

PART 1

SUGAR AND EMPIRE

PROLOGUE

1895

A visitor to the West Indian island and British colony of Antigua in about 1895 would see before him—and it will most likely be a man—as he sailed out of the wide Caribbean sea and into the shelter of the main harbor, the town of St. John's meeting the deep blue water at its edge and spreading outward and upward across the low hills that rise from the harborside, until they reach the bright blue of the cloudless sky. Dominating the town are the tall twin towers of the Anglican cathedral, appropriately sited on the crest of the highest hill and visible from all directions. Crowding in on all sides is the bright green of ripe sugarcane, and the canefields, dotted with stone mill-towers, stretch up and over the hills as far as the eye can see.

Yet despite the brilliance of the colors, on disembarking at the main wharf at the foot of town the visitor—perhaps he is one of the many who toured the islands in the nineteenth century to write a guide book for the American or British reader—will immediately notice, as one such visitor did in 1893, a feeling of “bygone prosperity” (Eves 1893: 285). To the left and right, ranged around the harbor's edge, he will see the warehouses and wharves belonging to the major import/export houses, exporters of sugar and importers of estate supplies, building materials, household items, fabric, and much of the food consumed on the island. On the right and ahead, he will see the large wooden one and two-story buildings, painted white or cream, that house the government warehouse (the King's Warehouse, as it is called), customs, the treasury, and the post office. Although all these buildings were clearly once impressive, they are now shabby and badly in need of repair. Through the open windows, white men formally dressed in white suits—the colonial civil servants (most sent from England) who run these government offices—work over stacks of dusty files.

On the left our visitor will see another side of Antigua altogether, for here is the market, hot, noisy, crowded with “Negroes”—as our visitor will undoubtedly call the local population—market women from the countryside selling vegetables from neat piles set out on small pieces of cloth spread on the ground, arguing loudly over the price of each item, and butchers (all male, butchering being as solely a male occupation as huckstering is a female one) killing and dismembering cows, goats, and chickens in open-air abattoirs. One-third of the island's population of 36,000 lives in town, and on Saturdays people from town and countryside crowd into the market.

If our visitor has visited before, or if he has visited other islands, he will find the town by comparison a bit ramshackle, the houses unpainted, the unpaved streets dusty, the smells from the open gutters overwhelming. The streets will be filled with men, women, and children of all colors and ages, along with donkeys, chickens, goats, and horse-drawn carriages. Walking up

the wide street from the wharf, our visitor will immediately meet the main shopping street, officially called Market Street but locally called Scotch Row for the Scottish merchants who own most of the stores, and looking right and left, will see rows of two-story buildings devoted, upstairs and down, to the sale of imported dry goods, housewares, and fabrics. On almost every corner a woman will be selling sugar cakes, nuts, mangoes, bananas, and ginger drink. If he ventures inside one of these stores, our visitor will find that they are mostly owned by white men, although they are staffed by a bevy of nonwhite men and women.

The only building in sight not built of wood, aside from the cathedral above, is the courthouse, that other symbol of colonial majesty, with the police station tucked immediately behind. Our visitor may hear raised voices from the upstairs of the courthouse, where the Legislative Council, partially elected (albeit by a very small segment of the population), has degenerated in the past few years into noisy factions.

As he walks through the town, probably on the way to Government House, where the governor both lives and works, up the hill behind the cathedral, our visitor, no doubt hailing from a society where class stratification is mirrored in residential segregation, may be surprised to see many small houses wedged between the larger ones, and find that there is no district or street that is particularly exclusive or fancy: small unpainted wooden houses, weathered a silvery gray, stand next to painted (mostly in white, some in pastels) single-storey residences and much larger two-storey merchant establishments, often with the store below and the family home above, a wide shaded gallery, or veranda, surrounding the second storey. Wedged in among them will be the smaller shops, housing the myriad artisans—carriage-makers, ironmongers, tailors, cobblers, barbers, coopers—who service the economy.

As he walks, our visitor may gradually realize that there are very few white faces in the shops or sitting on the galleries—for he knows that Antigua is a British colony, is governed by a British governor, administered by the British government through the Colonial Office, and that its planters are almost all white—even if white Antiguan, to the British a decidedly second best form of white but white nonetheless. But the white population in Antigua, never very large, has been on the decline since the 1880s and is now less than 2,000. And if he smells fresh bread, or passes a rumshop, and looks at the names over the doorways, he will see that the proprietors have Portuguese names; he will be told that the Portuguese were brought to Antigua from the island of Madeira in the 1850s to work on the sugar plantations, but refused to stay in the countryside.

If our visitor is taken out into the countryside, as most visitors are—taken, perhaps, to see the century-old British naval station on the promontory above English Harbour on the far south side of the island—he will pass down narrow roads crowded on both sides by tall stands of rustling sugarcane and see for himself what the statistics show: sugar dominates the landscape just as it dominates the economy. No matter in which direction he travels—and Antigua is small, only 108 square miles in all, low (there is only one mountain that comes anywhere near deserving that name, and that is only 1,300 feet high), and almost round, so that from one side to the other is at the very most only twelve or so miles—he will see acre after acre of cane. But he will also see that what he saw from afar as dense stands of healthy green plants are actually

full of stunted canes and withered brown leaves. The drought that began in 1892 and the virulent infestation of cane disease that began in 1894 have so reduced production that the 1895 crop is expected to be the lowest in thirty years.

And he will also be confronted by another crucial fact of the mid-1890s, for he will see large tracts of uncultivated land, some being used as pasture for cows, some returning to scrub. He has probably been told—all visitors are given this sort of information—that Antigua, in the eighteenth century the premier producer of sugar in the Leeward Islands and a leading producer in the entire West Indies, now has expenditures that are twice its revenues and sugar production is not expected to survive.

Nevertheless, the Antiguan economy is still at this point dominated by sugar, and scattered across the landscape our visitor will see, perched atop small knolls, the elegant wooden houses, painted white with dark green trim, surrounded by rolling green lawns and brilliant hibiscus, belonging to the plantocracy. Behind, hidden from the sight of those on the veranda of the “great house,” are the small houses for the estate workers. Although many families have moved off the estates into villages, estate work has remained the main source of cash income.

Our visitor will also see, on plantation after plantation, the ruins of many sugar mills—those conical towers that dot all West Indian landscapes—but in Antigua these mills are producing only the less refined brown, or muscovado, sugar, which is fast being replaced in the centers of consumption by the more refined white sugar.

If our visitor is interested in any agriculture other than sugar, he will be severely disappointed, for although he will see tiny gardens crowded around the village houses, some land in root crops and other vegetables, and, in the south, the beginnings of pineapple production, he will not see any serious attempt being made to find an alternative to sugar. Nor will he see cane being grown by peasant farmers, for, unlike in other West Indian islands at the time, the former slaves in Antigua have not been able to develop their own production.

As he travels across the island, our visitor will see few houses until he suddenly comes upon a village strung out along the road. Built on the edges of the plantations, these villages were founded by former slaves in the years after emancipation in 1834. (There were no villages in Antigua before emancipation, not even in the mountains: because these were so few and so low, and the island so small, few slaves were able to run away for very long, and there were no maroon villages, as in Jamaica; nor was it possible to build villages far away from the plantations after emancipation—there was no far away.) Many of the small houses are constructed of wattle and daub, while others are built of wood—all these wooden buildings, in town and country, provide a feast for the omnipresent termites, all run the risk of fire (almost all of St. John’s burned to the ground in 1769, in 1841, and large parts of it at other times), of tumbling down in one of the frequent earthquakes, or of being blown apart in one of the even more frequent hurricanes. Many are in various stages of construction, as their owners painfully accumulate the savings to build them, room by room.

Poverty wears a slightly kinder face in the warm West Indies than in the cold and dirty streets of Manchester, Birmingham, or New York, and our visitors will have to be looking to find it. But as they pass through the villages, our visitors will see crowds of children—for at this time

a full 35 percent of the population is under the age of 15—playing in the only space available, the road, or carrying water from one of the country ponds in large buckets on their heads, or crowded into one of the local schools, often little more than a roof over hardened earth, short of both desks and books. And yet in the whole of Antigua there are only thirty-five such primary schools, down from fifty-two in 1860, and the churches that run them (some are Methodist, some Moravian, and some—a very few, mostly in town—are Anglican) are having severe financial problems. There is only one grammar school for boys and one for girls, both recently opened and run by the Anglican church, and these are almost exclusively for the upper and middle classes—certainly well beyond the reach of those in the countryside, who can afford neither the school fees nor the cost of boarding in town.

By now our visitor may well be tired, and on returning to St. John's will welcome—but he himself will only be welcomed because he, like most of those who toured the West Indies after emancipation to gather information for books, is a man—the chance to stop at the New Club, the “planter” club, strategically placed just behind Government House. Here the planters—a term that includes both plantation owners and their managers—gather on Saturdays to catch up on the British newspapers and the local gossip, joined by a few merchants and doctors. Here our visitor will hear the planters worry about the long drought and its effect on the sugar crop, and complain bitterly about the disastrous effect that the influx of beet sugar into Britain has had on sugar prices. He will hear about the local government's huge deficit and the British government's—*our* government's, they will call it—reluctance to come to their aid. He will hear about the heated debate on the island's political status that is taking place in the Legislative Council, where the white majority is discussing voting for full Crown Colony status in a desperate attempt to close out the growing nonwhite clamor for a political voice. Our visitor will quickly learn that the economic problems are serious and that the white population is feeling increasingly beleaguered, abandoned on the one side by a “home” government that refuses to help with its economic problems and pressured on the other side by an increasingly restive population that wants a greater role in the economy and in its own governance.

And the planters' sense of foreboding would prove to be well founded. For the mid-1890s were a crucial moment in Antigua's history, when a series of crises—economic, political, and social—led to a profound restructuring of the organization of production and of political and social life.

Antigua had not always been poor. In the mid-eighteenth century, during the heyday of the sugar plantation, Antigua was one of the leading producers in the West Indies, and, despite dire predictions to the contrary, it remained prosperous after emancipation in 1834. Indeed, visitors in the 1850s called Antigua the most populous, productive, and wealthy of the Leeward Islands. But the unraveling began soon thereafter, and the crisis came to a head in the 1890s, when a drastic decline in sugar production combined with low prices on the world market to send the economy into a tailspin. The economic crisis was thus a crisis of sugar production, part the

result of internal production problems—including drought, disease, lack of capital and up-to-date technology—and part the result of forces far beyond the island, from the competition of cheaper beet sugar to the reduction of protective duties to changing British governmental attitudes toward the West Indies, and particularly the smaller islands. As we shall see, it was not the first crisis of accumulation the island's planters and merchants had faced, but it was by far the most serious: this time not just their profits were threatened, but their very existence as a class.

This realization in turn fostered a political crisis: as the planters and merchants—their numbers declining with the economy—realized that the existing political structure was failing to reinforce the organization of accumulation in their favor, they provoked a constitutional crisis and voted for full Crown Colony status, giving up their elected representation in the Legislative Council. They hoped that this action would curry favor with the British and win both the reinstitution of preferences for West Indian sugar (or the abolition of the bounties on European beet sugar), as well as funds for constructing a modern sugar factory—thus reestablishing their economic base. Equally important, however, they hoped to contain the demands of an increasingly restive nonwhite population, and most particularly of its middle strata, which was insisting on a greater economic role, more political representation, and greater social equality.

Before turning to these events, which are the subject of Chapters 2 and 3, we need to understand more about the Antiguan economy, and specifically about the role of sugar, about the people who controlled its production, and about the people who produced it. This, then, is the subject of Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 1

WHITE MEN, BROWN SUGAR

The Earlies

The vast transformation of the West Indies that has come to be known as the “sugar revolution”—the production and export of sugar on a large scale by a massive and forcibly imported slave labor force—began in Barbados with the introduction of methods of cultivating and processing sugarcane by the Dutch in the 1630s. In Barbados itself, sugar production grew rapidly, but it took some time to spread to the Leewards—St. Kitts, Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, and the Virgin Islands—populated as they were by “small men without capital or credit who had to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps” (Dunn 1972: 117).

The first white people to colonize Antigua were English, although they arrived not from Europe but from the neighboring island of St. Christopher, or St. Kitts, where Captain Thomas Warner had established a tenuous foothold in 1624. The settlement of Antigua in 1632 by Warner’s son, Captain Edward Warner, was equally tenuous at first. Growing tobacco for export and subsistence crops for themselves, these early settlers lived in a “state of perpetual crisis” that has been vividly described by Richard Dunn—under attack from the Caribs who, although they lived on neighboring islands, considered Antigua their territory, caught up in the wars between English, French, and Dutch, as well as in the feuds of the Restoration, producing a crop whose price dropped precipitously soon after their arrival—altogether a small and fractious group who “quarreled and drank and disobeyed” (Pares 1950: 15). The population was only 750 in 1646 and 1,200 in 1655 (Dunn 1972: 122; Oliver 1894-99: xxv).

Sugar cultivation began in the Leewards in the early 1660s and developed slowly, set back by the destruction wrought by the French invasion of 1666, a lack of capital, and the greater attractiveness of Barbados as a place for investment. Nevis was the first of the Leewards to convert to sugar, followed by St. Kitts, while Antigua and Montserrat lagged behind. A large quantity of tobacco (as well as indigo and cotton) was still being produced in Antigua in 1671 (Oliver 1894-99: xlv), when St. Kitts and Nevis were already growing only cane. Nevertheless, the conversion to sugar, once it began, was rapid: in 1672 it was reported that about 40,000 acres were planted in cane; by 1676 this had increased to 70,000 acres, over half the 120,000 that were considered arable (Oliver 1894-99: xlix).

Information on this period of Antigua’s history is fragmentary and contradictory, and it is not clear exactly when the first slaves were brought to the island—some of the early sugar production seems to have been carried out by indentured European and Carib labor (Dunn 1972: 123; Oliver 1894-99: xviii). But by 1672, the first year for which there are detailed figures, there were reported to be 570 Negroes and 800 English (Oliver 1894-99: xlix).¹ By 1678, when

¹ The report, cited by Gaspar and taken from Oliver, that in 1670 Antigua’s condition was “sadly deplorable, all his Majesty’s islands supplied with negroes except poor Antigua...” does not necessarily mean, as Gaspar supposes, that there were not *yet* any slaves, only that there were not *then* any, since Oliver also reports that when the French invaded in 1666 they took away 500 Negroes. See Gaspar 1985a: 67, Oliver 1894-99: xlii, xxxvi.

Governor Stapleton took a detailed household-by-household census, Antigua had clearly taken some giant steps on the road to the slave-based production of sugar: in six years, the total population had tripled, to 4,480, and 2,172 of these were slaves (Oliver 1894-99: lxi). In addition, this was clearly no longer a society of frontiersmen: 30 percent of the white adults were women, and there were 528 white and 499 slave children.² There was as yet no true plantocracy, however: only a handful of households owned more than a dozen slaves, while more than half had no slaves at all. Further, only a minority of households were cultivating sugar and holdings were still relatively small (Dunn 1972: 129-31).

From the Halcyon Years to Emancipation, 1700-1834

But the process of transformation continued, and by 1708 Antigua had by-passed St. Kitts to become the leading sugar producer in the Leewards, accounting for over half their sugar output and more than half their slaves (Dunn 1972: 141). Gradually, the small white farmer, followed by the small white trader and artisan, and finally by the middle-sized planter, abandoned the island and were replaced by newly arrived African slaves and by large-scale planters and their merchant-agents. The “barbarous, equalitarian society of backwoodsmen” (Pares 1950: 19) was, in less than fifty years, replaced by a stratified society of planters and slaves, the white population transformed into a true plantocracy, dependent on the exploitation of a large slave force for its labor. The figures for the slave and white populations, in the table on the following page, show vividly the growth of this dependence.³

It was these early planters who christened many of the large estates with names that are familiar to Antiguan today: Byam, Duer, Gunthorpe, Lucas, Parry, Vernon, Cochran, Winthorp, Lynch, Frye, Yeamans, Tomlinson, Carlisle, Lyons, Oliver, and Weatherill were all substantial planters and members of the Assembly in the late 1600s (Sheridan 1961: App.I; Oliver 1894-99: lxvii).⁴

² Although there were only 544 women in 1672 (Oliver 1894-99: lxi), their numbers grew quickly. By 1753, when sugar production was at its height, there were 1,123 women (and 1,433 men). By 1821, the number had declined, to 840 females (and 1,140 males)—the census no longer separates out adults and children—rising again very slightly to 867 females (and 963 males) by 1891.

³ The figures for 1707, 1720, 1729, and 1788 are in Martin 1843 and Lanaghan 1844; the figures for 1756, 1787, 1805, 1810, 1817, 1824, and 1827 are in Lanaghan only and the figures for 1673, 1741, and 1798 are in Martin only. The figures for 1678, 1821 (a census year), 1832, and 1834 come from Oliver (1894-99: lxi, cli, 407). The sources are frustrating because they do not all provide the same data, or analyze it in the same way. For instance, the only part of the 1844 census I could find is the summary in Great Britain, Sessional Papers, 1845 (426) xxxi: 329. Partial figures (i.e., whites only or slaves only) are included as a crosscheck. Gaspar cites a peak white population of 5,200 in 1724 (Gaspar 1985a: 80), but this seems high. It is not clear if the white figures included the population at naval station at English Harbour. In addition, the figure for the white population in 1834 seems suspect, since it appears to be a simple restatement of the 1821 census figure. The figures for the slave population in particular should be treated with caution, but since they are probably underestimates rather than overestimates, they are sufficient to make the point.

⁴ The first Codrington owned a plantation in this period as well: Bettye's Hope was given to Christopher Codrington as a gift in 1667 (Oliver 1894-99: xlii). The estate names may not appear as they do on contemporary maps. In some cases, the names did indeed change, dropping an *s*, adding an *e*, replacing a *y* with an *i*, and so on. In other cases, there are misprints in Oliver or in the almanacs. All these lists were originally handwritten, so there was ample opportunity for transcription errors to creep in.

It should be noted that the planters were almost uniformly male. Before emancipation, women owned slaves, although not in very large numbers, and plantations, but after 1834 they were few and far between: I only found three

Year	White	Slave
1673	nd	570
1678	2,308	2,171
1707	2,892	12,892
1720	3,672	19,186
1729	4,088	22,611
1741	3,538	27,416
1753	3,412	31,428
1787	2,590	37,808
1788	nd	36,000
1798	nd	37,808
1805	3,000	36,000
1810	3,000	37,000
1817	nd	32,249
1821	1,980	31,604
1824	nd	30,314
1827	nd	29,830
1832	nd	29,537
1834	1,980	33,432

Although the figures are scattered and somewhat unreliable, it is clear that production continued to increase dramatically, from about 12,000 hogsheads in 1724—along with considerable cotton and ginger—to an average of between 20,000 and 30,000 hogsheads in the 1770s (Oliver 1894-99: cxxiv; there were approximately 112 hogsheads to a hundredweight). If Oliver's higher figure of 30,000 is correct, sugar production in Antigua never again reached this level; even if we take the lower figure of 20,000 hogsheads, it was never again reached with any regularity (see Appendix 1). As sugar consolidated its hold on the economy, estates grew in size, so that in the peak period, from 1730 to 1770, the median estate size was between 600 and 699 acres: 65 families held over 300 acres each and 20 held over 1,000 (Sheridan 1961: 345).

The halcyon years were few, however, and by the 1770s the Antiguan planters had embarked on a long and bumpy downward course, interrupted by enough interludes of moderate prosperity to keep the sugar-dependent economy afloat but not enough to stem the tide (see Appendix 1). This was not at first the result of a drop in production but of increased competition, higher costs, and declining sugar prices. By the 1770s, British-produced sugar, which had held a near-monopoly on output for fifty years, was facing competition from the French West Indies, particularly Saint Domingue, as well as from a resurgent Brazilian industry

in the entire nineteenth century, and two of these were their husband's heirs (a very different situation from Barbados, for instance [see Butler 1987]). Similarly, there were very few free colored plantation owners and even fewer nonwhite owners after emancipation (for more on this, see Chapters 4 and 5).

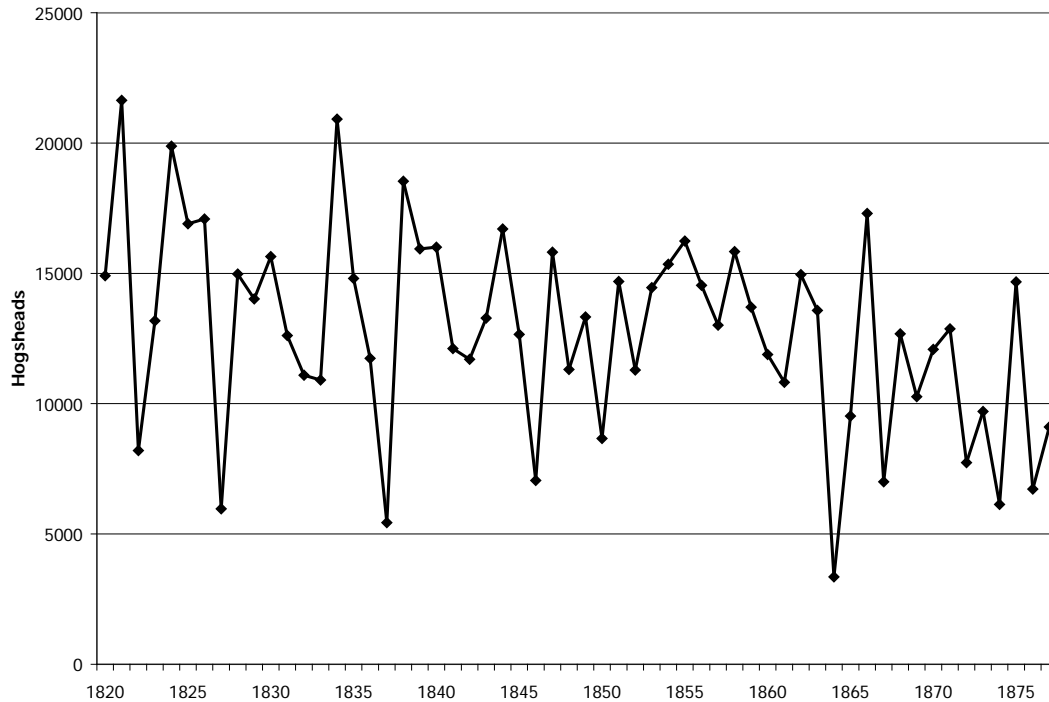
(Dunn 1972: 205-206). In addition, even within the British West Indies, the Leewards were facing competition from newly developed sources: by the early 1700s Jamaica had become the largest producer among the British islands, while St. Vincent, Dominica, and Grenada (ceded to the British by the French in 1763), Trinidad (seized in 1797), and Demerara, Essequibo, and St. Lucia (seized in 1796) quickly provided stiff competition because of their virgin soils. The shift was both swift and dramatic: comparing 1763 and 1773, the total value of imports into Great Britain from the Leeward Islands and Barbados declined from £772,716 to £512,183, while that from the Windward Islands alone increased from £62,915 to £859,981 (Whitworth 1776: II, 48-87). While in 1763 Antigua had been the fourth largest producer in the West Indies (after Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Kitts), by 1812 it was a distant fifth (after Jamaica, Demerara, Grenada, and St. Vincent), and by 1833 a struggling seventh (Augier et al. 1960: 122-23).

