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ENEMIES OF ALL MANKIND: PIRACY IN THE BRITISH ATLANTIC WORLD,
1680 TO 1730

A Thesis

Presented to the
Graduate Faculty of the History Department
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Kearney

By

Nicholas Knuth

December 2023

THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History, University of Nebraska at Kearney.

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ABSTRACT

Pirates during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries experienced the height of Atlantic piracy. The Golden Age of Piracy caused major political problems for the British overseas colonies and constituted revisions in colonial governance. Piracy during this period began as buccaneers who worked for the state during wartime as privateers and rogues during peacetime. This group changed however, by the end of the seventeenth century had transitioned into pirates, attacking any and all shipping around the colonies regardless of origin. This group forced Parliaments' hand to act against them and implement anti-piracy laws throughout the empire. However, the War of Spanish Succession held most of Parliaments' attention and the war on piracy slipped through the cracks. This allowed pirates almost free reign around the empire and it was not until the war had ended and resources were available that colonial governments could fight pirates effectively. By the late 1710s and 1720s, Parliament was able to allocate more funds and naval ships to assist in hunting down and capturing pirates. By the end of the 1720s, the pirates had been chased and executed bringing about the end of the Golden Age of Piracy and the maritime superiority of the British Empire.

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Introduction

Pirates have plagued the seas as long as people have been able to sail. However, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries pirates became a massive problem for colonial officials in the East and West Indies, and parliamentary officials in England. As the British Empire grew and expanded throughout the world, trade and military grew with it to uphold the law in the newly acquired territories. As all of these grew alongside the empire, so did outlaws and others who wanted to make a name for themselves outside of legitimate business practices. Unlicensed privateers and pirates operated around the British American colonies and the British India colonies wreaking havoc and claiming stolen goods forcibly taken from merchants sailing from port to port and selling them at low prices. The Golden Age of Piracy is considered to be between the 1650 and the 1730 in the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic.¹

This thesis will cover the Golden Age of Piracy between the 1680s and the late 1720s and discuss the development of government opinions in England and their attempts to suppress piracy around the British Empire. Political opinions were not uniform across the colonies at this time and each English colonial official handled pirates and privateers differently. The treatment of privateers and pirates also depended upon which European colony they anchored at. The Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Dutch all had a firm hold on the West Indies and would allow pirates to trade stolen goods as long as they did not come from their own merchants. During peacetime many English governors turned a

¹ Marcus Rediker. *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, (Boston, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2004) Pp. 8.

blind eye when pirates anchored in their harbors as long as they paid a fair price for their presence and brought goods that often cost too much to purchase on a regular basis or were not common in the area. Other governors who held different opinions tried tirelessly to somehow subdue pirates and rouge privateers and bring them to justice, however, at the end of the seventeenth century, the colonies had insufficient manpower to bring them to justice. Official opinion on piracy changed during wartime, allowing them to continue their depredations on enemies of the state and protect their own interests at sea at the same time. However, this relationship did not last long as once the war ended, governors and captains would attempt to bring in pirates and send them to trial or pardons were offered in hopes that they would continue to serve the state, but mostly pirates would return to being pirates as there were no rules to follow except their own. The Parliament in England received complaints from governors throughout this period to help prevent the sea robbers but the actions they took to suppress piracy were almost non-existent until certain laws passed by King William III in 1699,² and again in the late 1710s and 1720s under King George I, implementing one in 1721 that stated that any who help pirates are subject to execution.³ King George's laws suppressing piracy and the increasing size of the Royal Navy during the 1720s finally saw an end to the Golden Age of the pirates.

The economics of piracy and the empire developed side by side and in a similar manner throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Sugar, for example, became a staple of American colonial products and, "This new taste was first experienced

² Robert C. Ritchie. *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1986) Pp. 153-154.

³ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, Pp. 27.

among the rich, and then as cheaper sugar became available it spread through society, so that by 1750 the poorest English laborer's wife took sugar in her tea.”⁴ The import of sugar from the plantations in the American colonies grew from a four thousand tons in the fifteenth century to nearly two hundred thousand tons by the late eighteenth century.⁵ As imperial trade grew between the European colonies around the world, piracy also hung on to this growth, taking advantage of poorly defended trade ships in the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans. Typically, the mere presence of a pirate ship was enough to make a merchant vessel put down their arms and surrender. The Atlantic economy flourished due to the desire of the merchants and producers to make more and more money. They were not