Thus the Antiguan planters were devoting themselves to large-scale sugar production at a time when prices were falling and increased competition was favoring the most economical producer, and they had few resources to compete with in these circumstances. The chief difficulty was that although the soil was good for sugar, the island was subject to repeated cycles of drought, some of which lasted for two or three years, and lack of water was a constant problem (Auchinleck 1956).⁵ As Figure 1 on the following page shows, production swung wildly from one year to the next, and was therefore totally unpredictable. As we shall see later, this led to an inability to plan—to take advantage of high prices, for instance—that affected planters and government alike; it also meant that the Antiguan planters were never able to attract the capital investment that would have enabled them to introduce measures to lower the cost of the sugar they did produce.

A further problem was that costs of production were steadily increasing, although for different reasons at different points in time. The first crisis was caused by the American Revolution, when the state of war between the American colonies and Great Britain cut off West Indian access to a major source of supplies for the estates, including lumber and provisions. After 1700 most of Antigua's imported food and other estate provisions came from the North American colonies (Pares 1950: 35), so that the cessation of this trade hit the island particularly hard, a hardship compounded by the fact that there was less space for food cultivation and less local timber available than in other islands (Augier et al. 1960: 125). Then, as the slave trade tapered off toward the end of the century (it officially ended in 1807), the price of slaves increased. And last, but certainly not least, soil exhaustion and lack of water reduced yields at a time when these factors did not affect the competition's production.

⁵ According to G.G. Auchinleck's compilation, in the seventy-six years from 1874 to 1949, there were thirteen very dry periods—an average of one every 5.8 years (Auchinleck 1956). Appendix 1 correlates years of drought with sugar production.

Figure 1
Sugar Production, 1820-1877
[in hogsheads]



Emancipation and Its Aftermath, 1834-1890

Slave compensation (per slave) in Antigua was the lowest in all the British West Indies save the tiny Virgin Islands (Augier et al. 1960: 183), a clear indication of the diminished value of the Antiguan sugar economy. Nevertheless, emancipation itself (which took place in 1834) seems to have made the situation better: according to one visitor, the average export quantity from 1829 to 1833 was 12,189 hogsheads, while from 1834 to 1838 it increased to an average of 13,545 hogsheads and four times as many puncheons of molasses (Gurney 1840: 53).⁶ Mrs. Lanaghan, writing in the early 1840s, reported that despite a severe hurricane and long drought in 1835, and drought again in 1836, 1837, and 1840, crops were on average larger than under the slave system.⁷ Indeed, self-congratulation was everywhere: according to Joseph Sturge and Thomas

⁶ Douglas Hall, whose *Five of the Leewards* is the only book that focuses on these islands in the post-emancipation period, reports that Leeward Island sugar production slumped after emancipation and then struggled back, only reaching pre-emancipation levels in the early 1860s (Hall 1971: 99). The figures I found, however, show neither decline or recovery, but rather fairly steady production until the 1860s; 1834 itself was a bumper year, although production in the five years before that was below the level of the five years after. (See Appendix 1.)

⁷ Although Mrs. Lanaghan's book, *Antigua and the Antiguans*, was published in 1844, the author seems to have been writing in 1841-1842, since she describes a fire on April 2, 1841, and notes that "more than eight months have gone by since then" (Lanaghan 1844: I, 217). The book, part first-hand report and part amateur history, is probably the most widely cited book on Antigua ever written. However, the author's name is frequently misspelled, and I have seen

Harvey, who toured the West Indies to investigate the effects of emancipation, by 1837 even “the most bigoted adherents of slavery acknowledge that free labor is best and cheapest” (Sturge and Harvey 1838: 23). They argued that this was in part because free labor had increased the value of land and led to a more economical working of the plantations. Here topography played a role: William Green, in his study of the effects of emancipation, points out that in both Barbados and Antigua the planters were able to devote increased acreage to sugar by converting slave provision grounds to cane because the former slaves had little choice but to stay near the plantations rather than leave for distant villages (Green 1976: 201). Estates that had been “clogged with debts” were able to clear them, land values increased, once-abandoned estates were brought back into cultivation. Mrs. Lanaghan credited much of this to the fact that the planters no longer had to support the aged and infirm (Lanaghan 1844: I, 57). Production continued high through the 1850s, despite an earthquake in 1843, hurricanes in 1847 and 1848, and still another drought in 1849 (Candler 1965: 54). Davy reported that in 1849, Antigua was still the “most populous, productive, and wealthy” of the Leeward Islands (Davy 1854: 379).

The first great threat to the post-emancipation profitability of Antiguan sugar production came from the land the planters called “home.” Having dismantled slavery, the British government was determined to dismantle the measures that had protected colonial products from competition from foreign sources, as well as those that had protected British West Indian products in particular from competition from other British colonies. This was in part a response to insistent consumer demands for cheaper sugar (and baked goods) and in part to demands from the British sugar refiners, who argued that West Indian sugar was 40 percent more expensive than that from Cuba, and a huge 75 percent more than that from Brazil (Holt 1988).

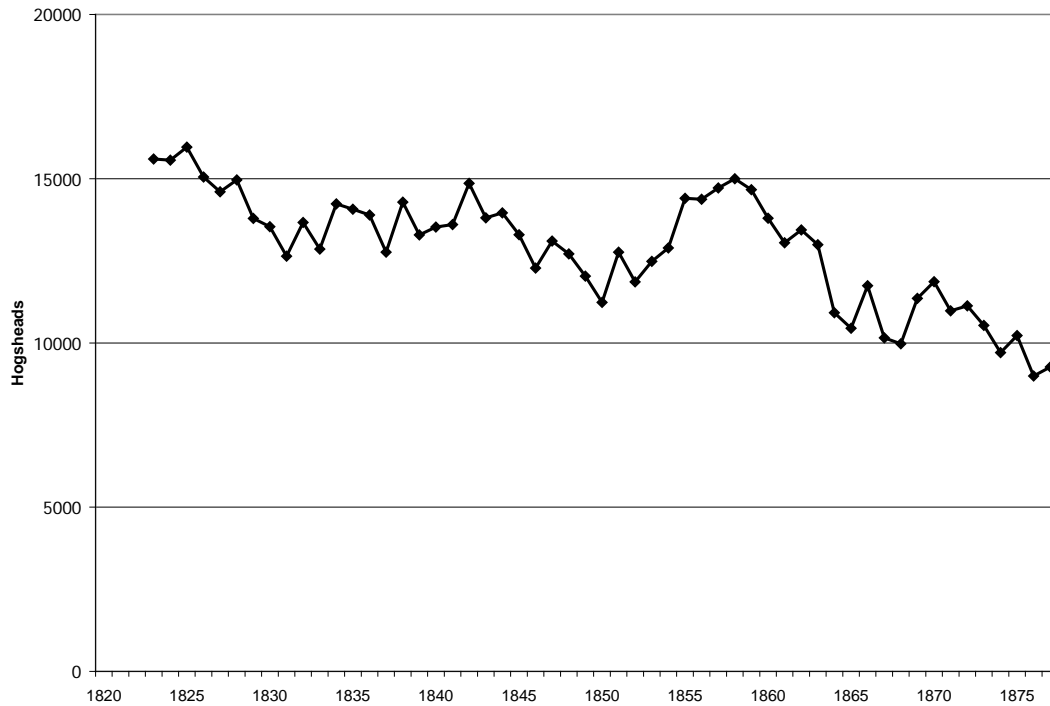
The process of reducing the protectionist barriers had begun in 1825, but the Sugar Duties Act of 1846, which provided that all preferences given to sugar from the British colonies would be eliminated by 1852, was, in West Indian eyes, an enormous betrayal. It was greeted by a howl of protest from the planters, who complained bitterly about having to compete with colonies where slavery still existed—referring principally to Cuba—and predicted “utter and irremediable ruin” if the duties were not reinstated. In Antigua, John Candler, a Quaker who visited in early 1850, reported that “altogether the planters are prostrated” (Candler 1965: 54). The British government, unmoved, proceeded with the act, agreeing only to postpone the final date to 1854.

The act immediately changed the source of sugar imports into Britain. In the first place, foreign imports became much more important: while in the 1835-1838 period, 7 percent of imports came from foreign sources, in 1855-1858 (the first four years of equalized duties) the figure rose to 34 percent. And in the second place, British West Indian sugar became a less and less important part of the whole: thus while in the earlier period 76 percent of total British imports came from the Caribbean, by the later period this was reduced to a mere 37 percent—not so much because British West Indian production had decreased as because overall imports had almost doubled. No figures could give a clearer idea of the diminishing importance of the

Flanaghan, Lanahan (Antigua archives booklet, which also lists the book as being published in 1824), Flannigan (Gaspar 1985: 212), and Flannagan (Lazarus-Black 1990). Oliver, in his bibliography, spells it Lanaghan (Oliver 1894-99: iv). It is not clear who she was, although it is interesting that Robert *Lenaghan* was one of the merchants who signed a petition in 1848 (CO 7/89, 28 February 1848); it seems possible that he was her husband.

West Indian colonies in the British scheme of things. (Data computed from Hall 1971: 100-101.) Figure 2, which smoothes off the ups and downs of yearly production by computing five-year moving averages, shows clearly the steady decline during these years:

Figure 2
Sugar Production,
Five-Year Moving Averages, 1823-1877



Sidney Mintz has emphasized the extent to which the act spelled the beginning of the end for the West Indian sugar industry: “It might not be too much to say that the fate of the British West Indies was sealed, once it became cheaper for the British masses to have their sugar from elsewhere, and more profitable for the British bourgeoisie to sell more sugar at lower prices” (Mintz 1985: 185). If this was true for the entire West Indies, it was particularly true for the less competitive among them, including Antigua. But that does not mean that the planters were ready to admit defeat. The Antiguan planters sought to stay afloat in two ways: by reducing costs and by increasing production. Short of capital, they preferred to focus on the first rather than the second.

At the time of emancipation, the assumption among the planters was that the pre-emancipation labor regime could and would be maintained: the only difference would be that the labor force would now be “free.” They believed that the problems of control that this might create could be handled through legislation, and would in any case be more than compensated by the reduced costs, since they would no longer be responsible for the welfare of their employees—most particularly, the young, the aged, and the ill. While in other islands, the Assemblies tried to buy themselves time by instituting a four-year period of apprenticeship—not

quite slavery but hardly emancipation—in Antigua the planter-dominated Assembly, convinced by one perspicacious member with a head for sums that free labor would be immediately cheaper than slave (see Hall 1971: 22, citing Thome and Kimball 1839, for this story), voted to forgo apprenticeship altogether. This proved a smart move, for the momentous passage from slavery to legal freedom for the 29,000 slaves was entirely peaceful. Indeed, the Antiguan planters must have felt very pleased with themselves when they saw the unrest in St. Kitts, where martial law was declared on August 6 (Frucht 1977).

The planters' financial calculations were based on the conviction that they could guarantee themselves a steady supply of cheap labor, and they immediately set about ensuring that that would be the case. They knew full well that the greatest threat would be if the former slaves left estate labor, which would drive up wages, and they also knew that, in striking contrast to those islands where there was abundant uncultivated land far from the plantations, where former slaves could (and did) retreat in large numbers, in Antigua—as in Barbados and St. Kitts—there was little land available for farming, or even for the creation of independent villages. Nevertheless, to reinforce their position, they sought to have the Assembly enact a number of measures that they hoped would make movement off the estates close to impossible.

First and foremost among these was the Contract Act, according to which the slaves-turned-laborers could continue to occupy the houses and plant the house gardens on the estates where they had worked only as long as they agreed to continue working for the estate (Hall 1971: 38). In addition, the act instituted draconian penalties for failing to do plantation labor: for instance, if a laborer missed two consecutive days in one week, or any two days in a two-week period, he or she could be sent to prison for one week with hard labor (Rogers 1970: 57)—and this was the second version of the act, the first having been disallowed (with a “sharp retort”) by the Colonial Office for being even more biased in the planters' favor (Burn 1937: 170).

Eviction was thus an omnipresent threat. When the former slaves proved reluctant to sign on to their old estates, fearing that they would be signing away their newly acquired freedom (Rose 1929-40: 497), the Assembly passed an amendment to the act that not only allowed verbal contracts but took simple occupancy of a house as proof of intent to work for a year (Rogers 1970: 58; Bolland 1988: 16; for more on the harsh restrictions imposed on the labor force, see Sturge and Harvey 1838: 29). According to one source, within two months of emancipation, two-thirds of the former slaves were back on the plantations (Greenwood and Hamber 1980: 81)—implying that they had initially tried to leave. Candler wrote that the workers who fell under the act were virtually “imprisoned,” particularly those on estates where the act was strictly interpreted by a hostile manager (Candler 1965: 56). It should be no surprise, then, that the act became a major source of dissatisfaction and its abolition a central rallying point for the laboring population over the next one-hundred years.

To further close the door to the possibility of “free” labor, the Assembly also passed a series of vagrancy laws, attempts to keep the former slaves from enjoying too much “free” time. Within a week of emancipation, the Superintendent of Police had issued a public notice that anyone not working “must find some Employment before the middle of next week, or else I shall be obliged to apprehend you as idlers” (cited in Brown 1985: 5), and there quickly followed a series of laws that restricted movement, condemned “disorderly” conduct, punished “rogues,”

and so on.⁸ In addition, licensing laws were promulgated in an attempt to keep former slaves out of the urban trades—and therefore out of urban areas (Hall 1971: 153).⁹ At the same time, an upsurge of local complaints of worker “laziness,” accompanied by a metropolitan literature that reinstalled the image of the “idle Negro” (the contribution with the most importance for the West Indies was made by Thomas Carlyle in 1849—see Hall 1971: 155), signaled—as it would repeatedly over the next one hundred years—the ideological aspect of the struggle to keep the workforce in line.

Last but certainly not least, the Antiguan planters began to follow the lead of their Trinidadian and Guianese counterparts in demanding an imported labor force to help solve their labor problems. The importation of large numbers of Portuguese into Trinidad and British Guiana had begun in 1841 (Brereton 1981: 98; Rodney 1981: 241), but the Antiguan planters treated the prospect with some reserve, worried about the high cost and about having to compete with the higher wages being offered indentures in other colonies (Hall 1971: 127). Thus it was not until June 1846 that the Antiguan Assembly passed an act to encourage the importation of 3,000 laborers by providing a bounty (Horsford 1872: 110). The cost was to be shared, two-thirds to be paid out of general revenues and one-third by the importing employers, and the indenture period was to be twelve months (Hall 1971: 156; see also arguments for immigration in Sewell 1861). The act was assented to reluctantly by the acting governor, who did not agree that it was necessary, and accepted with modifications by the Colonial Office (Hall 1971: 34n). As in Trinidad, the aim was to encourage the introduction of “people of European descent” or, more bluntly, “white immigrants” (Hall 1971: 50; Hall 1982: 90). It was hoped that they would set an example with their industry, increase the number of whites, and eventually add to the middle class. In Antigua, the period of indenture was three years, reduced to one in 1880 (Lazarus-Black 1990: 135, n.8).

It quickly became clear, however, that it was impossible to attract plantation labor from the European continent (Brereton 1981: 99), and instead recruitment was from the Portuguese islands of Madeira and Cape Verde. In 1846, a famine in Madeira led to massive out-migration, which intensified after disease wiped out the wine-grape vines in 1852 (Augier et al. 1960: 197; Lowenthal 1972: 198-99; for slightly different dates, see Greenwood and Hamber 1980: 90).¹⁰ Between 1835 and 1882, 36,000 Portuguese came to the West Indies: 30,000 to British Guiana, 2,000 to Antigua, 1,000 to Trinidad, 100 to Jamaica, and a few to other colonies (Greenwood and Hamber 1980: 92). The inflow dwindled rapidly after 1862, although immigration did not

⁸ It should be noted here that the superintendent was not a white man, but a prominent former free colored named Henry Loving, who also played a large role in drafting the first Contract Act (Brown 1985). For more on Loving, see Chapter 4.

⁹ In an important theoretical argument, Mindie Lazarus-Black argues that this period saw the gradual implementation of what she calls “government through families,” whereby families were now made responsible for what had previously been private matters. Thus at the same time that restrictive laws were passed (in addition to the vagrancy laws, there were laws banning obeah, poor laws designed to make families take care of their less fortunate members, and maintenance acts for illegitimate children), a number of policing institutions were created, including health inspectors, reform schools, and public nurseries, while the content of education also became regulated. On all this see Lazarus-Black 1990: 140 ff., as well as Lazarus-Black 1994.

¹⁰ Madeirans had come to the West Indies as early as 1835, emigrating particularly to British Guiana, as well as to Trinidad. They had a high mortality rate, however, and the British Guianese government stopped paying their passages in 1842. At about the same time the Madeiran government made it extremely difficult for them to leave.

officially end until 1882 (Rodney 1981: 33).

According to Horsford's 1872 Almanac, the first Portuguese arrived in Antigua in January 1847 (Horsford 1872: 110), but the census returns show the first group—seven people—arriving in 1848.¹¹ The number of those admitted then increased only gradually:

1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	Total
7	132	63	180	21	403

The pace picked up after 1852, and another 1,570 arrived between 1853 and 1856, a rate of about 400 a year. Of these, 195 were from the Cape Verde islands. This was virtually the end of the inflow: only 44 arrived in 1858 and 11 in 1861. (On this see Great Britain, Sessional Papers 1852-1853, lxxv: 289; and Great Britain, Sessional Papers 1863, xxxviii: 39). The total number of Madeiran and Cape Verdean in-migrants was thus 2,235.

There must have been a high death rate or a high rate of return migration, however, and the experiences of the other colonies would suggest the former, because the census counts do not reflect this influx:

Place of birth	1856	1861	1871	1891
Madeira	647	710	511	215
Cape Verde	183	142	43	20

On the other hand, it is impossible to tell the extent to which the population was augmented by a high birth rate—certainly the impression from the genealogies—and thus to determine definitively how large the Portuguese population (even confining it to its self-described members) was at any one point in time.

In Trinidad and British Guiana, the planters quickly found the Madeirans to be an uncooperative labor force, and the governments began to encourage the immigration of Indians (from India), who soon far surpassed the Madeirans in number. In Antigua, on the other hand, the governor was apparently right, and there was no demand for additional labor. Thus there was virtually no Indian migration into Antigua in these years—there were 71 Indians listed in the 1891 census and only 3 in 1911. Nor, again unlike Trinidad and British Guiana, were there many Chinese: in May 1863, 115 Chinese destined for Cuba were shipwrecked on Barbuda and indentured themselves as laborers (Horsford 1872: 112), and 500 more were imported in the 1880s (Oliver 1894-99: clix), but by 1911 there were only 13 left.¹² The Madeirans were

¹¹ There seems to have been at least one Madeiran who arrived earlier, however, although how he got to Antigua and what he did there remains a mystery. His name was Emmanuel Ferrarer, and when he died in 1820 he left a will that refers to his one slave, a female, and to his property, a wooden tenement in St. John's. He directed that the slave be sold and the money used to pay his funeral expenses, with "1 doubloon" to go to a church in Madeira called St. Mary in the Mountains. This would seem to indicate that he had no surviving relatives in Antigua.

¹² The Norman Commission reported that 385 Chinese had been imported in 1881, a "bad lot," most of whom were "incompetent" (Norman Commission, App.C, Pt. XI: 200). According to the 1891 census, the Chinese population in that year was 131. Once again, few remained by the end of the century: the last was a government pensioner who used to

therefore Antigua's only non-African immigrant group by the end of the nineteenth century.¹³

Restrictions on the labor force, and swelling its ranks through importation, formed the core of the post-emancipation planter effort to maintain (or regain) control of the now "free" laborer. For its part, the labor force was equally aware that control was at issue, and particularly of the strategic importance of having land of its own. Sammy Smith, son of a slave and a survivor of the struggle, put it bluntly: "All the feast and fuss them behave with amount to one thing: them afraid black people come to boss them." Smith then vividly describes the effort his own family made to move off the estate and build a house in a village, an experience that was repeated by thousands of former slaves across the island: "We were bound and determined to work the land.... If we could work the land, then in process of time we would become self-sufficient or we would be in control of things" (Smith and Smith 1986: 57).¹⁴ Every estate laborer who moved into a village, every small subsistence plot hacked out of the bush, gave the laborers that much more bargaining power in the long, bitter, and occasionally violent struggle that ensued.

Thus despite the planters' best efforts, villages began to be built on abandoned or non-arable land. The movement was spurred after 1837, when the governor agreed to release government land (held under ten-acre legislation) and when some estates were forced to sell (Oliver 1894-99: cliv, citing Governor Colebrook's 1839 report): the Colonial Office saw villages in a more favorable light than the planters, as "nurseries of Labour" for the entire island (Hall 1971: 43, quoting CO 7/64).¹⁵ Villages with names like Freetown, Liberta, and Bethesda were built on the edges of estates. There were 67, with 9,033 inhabitants, by 1846, and a total of 15,644 people were living in villages by 1858 (Sewell 1861: 148).¹⁶ But while in some islands the establishment of such villages led to the formation of a peasantry, in Antigua this was not the case. Even growing enough food for local consumption was a struggle: Davy reported that in 1849 the lack of unappropriated land, even for root crops, was one of the major reasons laborers had to work on the estates, a need that was reinforced by the structure of taxation, which, by relying heavily on import duties, raised the price of household staples—many of which were imported—and forced some members of each household to work for wages. Although the

lay out the sidewalks in St. John's (Smith and Smith: 1986: 102). According to S.A. Henry, when he was a child (which would have been in the early 1900s), there were a few Chinese living in town, making cigars and using molasses to cure the tobacco, using poles to carry water. One was a well-known barber who trained John Rodriguez Anjo (see "Letter to a Friend," *Workers' Voice*, 1 December 1982).

¹³ According to Nicholson (1984: 75), citing Watkins (1924: 51), 2,000 laborers were imported from Barbados in 1863.

¹⁴ Sammy Smith's life history, as told to his sons Keithlyn and Fernando Smith, is called *To Shoot Hard Labour: The Life and Times of Samuel Smith, an Antiguan Workingman, 1877-1982* (Smith and Smith 1986). It will be referred to frequently in what follows, both for Smith's memories of specific events and for the very Antiguan expressions he uses. Although the book is being accepted by many Antiguanas as accurate history, Smith gets many facts wrong, particularly for the period before he was born and when he was a young man. Nevertheless, it is a wonderfully evocative history of Antigua from a workingman's point of view.

¹⁵ "Ten-acre land" was land that had been set aside for white settlers, who were to be lured to the island with the promise of ten-acre plots. The scheme had never worked, however, and the land remained, uncultivated and in the hands of the government (P. Henry 1985: 50).

¹⁶ Henry, citing Hall, dates the first village at 1835 (Henry 1985: 50; Hall 1971: 43-45). Figures on the number of villages in existence by any particular point in time are contradictory. Candler reported 30 villages by 1849, while Davy, who visited in the same year, reported 87 (Candler 1965: 54; Davy 1854: 390); Henry uses the Sewell figures. Lazarus-Black points out that many former slaves left their estates to find, or live with, mates (Lazarus-Black 1990: 182n).

villagers continued the provision production and marketing systems that they had developed under slavery (Gaspar 1985b), almost no peasant production of export crops developed—a fact that eventually became a major cause of concern at the Colonial Office and the subject of more than one Royal Commission report. In Antigua, there was no question of competition from another crop—coffee, as in the Windward Islands, or bananas, as in Jamaica, for instance—or even from peasant-based production of sugar.

Restricting access to land was the major way in which the planters hoped to reduce their labor costs without making large-scale investments. There was a raw economic logic to this: labor costs made up a full 50 percent of the cost of sugar production (Hall 1971: 123), so savings in the wage bill could make the difference between profit and loss. But the introduction of labor-saving machinery in the field was also important, both for the wages it saved and for the potential of increasing production per acre. The same was true for the reorganization of the labor process itself: for instance, the introduction of task gangs, which moved from plantation to plantation, reduced wages and were an innovation confined to Antigua and St. Kitts (Greenwood and Hamber 1980: 110). Within ten years, fewer laborers were producing nearly two times as much sugar (*ibid.*: 74). The success of these efforts can be measured directly in wage rates: 6d/day at emancipation, they rose immediately to 9d and then 1s, but had been forced back to 6d by 1846 (*ibid.*: 105)—a major saving for the planter and a wrenching setback for the laborer. This low rate did not last, because although the Antiguan workers did not protest violently (as they did in other islands), they still found ways to withdraw their labor, but even after the rate had risen slightly, it was nowhere near that in other islands: 9d (with house and grounds) in Antigua compared to 2s in Trinidad, for instance (Augier et al. 1960: 189).¹⁷

The planters also tried to shift the bulk of the tax burden onto the laboring population: both taxes on individuals (donkey and hut taxes, for instance) and import taxes on consumption goods fell disproportionately on the poor. Import duties, which were eliminated on most items in 1848, were reinstated in 1850 (Hall 1971: 157). This, along with the lack of land and the almost nonexistent transfer of government funds back to the mass of the population (through education, for instance, or social welfare programs), meant that the labor force was squeezed and re-squeezed in order to give the Antiguan planters a small advantage over their competitors. The Colonial Office, supposedly the guardian of the welfare of the former slaves, was opposed in principle but was loathe to protest too much, since at this point the need to keep the colony financially solvent came before all other considerations.

While impoverishing the labor force was one way to protect profits, the other was to increase production. The Antiguan planters' main problem here was that they were short of capital (Hall 1971: 110), and so the innovations they introduced were those that were the least capital-intensive. Antigua developed a reputation for backwardness in production methods, and in 1846 there was reportedly neither a pitchfork nor a wheelbarrow on the island (Greenwood

¹⁷ Data on wage rates are very imprecise. Part of the reason is that rates varied according to the type of work, and the quoted figures obscure this variation. Hall, for instance, gives figures of between 5s and 8s a day for skilled laborers in 1848 (Hall 1971: 156), which indicates a huge difference between these people and field laborers. It is not clear where Greenwood and Hamber's figures come from, but one planter testifying to the Select Committee in 1842 reported 9d a day, and Candler, visiting in 1849, reported 6d. Davy also reported a change from 6d to 1s to 9d in 1848-49. Hall gives the following for "first-class field workers": 6d in 1839, 9d in 1842, 1s in 1845, and 6d in 1848 (Hall 1971: 55). Sewell reports 8d to 1s a day in 1860 (Sewell 1861: 157).

and Hamber 1980: 110),¹⁸ although according to Hall the plow was introduced in 1845 (Hall 1971: 109); this was accompanied by the increased use of fertilizer. A steam plow arrived in 1863 (Almanac for 1878); by 1888, according to one visitor, there were more such plows in Antigua than in any other West Indian island (Eves 1893: 287). The first steam-driven mill, which increased the percent of juice derived from the cane, was installed in about 1845 (Hall 1971: 111). By 1878, all the major producers had at least one such mill, and there was a total of 35 on the island (Hall 1971: 111; Almanac for 1878). The 1872 almanac notes that upgrading and capital investment were visible all around.

By keeping labor costs down and improving production, the Antiguan planters were able to hold their own, even in the 1850s, when a steep decline in sugar prices, coupled with increased production, led to a severe depression in other islands.¹⁹ Throughout the West Indies, banks closed, merchant firms went bankrupt, planters were refused credit, and land became unsalable (Rogers 1970: 89). Wages were reduced by as much as 50 percent and laborers began to leave sugar for other work. Antigua, however, seems to have been somewhat protected from the worst of these effects. For one thing, the Antiguan planters, unable to invest in improved refinery technology, continued to produce the less refined brown (or muscovado) sugars, which faced lower duties than the higher quality gray crystals—a measure designed not to help the brown sugar producers but the British refiners (to encourage them to use muscovado), but an advantage nonetheless, and one that did not disappear until 1874. In the early 1860s, Governor Hill reported that the colony was self-supporting, and between 1859 and 1862 the public debt was reduced by 30 percent (Rogers 1970: 248).

Then, in 1862, the worst drought in fifty years drastically and precipitously reduced production:

1862	12,920
1863	10,124
1864	2,613
1865	7,906

Prices were still low, and the combination created a severe crisis. To make matters worse, at this point another competitor came on the horizon: bounty-fed European beet sugar. Imports into Britain began in the 1860s and increased rapidly: 80,027 tons of beet sugar were imported in 1865, 305,000 tons in 1878, 559,000 tons in 1884, and 1,362,000 tons in 1900 (Dookhan 1975: 18). Not only does this point to an astonishing English sweet tooth, but it presented the most serious threat to West Indian cane sugar production since emancipation: not only was West Indian sugar still being forced out by other colonial and foreign sugars—by 1900 British West Indian sugars made up only 25 percent of the total cane sugar imported into Britain—but

¹⁸ Unfortunately, Greenwood and Hamber give no source for this statement, which I have not seen elsewhere.

¹⁹ According to Dookhan, the price decline began earlier: he quotes prices of 33s8d per cwt in 1838, 23s8d in 1847, and 21s5d in 1854 (Dookhan 1975: 12). The reported prices of sugar vary from author to author, and it is often difficult to determine the reason for the difference. Part is probably due to the different quality of the sugars produced in different islands. Thus Holt, writing of Jamaica, cites a price of 37s per cwt in February 1847, down to 27s6d in November, and then to 26s, where it remained for the rest of the decade (Holt 1988). Hall, reporting average muscovado prices, in bond, quotes 33s for 1843-46, 25s10d for 1847-50, and 23s8d for 1851-54 (Hall 1971: 100-101). Despite the differences, the trend is clear.

cane sugar as a whole was now being replaced by beet sugar: in that same year cane sugar made up only 10 percent of the total sugar imported into Britain, compared to 51 percent in 1884 (figures from Dookhan 1975: 18). The United States, which had become an increasingly important market for the West Indies, was also affected by the beet sugar competition and was unable to take up the slack. And of course one further result was that the price of cane sugar continued to fall: to 13s per cwt in 1884 and on down through the 1890s.

The decline in production that began in the mid-1860s continued, steadily if erratically, for the next thirty years (see Figure 2, above). Visitors for the first time saw signs of depression: Daniel Hart, in 1866 (Hart 1866: 219), reported seeing large tracts of abandoned land, and noted the imbalance between exports (£79,533) and imports (£178,786), a fiscally dangerous situation that a sagging economy had little chance of rectifying. Many planters had begun to feel that the future looked grim, and they started selling off their estates and heading back “home” to England, or simply became “absentees,” leaving their plantations in the hands of local attorneys. Antigua, which had been an exception among West Indian islands for the large number of resident proprietors in the 1830s and 1840s (Burn 1937: 66), now became an island where absentees were the largest owners.²⁰

Planters were able to leave in part because of the passage, in 1854, of the West Indian Encumbered Estates Act, which speeded up the process of turnover by freeing estates of their encumbrances—legacies promised family members in palmier days—and debts, thus making them available for purchase. The generally accepted wisdom in the West Indian literature is that in all the colonies, including Antigua, the act served to concentrate property in the hands of the metropolitan-based merchant houses to whom the planters were indebted (e.g., Beachey 1951, Hall 1971, Greenwood and Hamber 1980: 105), thereby undermining the family basis on which sugar planting had been organized (Green 1976; Henry 1985: 48) and discouraging both investment and diversification. In Antigua at least, a close examination of the court transactions shows that this is at best a partial and short-term view of the act’s effects.

Although some properties did indeed go to the merchant-consignees, in addition, and more important in the long run, the act led to three other developments: First, it made it possible for many families with unprofitable estates, both residential proprietors and smaller absentees, to cut their ties with the island. Second, it provided opportunities for both old and newly arrived planters to expand their holdings—in fact, about 65 percent of the estates went to individual owners, some immediately and some after having been bought first by their merchant-consignees.²¹ And third, it provided an opportunity for at least one British-based company that

²⁰ Absenteeism has repeatedly been criticized in the West Indies for its negative effects on production—as well as on the manners and morals of local society—but in Antigua it was not considered a problem. According to Burn, in 1838, 63 percent of the cultivated acreage (and 55 of 112 estates) was owned by absentees (Burn 1937: 66). The proportion of absentee-owned estates did not grow appreciably after emancipation: by 1872, 64 percent of the cultivated acreage, and 59 of the 109 estates in cultivation, was absentee-owned.

The flip side of this equation, however, was that while this might be a relatively small percentage of absentee ownership by West Indian standards, it still meant that two-thirds of the acres, and over half of the estates, had nonresident proprietors. In addition, as we shall see below, while before emancipation the absentees owned the smaller estates, after emancipation, it was the largest estates that were absentee.

²¹ An example of an old owner is the Shand family. The Shands were the quintessential example of the successful planter family. Francis Shand was a prominent estate owner in the 1830s—indeed, as a member of the Assembly, he was one of those who had argued against apprenticeship—and, like other large owners at the time, was also a merchant,

had not previously been active in Antigua to buy properties, both from individuals and from the old merchant-consignees, and this in turn led to the first major investment in sugar production in the island in decades.²² Thus while the act did indeed speed turnover and consolidation, it

shipowner, and owner of an estate in Montserrat; he was prominent enough to have been among those testifying before the Select Committee in 1848 as to the healthy state of sugar production in Antigua (Hall 1971: 143). By this time he was living in England, but it seems likely that another member of the family remained in Antigua to look after the family interests. In 1851, Mssrs. F. & W. (Francis and Walker) Shand had 10 estates, totaling about 2,400 acres, scattered across the island.

The Shands used the Encumbered Estates Court to acquire three more estates (Cassada Gardens, Donovans, and Gunthorpes), and then bought two more (Tomlinsons and Paynters) directly from an individual owner; they also leased the Diamond. But they soon ran into trouble and thus provide a vivid example of the process we have been describing. By 1878, the family is listed as absentee (*Almanac for 1878*), and still owned only two of the original ten estates—Fitches Creek and Cedar Valley. Nevertheless, these two, with the five others, totaled over 3,700 acres, so that Shands remained the second largest owners in 1878.

But as the economy continued to decline, they faced more serious trouble. After Francis died, management passed to his son Charles Arthur, who, in the tradition of the wealthiest planting families, had been educated in England (at Harrow), had worked for a large Liverpool merchant establishment, and had then come—or been sent—to Antigua to look after the business. In 1888 he petitioned the court to sell all seven estates through the act, a process that was completed in 1892. Sold as a package for the low price of £10,000 (Cassada Garden, Donovans, and Gunthorpes alone had sold for £6,500 the first time they went through the court), the estates were bought by G.A. Macandrew, a merchant based in Liverpool who had apparently been the Shands' agent. (Macandrew also had ties to Antigua that went quite far back: he had replaced the Shands as lessor of the Diamond estate by 1878 and owned it by 1891.) The Shands did not give up total control, however, because they are still listed as Shand estates in 1897, when they went into receivership. Charles Arthur was a member of the local Legislative Council, was appointed as one of Antigua's representatives on the Leeward Island Legislative Council, and was also on its Executive Council (CO 152/195/94, March 1895). (He lists himself as manager of Fitches Creek in 1897 and as a proprietor in petitions signed in 1898 and 1899; by 1902, however, Fitches Creek is listed as owned by the Macandrew heirs.)

An example of a newly arrived family that benefited from act was the Maginleys. Two brothers, John and Robert, arrived from Ireland sometime between 1852 and 1872—they are not listed as owning estates in the 1852 almanac, but are 1872. The story is that they came as apprentice planters, or managers, but quickly set about acquiring estates of their own. Using both the court and private sales, they had, by 1878, accumulated almost 4,500 acres and together were the largest owners in Antigua. Their estates (Comfort Hall, Gilberts, Long Lane, Lavington, Lyons, Willis Freemans, and Burkes/LaRoche/Table Hill) were primarily in the fertile southeast. By 1891—again using the court—these had been supplemented by Cedar Hill and Sandersons, for a total of nine estates. John served on the Legislative Council for twenty years, as well as on a number of public boards, and was a leading member of the plantocracy.

The other major new owner was A.J. Camacho, a Portuguese from Madeira who seems to have arrived somewhat later than the majority of Portuguese immigrants and to have begun almost immediately to acquire estates. By 1878 he owned two—Bellevue and Briggins—totaling a respectable 967 acres; by 1891 he also owned Langford/Mt. Pleasant/Dunbars, Ottos, Woods, and Jonas's, for another 2,000 acres. These latter were more scattered, but all were clustered close to St. John's. The Camacho family will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

²² This was Fryer's Concrete Company, which bought six large cane-producing estates—Bath Lodge, Bodkins, Green Castle, Bendals, Belvidere, and George Byams—as well as Halliday's Mountain, which it used for cattle. These, along with Rigsby, which it leased, brought the total area under its control to about 3,700 acres. It had used the Encumbered Estates Act to buy Belvidere—the largest estate on the island—in 1864 for the purpose of establishing a central sugar factory (CO 152/191/126, May 1894; CO 152/213/Crerar & Co., 1 May 1896). Contrary to what might be expected from the name, the company had not decided to move from making concrete to making sugar: the owner was an imaginative entrepreneur who hoped to introduce a new manufacturing process to produce a dry block of "sugar concrete" that would be much lighter than the usual muscovado, thus significantly reducing transport costs (see Hall 1971: 111 for this story). Although in 1869 a newspaper reported the concreter "now at work," this apparently did not last and in the early 1890s Fryer's Concrete sold a two-thirds interest to the London-based firm of Lee, Crerar & Co. and one-third to A.M. Lee. In 1889 Lee bought Montpelier through the Encumbered Estates Court from the heirs of F.B. Harmon, one of the few remaining long-time residents who had recently died.

was a two-step process by which this was affected: from individual owners to old-hand merchant-consignees, and from these back to individuals, as well as to newcomer companies.²³

Antigua did not vote to come under the act until 1864, but once it did, the process moved swiftly: 73 estates were sold through the court between 1866 and 1892, more than in any island other than Jamaica (for lists, see CO 318/282, 26 January 1893). Although this included several estates that passed through the court twice—so that it was not actually 73 estates, but 73 transactions—it nevertheless encompassed a total of 23,569 acres, or over 37 percent of the 63,147 acres in estate land in 1872. The act thus played a key role in the snowballing process of turnover—so great a role, in fact, that one merchant reported that all but eight estates changed hands between 1860 and 1897 (Norman Commission, App. C, Pt.1). Further, it was not only those who came earliest who left, followed by those who came later; many more recent immigrants came and went as well.

The gathering speed of this turnover can be measured through an examination of changes in estate ownership over time.²⁴ Thus a comparison of the estate lists over the years shows that by 1878, only 7 estates were still owned by the families that had owned them in 1843, and all but one of these was an absentee, their plantations having been handed over to resident managers when the owners had left the island much earlier. By 1901, it was reported that the oldest resident proprietor had only been on the island forty years (CO 152/266/Conf., 31 December 1901). This is in striking contrast with Barbados, for instance, where a resident planter class remained in place after emancipation.²⁵

Like the individually owned absentee estates, the Lee, Crerar factory management was a family thing: the first manager was Archibald Spooner, followed by two more Spooners, A. St. George and Hy. D'Esterre. As with the large absentees' managers, these men were socially part of the plantocracy and Spooner lived at Montpelier.

²³ Some examples of the merchant-consignee-to-new-owner process will make this clearer. There were three companies of the type that Beachey was discussing that benefited from the act: F. Garraway & Co., W. Parker & Co., and S. Dobee & Sons. (One of the oldest merchant-consignees, Thomas Daniell & Co., which owned estates in 1843, did not make any attempt to expand its presence through the act, and either leased out its estates or let them go to cattle. The other merchant-consignee that was prominent in the 1840s was Manning & Anderdon, and although it owned Big Duer's in 1843 and was the agent for the Tollemache estates, it seems to have withdrawn by 1851.) F. Garraway had been a consignee for two large estates (Belvidere and Byam's) in the 1840s and 1850s and owned both these and one other estate (Bodkins) at the time of the act. Garraway seems to have used the act to buy and sell its way out of Antigua, and its activities show how complex the process could be. It sold the three estates through the court—to a newcomer company—completing the process in 1868, and turned around and bought three others—two through the court (Blackman's/Mt. Lucy and Cades Bay) and one (Ottos) from an individual. Then in 1876, it sold these three: Ottos and Mt. Lucy to a small company and Cades Bay to an individual. By 1878, F. Garraway & Co. no longer owned any estates in Antigua. (Thomas Daniell & Co., Manning & Anderdon, and F. Garraway are all discussed by Hall in his chapter on post-emancipation merchants [Hall 1971].)

W. Parker & Co. and S. Dobee & Sons were small companies that also bought estates through the court—Parker bought Hawse's and Mercer's Creek, Big Duers, Little Duers, and Lower Freemans, while Dobee bought Ottos and Blackman's. They then turned around and sold them off, all to individuals. Both companies were gone by 1891.

²⁴ Tracing changes in estate ownership may be the ultimate exercise in frustration, in part because estates not only changed hands but also changed size, whether through expansion, amalgamation, or by going out of production (partially or fully), and in part because complete lists are only available for scattered years—1843 *Antigua Almanac and Register*, 1851 *Antigua Almanac*, *Almanac for 1872*, *Almanac for 1878*, plus the lists that Hall put together for 1829 and 1891, and incomplete lists for 1902 (CO 152/273), 1907 (CO 152/297/295), and 1924 (Watkins 1924).

²⁵ Indeed, in contrast with Barbados, or with Nevis (Hall 1971: 167), where families arrived in the 1600s and stayed for generations, a key characteristic of the white population of Antigua since its first members arrived in 1632 was the rate at which they came and went.

The other striking difference with islands such as Barbados was the extent to which the largest estates were by this time owned by absentees. Contrary to what might have been expected, only the smaller absentees used the act to sell their estates: all of the largest—some of whom had owned land in Antigua since well before emancipation, when the original proprietor was resident—still held their properties in the 1890s.²⁶ It was their attorneys who were now the leading figures in the “plantocracy,” even though each of them owned, at most, one small estate; the point was that they controlled hundreds of acres. In fact, this type of estate management was as much a family enterprise as ownership itself, with the job being handed from father to son.²⁷ Mrs. Lanaghan’s haughty distinction, written soon after emancipation, between the true aristocracy—planters, clergymen, barristers, and doctors—which “springs from a good old stock ... through whose veins runs a stream of England’s richest blood,” and the “upstart class”—white men who came out as lowly overseers, rose to manage one estate and then went on to become the attorneys for several—the “mushroom part of the aristocracy,” “obtruding their tall heads, even in the aristocratic circles of the community” (Lanaghan 1844, II: 193, 202), was irrelevant fifty years later, when the attorneys had become more powerful than the resident owners.²⁸ Even the language indicates this, for by this point the term “planter” is used to mean owner, manager, or attorney, and all were considered part of the “planter” class. Nevertheless, as the economic crisis deepened, the interests of the absentees began to diverge increasingly from those of the resident proprietors, and this dispute was to have a profound effect on the planters’ attempts to save themselves from economic ruin.

Richard Sheridan (1961) and Richard Dunn (1972) are the only scholars who have done any work on the composition of the early Antiguan plantocracy, and while their studies—like that of Pares on Nevis—focus on continuities, a reanalysis of their material demonstrates that the discontinuities are at least as striking. Dunn’s data shows, for instance, that by the late 1600s most of the original “paltry men” had left, whether by choice or forced out by changing economic circumstances, so that only 6 of the top 29 families of 1678 had direct descendants in the plantocracy of the mid-1700s (Dunn 1972: 131). And even this established plantocracy moved on: by 1829, only 13 of the 65 leading families of the 1730-1775 period remained as estate owners, and at least 3 of these were absentees.

²⁶ Absentees came in two sizes, large and small, and, as noted above, it was only the smaller absentees who took advantage of the act. The small absentees, by far the larger in number, generally owned only one estate which was left to the management of a local man who also had a number of other interests (for instance, managing other absentee estates and owning one himself as well). Most of these properties turned over after the act was passed. The larger absentees, far fewer in number but much more important economically, owned extensive sugar-producing properties which were managed by one man who managed only these estates (although he too might have one or more estates of his own) and who also played a role as a leader of the local plantocracy. In most cases, the original owner had once been resident, but over the years the management of the estate(s) had passed down the generations to other, more distant, family members.

²⁷ For instance, George Holborow, who represented the Codrington estates, did so from before 1872 (the earliest reference I found, although he could have been on the island many years before that) until his death in 1891, and was succeeded by his son Frank; Thomas Dickson Foote, who managed the Tudway estates, also held the post from before 1872 until he died in 1908 (at age 86), and was aided and then followed by his son John Freeland Foote. Both the elder men served on the Legislative Council: Holborow was there in 1872 and remained until 1897, while Foote was a member of the Assembly in 1843! Foote had turned the position over to his son by 1890, and the son continued to serve for another thirty years, most of that on the Executive Council as well. Foote was also a proprietor in his own right, but he never seems to have held on to any estate for very long: he bought Big Duers sometime after 1843 and Parrys through the court in 1869; he then sold Big Duers through the court in 1877. By the 1890s, he does not seem to have owned any estates.

²⁸ In the early days, according to Luffman, many “poor Scotch lads” came out as indentured servants and rose to become masters of their own plantations (Luffman 1789: 99).

The end result of all the turnover was a major change in the structure of land ownership and a major reduction in the planter population: by 1878, 13 producers, or 23 percent of the 56 large enough to be listed as planters in the almanac for that year, owned over 30,000 acres, or almost 60 percent of the listed acreage (and probably a far larger percentage of the land in actual production); all 13 owned over 1,000 acres each. By 1891, only 7 of these remained.²⁹ Compare this again with Barbados, where 440 of the 500 estates in existence at emancipation were still producing in 1890 (Augier et al. 1960: 238). The seven included one resident (Magainley), one new company (Fryer's Concrete), and five absentees. Three of the five were long-time absentees (Codrington, Combermere, Tudway), while two were more recent (Shand, a long-time resident recently become absentee, and A.M. Lee). The rest of the estates were owned by individuals, both living on the island and absentee, most of whom owned one or two smallish estates apiece. The white population was down to 1,830 (out of a total of 36,119), from 2,556 in 1861, and continued to decline rapidly thereafter:

	Whites	Total
1861	2,556	36,412
1871	2,142	34,344
1881	1,795	34,321
1891	1,830	36,119
1911	1,103	31,394
1921	914	29,767

The 1891 census counted only 224 "planters," compared to 326 in 1861.³⁰

The Merchant-Planters

Production needs distribution and producers need supplies. In the West Indies, the people (or firms) that provided these services were called merchants, a somewhat inflated title but one that was necessary to clearly distinguish them from those lowly purveyors of goods, the shopkeepers. In Antigua, merchanting, like sugar production, changed dramatically in the fifty years after emancipation, as the large overseas-based merchant-consignees were replaced by local merchant-planters.

Before emancipation, the planters had supplied their own plantations with whatever they deemed was needed and could not be produced locally. They usually dealt directly with metropolitan-based firms, which sent supplies, advanced cash, marketed their sugar, and in general conducted their business for them (Sheridan 1961: 348). The largest—Shand was one example—often sent their sons to work with these firms, and Sheridan's study highlights how many of the leading land-owning families had members who were merchants, both in Antigua and in London. Thus most of the resident merchants were middlemen, acting as factors or

²⁹ Looking at the figures another way, where there had been 156 owners with more than fifty acres in cane in 1843, there were now only 80 (see CO 152/197, 14 September 1895).

³⁰ I could not find the 1851, 1856, or 1881 censuses, but have copies of those for 1861, 1871, 1891, and 1921; the figures for 1881 are from Oliver 1894-99: clix.

commission agents, receiving goods on consignment and disposing of them for a commission. Others did simple resale; some did both (Hall 1971: 133). Some began as plantation owners; others used their merchant profits to buy plantations or married into plantation families, and the planter-merchant was not uncommon (Sheridan 1961: 348, 350).

After emancipation, and particularly after the passage of the Encumbered Estates Act, the large overseas-based estate-owning consignee merchants began to give way to locally based firms. As noted above, the British-based merchant-consignees who had come to own estates used the act to sell their properties, while others used it to acquire them; but even for the latter, the recession of the 1860s and the subsequent decline in the fortunes of the sugar industry led them to sell off, and all were gone by 1890. Their role in supplying the estates was taken over by three new firms, A.J. Camacho & Co., George W. Bennett & Co., and Joseph Dew & Sons, all of which were headed by men who had begun as estate owners, moved into import/export, and ranked with the planters as the most powerful men in Antigua by the later part of the century.

The first of the three was A.J. Camacho and Co., which in 1870 was the only company advertising itself as providing "Estate Supplies and Provisions." It was owned by the same A.J. Camacho, recently arrived from Madeira, who was rapidly acquiring estates, and his history will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10. The founding date of George W. Bennett, Merchants (which later became George W. Bennett-Bryson) is not clear, but Bennetts had been on the island since at least 1843. They were not large owners, however, because in that year a Bennett owned only a small provision estate (Brecknocks) in St. John's parish and was co-owner of a small sugar-producing estate, Yeamans, across the island. John Bennett is listed as the owner of Brecknocks in 1851 (Yeamans having been sold), but by 1871 his heirs had leased it out; by 1878 it too was in provisions. In the meantime, however, George W. Bennett—presumably but not necessarily his son—had bought the moderate sized estate of High Point and Nibbs, in the far northeast, two large estates with steamworks (Blubber Valley and Claremont) in the south and west, and was leasing Golden Grove just outside St. John's. By 1872 he had become a "General Merchant" and was an elected member of the Legislative Council, representing Popeshead in the northeast; by 1878 he had been appointed to the Executive Council. When he died, he left his real estate for the use of Patrick Burns, then auditor-general, Henry Ogilvie Bennett of Edinburgh (his brother, an engineer), and George Gray Macandrew of Liverpool, merchant—of the same firm that represented the Shands. His premises were left to his five brothers and sisters. His daughter, apparently his only child, was to share in the sale of the property and personal effects, but was left no real estate of her own (which probably meant that she was no longer in Antigua).

Henry Ogilvie Bennett came out to Antigua after his brother's death and picked up the reins of the family business. He got out of the estate part: he had sold off Claremont and High Point/Nibbs by 1897 and Blubber Valley a few years later, although he bought Friars Hill as a residence for himself. Bennett was as prominent in politics as his brother had been—indeed, he presumably stepped right into his brother's roles in the community, and he held all the most prestigious positions: member of the Legislative Council in 1882; member of the Executive Council in 1885; president of the Legislative Council in 1891; president of the Leeward Islands Legislative Council in that same year; and member of the Federal Executive Council in 1893. In addition, he served on virtually every board (hospital, health, water, public markets) and was a justice of the peace and visiting justice at the jail—perhaps an extreme example of overlapping

political and civic commitments, but one not uncommon at a time when the number of white men available to serve in such positions was on the decline. In 1895 the firm of Geo. W. Bennett-Bryson & Co. acquired the business of Henry Ogilvie Bennett (trading as Geo. W. Bennett & Co.), with shares going to H. Ogilvie Bennett, Robert Bryson, and D.D. Bryson, merchants in London, William Gillespie and C.M. Gillespie, also London merchants, Geo. A. Hayward, accountant in Antigua, and Charles Major, barrister in Antigua. Bennett was to be a paid director, as was Robert Bryson.³¹ Presumably this was a move of some desperation, because when Bennett died in that same year, his wife is in severe financial straits.

The third family that became involved in merchanting began not as provisioners or consignees but as engineers. The first family member, Joseph Turner Dew, came out from England as a young man in the 1860s to bring the steam plow and founded Joseph Dew & Sons, Engineers, specializing in engineering and brasswork. He had three sons and a daughter. Two of the sons, Joseph Turner, born in 1866, and Ernest David, born in 1868, remained in Antigua, while the third, William Elsdon, migrated to South Africa. The family did not move into estates until the turn of the century, and when it did, Joseph Turner remained on the engineering side of the business while Ernest David, who had married two Maginley sisters (one after the other), moved into the estate side, managing Belmont. But the company also expanded out of engineering into wholesaling and retailing, and became the consignee for the Codrington estates. The business was passed on to Joseph Turner's son Ernest Dalmar and daughter Lillian Betty, who married the company secretary, Ronald Cadman.

All these men left estate work to concentrate on the merchant part of the business, in the case of Camacho and Dew turning the estate part over to other family members (Camacho to his sons, Dew to a brother). The businesses were all-encompassing: the firms acted as shippers for the sugar of various estates (including their own) and sold imports (both wholesale and retail) through their stores; they owned both wharfs and lighters; they were steamship agents for particular lines; and they employed large numbers of people, both inside their stores and warehouses and as stevedores outside on the docks. Yet despite the extent of their businesses, very little capital investment or risk was involved—certainly less than being an estate owner. As commission agents, these men had the ability to earn profits several times over from the same transaction: they could, for instance, charge both a wholesale markup and an additional retail markup for items sold in their own stores and still remain competitive with the smaller stores they sold to wholesale, as well as pay themselves a commission (including on what they sold to themselves), and earn income from acting as shipping agents for the same goods. It is not surprising, then, that they were among the wealthier men on the island.

Scotch Row: The Retail Merchants

Emancipation had, almost at one stroke, created a large internal market on the island: no longer provisioned by the estates and now earning a cash income, the former slaves were both

³¹ The Memorandum of Articles of Association is dated January 18, 1895. According to Desmond Nicholson, in 1867 Henry and George Bryson join hands to establish General Merchants and Chandlers (Nicholson 1984: 75). It seems more likely that this should be Henry and George Bennett, although only one was actually living in Antigua. The first Bryson to appear on the jurors' roles was Robert, in 1897, which would have been immediately after Bennett died.

able and anxious—and, in terms of basic necessities, forced—to buy in the retail stores. The volume of imports of consumer goods increased, as did the number of retail establishments (Hall 1971: 135). As the resident estate proprietors left, the retail merchants gained in both relative numbers and importance. Yet they were entirely different from the import-export merchants, both in the structure of their businesses and in their social origins.

Market Street, the main shopping street in St. John's, is known locally as Scotch Row (or, sometimes, Scot's Row), a daily reminder of the origin of many of these men. While Scotsmen had been emigrating to Antigua since the early 1700s, not only as estate bookkeepers and overseers but as doctors and tradesmen (Sheridan 1961, 1970a, 1970b, 1977), they were at first included in (and intermarried with) the "gentry"; by 1844, however, retailing had become an occupation of its own, unconnected to the estates, and Mrs. Lanaghan's withering description of their origins in the "trouty lochs and oaten bannocks" of Scotland gives an idea of their status among the plantocracy (Lanaghan 1844, I: 210). They were Scotch Presbyterians, again not a denomination held in much respect by the dominant Anglicans. In 1849, their church in St. Johns was described as "one of the most singularly ugly specimens of architecture" that the author had ever seen (Baird 1850: 52).

In Barbados, the merchants gained control over the economy by becoming the planters' bankers (Watson 1985). In less wealthy Antigua, they never amassed the capital to take on this role. Unlike the import-export merchants, the retail merchants were not involved in the production or export of sugar and were thus less tied to the planter class and its interests—indeed, as Mrs. Lanaghan wrote, in England they would have been called "haberdashers" or "drapers"; only in Antigua did they take for themselves the "lofty" title of "merchant" (Lanaghan 1844, I: 212). While a few owned country property, they did not own working estates; nor did they own wharfs and lighters. They were thus unable to profit from the wide range of activities available to the export-import houses. On the other hand, they were able to operate with very little capital, capital investment, or risk; they therefore did not face the difficulties in raising funds for expansion and modernization that the planters did, and there were few bankruptcies.³² Although, as access to British credit became more difficult, some of those with more capital made crop advances, none became an estate owner through default.

In 1844 Mrs. Lanaghan had great fun describing the two-storey retail establishments that lined both sides of Market Street from St. Mary's to Newgate streets. They were, she wrote, "labyrinthian depots of vanity," full of "articles of the most opposite natures"—from clothing to kitchen utensils to jewelry to estate supplies to house wares to liquors to sugar loaves (Lanaghan 1844, I: 210-11). In fact, most of these merchants specialized in a general way, some concentrating on dry goods, some on groceries, and some on assorted provisions. As they had before emancipation, after 1834 they continued to operate as manufacturers' representatives, which allowed them to become the exclusive distributor of a particular line of goods, often the current craze in Europe or the United States—indeed, large sections of the front page of every newspaper consisted of ads for the latest fashionable import, or most recent medical cure, "exclusively" available at one or another store. Some of the merchants were also honorary consuls, and the largest were agents for steamship and insurance companies, or both.

³² Some of the retail merchants did borrow, often from each other, in order to finance their businesses, and some left legacies to be paid out of the profits, but none of this encumbered the businesses as it did for the estates.

One or two were in the potentially lucrative business of salvaging wrecks. Although one might expect keen competition among them, this does not seem to have been the case, in part because the market was segmented by product and in part because of customer loyalty (or “custom”), accompanied by a low-level credit system for the consumer.

The decline that began in the 1860s must have affected the Scots merchants as it did the planters, and almost all of the forty-two signatories to an 1848 petition from “merchants and importers of British manufactured goods”—most of whom had recognizably Scottish surnames—had left by the early 1880s. Compared with the planters, however, the retail merchants did not decline in number:

	1844	1871	1891
Planters	338	285	224
Commercial	217	2424	256

Scots were replaced by other Scots, and most of those who owned stores after 1870 had arrived in the preceding decade. The main exceptions were J. Murdoch & Co., which officially put its founding date at 1829, and McDonald & Co., founded in 1848 by two brothers, John and Robert MacLachlan McDonald. But Bridgers was founded by John and James Bridger in about 1860 while William Forrest of Forrest and Co. arrived in 1869. Alexander McAdam, who arrived in 1843 (and was an exception in that he first owned a plantation), did not open his store—named Glasgow House—until about 1860.

As the century progressed, Scotch Row came to include a number of non-Scotch owners, most of whom began as clerks: these included Robert Warneford, who is believed to have come from Anguilla and worked as a clerk for McAdam;³³ James Black Smith, who also came as a clerk (he is listed as such in 1886) but was a merchant by 1892; William Gumbs Richardson, a clerk in 1888 and a merchant in 1895 who probably also came from Anguilla (Gumbs and Richardson both being very common Anguilla names); Robert William Dobson, son of planter R.W. Dobson (Union, Rooms, New Division) who was famous for exporting tamarind and hides; and R.R. Kirkwood, a Scotsman who is believed to have come from Nevis—according to one advertisement, the Antigua store was established in 1873.³⁴

³³ I have no written confirmation of where Warneford came from, and people reported that it was St. Maarten, St. Barts, and St. Eustasius. The fact that he supposedly reaped salt on his estate at Yeptons lends credence to the Anguilla theory, since Anguilla is famous for its salt reaping. However, in 1869 Warneford advertised “Yapton’s Farm” as being for rent and under cotton.

³⁴ The names and occupations come from the juror rolls. There were others who appeared even more briefly on the jurors’ roll between 1880 and 1890. These were even smaller stores. For instance, Thomas S.G. Pigott was listed as a merchant in 1880 and 1885, as a clerk (but also a Special Juror) in 1890, and as a merchant again in 1895 and 1906. He does not seem to have had a store of his own, but temporarily rented William Hart Moore’s property after Moore declared bankruptcy in 1885. In the early 1900s, he was William Forrest’s chief clerk, a post he held until he died in 1920 at the age of 78. He was presumably struck off the jurors’ roll sometime before that (for old age), as was his cousin Robert, who died in 1928. (Warneford was one of the executors of his will, along with Richardson, as he himself had been the executor of Mrs. Warneford’s will some years earlier.) He came from a very old white family, but was part of the poorer branch.

Four others—Proudfoot, Galbraith, Madgwick, and Lucas—were also clerks before they became merchants. I have no information about Lucas, and little about Proudfoot, except that he was a Special Juror in 1875. Galbraith

These merchants arrived and established themselves at a time when turnover among the planters was increasing, but once in Antigua they were less likely to leave than their predecessors. As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century many had been on the island longer than many planters: most of the larger merchants in 1897 had been there since the 1870s and the smaller ones since the 1880s, just the opposite of the planter pattern.

One of the reasons for their longevity was that they were better able to pass on their stores, at least for one generation and sometimes for two. A few had sons, but those who did not—or did not have them nearby—sold to their chief clerks, fellow Scots who had come out to work in the stores as young men and who were considered part of the family. The planters, on the other hand, were more likely to have sent their sons away, and virtually never sold out to their managers, who were generally considered socially inferior. Thus John and Robert McDonald handed their business on to their sons John Scotland and James Robert in about 1860, and they in turn passed it on to John Scotland's sons, Donald and Wallace, in about 1900 (John Scotland had bought out James Robert in 1889). The Bridger brothers passed their store on to one of their sons, John Hyde, and William Forrest passed his on to William Forrest, Jr. James Murdoch sold to his chief clerk, William Hart, in about 1876 and Alexander McAdam sold to his chief clerk, David Torry, in 1901. Torry had come to Antigua from Scotland in the early 1880s to clerk for McAdam, had married the sister of another Scots merchant, William Henry McFeeters, and had been in charge of the store for years while McAdam moved back and forth between the island and England.³⁵

But despite their numbers and the length of time they had been in the island, there was a wide social gulf between the Scotch Row merchants and the planters, the result of differences of national origin (Scots versus English), religion (Church of Scotland and then, when it closed, Methodist, versus Anglican), and class. Although I do not have complete data, it seems that few if any of the nineteenth-century merchants, or their children, married into planter families; instead they brought their wives with them or went home and married there. Even by the third generation, the oldest of the Scots merchants families—the McDonalds—were marrying doctors and churchmen, not planters. There was public amicability, as at the annual dinner for the Scotsmen of the island in the 1890s, when planters toasted Scots merchants and vice versa, but even as the white population declined, the distinctions never entirely disappeared. The Scots

appears in 1891 but is crossed off the 1892 list; he was apparently exempted, because in 1907 he wrote the Colonial Office to protest suddenly being put on a jury panel, claiming that his duties as shipping merchant and as American vice-consul and Consular Agent for France made it impossible for him to serve. He was turned down, but left the island in 1907 (CO 152/295/159, 9 April 1907 and CO 152/298/396, 18 September 1907).

Madgwick was reported to me to have been an Englishman with stores in Dominica who came to Antigua at the turn of the century. However, there was a James Madgwick who signed a merchant petition in 1848 and a Charles P. Madgwick listed as a merchant in 1872 and 1875. It is possible that the family left Antigua and then returned.

The other name on the jurors' roll, Anthony F. Archer, was that of a merchant who was judged bankrupt in 1886.

³⁵ It is not clear whether McAdam had one or two stores. Torry's obituary in the *Sun* (26 May 1917) reports that he came from Scotland in the early 1880s to work for McAdam of Glasgow House, was after some years appointed manager of "The House for the People," and succeeded McAdam when he died in 1901. Torry's store was certainly known as "The House for the People," and its subsequent owners retained that name (although it was also known as David Torry). What is not clear is if this was simply another name for Glasgow House, or whether McAdam had closed Glasgow House at an earlier date.

merchants were not invited into the white clubs, including both the New Club and the Antigua Cricket Club, and they were also shut out of political life: none was either an elected or appointed member of the Legislative Council until the end of the century, and only one or two served on the civic boards.³⁶

The Cinderella of the Caribbean

The 1890s were years of “gloom” and “loss” throughout the British West Indies, and of great “despondency” in Antigua; the canefields were reported to be in a “pitiable” state (Beachey 1957, Watts 1906). Sugar production once again dropped precipitously, the result of an exceptionally long drought (beginning in 1892 and lasting through 1894), which overlapped with a sudden infestation of cane disease (1894-1897). Only 7,219 tons were shipped in 1895, and any chance of recovery as a result of good crops in 1896 and 1897 was destroyed by another disastrous crop in 1898, followed by poor production in both 1899 and 1900.

Year	Tons	Price/ton
1891	12,091	£10/8
1892	15,302	£13/1
1893	14,566	£11/4
1894	12,342	£11/1
1895	7,219	£7/7
1896	15,100	£8/1
1897	12,744	£8/0
1898	6,928	£9/1
1899	10,041	£9/6
1900	7,603	£10/5 ³⁷

This would have been problem enough, but to make matters worse, a major worldwide depression had begun in 1893, and by 1895 sugar prices had declined to a new low of £7/7 per ton. And worse still, West Indian producers, who had turned to the U.S. market as they had found it difficult to compete with bounty-fed European beet sugar—by 1894 the United States was the source of 76 percent of Antigua’s export earnings—was suddenly and precipitously closed out when the United States decided to protect domestic and Cuban production (see Appendix 4). The value of exports in 1895 was half that in 1892. The value of imports necessarily declined as well, but not enough, and the result was a drastic decrease in government revenues and a large deficit: while revenues and expenditures more or less balanced from 1891 to 1894, in 1895 revenues were only £44,348 while expenditures were

³⁶ The only exception was Alexander McAdam, and as noted above, he was an exception also in the sense that he considered himself first and foremost an estate owner, and only secondarily a merchant.

³⁷ It should be added that the entire 1830-1895 period was on the whole deflationary, which reduced the value of land and made it increasingly difficult to earn from sugar production—although salaries, if they remained static, were worth more. After 1895, however, an extended period of inflation began, which further reduced the profitability of sugar production *and* reduced earnings from salaries. (Information courtesy Richard Lobdell, pers. comm.)

£70,221—a huge and, most important, sudden negative balance of £25,873, or 58 percent of revenues. Deficits continued, although on a lesser scale, for the next ten years (see Appendix 3). The financial situation was not helped by the British decision, in 1899, to leave Nelson's Dockyard, which overnight stripped the island of another source of income (Lewis 1968: 119).

Part of the reason for the desperateness of the situation was the decision made by the planters immediately after emancipation, and tacitly endorsed by the colonial government, to focus on one crop—sugar. The dependence on sugar was almost total: sugar crystals made up between 80 and 95 percent of the total value of exports throughout the nineteenth century, and most of the balance—rum and molasses—was sugar-related. In 1891, sugar production provided direct employment, in field and factory, for well over 50 percent of the population over the age of 15: there were more than 12,000 agricultural workers alone, out of a total population over 15 of 23,690, and this does not include either those in ancillary artisanal activities, technicians in the sugar factories, dockworkers, etc., none of whom would have been employed without the sugar industry (1891 Census). Nor does it include those who worked for the import-export merchants, who were involved in the distribution (packing, loading, shipping) of sugar. The wages earned by the sugar workers, dockworkers, and store clerks, as well as some of the profits earned by the plantation owners, were spent almost entirely on imported goods, in stores owned by local merchants and shopkeepers.

In addition, as noted earlier, the Colonial government, which was responsible for a wide range of activities—from administering the government and courts, to medical care, the port, the police, the post office, roads, and water—raised the revenue to carry out these functions primarily from import duties. By 1894, import duties (not including port, harbor, and wharfage fees) were providing 50 percent of revenues; the next largest components came from the equally regressive court fees and stamp taxes. The planters had always fought the imposition of any form of direct taxation on sugar exports (this did not come until 1916), and even when prodded to enact a small tax on land in crop, they repeatedly petitioned that it be waived because of one unfortunate condition or another—hurricanes and poor crops being the most frequently pled mitigating circumstances.

Sugar planters in all the British West Indian islands were having problems in the mid-1890s, but the Antiguan sugar planters were in particular trouble because they were still producing muscovado sugar, which was less and less in demand on the world market. In the mid-1800s, two major improvements in sugar manufacturing had become available: the vacuum-pan boiler, which reduced evaporation, and the centrifugal drier, which reduced the molasses content of the sugar. Yet improvements had been introduced only at the Fryer's Concrete factory, either because of the absentees' unwillingness to invest or the newly arrived owners' lack of capital, and the Antiguan continued to produce their heavy brown muscovado.

The mass of the population began to suffer severely from the precipitous decline in its living standards. The drought affected the production of local food crops as well as sugar, while inflation abroad, due in part to the Boer War, led to an increase in the price of imported foodstuffs. Estates began to lay off workers, and some tried to lower wages. When the Shand estates went into receivership in 1897, this was considered an ominous sign: the twelve estates laid off 1,200 people (CO 152/221/Conf., 26 August 1897; CO 152/222/353, 14 September 1897). A census of the estates for the period from July to September 1897 indicated that only 2,995 people remained employed out of a total of almost 5,000—1,971, or 40 percent, having

been dismissed in the preceding six months (CO 152/222/582, 29 September 1897). By 1898, deaths from starvation were reported to be on the increase, as was the number of paupers and beggars. Men began to migrate in large numbers, leaving women and children dependent on their own much lower earnings (women earned half what men earned on the estates): the number of people working in agriculture, both plantation and own-account, declined from 12,295 to 9,822 between 1891 and 1911, while the proportion of women increased. Indeed, the overall sex ratio for those over the age of twenty began to shift rapidly, from a male to female ratio of 100:125 in 1891 to 100:159 in 1911 (1911 Census: 5).³⁸

In a flurry of attempts to cut costs, the Legislative Council voted to reduce expenditures in ways that directly affected the welfare of the poorer members of the population: it closed the public dispensary, reduced school grants, abolished several lower level civil service posts and reduced the salaries of others, and stopped work on the harbor. The Legislative Council, pushed by the governor, passed a number of measures intended to raise revenues, but most were turned down by the Colonial Office as being too detrimental to the mass of the population. After much wrangling, income and trade taxes were finally introduced in 1900, but these were severely limited in scope: the income tax was confined to those earning over £100 a year, a maximum of 200 people (it was extended to those earning over £50 in 1905), and a trade tax, calculated according to the amount of business a merchant did, only affected 217 people in 1904 and in any case was passed along to the consumer. The Colonial Office counterproposals—to increase the duty on rum, to increase the land tax, to establish trade and income taxes, to institute a proper excise tax system, or even to systematically collect existing taxes—were all aimed at the planters and merchants and were greeted with outrage, including from the governor, who wanted to avoid planter antagonism (see, e.g., CO 152/239/703, 20 December 1898). Yet despite their protests, the Antiguan planters were not highly taxed by Leeward standards: in St. Kitts in 1907, for instance, there was a land tax of 13s6d per acre, compared to 2s6d in Antigua, plus the Kittitians paid wharfage dues and an export tax on sugar.

None of this prevarication endeared the Antiguan planters to the Colonial Office. Between 1897 and 1898, the number of people on poor relief increased threefold (CO 152/244/151, 6 March 1899), and an Anglican clergyman was provoked to write the governor (who passed the letter on to the Colonial Office) that the situation had become so bad that the workers were willing to risk the hazards of jail because there at least they knew they would be fed (CO 152/233/312, 8 June 1898). In that same year the new governor, Ernest Bickham Sweet-Escott, reluctantly set up a Poor Relief Fund, and private institutions began to organize soup kitchens (Maynard 1968: 56). A public works relief program was begun, using a small colonial grant. Antigua was truly on its way to becoming, as it was described some years later, the “Cinderella of the West Indies” (CO 152/351/155, 3 May 1916).

³⁸ There was no full census taken in 1901 because of the expense, but a simple population count, taken in March, stated that there were 15,878 males to 19,093 females, a dramatic decrease in the number of males (from 17,242 in 1891). See CO 152/263/291, 4 June 1901.

CHAPTER 2

THE "POLITICKING" OF SUGAR³⁹

Throughout the 1890s, the Antiguan planters used every weapon in their arsenal—from petitions to pleas to threats—to get the British government to come to their aid. They joined with other West Indians in peppering the Colonial Office with petitions demanding that the bounties given by the French and German governments to producers of beet sugar be abolished, which would reduce the competition given their higher priced cane sugar, or that countervailing duties be placed on bounty-supported imports, which would have the same effect.⁴⁰ They pled poverty and warned of the dire social consequences of their demise: if they were to abandon their estates, throwing large numbers of people out of work, there might well be "disturbances." They begged for grants to tide them over what they argued was only a temporarily bad period. They asked for a remission of the already small land tax, threatening that without such relief they would have to curtail, or even refrain from, cultivation, and that therefore every shilling exacted in taxes would "mean so much less to be circulated among the laboring classes in wages" (CO 152/230/199, 30 March 1898). At the same time, they rejected an increase in the usual forms of taxation: when the Colonial Office insisted that import duties be increased to compensate for the loss in revenues caused by the recession, the planters predicted that this would lead to lawlessness and pauperism, as well as to an increased burden on the British taxpayer, who would be forced to foot the bill for any relief.

Finally, in the late 1890s, when the situation was at its gloomiest, they were offered help, but only on the condition that they give up the modicum of self-rule that they had maintained through the nineteenth century and voted in full Crown Colony government. They agreed. While imminent bankruptcy was a major issue, they knew they faced another that was equally threatening in the long term. This was the demand of an increasingly restive nonwhite middle class for a voice in island affairs. Their dilemma was thus acute: By agreeing to the British plan, they would be placing their faith in a distant savior that had not demonstrated much faith in them. But by refusing, they would not only forego financial aid but risk their own demise at the hands of the much-feared restless masses—a number of whom, as we shall see in Chapter 8, were searching for crops other than sugar to provide them with a living. In the end, it was the latter that proved the greater fear and they voted themselves out of office.

Before turning to this episode, it is necessary to describe how government in the West

³⁹ From Sydney Mintz's comment in *Sweetness and Power* that "no single food commodity on the world market has been subjected to so much politicking as sugar" (Mintz 1985: 185).

⁴⁰ There was also talk of asking to join the United States—see, e.g., CO 152/217/205, 13 March 1897—but it was short-lived. See also Froude 1897 for reports of the same feeling in Barbados. In 1898, "A Ruined Planter" wrote a bitter article in *The London Review* (reprinted in *The Living Age*) that also ended with the suggestion that the West Indies be incorporated in the United States. (*The Living Age* 219, series 7, vol. 1, no. 2830, 1 October 1898, pp. 40-43.)

Indies evolved and operated, and in particular on the role of the Colonial Office, the governor, and the local Assembly or Legislative Council.

The Colonial Office, the Governor, and the Colonial Civil Service

The earliest formal government in Antigua consisted of a captain-general—later a governor—who was appointed by the British Crown and was therefore the local representative of metropolitan interests in the colony; an appointed Council, which acted as an advisor to the governor; and an elected Assembly, which was performing legislative functions as early as 1644 (Benn 1987: 27; but see Oliver 1894-99: xx, who gives a slightly later date). In 1833, Antigua, Montserrat, St. Kitts, Nevis, the Virgin Islands, and Dominica were united administratively, and Antigua became the seat of the governor of the entire group, with lieutenant governors in the other islands.⁴¹ This was more a unification on paper than in reality, however, not only because there was, at least in the early days, a great deal of resistance (Dookhan 1975: 139), but because each island retained its own political structure, legal, administrative, and judicial system, powers of taxation, and local government. Furthermore, although the governor of the Leeward Islands oversaw the entire group, he spent most of his time administering Antigua, resided there, and was far more active in its economic, political, and social life than in that of the other islands.

The governor was a representative of the British Crown. He was appointed by the king or queen of England but was directly responsible to the Secretary of State for Colonies, the head of the Colonial Office. From 1801 until 1854, colonial affairs were under the jurisdiction of the War Department, and it was not until 1854 that the Colonial Office emerged as a separate and distinct department (Rogers 1970: 34). The position of Secretary of State for Colonies, with responsibility for the welfare of over 60 million colonial subjects, was reportedly only a secondary post in the government, at best a stepping stone on the ladder to better ministries (Burns 1949: 158). Not surprisingly, then, the secretaries seldom knew a great deal about the colonies, and seldom stayed long enough to find out: twenty-three men held the post in the forty-five years following Joseph Chamberlain's exceptional eight-year reign from 1895 to 1903 (*ibid.*). Yet the Secretary of State for Colonies was responsible for every act carried out in his name, and passed final judgment on virtually every aspect of life in the colonies, approved every expenditure, every promotion, every pension, every development project, and every administrative reorganization. He was advised through the process of "minuting" described in the Introduction, whereby each piece of correspondence, proposal, and report moved slowly up the office hierarchy, "minuted," or commented upon in writing, by a series of ambitious young men anxious to impress their superiors with their knowledge, ability, and writing skills. Each commented on his predecessor's comments, until the paper finally reached the Secretary of State, who made a final decision disposing of the matter. The public school atmosphere and general "clubbiness" of the Colonial Office, along with its members' lack of experience of colonial

⁴¹ The Leeward Islands became a federation in 1871, with a Leeward Island Legislative Council composed of three ex-officio, six nominated, and ten elected members. In 1882, St. Kitts and Nevis were amalgamated; Anguilla was added to the group in 1883. Dominica, never happy with its association with the Leewards, became part of the Windwards in 1940 (Dookhan 1975: 138).

life, served to make a detached we-they attitude almost inevitable (for a keen sense of this, see Parkinson 1947).⁴² Heussler, who has made one of the few detailed studies of the Colonial Office staff, highlights this when he comments that each colony was less a real entity than an “image” in the mind of the staff (Heussler 1963: 23). Hyam, less kind, writes that their arrogance led them to “plain contempt for many governors and all colonials” (Hyam 1979: 38). Only as the Secretary of State gradually assumed responsibility for more and more colonies did the governors get more authority: the amounts that could be expended without prior approval increased gradually, for instance, as did the salary level at which a governor alone could approve an appointment (Jeffries 1938: 93). These restrictions were one of the many sources of tension between governor and Colonial Office.⁴³

In the colony itself, the governor governed with a combination of colonial civil servants and the members of the legislature: he was in charge of the former but needed to keep the favor of the latter if he was to get anything done. The legislature had a number of ways of being difficult, not the least of which was to withhold the governor’s salary. The legislators themselves were generally planters, along with an occasional doctor or merchant. Although by the late nineteenth century (and probably well before), all of these men considered themselves “Antiguan,” only some had been born in Antigua.

For the first two hundred years after colonization, the conflict between the governor and the legislature was minimal and occasional, in part no doubt because the governor tended to be a planter as well. But after emancipation, as the British took an increasing interest in the welfare of their “subjects,” the Colonial Office took on a larger and larger role in their management. To the British, and most particularly to those British in the Colonial Office who considered themselves responsible for the colonies and their inhabitants, the civil service was not the servant of the government but *was* the government (Heussler 1963: 164), and during the nineteenth century the planter-dominated legislatures, like the planters themselves, came to be seen as more of a hindrance than a help in the task of governing.

But the governor was the man on the spot—both physically and metaphorically—and although he generally tried to follow Colonial Office instructions, there were times when he could not get the cooperation of the local elite, or when he disagreed with those instructions, either because he was sympathetic to local opposition or because he had another agenda in mind. Governors were encouraged to visit the Colonial Office when they were “home,” but, contrary to the Colonial Office’s portrayal of its receptivity (e.g., Jeffries 1938: 221), the Antiguan governors did not feel that they—or their suggestions—were taken very seriously, and they often had the sense of having to argue a case before their superiors (Burns 1949: 157; Bell 1946; St.-Johnston 1936a). And since few governors were admired by the Colonial Office (Hyam 1979: 39), it is not surprising that the Colonial Office people had to be convinced, and the

⁴² The Colonial Office staff were often the sons of landed or formerly landed families who needed military or civil service positions to maintain their family status. (For an extensive examination of Colonial Office patterns of recruitment, see Heussler 1963.) They were all men: the Colonial Office refused to accept women until just prior to World War II (by which time the men were expected to spend some time overseas—see Parkinson 1947: 104), and even at this late date the change was met with dismay (Parkinson 1947: 104; Jeffries 1938: 236). For more on the “Colonial Office mind,” as well as on the educational and intellectual attributes of the Colonial Office personnel, see Hyam 1979.

⁴³ Not until the 1940s, however, did the Colonial Office become directly involved in administration of programs (Jeffries 1956: 202).

governor's requests, if approved, were clearly *granted*.

In these circumstances, who the governors were, their administrative capabilities, intellectual resources, and even personal characteristics played an important role in Antigua's development. Both the governors and their right-hand men—the colonial secretaries, who often stood in for them—are therefore worth a few words.

The upper levels of the Colonial Service were a huge occupational ladder, and the Leeward Islands were only one rung—and a very lowly rung at that—for men on their way elsewhere: governors wanted to govern more important (and larger) territories, colonial secretaries wanted to become governors, administrators to become colonial secretaries, and so on and on. Men at this level, which also included the chief justice, the puisne judges, the attorney general, the auditor general, the inspector of police, the superintendent of public works, and the treasurer—the key upper level Colonial Service posts—virtually never stayed in the Leewards, although a few returned after serving in other colonies, and the length of tenure for the brightest was only a few years. One student of the Colonial Service noted that the transfer of upper level officers out of colonies with only limited numbers of posts, along with a “crisis system” of posting to trouble spots, left the lesser colonies in a “more or less permanent state of inferior staffing” (Heussler 1963: 82), and, as we shall see, this was certainly the case for Antigua. The only men who stayed for long were those who had been passed over for promotion: whether Europeans or West Indians, they were considered to have reached the top of their particular occupational ladders—the difference being that the top was lower for West Indians (white in the late nineteenth century, but, as we shall see in Chapter 7, this would also be the case for nonwhites in the early twentieth century), and was reached at a much younger age.

This mode of operation affected both the quality of colonial leadership and the kinds of decisions that were made. Governors, for instance, seldom initiated long-term projects and when they did were unable to see them through (the maximum term for a governor was six years), while their successors, anxious to make their own mark, with other talents and priorities, invariably started off in other directions. This, when combined with frequent changes within the Colonial Office, meant that there was no policy or development plan that was steadily implemented over the years.

The problem of lack of planning was compounded by the fact that the only real criterion of good administration was fiscal responsibility (Jeffries 1949: 71), and although in theory this could have been interpreted in terms of a long-term effort to develop self-supporting economies—which a few governors did attempt—in fact much more frequently the prime consideration was short-term solvency. In many years, particularly toward the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth, this may have been inevitable, since large deficits made it difficult to make ends meet. But this mentality was carried into years of surplus, when it would have been possible to begin long-term planning to use the surpluses productively. Some governors were responding to a sense of priorities brought from experience in other colonies; others were responding to the demands of the local planters. The result was idiosyncratic: if a governor thought roads were particularly important, then roads were built; if flooding was a problem one year, then flood-control measures were instituted; if drought, then a water-conservation program, either well drilling or reservoir building, was begun—all stop-gap attempts to solve immediate problems, which then recurred with monotonous regularity a few years later. In addition, a willful governor could get the colony into considerable financial

trouble, despite the elaborate system of Colonial Office oversight.

The desire to move on was inherent in the Colonial Service, but it was exacerbated in the Leeward Islands, where conditions of service, pay, and pensions were among the lowest in all the colonies (Burns 1949: 22; Parkinson 1947: 78; St.-Johnston 1936a). In addition, matters like leave time, whether families were allowed, and other quality-of-life issues varied greatly from colony to colony, and colonies like the Leewards with less perks to offer had the most difficulty recruiting and keeping people. Further, salaries remained remarkably static: the Leeward Islands governor earned £2,000 a year in salary and allowances from 1895 to the 1920s, and £3,000 from then until the end of the 1940s—at a time when the governor of Jamaica was earning £5,500 and the governor of Hong Kong £7,000 (Jeffries 1938: 254; figures for 1938). The Leewards' saving grace was that they were considered "civilized" (except for Dominica—even among the Leewards there was a distinct pecking order), and allowed wives and families. Nevertheless, the Leeward (and Windward) Islands were class IV (the lowest) governorships.⁴⁴ The colony was graced by twelve governors between 1888 and 1944, an average of four years apiece. Most were part of what might loosely be called an island circuit, which included Mauritius, the Seychelles, Fiji, Malta, Tasmania, the Leewards, and the Falklands, as well as Sierra Leone. Thus three had been governor of Sierra Leone, two of the Seychelles, and one of Malta, while two went on to Fiji, one to Tasmania, one to Mauritius, and one to Malta.⁴⁵ All had served in at least one, and usually more, of these places. Only two went on to larger governorships. Five died in the post, a final indication that the Leewards were more likely to be the resting place for elderly men than a rung on the ladder to greatness. They varied dramatically in their knowledge of the West Indies, as well as in their sympathies and administrative abilities.

Given this, it should come as no surprise that the Leeward Islands governors were not held in particularly high regard by the Colonial Office, and criticisms appear throughout the minutes. The impression is that nothing could please. W.F. Haynes-Smith (1888-1895) was accused of being "unstable" and "reckless and unscrupulous in matters of finance" (CO 152/196/257, July 1895), Eustace Fiennes (1921-1929) of lacking financial acumen, Edward Marsh Merewether (1919-1921) of being "spendthrift." Some, like Gerald Strickland (1902-1904) and Ernest Bickham Sweet-Escott (1906-1912), were accused of having too many ideas; others, like Francis Fleming (1895-1901), of having too few. Their responses are generally defensive, and range from irritated to tendentious to placating. Some were almost hopelessly out of touch with Antiguan reality: Fleming, at the height of the economic crisis in 1899, wrote the Colonial Office that he "believed" that there was poverty on the island, but that he was "somewhat at a loss to understand why the labouring population have not been able to secure that employment which it was anticipated they would" (CO 152/245/231, 12 April 1899). Not surprisingly, perhaps, the Colonial Office view did not necessarily coincide with the local one, and the governors most heavily criticized in London were apt to be the most popular with the local planters. When Henry

⁴⁴ In the West Indies, only Jamaica and Trinidad qualified as class I and British Guiana as class II. The Leewards and Windwards were class 4, and all the others were class III (Jeffries 1938: 254). The other class IV governorships were the Falklands, St. Helena, and the Seychelles.

⁴⁵ From the Colonial Administrative Service Lists. This discussion, like the one in Chapter 7, looks at the Colonial Service as a vacancy chain (White 1970). See the Introduction for a discussion of White's concept.

Jackson was appointed governor of Fiji in 1902, a petition protesting his departure, accompanied by sixty-six pages of signatures, was sent to the Colonial Office (CO 152/271/193, 23 April 1902).⁴⁶ Popularity with the mass of the population had as much to do with personal style as spending: governors who were willing to leave Government House and go into the villages to talk to people were the most remembered—in this period, Fiennes is the preeminent example, in part because he also developed the beach at Fort James and the Dockyard.

Under the governor came the colonial secretary, the top administrative post in the colony and the precondition for most governorships. Although colonial secretaries in the Leewards were less likely to die in the post than governors, they too generally became part of a small island circuit (extended to include Tonga), and none in the fifty years between 1888 and 1940 had particularly distinguished careers. In fact, none became governors, although one became a chief justice (in Ceylon) and one a higher level colonial secretary (in Trinidad).

For posts below this level, the situation was reversed: here the Leewards were a place to begin a career, not to end one. Of the six attorney generals in this period, for instance, the Leewards was the first or second post for four (although they were not necessarily young, often having been in private practice first), and the third post for two. One died in office, but the others went on to far better things: one became acting chief justice of the eastern and central provinces of Nigeria, one attorney general of Nigeria, and one chief justice of Ceylon. Since there was more movement within the Legal Service than in other branches (Jeffries 1949: 145), and a higher proportion of senior to junior posts, the West Indies provided a training ground for officers who might eventually go far. In other words, a young officer could have a fairly high level post in a small colony (with a low salary), and move up rapidly.

The higher level colonial civil servants were generally British, at least until necessity pushed the Colonial Office into accepting West Indian whites. It was maintained that this was because the “higher grades” required a British university degree or professional qualifications. On-the-job training was not an adequate substitute, effectively excluding West Indians who could not afford a British university education, including those who managed to get a degree in either Canada or the United States. The Colonial Service was one in which “you are treated as gentlemen by gentlemen” (Jeffries 1949: 90), or, as the Secretary of State for Colonies put it in 1909, “In every circumstance and under all conditions he [the colonial servant] shall act in accordance with the traditions of an English gentleman” (cited in Heussler 1963: 60)—and indeed, betraying these conditions, primarily through over-imbibing in alcohol or womanizing (particularly if the woman was not white) were virtually the only grounds for censure or dismissal. Laziness or incompetence simply meant lack of promotion. Further, it was firmly believed that West Indians, including white West Indians, could neither judge nor police themselves. As one governor put it, “It is exceptional to find [a West Indian native] with the backbone to risk incurring the displeasure of his own people” (CO 152/379/454, 26 September 1921). As a result of this attitude, few white West Indians reached these “higher levels” in the Leewards until after World War I: with only two exceptions, both made in times of severe fiscal crisis, the posts of colonial secretary remained British until 1925, chief justice until 1931, the first and second puisne judges until 1935, the inspector of police until 1935, the keeper of the prisons until 1936, and the

⁴⁶ Unfortunately for the later researcher, the signatures were not kept. This was often the case with long lists that would have been invaluable for their social content but apparently took up too much space in the files.

attorney general until 1920.⁴⁷

There were a number of middle-level Colonial Service posts that were held by men who although probably born in England had lived in Antigua for so long that they were considered—by themselves and by the Colonial Office—to be Antiguan: certainly their ties to England had been cut and none of them retired to England as the planters did.⁴⁸ And all of them tried, at one point or another, to get more lucrative posts in other islands. Their pleas—for advancement or for salary increases—and those of the other Europeans posted to Antigua, make pitiful reading. All report that they are financially strapped, forced to survive on salaries that have remained static for decades; the petitions of their widows, who find themselves unable to provide for themselves and their children on their meager pensions, are even more pathetic. Yet none of their applications were taken seriously by the Colonial Office.⁴⁹ Indeed, this was one of the facts of life in a small colony: while its local colonial servants were not highly regarded in the service as a whole, they were able to rise to higher levels in the small colony than they were considered fit for “abroad.” This quickly became clear to at least one Antiguan-educated officer who finally won a posting in Africa: when he found, to his dismay, that he would never be promoted because the assistant colonial secretary regarded him as being “of inferior status,” he pleaded to be transferred back (CO 152/332/360/28, August 1912).

These men made up the governor’s “side” of the Legislative Council, serving as appointed or *ex officio* members; they were also prominent in civic life, serving on all manner of local boards, and they effectively tied up these posts for most of the last half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, it was not until they had, one by one, died or retired—a process that took until the end of World War I—that their posts opened to younger men.⁵⁰ It was because of this

⁴⁷ One of the exceptions was E. St. John Branch, who was attorney general and colonial secretary from 1903-1909. Branch came from a well-known West Indian clerical family—his father was canon of the West Indies diocese—and was born in Trinidad, educated at Durham, and called to the bar at Grays Inn. He went on to a distinguished legal career, but he was only made colonial secretary as part of a cost-saving measure that combined the post with that of attorney general. When he applied for a higher level colonial secretaryship, in Trinidad, he was dismissed as a “bright young man” who had gotten into a “position very much ahead of his comparative merits in the West Indian service” (CO 152/295/Tel., 5 February 1907)—the kind of comment most such applications received.

⁴⁸ This supposition is based on the fact that they all went to school in England; they may, however, have been born in Antigua and sent back to England to school, although it seems unlikely.

I have not used the term creole to describe these people because it is generally applied only to those born in the colonies, but if the term refers to identity rather than place of birth, it seems to me that most of them considered themselves Antiguan. Part of this was no doubt because their constrained financial circumstances forced them to confine their horizons, and those of their children, to Antigua. They were certainly not considered “English” in the way that colonial civil servants appointed to Antigua from elsewhere were.

⁴⁹ All applications for transfer went through the Colonial Office and are the source of considerable detail about the person’s background, education, career, etc., at least until 1926, when the files begin to be weeded out. Reading through this material, watching as people get shifting from department to department, from island to island, gives a clear sense of the huge amount of time the governor and colonial secretary spent on personnel matters. This was still the case in 1949, when Hammond did the research for his report (Hammond 1952: 67).

⁵⁰ The oldest was Octavius Humphrys, who began as an assistant clerk to the Assembly in 1858, held a variety of posts, and finally, in 1895, reached the not very lofty post of registrar after thirty-seven years of service; he retired in 1905. His position was taken by R.H.K. Dyett, a slightly younger man with a similar history: he had begun in the colonial service in 1879 and did not retire until 1930. Similarly, William Douglas Auchinleck, who had begun as a clerk in the Treasury in 1867, became treasurer in 1893 and finally reached the post of auditor general in 1907; he did not retire until 1923. And W.H. Wyham, Magistrate for District A since 1878, held the post until his death in 1917. Finally, Edward Bell, Inspector of

longevity that climbing the Colonial Service occupational ladder was jokingly described as “walking in a deadman’s shoes” (see Chapter 7).

The Assembly

In the immediate post-emancipation period there was a nominated Council of 12 men and an elected Assembly of 25. The local assemblies in the West Indies had, over the years, brought large areas of governance under their control and had managed to garner three roles for themselves—those of lawmaking, including the ability to impose taxes; those of the executive, including collecting revenues and spending funds; and those of audit, checking on their own expenditures (Rogers 1970: 79)—all of which would, in other circumstances (including those in England itself), have been totally incompatible activities. The governor could only impose his will on the assemblies by vetoing legislation or by dismissing them, neither of which were necessarily effective—legislation could be reintroduced and there was scant hope that the next assembly would be any better than the previous one. And since the assembly controlled the purse strings, it controlled the governor’s income, and there was always the threat—used often enough to make it real—that that income would be withdrawn. It should come as no surprise that this structure only worked well when the governor’s initiatives were supported by the assemblies, and that the governors therefore went to some lengths to maintain their goodwill—which generally meant the goodwill of the planter class.

The members of the Antigua Assembly were chosen by a tiny electorate: in the first election after emancipation it included only 323 men out of a population (male and female) of 35,594, and this was among the better ratios in the Eastern Caribbean. Thus an average of thirteen voters elected each representative, although in fact several members from the rural areas were elected by only two or three voters each. The qualifications for voting were high and entirely property-based, and were steadfastly maintained after emancipation.⁵¹ As Hall points out, since the qualifications remained the same, the only way for the electorate to increase in size was through an overall increase in property ownership (Hall 1971: 151) or wealth (although deflation also played a role). Yet as the nineteenth century progressed, the number of voters, as a percentage of the population, actually *decreased* (see next page).

The qualifications for holding office were much higher than those for voting, but did not necessitate owning property, thus allowing for the election of some of the more transient professionals.⁵²

Police since 1896 (and an Irishman), did not retire until 1935, while the Keeper of the Prison, Thomas Fisher, who arrived in 1891, finally retired in 1924. Two others left the scene somewhat earlier: Arthur Holmes à Court, appointed superintendent of public works in 1872, retired in 1903, and M.D.B. Eldridge, who began in the service in 1869 and was harbor master in 1894, died in 1904.

⁵¹ Thus in 1878 the qualifications for urban dwellers were possession of land valued at £13/16s/8d or rent of £26/13s/4d; and for those in the countryside, possession of 10 acres in fee simple or 5 acres with buildings on them, or of land valued at £111, or 1 acre with buildings valued at £222, or a rent of at least £88 per annum (*Almanac for 1878*).

⁵² They included an annual income of £200 from a profession or occupation or of £66 from property (*Almanac for 1878*). They were not nearly as high as in Barbados, however, where the qualification for sitting in the assembly was thirty acres of land with a house worth £500 on it, or a £200 freehold, or £300 income. The voting qualification in Barbados was lower than in Antigua: a freehold worth £20 or a lease worth £64. This is roughly equivalent to Dominica, where it was ownership of a fifty-acre lot or a dwelling worth £20 (Rogers 1970: 315).

Year	No. of voters	% of population	% of white pop. ⁵³
1872	442	1.3	20.5
1888	208	0.58	11.3
1897	349	1.0	nd

After emancipation, the Colonial Office saw its role as that of protecting the rights of the former slaves as new citizens, not only in the economic realm but politically and socially as well. Thus they were to be able to vote—if they could meet the qualifications—and to have access to all public institutions, including education and equal protection of the laws (Holt 1988). But the initiative for carrying this policy forward lay in the hands of the local legislatures, almost all of which were dominated by planters, and it was not long before the Colonial Office began to express disillusionment with what it saw as a lack of progress, particularly the lack of concern for the welfare of the laboring population, and about the inability of the local governments to fulfill their new roles. The reluctance to interfere, based in part on a desire to maintain good relations with the planter-dominated legislatures, gave way to a sense of frustration, and this in turn reinforced a current of thought in the Colonial Office—articulated most clearly by Sir Henry Taylor, writing in the 1830s with specific reference to Jamaica—which argued that neither whites nor the emerging nonwhite middle class was able to provide the leadership necessary to improve the welfare of the mass of the population, and that therefore these islands had to be governed directly, as Crown Colonies—as was being done in Trinidad, where Crown Colony government had been introduced in 1831. This argument was buttressed by another: that not only were the local legislatures actively obstructing measures that favored the poorer people, but that they were inefficient and wasteful as well. Since a central Colonial Office concern was the financial viability of each colony, it was the way the colony handled its finances that was generally at issue. It was easy, and common, for the local assemblies—like the governors—to find themselves accused of fiscal irresponsibility, lack of financial planning, of spending without due concern for the source of funds, and of spending without proper audits (Rogers 1970: 46-48).

Although one solution would have been to change the legislatures—by widening the franchise, for instance—this was unacceptable because it threatened to open them up to people the Colonial Office also considered, although for different reasons, incapable of acting in their own interests. Instead the solution was to further restrict the assembly's role, and wherever possible to do away with it entirely. Thus the doctrine of "trusteeship" was introduced to underpin a system that would prevent the domination of an obstructive white oligarchy and the frightful possibility of a takeover of the assemblies by the nonwhite population. The Colonial Office was prepared to act for the former slaves, but to prevent them from acting for themselves: a benevolent autocracy was to replace a selfish oligarchy (Benn 1987: 42; on all

⁵³ The figures for number of voters come from: for 1872, *Almanac for 1872*: 48; for 1888, Salmon 1888; for 1897, CO 152/223/608, 12 October 1897. They are presumably relatively accurate. The population figures are less so: those for 1872 are from the 1871 census; those for 1888 from the 1891 census, the closest date available; and those for 1897 from the 1901 census. The percentage for 1888 seems very low: but while this might be because the 1891 figures were used and the population decreased drastically between 1886 and 1891, if 1881 population figures are used, the percent of population only increases to .61 percent, and the percent of white population to 11.6 percent

this see Benn 1987, Holt 1988, Hall 1971, Rogers 1970).

In the first of what in retrospect was a series of moves in this direction, the Colonial Office proposed the creation of two structures that would bridge the gap between the governor and the assemblies, an Executive Council and an Administrative Committee, both of which were adopted in Antigua in 1859 (Rogers 1970, chap. 4; *Almanac for 1872*: 80).⁵⁴ This was an awkward compromise, but it might have stumbled along for a good many more years if events elsewhere—and particularly in Jamaica—had not led the Colonial Office to renew its efforts to replace representative with Crown Colony governments throughout the West Indies.⁵⁵

The story of the Morant Bay rebellion, which took place in Jamaica in June 1865, is well known; for our purposes the relevant point is that the crisis that led to the imposition of Crown Colony government in Jamaica both fueled Colonial Office doubts about the ability of other islands to govern themselves and gave it the leverage to pursue its objective elsewhere (Rogers 1970: 228). It was by now convinced that elected councils were in general inefficient and financially irresponsible, preferring to borrow when in trouble rather than raise taxes or reduce expenditures; that they shielded weak governments and hampered strong ones; and that they became small oligarchies that were only interested in their own affairs and thus were incapable

⁵⁴ The nominated Executive Council was made up of 10 men chosen equally from the Assembly (which now had 27 members) and the Council (which had 10). Although nominated, this body was considered representative because its members held seats in one of the two houses—hence this configuration was referred to as a "modified form of responsible government." The Executive Council was to have the power to make laws in all but the financial area, was to pay particular attention to audit matters, and was expected to act as an organ of communication between the governor and the two houses. In addition, three members of the Executive Council (one from the Council and two from the Assembly) were, with the governor, to make up an Administrative Committee, which was to have such key financial responsibilities as preparing the budget and spending money. Its members, who were paid the fairly large salary of £250 per year, were expected to act as the governor's official representatives in the Council and Assembly. The two new bodies were thus expected to bridge the structural gap between governor and Assembly by providing the governor with a group of his own choosing that he could work with directly, and by giving him the chance to take much more direct control over financial matters (Rogers 1970: 86). It also appears to have been a rather obvious attempt to diminish the power of the Council and Assembly—especially the latter, which was elected—without creating a constitutional crisis in the process (Rogers 1970: 100). The governor wanted to do this in part because he was finding it increasingly difficult to fill 27 seats with 27 capable men—although Antigua had a reputation for being better off in this regard than Montserrat or St. Vincent. In the latter, it was reported in 1855 that many of the members could not read and that one could neither read nor write (Rogers 1970: 117, 49).

⁵⁵ In the meantime, the Executive Committee structure did not solve the problem but rather created a new one. The issue was who the Executive Council members should be responsible, and loyal, to—the governor who appointed them, or the Council or Assembly from which they were chosen and which they asked to approve their proposals. Was the Executive Committee in effect a cabinet, or was it a committee of the Assembly? Thus if the Assembly found a member of the Executive Council unacceptable, could it demand that he resign? And similarly, if the governor found an Executive Councilor, elected by the Assembly, unacceptable, could he ask for this member's resignation?

In Antigua, these problems came to a head over the issue of immigration. The details of the discussion will be described in more detail in the chapter on the Portuguese; here the only point that needs to be made is that when there was a disagreement between the governor and Executive Committee, which opposed immigration, and the members of the Assembly, most of whom favored it, the Assembly demanded the resignation of the Executive Committee—on the grounds that they were not representing the Assembly's wishes (Rogers 1970: 121). After some maneuvering, the governor dissolved the Assembly, only to be confronted with an even more intransigent successor body. A crisis was averted only because the new governor, who arrived in 1863, was—at Colonial Office direction—more favorably disposed to immigration and so was able to reaffirm the position that the Executive Committee was responsible to the governor, not the Assembly. At the same time, the £250 stipends for Executive Committee members were abolished, which removed another source of dissatisfaction in the unpaid Assembly (Rogers 1970: 124-25).

of acting to improve the conditions of the bulk of the population (Will 1970: 241-42).

Nevertheless, the precipitating events in Antigua were local and economic: the drought of 1863-1864 led to a drop in production in 1864 and 1865 (see previous chapter), which made the planter class suddenly amenable to Colonial Office proposals to further reduce the role of the elected Assembly if this would result in financial relief and if they could be convinced that they would retain control (Hall 1971: 175-76). In the maneuvering that followed, the white population broke into two groups: those who favored a modified form of Crown Colony status and those who preferred “pure” Crown rule. The former group included mostly resident proprietors and was led by George W. Bennett, an administrative committee member and future founder of George W. Bennett & Co.; the latter included those who represented absentee interests and was led by Thomas D. Foote, attorney for the absentee Tudway estates. The absentee planters, in the face of the crisis engendered by the abolition of sugar duties, had become increasingly dissatisfied with representative government, which they saw as fiscally irresponsible and no longer serving their needs (Rogers 1970: chap. 4). The final result, voted in 1868, was a single Legislative Council composed of 24 men: 4 ex-officio members of the government, 8 members nominated by the Crown, and 12 members elected from 11 electoral districts (2 representing the city of St. John’s); the governor was to have the deciding vote. This was modified Crown Colony government—even the Colonial Office was unwilling to push for a total Crown Colony at this point, believing that a certain amount of representation was a good thing—but it nevertheless reduced the elected element to being a pressure group. Antigua had followed quickly in the footsteps of St. Kitts and Nevis, both of which had agreed to the same quasi-Crown Colony status earlier in the year, and was followed by Tobago in 1874 and Grenada in 1875; similar status had been instituted in Dominica in 1863, in the smaller and more impoverished Virgin Islands in 1859, in Montserrat, in stages, in 1861 and 1866, and in St. Vincent in April 1867 (see Rogers 1970: *passim*).

It should come as no surprise that this hybrid status was as unsatisfactory a structural solution as the Executive Committee arrangement had been. The elected members were expected to support the government unless there was “strong and substantial reason” not to do so (Benn 1987: 42), but they could still make things difficult for the government by being obstructionist and noisy. This they did, and gradually even this voice became, in the Colonial Office view, a hindrance. The move to full Crown Colony status followed quickly, and by 1878 only the legislatures in Antigua, Dominica, British Guiana, and Barbados had any elected members at all. In these islands, more tied to sugar production and with larger white populations, there was greater resistance.

The Vote for Full Crown Colony Government

By the time of the crisis of the mid-1890s, the Colonial Office was displaying as withering a contempt for the Antiguan Legislative Council as it was for the planter class as a whole. It noted that with increasingly fewer white men and so many offices, any white man who was not a complete disgrace held office. The governor was facing dissatisfaction from a part of the nominated element—the unofficials—who felt that government officials were playing too great a role in governing: in 1897, five of the eight nominated unofficials were government employees,

including the solicitor general, the registrar, a magistrate, a doctor, and the government chemist (and a sixth, a lawyer, became acting 2nd puisne judge in 1899), and this had been the case for a number of years. At the same time, the governor wrote the Colonial Office that he was finding it increasingly difficult to come up with men who were both competent and loyal to nominate as unofficials. On the elected side, he reported that many office holders were so aged and yet so determined to hold onto their offices that he was having to devise ways to force them out, using whatever face-saving tactics—letting them keep the titles that accompanied their offices, for instance—that came to mind and did not cost money. Thomas Foote, for example, was serving in 1843 and was 75 years old in 1897. In fact, the intransigence of the elected members so annoyed the governor that he appointed two additional officials in order to get the estimates passed—an act the Colonial Office endorsed but not without noting that it had made the elected members “very savage.” This must have been a fairly desperate move, because one of the nominees was described as a “barely efficient” superintendent of public works who had been unable, despite many attempts, to get promoted out of Antigua (CO 152/207/356, August 1896).

In pressing the case for full Crown Colony government, the governor argued publicly that the problem was a legislature that refused to act except in its own interests, but both he and the planters were equally worried that an increasing number of nonwhites were being elected, and that if this trend continued the island would be given over to the “Blacks and coloured population” because whites would not stay to be governed by other races (CO 152/181/Conf., 14 December 1891). He therefore argued that there should no longer be an elected element “unless there is some better prospect than at present of increasing the white population in these Islands” (CO 152/181/Conf., 3 November 1891). The public argument—that the laboring classes had to be protected “through the restraining influence of the Crown”—was disingenuous: the real issue was racial and came through in the confidential reports to the Colonial Office.⁵⁶

This concern was fully endorsed by the planter members of the Legislative Council, who saw their numbers eroding: by 1897, 7 of the 12 elected members were nonwhites—as compared to 2 in the 1870s and only 1 in 1890. By the mid-1890s, there was growing pressure from these members for an increase in the size of the elected element, to make it a majority. They can hardly have been mollified by the Colonial Office argument that, contrary to what they might believe, Crown Colony status was the best guarantee of their interests because the existing oligarchic governments refused to entertain them (Lobdell 1986: 12). At the same time, there was growing popular pressure to extend the franchise: when, in 1896, the elected members passed a resolution asking that the franchise be extended, meetings were held around the island to push the issue (*Antigua Standard*, 25 January 1896). The pressure intensified, and the *Antigua Times*, edited by the Rev. J. Roberts, a Moravian, reported a raucous meeting in November 1897, this time convened by Bleby Moore, a prominent nonwhite lawyer and elected member of the Legislative Council, and chaired by Delos Martin, a prominent nonwhite merchant, which demanded that the property qualifications be lowered and that a salary qualification be instituted.

The unrest among the elected element alarmed many of the white planters and merchants,

⁵⁶ It was impossible for the governor to discuss the issue of race publicly, but it came up in Colonial Office correspondence. However, as here, virtually any piece of correspondence dealing with race was marked “Confidential.”

who suddenly saw the specter of rule by their former slaves, and their fears—endorsed, and probably fostered, by the governor—made them more amenable to efforts to install full Crown Colony government. But although such fears may have been the stick that pushed the Legislative Council forward, the carrot was provided by the Colonial Office, which used simple economic blackmail: unless the elective element was dismantled, the island would neither receive any aid nor be able to attract much-needed outside investment.

By this point the Colonial Office had lost all faith in the Antiguans' ability to take charge of their destiny. They were not only considered impoverished and therefore not worthy of further investment—one request for loans was turned down because the Antiguans were considered to have nothing to offer as security but their estates, which were of no value to the British (CO 152/152/221, June 1895)—but they were considered inept and self-indulgent, perpetual complainers with little commercial sense. The Colonial Office heartily agreed with Archibald Spooner, manager of the factory at Belvidere and representative of the Lee, Crerar interests, when he advised them that capitalists "could never be advised to invest their money in this Island as long as such a body as constitutes the elective side of the Legislative Council have any voice in the administration of the Colony's affairs" (CO 152/222/549, 14 September 1897).

Finally, in 1898, the Secretary of State for Colonies bluntly informed the governor that if the planters wanted any help, they would have to give up all claim to an elected element on the Legislative Council. The resolution was introduced by John Maginley, a resident planter and loyal member of the council for over twenty years.⁵⁷ In March the Legislative Council voted itself out of existence, to be replaced by a fully nominated council of 8 officials and 8 unofficials. Although there was "considerable opposition" (ibid.) in the council, the vote was carried out in secrecy, forestalling public protest.⁵⁸

In appointing the fully nominated legislature, the governor was able to introduce some new, and younger, men and at the same time clear out a number of the more outspoken nonwhites. But the emphasis remained on those with ties to the sugar industry, and no previously unrepresented interests were given a voice; the government simply took the opportunity to add some new faces. The major change was that Archibald Spooner, the man who had been so critical of the local planters, was rewarded with a seat. The other nominated members included John Freeland Foote, who had replaced his father as representative of the absentee Shand/Macandrew estates, John Maginley, R.A.L. Warneford, J.J. Camacho, Delos Martin, Charles Major (a lawyer who had previously been a nominated official), and Alfred Langford Wyckham, nominated as the representative of the "native and labouring interest" (CO

⁵⁷ Maginley, who left for Ireland in 1902, cited this fact in pleading with the Colonial Office for relief for his wife and six children. Unfortunately, once the Colonial Office got what it wanted, it did not have much time for the problems of its supporters. The Colonial Office comment was that if Maginley was in such bad straits, others must be in a truly sad condition—but it refused to help. Maginley wrote two more times and was refused twice again; in one letter, he noted plaintively that the key supporter of Crown Colony status in St. Kitts had been rewarded with the attorney generalship of Grenada (CO 152/276/J. Maginley, 3 April 1902, 12 April 1902).

⁵⁸ According to Maginley, the vote was 8 to 11, and since there were 11 elected members, 3 of them must have voted with the government. A columnist in the *Sun* noted some years later that the public had been prevented from objecting because the vote had been "sprung" on them, with only the council members and "three others" knowing about it (*Sun*, 27 June 1914). The negotiations in 1868 were also carried out in secrecy, at least until the newspapers got wind of them.

152/196/257, July 1895).⁵⁹ Only Delos Martin was nonwhite.

By the late 1890s, then, the Colonial Office had achieved its aim: it had dismantled the arena of politics and handed it over to the government. It took the financial crisis of the mid-1890s to provide it with the wedge it needed to divide the elected members and push the issue to its conclusion. The local planters agreed to give up what remained of their representative government because they feared the consequences of keeping it, and because they believed that this was the only way to save the sugar industry. Faced with an increasingly restive nonwhite population at home and an increasingly critical and meddlesome Colonial Office in the metropole, they chose Crown Colony status in the hope that the "home" government would be able to do for them what they were finding it increasingly difficult to do for themselves: preserve their economic and social power. But while their actions did indeed open the way for outside help, preserving their power was another matter altogether. The ensuing struggle with the Colonial Office over the form that help should take would shape the future of Antigua. It is to this that we turn in the next chapter.

⁵⁹ Alfred Langford Wykham was a white doctor who was born in Antigua and educated in the United States and Great Britain. He returned to Antigua in 1893 and was elected to the Legislative Council as the representative from Falmouth, English Harbour, and Rendezvous Bay—an area of small holders. He considered himself, and was considered, a staunch advocate for the laborer and small holder, and had written a scathing letter to the Norman Commission condemning the government for its lack of concern for the condition of the labor force (Norman Commission, App. C, pt. xi: 198). He also advocated letting the people have access to waste land, and, more subversively, treating the black and colored population as British citizens. He is remembered by one informant as having led the group that opposed Crown Colony status. The story was that when the time came for the vote, he gave a fiery speech but all the people he thought were on his side deserted him, leaving him the only opposition. He was so distressed that he soon became a recluse, putting barbed wire around his house so that visitors could only enter by a side door.

Wykham resigned from the Legislative Council in 1899 due to the pressures of his medical practice and the difficulties of traveling into town (CO 152/247/383, 27 June 1899). In his will, which was drawn up in 1922, he left everything to his wife, Florence Maria Nibbs Wykham, but asked that if possible a Triennial Prize be awarded to a student at the Antigua Grammar School or the Antigua Girls' High School and an annual prize (of lesser value) be awarded to a student at St. John's Boys School or St. John's Girls School, or whichever of them were operating ten years after his death. He died in 1936.

Major was acting solicitor general and was appointed as an unofficial with the disingenuous argument that his was only acting appointment (CO 152/211/576, 10 December 1896).

Paget Henry and Rogers both argue that the white planters who voted in Crown Colony status "de-democratized" the state (P. Henry 1985: 56). That was undoubtedly true, but the fact was that they de-democratized it not only for themselves but for the nonwhite middle class as well.

CHAPTER 3

THE WHEELS OF EMPIRE

When reports of financial problems had begun to come in from Antigua, the Colonial Office had attempted to dismiss them as the aftereffects of a “reckless” and “headstrong” governor who had made a number of unauthorized expenditures (CO 152/196/257, July 1895).⁶⁰ Even the dismaying statistics about the growing impoverishment of the mass of the population were at first dismissed as colonial exaggeration.

But by 1896 the British Parliament had become concerned enough about the economic plight of the West Indies as a whole to send out a Royal Commission, chaired by Sir Henry Norman, to investigate and come up with a comprehensive plan that would take the particular situation of each island into consideration. Its central recommendation, made in August 1897, was that a concerted effort be made to save the sugar industry in Antigua, Barbados, and St. Kitts; the other islands could stay in agriculture but should be encouraged to diversify their export crops. For the three islands that were to remain devoted to sugar, the commission recommended that new factories be built and existing factories modernized, so that these islands’ sugar would be more competitive on the world market, and that this be done immediately to avoid their becoming an even greater financial burden. Echoing local planter concerns, the commission feared that the decrease in land in cane was leading to an irreversible loss of the labor force through out-migration to other sugar-producing islands, while the decline in the sugar industry’s prosperity was leading to a proportionally greater loss of the white population. The commission refused, however, to countenance West Indian pleas to get the beet sugar bounties removed, believing that the principle of free trade remained sacrosanct.

Although it favored the modernization the sugar industry, the perils of complete dependence on sugar were clear to the commission, as were the perils of dependence on estate production. It therefore recommended the development of peasant production of both food crops and cane as a way of reducing the monopoly of the planters and increasing local self-sufficiency. Using Antigua as an example, the commission noted that in 1896 the island had imported 8,065 barrels of cornmeal, 37,157 bushels of corn and grain, 637,101 pounds of meat, 633,394 pounds of oilmeal and oilcake. Any one of these could have been produced by Antiguanus not involved in the sugar industry if not for what Eric Williams has called the “salt fish, tinned milk” tradition of relying on imports for dietary staples (Williams 1970: 342, 449). This aspect of the plan, however, met with considerable resistance from the planters, who had no interest in opening up the economy to other crops and who were even more reluctant to open up cane growing to other producers. For its part, the Colonial Office chose to approach the issue indirectly and concentrate on those commission recommendations that would have a more

⁶⁰ At first it is the auditor-general, a long-time Colonial Service official who had acted as colonial secretary and who had died in 1895, rather than the governor, who was blamed for the problems. The Colonial Office took no responsibility for not catching on to what an audit of the accounts could have—and ultimately did—show. See CO 152/196/257, July 1895.

dramatic impact. The focus therefore turned to the establishment of a central sugar factory.

Once the decision to invest in the sugar industry in at least some of the islands had been made, the Colonial Office became more willing to do something about the bounties on beet sugar. This was in part because of increasing pressure in England: as one "ruined planter" wrote in *The London Review*, "Rather than call upon the working man and the jam manufacturers in particular to pay for a few months a farthing a pound extra for their sugar, the West Indies are to be reduced to beggary, possibly revolution" (*Living Age* 1898: 40). Joseph Chamberlain, who had become Secretary of State for Colonies in 1895, was accused of being a hypocrite, professing sympathy for the planters but doing nothing: "The West Indies have asked for bread, and they have received stone" (ibid.).

Until this point the Colonial Office had dodged the issue, maintaining that it came under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Office. Now, however, Chamberlain tried to persuade the Foreign Office to give way, and finally, after much discussion and maneuvering, in 1902 the Brussels Convention was signed and the bounty system abolished. Nevertheless, beet sugar remained cheaper than West Indian cane sugar in the British market, and it was the increasingly favorable terms being offered West Indian sugar in the Canadian market that saved the West Indian sugar industry once again. West Indian imports into Canada rose from 11,000 tons in 1897 to 130,000 tons in 1909 (Augier et al. 1960: 259), and for Antigua there was a sevenfold increase between 1901 and 1910--agreements were signed in 1898, 1900, and 1907; by 1905, 65 percent of Antigua's export earnings were coming from its Canadian trade, and by 1910 the figure was up to 80 percent (see Appendix 4).⁶¹

The Sugar Factory Debate

The commission's recommendation that the first factory be established in Antigua was based on its belief that the situation there was both more drastic and more remediable: one central factory that could produce higher grade gray crystals would go a long way toward reviving the Antiguan sugar industry, or so it was believed. They were also being pressed by A.M. Lee, a man with some influence as chair of the West India Committee pro tem, who wrote the Colonial Office that although he wanted to modernize Belvidere, he would not invest any capital until the "evident apathy of the Imperial and Colonial governments as to whether the sugar industry continues is resolved" (CO 152/222/549, 14 September 1897).

Once the decision was made, the key questions became who should build the factory and who should finance it. The planters heartily endorsed the commission's argument that a modern factory would make Antiguan sugar production viable and proposed that they form a syndicate to build it. Not only would they be producing the more competitive gray crystals, but the new

⁶¹ This shift to the north was part of a slow but steady reorientation of trade away from Britain and toward the American continent: as early as the 1850s, the island had depended on the United States for at least two-thirds of its provisions (Davy 1854; Candler 1965) and this import trade was now complimented by the rapid growth in exports. Thus by 1894, 76 percent of export earnings were coming from the U.S. trade. When the U.S. market closed with the introduction of preferences for Cuban sugar, the Canadian market began to take its place, bolstered by the willingness of the Canadians to take Antiguan muscovado when U.S. and British refineries (for different reasons) were no longer interested in it (Beachey 1957: 174).

factory would encourage more efficient cane production and renewed outside investment, and would therefore spark a more general recovery. On the other side, as minute after minute shows, the Colonial Office expressed grave doubts about the ability of the local planters to take any positive steps to better their own condition: they were considered not only impoverished, but “ignorant, narrow-minded, shifty, improvident, selfish and provocative” (Hyam 1979: 40). Such convictions were bolstered by Spooner’s comment that the local planters regarded sugar as a source of revenue for themselves rather than as an industry that employed 90 percent of the population (CO 152/222/549, 14 September 1897).

This attitude greatly influenced the way in which the negotiations were carried out and the conditions that were placed on the project. First, the Colonial Office insisted that the British government’s contribution be in the form of a loan rather than a grant, and that the loan be secured by a mortgage on the factory itself. It felt that this would insure that the investors, not the British taxpayers, would bear most of the risk, which was justified because the investors would also in the long run make the profits. Second, it followed logically that the factory should therefore be built by a private company (or a syndicate, a group of investors) that could offer adequate security against the loan.

This had been the Colonial Office position in the early 1890s, when there had been two tentative probes from private parties that were exploring the possibility of investing in Antigua. In 1891, the Glasgow-based firm of Messrs. Duncan Stewart & Co., Ltd. had inquired at the Colonial Office about the possibility of establishing a factory in Antigua, but had insisted that the British government pay all the costs, with the only return being the potential increase in income from sugar duties. The Colonial Office dismissed the plan as absurd (CO 152/181/Stewart & Co., 19 October 1891). There was a flurry of further inquiries after the Norman Commission report, but since all of them also insisted on direct grants rather than loans, all were refused.

In the meantime, the Antiguan planters, with the backing of the governor, were becoming increasingly concerned that conditions were worsening while the British government delayed, and they sent the Colonial Office proposals of their own. On the surface, their proposals seemed to meet the stipulated conditions. The planters argued, in their own favor, that they themselves had testified before the commission that a major effort to save the sugar industry was needed, that they themselves had proposed the establishment of a central factory, and that they themselves had urged that “our mother country” provide a loan—not a grant—for that purpose. But they also wanted the “interest of the land and of the factory [to be] identical,” so that the factory would be neither private nor government-owned: they feared that if private ownership were allowed, the factory owner would be able to squeeze the planters, while if the government were the owner, it would take all the profits (Norman Commission, App. C., pt. XI, p. 169). In addition, they wanted three factories, in different parts of the island, rather than one central factory, as a means of spreading the financial risk and forestalling the establishment of a monopoly. Their proposal was therefore for a consortium of planters to be provided with a government loan. The planters would put up their estates as security and the factory would become fully owned by the shareholders after the loan had been repaid.

This proposal, although endorsed by the governor, was not taken seriously at the Colonial Office, both because the planters were regarded with less than admiration and because the estates, being already mortgaged, were not considered adequate security against the loan

(Watts 1900; CO 152/277/Conf., 10 January 1903). As the discussions stretched into the early 1900s—years full of “wearisome reiteration”—the planters repeatedly indicated that they were willing to moderate their original proposal, while the Colonial Office began to insist on more and more conditions. Only Sydney Olivier in the Colonial Office and Governor Strickland in Antigua felt that Antiguan fears of an outside company had any validity (CO 152/254/115, 9 February 1900).⁶² Even planter threats, in 1901 and again in 1902, to stop planting because no further crop advances would be forthcoming from the London consignees unless the situation was resolved, and the governor’s plea that Antigua was about to become an “expensive Poor House” (CO 152/270/Conf., 25 February 1902), only moved the Colonial Office—after weeks of negotiations—to offer a grant on a single crop, a stopgap measure which it then used as a reason for *not* being able to come up with a grant for the factory itself (CO 152/274/538, 2 December 1902). In the meantime, investment in upkeep had come to a virtual standstill and the governor reported that credit and capital had been exhausted, that the factories were producing inferior and “gummy” sugar, and that the situation of the laborers was desperate (CO 152/274/538, 2 December 1902). The number of estates with over 100 acres in sugar was down to 57, and the number of proprietors to 23.

Finally, in 1903, the Colonial Office announced that it was prepared to move ahead, primarily because the signing of the Brussels Convention had led to renewed confidence in sugar as an industry. First, A.M. Lee was offered a small interest-free loan of £3,000, with the estate as security, on the promise of an additional investment on his part of £7,500; he was also allowed to import all materials duty free, a concession made in response to his earlier complaint about the “discriminatory” taxes faced by capitalists in Antigua (CO 152/222/549, 14 September 1897; CO 152/276/Lee, A.M., 29 October and 6 November 1902). Lee accepted in 1903 and work began immediately (CO 152/277/14, 9 January 1903; CO 152/280/339, 7 July 1903).⁶³

The Colonial Office had before it two other proposals, one on behalf of Henckell DuBuisson & Co. and Boddington & Co., both of London, represented in Antigua by John Freeland Foote, the attorney for the Shand/Macandrew (now Macandrew heirs) and Combermere/Cotton estates (CO 152/278/Conf., 3 April 1903),⁶⁴ and the other from a group of mostly resident proprietors. Not surprisingly, it dismissed the latter as unworkable because of lack of capital and focused its attention on the former, offering both Henckell DuBuisson (the active partner) and A.M. Lee the chance to compete for the “prize” of a £15,000 loan. When neither was able to come up with the stipulated £20,000 in matching investment capital, Lee dropped out of the negotiations. Henckell DuBuisson, larger—it also owned estates in Jamaica, St. Kitts, and Trinidad—and with more clout in London, continued to negotiate but steadfastly refused to agree to any of the terms as offered until the Colonial Office, pressured by the deteriorating economic situation in

⁶² In 1895, while serving on the West Indies desk at the Colonial Office, Olivier had been sent out to Antigua as auditor-general to straighten out the financial tangle created by the previous auditor. His report had been so impressive that the former governor had been forced to make restitution for misappropriated funds (Lobdell 1986: 3). His minutes show considerable knowledge of the Antiguan situation.

⁶³ In 1905 the Colonial Office agreed to Lee’s request to limit the mortgage to the factory contents (CO 152/286/95, 18 March 1905).

⁶⁴ The Combermere estates had been bought by Colonel Cotton sometime between 1897 and 1902.

Antigua, finally agreed to its demands.

The capitulation was total. The new company, the Antigua Sugar Factory, Ltd., was given an interest-free loan of £15,000 on the promise of additional investment of £25,000, both loan *and* interest (on the additional investment capital) to be guaranteed by the British government. In addition, the Colonial Office agreed that the loan would be considered to have been contributed by the supplying estates, which would therefore have a half-share in the factory after the loan was paid off. No mortgage, of either estates or factory, was required. In a bow to those in the Colonial Office who were concerned about the Norman Commission's recommendation to develop peasant cane production, the factory agreed to take a stipulated amount *if it was offered* (CO 152/278/Conf., 3 April 1903). The owners, knowing full well that there were no peasants in the environs, could hardly have seen this as a major drawback. The Antigua government agreed to grant facilities for the construction of a cane railroad and for the use of public roads, and to temporarily loan the government engineer to the factory (CO 152/281/565, 16 November 1903). This was only one of several instances where a government employee was put at the disposal of a supposedly private company, the other important one being the government chemist, Francis Watts, who was a key figure in the negotiations and continued to be paid out of government funds. Indeed, Watts received a Companionship of the Order of St. Michael and St. George for his work.

The factory was to use the income from the sale of its sugar to pay its working expenses and the interest on the capital invested, to set aside a reasonable amount for a sinking and reserve fund, to keep for itself a profit of 10s/ton, and *then* to divide any excess between the shareholders and the estate proprietors who supplied the cane (Watts 1906). The entire scheme was thus a far cry from the original Colonial Office conception: it entailed no risk for the company, which was virtually guaranteed a profit, while all the risk—and some of the expense—was taken by the estate proprietors and the Antigua government. Further, the distinction between planters and factory that was made throughout the discussion was something of a smokescreen: the Shand/Macandrew estates, which were to supply the bulk of the cane to the factory, were indebted to Henckell DuBuisson, which sometime before 1907 had become their full owner: for these estates, at least, factory and planter were the same. Further, the Colonial Office argument, made in a memorandum to the Crown Agents, that the shares in the factory would be bought up by “merchants or proprietors resident in or trading with Antigua,” thus making “leading interests of the Island directly concerned in the success of the scheme” (CO 152/267/Crown Agents, 15 October 1901) seems to have been either a pious hope or a blatant attempt to influence the outcome of the decision-making process in London: the phrases “trading with” and “directly concerned” were key since the majority shareholders were Thomas DuBuisson and George Moody-Stuart, the principles of Henckell DuBuisson. Moody-Stuart had been a major figure in the negotiations and had won the full confidence of the Colonial Office, which felt that his views on the sugar industry were “unusually enlightened.” In fact, he then took on something of an advisory role on the West Indies in general, giving advice on various development plans and even writing papers on the uses of that new American development, “scientific management” (CO 152/368/Stuart, G.M., 3 June 1919). By 1923, the Colonial Office

was routinely sending him the Antigua budget for review and suggestions.⁶⁵

Expansion and Consolidation

The two factories—the renovated Bendals (as Belvidere was now called), which began grinding cane in May 1904, and the Antigua Sugar Factory at Gunthorpes, which began grinding in December—immediately had a monopoly, together taking in over half the island's cane. But Gunthorpes output far exceeded that of Bendals, which, although it had a capacity of 3,000 tons, was not as efficient and never produced more than about 1,800 tons (CO 152/402/479, 2 September 1926; Watkins 1924: 213), or only 15 percent of the combined total. Further, the Antigua Sugar Factory had been built at the center of the Shand estates, on the fertile central plain, and was now poised to begin a process of steady expansion outward from that core. In 1906 it brought in three contiguous estates (Parrys and the Diamond, which were Shand/Macandrew estates, and Big Duer, owned by Shand attorney John Freeland Foote), and in 1908 proposed with a flourish to double its output by moving further south and taking some Camacho estates, as well as those of a number of absentees (CO 152/303/265, 12 June 1908). In 1908, Henckell DuBuisson proposed building a second factory in the windward district, and the Colonial Office agreed to let Frances Watts travel to England to discuss this and even—after some debate—to have him paid out of government funds (CO 152/304/392, 15 August 1908). The proposal languished, or perhaps objections were raised, because in 1910 it was repeated, only this time the expansion was to proceed *without* the consent of the existing suppliers, a highly dubious procedure to which the Colonial Office nevertheless gave its reluctant consent (CO 152/320/Crown Agents, 18 October 1910 and 3 November 1910).

Several large estates remained outside the Gunthorpes net—the Codrington, Tudway, and Maginley estates in particular—but without access to a modern factory they were only able to continue producing the increasingly unsaleable muscovado. In 1904, immediately after the Antigua Sugar Factory deal, the governor wrote the Colonial Office that he hoped that the three could be combined to supply a third factory (CO 152/283/110, 5 March 1904), and in 1909 these owners proposed a number of new plans, including one for a factory to serve the southeast region. The acting governor, himself a white West Indian from a family with prominent connections in Antigua, argued that this would be far better than enlarging Gunthorpes; at the same time, he noted that he was under no illusions that such a plan by a local proprietor would be considered favorably (CO 152/310/Conf., 15 May 1909). He also feared that the Antigua Sugar Factory would “seek to strangle it or impede its working by a selfish refusal to allow it

⁶⁵ His response in this particular case was similar to his response in many others: to mount an extended attack on the governor—at this point the locally beloved Sir Eustace Fienness—for spending too much money, coupled with a detailed argument for why Antiguan governors should be paid less (CO 152/391/Moody-Stuart, G., 15 December 1923). He quotes the factory manager: “The aim of the present Government seems to be wholly and solely how to find the means of increasing taxation and to add to the already over-staffed Island. The personal emoluments amount to £30,000 to run a little one-horse show of 1,000 whites and 27,000 others.” As one Colonial Office official noted, Moody-Stuart was “obsessed” with the issue of government expenses, and had at one point recommended abolishing the posts of governor and colonial secretary, and then amalgamating with Trinidad (CO 152/398/Conf., 18 November 1925)—where, it should be remembered, Henckell DuBuisson had a large factory.

'running rights' over the present railroad"—which, it will be remembered, had been built with government funds. The fact that he requested that the dispatch be considered confidential is a clear indication of how feared Henckell DuBuisson had become. The Colonial Office responded that it was entirely understandable that the factory did not want a "rival" to use its rail lines—further evidence of the extent to which it considered the company the only possible investor.

The entire issue of the direction of development, although negotiated by the Colonial Office, the planters, and the local governor, had by this point become a matter of public concern on the island. Thus there was a large attendance at a debate sponsored by the Wesley Guild in May 1910, when the subject was "Are Central Factories Beneficial or Otherwise to Antigua?" The planters were united on one side: Spooner, manager of Bendals, and A.P. Cowley, long-time president of the Antigua Commercial and Agricultural Society and attorney for the Maginley estates, argued in the affirmative. On the other side were a member of the nonwhite middle class and the owner of a small estate. The affirmative won by a large majority, but the editorial writer ("Stroller") for the *Sun* clearly favored the negative. He reported that Spooner, when confronted with the criticism that most of the factory profits left the island, responded with what Stroller called an old set of arguments: that not enough money could have been generated internally to make such a large investment possible, and that in any case the investing capitalists should not be grudged their share because they were "bold enough" to put money into Antigua when "the very name of the island stank in the nostrils of every West Indian merchant." Further, Spooner argued—with perhaps more truth but also with his typical lack of tact—that at least profits were no longer being poured back into "badly crushed megasse and ill-paid working people in old boiling houses," all to produce "wet and dirty" sugar (*Sun*, 23 May 1910).

The counter-argument was not only that profits were leaving the island, but that remittances, not outside investments, had been the major source of the recovery of the economy; and—perhaps to strike a chord in the Colonial Office—that because of the factory's monopoly control, the peasant proprietary class necessary for a strong economy was not being encouraged. Stroller then argued that the sugar industry ought to be locally owned, and that—contrary to Colonial Office wisdom—local people would indeed buy shares if they were given the chance.

It was hard to argue with success, however, and sugar production was growing, although slowly, while the factory continued with its plans to expand. In 1915, when a larger group of muscovado-producing owners and attorneys (representing the Goodwin, Codrington, Maginley, Camacho, and Dew estates)--describing themselves as "men of substance and good local standing"—requested help with building a factory, the governor told the Colonial Office that the Antigua Sugar Factory would actively oppose the proposal because of its own plans to absorb the remaining muscovado estates. These owners had already refused a factory offer to take their cane on the grounds that the terms were overly generous to the factory; they wanted instead to form a cooperative venture in which the profits went to the producers, not to outside investors. As they wrote in their petition, they did not see why they should be compelled to "alienate a proportion of the profits derivable from cane cultivation together with ultimate control of the sugar industry to capitalists who may possess no direct interest in the Colony" (CO 152/348/422, 3 December 1915). Although the group was willing to meet the same terms as

had been offered the Antigua Sugar Factory, the Colonial Office flatly refused (CO 152/348/422, 3 December 1915). Finally, in 1920, when one of the Maginleys and the attorney for the Codrington estates made still another proposal, the governor argued that any factory that would compete with the Antigua Sugar Factory would not be to the benefit of the *government*—although he admitted somewhat grudgingly that it might benefit the laborer (CO 152/373/583, 8 December 1920).⁶⁶

Imagine the governor's dismay, then, when in mid-1922 Henckell DuBuisson suddenly abandoned its expansion plans in favor of erecting an entirely new plant that would make white sugar. The muscovado planters, who had been operating at a loss for the past three years, were in deeper trouble than ever. In a replay of the turn-of-the-century situation, the banks were refusing to make them further advances (CO 152/385/Conf., 2 August 1922) and the Canadian market was finally closing to their product. The governor, fearing ruin for the remaining planters, begged the Colonial Office to offer all kinds of inducements to get Henckell DuBuisson to drop the plan—he suggested running a railroad to the harbor, getting in more water, and refunding the income tax. The Colonial Office sent the governor's memorandum directly to Moody-Stuart—another clear sign, if one be needed, of the shift in power in the colony—and Moody-Stuart replied that the factory could not make a large enough profit by expanding but had to produce white sugar (CO 152/385/Conf., 5 August 1922). He promised, however, to take in the muscovado estates, but only if they reorganized production and the managers and laborers gave up their "easy-going ways"—in other words, by extending their workdays, reducing their number of days off, and reaping the cane according to the factory's schedule (CO152/387/Moody-Stuart, G., 19 September 1922). Moody-Stuart was unilaterally reinstituting the very measures that had led to riots in 1918 (see Chapter 8), only now there was no protest.

The new refinery, capable of producing white crystals, was erected in 1923, and by 1924 most of the large estates (with the exception of those still associated with Bendals) were contracting with it (CO 152/395/Enc., 29 December 1924). By 1940, Bendals had been dismantled, leaving Gunthorpes the only factory. The process of consolidating ownership of the estates that fed cane into the factory took longer, however, and did not end until 1943, when the company was restructured in order to "secure the industry" (Antigua Syndicate Estate minutes, 11 February 1943; 2 April 1943).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ One final attempt to regain a modicum of local control took place in 1926, but it too was short-lived. In that year, A.M. Lee & Co. went into liquidation, and a group of three resident landowners (Peters, Dew, J.J. Camacho) formed South Western Estates Company and asked the British government to guarantee the interest on the purchase money so that they could buy Bendals and its estates, giving the estates as security (CO 152/402/479, 21926). It is not clear from the records if the group got the loan, but by 1937 Southwestern Sugar Estates Ltd. was partially owned by Bennett-Brysons and Dews. In 1937, Joseph Dew and Sons sold out their interest to George W. Bennett-Bryson and Co., which then brought the estates into the Syndicate (*Star*, 3 September 1937); see also n. 67.

⁶⁷ In 1940, the Antigua Sugar Estates had reissued 18,000 shares at £1 each to three DuBuissons (James Memoth DuBuisson, Mrs. Edith Manus DuBuisson, and William Herman DuBuisson), Alexander Moody-Stuart, and Judith Gwendolyn Moody-Stuart. This signaled the final shift to the next generation, as George Moody-Stuart was offered shares but declined (Antigua Syndicate Estates minutes, 4 January 1940; 1 May 1940). The estates to be controlled by the new company were the "Gunthorpes" estates: Cassada Garden, Paynters, Tomlinsons, Fitches Creek, Donovans, Gunthorpes, North Sound, Cedar Valley, Galley Bay, and Five Islands.

In April 1943, at the request of the factory, R.S.D. Goodwin and Edward Scott-Johnson, directors of George W.

The factory and its associated estates developed a particularly close relationship with George W. Bennett-Bryson & Co., which also handled exports from, and imports for, the Cotton and Maginley estates. This was a financial arrangement that was useful to all parties—merchant, estate, and factory: for instance, the estates were able to negotiate import arrangements for such major items as fertilizer that gave them both a discount and a reduced markup, while Brysons got the right to import huge quantities of the same goods through the shipping lines they represented. Much of the money the estates spent was from loans from either the factory or the government, although the latter was by far the better deal. The factory's loans had to be approved by Henckell DuBuisson in London, which demanded shares in return; the government advanced funds, which were generally used to buy such equipment as plows and tractors, and granted extended repayment terms at low or no interest. All of this buying flowed through Brysons, which by the mid-1930s was almost as much an overseas company as the Antigua Sugar Factory: six of the eleven shareholders (including three Brysons) lived in England. With one exception, all the others were either past or present officers of the corporation or their relatives; the exception was R.S.D. Goodwin, a planter (Annual Return of George W. Bennett Bryson & Co. Ltd., 31 December 1936).

The reins of control at the factory were gradually turned over to the next generation: George Moody-Stuart's son Alexander came out to manage the company's estates in the early 1920s and married Judith Henzell, the daughter of factory manager L.I. Henzell. Alexander was on both the Legislative and Executive councils by 1930. Henzell retired in 1937, replaced by a man who had done a Henckell DuBuisson apprenticeship, having served four years as chief

Bennett-Bryson—Robert Bryson had retired and returned to England but remained a partner and shareholder—were invited to become directors of the Gunthorpes Estates, Ltd. (Antigua Sugar Estates minutes, 2 April 1943). Goodwin became chair of the company in August (at £500 a year, in addition to his Bryson's salary; Moody-Stuart, as general manager, earned £1,000 a year). The restructuring agreement was signed on August 1. Over the next year, the "new" company—renamed Antigua Syndicate Estates, Ltd.—"bought" the original estates, as well as Tomlinsons and the tractor workshop, from Gunthorpes Estates, Ltd., and then proceeded to buy virtually every remaining producing estate: Delaps (the remaining Colonel Cotton estate), the Bennett-Bryson estates, the jointly owned Bennett-Bryson/R.S.D. Goodwin estates, the Codrington and Tudway estates (these in exchange for shares in the company), and, after a long and unpleasant negotiation, the remaining Maginley estate. In 1946, it bought the Dews estates.

The original company's estates were Cassada Garden, Cedar Valley, Fitches Creek, and North Sound, and were "bought" for £30,700; while Delaps was bought for £7,734. The Bennett-Bryson estates were Sandersons, Long Lane/Lavington/Ffryes, Burkes/LaRoche/Willis Freemans, Jolly Hill (Jolly Hill, Blubber Valley, Ffryes, Montroses, Yorkes and the Cove), Hawes and Mercers Creek, Cochranes and Thomases, and were bought for £39,000; and the Bennett-Bryson/R.S.D. Goodwin estates (owned 2/3 by Bennett-Bryson and 1/3 by Goodwin) were Morris Looby, Bodkins, Parrys, and the Diamond, all bought for £7,400. The Dews estates were Gilberts, Pares/Cochranes, and Comfort Hall/Creekside. Five Islands and Galley Bay were retained by the Moody-Stuarts in the 1943 transactions. In addition, Weirs was leased, as was most of Langfords (from the government in 1945—after the Land Settlement Board removed the tenants). Negotiations with Mary Camacho in 1947 for Carlisle and part of Barnes Hill fell through. (On all this, see Antigua Sugar Estates minutes, 2 February 1943; 24 March 1943; April 1943; 30 July 1943; 20 August 1943; 24 September 1943; 28 January 1944; 8 March 1944; 2 June 1944; 7 July 1944; 9 October 1944; 29 June 1945; 20 December 1946; 27 December 1946.) In addition, Antigua Distillery, Ltd., bought Montpelier, the sole remaining muscovado factory, in 1943.

This information comes from the minutes of the board meetings for the Antigua Sugar Estates/Antigua Syndicate Estates. At the time I was in Antigua, the minutes of these meetings for the years 1940 to 1960, as well as a mass of correspondence and reports for the same period, were in two file cabinets at the factory. In October 1980 they were removed by the then Minister of Education Reuben Harris to his ministry for safekeeping.

engineer in the factory in St. Kitts and nine at the Usine St. Madeline in Trinidad. Henzell remained on the scene, however, keeping his seat on both councils and, with Moody-Stuart, attempting to dominate not only economic life, but political life as well.

As the Antigua Sugar Factory continued to grow in size and power, the government became less and less able to protest its high-handedness—even when it agreed that its actions *were* high-handed, which was seldom. Thus when the factory decided to build a railroad to Bendals, so that cane could be sent there when the new factory was overloaded, and met with resistance from the estates en route, George Moody-Stuart went directly to the Colonial Office to put his case (CO 152/395/Moody-Stuart, G., 29 December 1924). The argument itself—that no “private” owner had the right to stop a project that would benefit the island—shows the extent to which the factory believed that its interests were synonymous with those of all Antiguan (CO 152/395/505, 8 December 1924). The estate owners vigorously disputed that the land was being taken for the benefit of the island, arguing that if this was so, a private concern could “exercise absolute control of the entire sugar industry” (CO 152/398/Camacho, 20 March 1925). Not only, they wrote, did the bill give over to a private company a power that only the government had heretofore had, but it gave the factory, which already controlled the price of sugar and labor, control over the *land* of Antigua as well (CO 152/398/Camacho, 22 April 1925). A poster made by the outraged owners and plastered across the island was headlined “The Wheels of Empire” and put the case thus:

An English corporation (cane sugar factory) doing business in a small British possession (Antigua) has prospered and grown into a monopoly, and an English governor is using Crown Colony system of government to coerce local owners to sell this corporation the fee simple of a railway track cutting right through their land and giving them immediate possession, at their own price and on their own terms.... No give and take, take all.

Whatever sympathy this proclamation aroused in the general population, the bill passed and the railroad was built.

By the mid-1920s, then, the white planter-proprietors who had succumbed to economic pressure and the fear of social anarchy at the end of the nineteenth century and voted for Crown Colony government had effectively sealed their own fate by turning the economy over to foreign hands, and there was less and less local protest as the process continued.⁶⁸ With the loss of a role in the economy went the loss of a role in the political arena: by 1920, the only local planters on the nominated side of the Legislative Council were J.F. Foote, who continued to represent one of the larger absentees and who was by that time an elderly man, and R.S.D. Goodwin, who, as noted above, was also a Bryson’s director and shareholder. Both sugar factories were represented by their managers; the other four members were all merchants. It was not so much that the merchants had grown in importance, however, either in terms of their contribution to the economy or their social status, but that there were more of them to choose

⁶⁸ The only exception, and that a partial one, was the *Magnet*, edited by Harold Wilson, which generally took an anti-government position. From time to time, Wilson complained rather plaintively about the lack of complaint (e.g., *Magnet*, 15 June 1943). For more Wilson, see Chapter 9.

among, they were younger, and there was no longer any *need* to have the planting interest represented by more than the factory.

Not surprisingly, the white population continued to decline in numbers: to 1,013 in 1911, 914 in 1921, and only 694 in 1946.⁶⁹ It was also an aging and increasingly female population: by 1911, there were 528 females to 481 males, with only 23 percent of the white population under 15--compared to over 37 percent for the nonwhite population. Looked at from the other end of the age scale, almost 25 percent of the white population was over 50, compared to only 14 percent of the rest of the population. Many of the remaining whites were increasingly impoverished.⁷⁰ Widows of civil servants repeatedly appealed to the Legislative Council for financial help, having been left without savings by their husbands and finding themselves unable to survive on government pensions. By the 1920s there was a host of never married white women, daughters of planters and merchants whose brothers had migrated to the United States and Canada or had died in the war.

These demographic trends were the result of the growing difficulty of attracting young white men to Antigua, or even keeping locally born men at home, whether to work in the Colonial Service, as estate managers, or in the merchant businesses. A number of measures were introduced to stem the outflow, and to increase the inflow, of "suitable" men. As early as 1908, Colonel R.S. Cotton, who had estates in St. Kitts and Nevis as well as Antigua, proposed a training and apprenticeship program that would not only bring young men from overseas but would introduce them to the ways of "decent society" (CO 152/308/Col. Cotton, 28 May 1908). Not much happened, however, and by 1925 Moody-Stuart was writing to the governor to complain that white planters were so scarce that there were only five white overseers—the source of future managers—on the island. He too proposed an immigration scheme, this one to bring young men from Scotland—"men of the crofter or small-holder type [who] have been trained in farming since boyhood" but who "are a burden to the Home Government because there is no work for them at home"—in order that the future of the island "be made safe" (CO 152/397/Conf., 14 May 1925). To insure the stability of the sugar industry, it was necessary to insure "English economic control, English traditions in this the oldest English colony" (letter of 12 October 1937, quoted in *Outlet*, 10 October 1968). Yet the wages paid these men were so low that several long-time employees were so indebted when they died that their widows had to appeal to the company for help with proper burials.

The Factory and the Economy

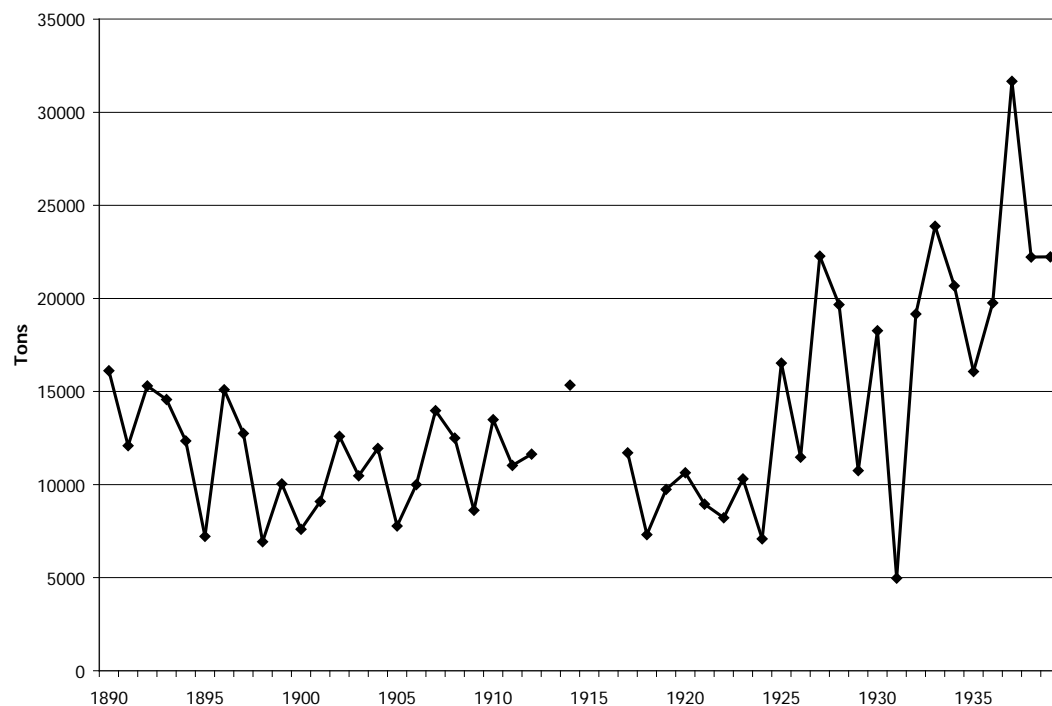
The establishment of the Antigua Sugar Factory may have stabilized the sugar industry by making possible the manufacture of better quality sugar, and the factory itself was certainly a success—as amply demonstrated by the fact that, despite adverse growing conditions, it almost

⁶⁹ Unfortunately, there was no census between 1921 and 1946; although some colonies had a census in 1931, Antigua did not.

⁷⁰ An extreme example appeared in a petition to the King from a woman who described herself as poor and white, but who cited a detailed genealogy to argue that her good breeding argued in favor of a positive response (CO 152/334/100, 4 April 1913).

always showed a profit (Rottenberg 1960).⁷¹ But this did not help the island government or improve the standard of living of the rest of the population. First, the amount of sugar produced increased only gradually (see Figure 3), in part because of the climatic factors Antigua had always faced: serious droughts continued to occur with appalling frequency (in 1905, 1910, 1912, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1925, 1928, 1930, and 1939, with lesser drought years in between—see Appendix 2), and various governors' schemes did nothing to improve the water storage situation.

Figure 3
Sugar Production,
1890-1940
[in tons]



The years when imports did not exceed exports, and government expenditures exceed revenues, remained few (see Appendix 3). In addition, by the early 1900s debt charges were high--14 percent of revenues in 1909, for instance. In a reprise of the nineteenth century pattern, every time the economy began to improve—as it did between 1911 and 1916, when the situation was reported to be the most favorable in years (CO 152/351/155, 3 May 1916)--there was another setback, in this case a rise in the cost of provisions, clothing, and freight due to the

⁷¹ In fact, according to Simon Rottenberg's 1960 report, the extent to which the factory was insured against loss was amply demonstrated by the fact that it only lost money in four years (1922, 1929, 1931, and 1954) of its fifty-five-year history, and the year 1922 is in dispute. In 1923, to take one example, the factory paid export duties of £10,000, or 11 percent of total government revenues, and still made a profit of £57,550 (CO 152/392/122, 24 March 1924).

war, provoking a decrease in imports and therefore in import duties. In 1913, despite good production, depressed prices and the loss of government income (because of the granting of preferences to British and Canadian imports) led to a decline in government revenues. In addition, the growth of the Canadian market, while it helped the planter, had a much less positive effect on government revenues, since the trade agreements obligated reciprocal preferences—each had to give preference to the goods of the other—as well as a 20 percent rebate on all goods imported into the colonies.⁷²

During the war, a steep rise in the cost of provisions, clothing, and freight (CO 152/352/155, 3 May 1916; CO 152/358/88, 8 March 1918) again wreaked havoc on government finances. High prices in 1919, coupled with the restoration of the metropolitan tariff preference for sugar (Ward 1985: 47), were followed by a drastic collapse in 1920, with sugar prices falling from £42 to £15 a ton and muscovado becoming unsaleable. By 1920, a visitor was reporting that St. John's had the "air of a half-forgotten village" (Franck 1920: 344). When Sir Eustace Fiennes arrived in 1921, he reported that the roads were a wreck, the water supply precarious, the wharfs falling apart, the government launch useless, and morale low (*Sun*, 25 May 1922). Sanitation in St. John's had been so neglected that its effect on health was repeatedly discussed in the newspapers. A hurricane in 1924 and another drought further reduced revenues, and in 1925 all the merchants and planters petitioned for tax relief (CO 152/397/Conf., 4 November 1925). In 1926, a visitor reported that "The struggle for existence seems too bitter to permit much thought about public works and improvements.... Poverty stalks over the island, such abject poverty, it seemed to me, as I did not encounter among any of the larger islands of the whole West Indies..." (Bell 1926: 116-17). The situation did not improve, and the British sent out a commission in 1929, headed by Sydney Olivier. Its report paints a dismal picture of growing impoverishment, a decline in services, and a standard of living worse than that of either St. Kitts or Barbados.

The Antigua economy and the Antiguan population suffered severely from the effects of the 1929 depression. Novelle Richards, in *The Struggle and the Conquest*, vividly describes the island in the 1930s as a place where "ruin stared many people in the face ... a land of misery and depression, an island of slums and hovels, of barefooted, unkempt people" (Richards 1964: 1). In 1930, a special grant of £10,500 was spent on relief, soup kitchens, and money for aged paupers (Leeward Island Reports 1930-31: 11). By 1938, unskilled sugar workers were earning only a pitiful shilling a day, if they could get work, less than in any other island. As Sammy Smith wrote with his usual pithiness, "People was walking from pillar to post" looking for work (Smith and Smith 1986: 141).

As in the 1890s, pressure on the government to find other sources of revenue increased as income from customs receipts declined. The Legislative Council, pushed by the governor, gave lip service to the notion that it was obliged to raise revenues by imposing more than import duties, but the only suggestions it came up with were so flagrantly in its own favor, and so obviously detrimental to the mass of the population, that they were routinely turned down by the Colonial Office, only to be proposed again and turned down again. There were proposals to

⁷² See Appendix 4 for analysis of changes in exports and imports by area between 1894 and 1935.

increase the import duties on such everyday items as flour, fish, and bread. A road tax was enacted, disallowed by the Colonial Office as being a poll tax by another name, proposed again, disallowed again. At various times a hut tax, a horse and ass tax (which specifically exempted the large estates), a bachelor tax, increased stamp taxes, court fees, postal rates, and death duties were all proposed—and all disallowed. The idea behind all these taxes was that they would make the laborer labor harder, but as one Colonial Office minute noted acerbically, if the governor's assertion that such taxes were an incentive to work and would "raise the standard of character" were true, we would all have attained perfection (CO 152/386/465, 24 October 1922). During one particularly heavy flurry of tax proposals, even the local planter newspaper took up the cause of the ordinary man and woman, calling such taxes "iniquitous class legislation," and—hitting the planters where it hurt—"glaringly un-British" (*Sun*, 13 May 1922, 16 May 1922). Waxing eloquent, the editorial continued: "If His Excellency had specially designed to throttle the minor industries of the island and put the poorer classes out of the business, and thereby entirely crush and wipe out the spirit of industry which they now have, he could not have designed a more successful weapon for the purpose than the tax on animals" (*Sun*, 16 May 1922). On the other hand, when the Legislative Council tried to impose a tax on the income of companies registered abroad—arguing that a company should be taxed where its profits were made—Moody-Stuart protested directly to the Secretary of State for Colonies. In an admirable bit of logic, he wrote that the island would only spend the extra income, and that it would be better to *reduce* export duties (CO 152/392/122, 24 March 1924). The Colonial Office then ordered the governor, against his wishes, to rescind the tax.

The Colonial Office's counterproposals—to increase the duty on rum, to increase the land tax, to establish trade and income taxes, to impose export taxes, to institute a proper excise tax system, or even to collect existing taxes systematically—were all aimed at the planters and merchants and were routinely greeted with howls of protest. The Colonial Office pushed particularly hard for an income tax, which it believed was the only equitable way to tax the rich without their passing the tax along to the public, but the planters repeatedly refused, fearful, among other things, that they would have to open their books to outsiders. They preferred an increase in the land tax, which they knew they could (and did) petition to have reduced in bad years. The merchants did not object too strenuously to a license fee since it was a known amount and only marginally dependent on revenues (it was a two-step tax). The Legislative Council thus passed both income and trade taxes in 1900, but these were severely limited: the income tax was confined to those earning over £100 a year, a maximum of 200 people (it was extended to those earning over £50 in 1905), and the trade tax, calculated according to the amount of business a merchant did, was in effect another consumption tax and in any case only affected 217 people in 1904.⁷³ An export duty was not levied on sugar until 1916 and on cotton until 1918. Thus despite all these moves, import duties continue to grow as a percent of total government revenues: 54 percent in 1900, 56 percent in 1915, and 64 percent in 1925/1926.

⁷³ Despite such protests, Antiguans were hardly highly taxed by local standards: in St. Kitts in 1907, for instance, there was a land tax of 13s6d per acre—compared to 2s6d in Antigua—wharfage dues, *and* an export tax on sugar. The total amount collected through all such taxes was small and actually *decreased* over the years, both in total amount and as a percent of all revenues: from £5,453 and 9.5 percent in 1894 to £4,248 and 8.2 percent in 1915-16.

At the government level, the lack of foresight discussed in Chapter 2 played additional havoc with any attempt at achieving stability. Again and again, a year or two of surplus revenues led to an increase in government spending that turned out to be based on a totally unwarranted optimism. Thus, for example, expenditures increased 14 percent in 1921-1922, despite a 17 percent decline in revenues; and in 1928-1929, several years of small surpluses gave rise to a 22 percent increase in expenditures—in the same year that there was a 5 percent drop in revenues. In addition, whenever the financial situation improved, the Colonial Office reduced the grants-in-aid portion of the budget, which made it impossible to accumulate a reserve. Not surprisingly, the infrastructure deteriorated: road, water works, the hospital and old peoples' home all became in desperate need of repair. Indeed, the island is still paying for this penny-wise, pound-foolish approach, for one result was that any capital improvements were made in the cheapest way possible and at the last possible minute. As the Hammond report, which was severely critical of the lack of maintenance and planning in public works in particular, noted, "The neglect of the stick in time appears to be a long-standing habit" (Hammond 1952: 49), while "the present system of taking a round figure which has no ascertainable relation to facts, cutting it down, and spreading it over the most claimants but not necessarily most economical requirements, is exceedingly wasteful" (ibid.: 51). This criticism, written in 1949, was as true in the early part of the century as it is today.

The period from 1900 to 1940, then, was one in which the foreign-owned Antigua Sugar Factory and its associated estates established a monopoly on sugar production on the island, while the resident proprietors, rebuffed in every attempt to establish a counterweight to the factory, gradually disappeared. As a group, the white population had sealed its own fate: in the first place, it had bound itself so tightly into sugar production that when the factory was built, it had no other source of income to turn to. In the second place, it had lost the support of both the British government—which it believed would be its savior—and of the classes below, in particular the nonwhite middle class, which it had thoroughly alienated during the fight over Crown Colony status. When the resident planters foundered, Henckell DuBuisson was able to drive a wedge into the center of the economy. Having both capital and the ear of the Colonial Office, the company quickly became indispensable to the economic well-being of the island and able to dictate its terms.

But the failure of the resident planters to maintain themselves, and their way of life, provided a wedge not only for a British company; it also provided a wedge for the nonwhite middle class. It is the origins of this class that is the subject of Part 2.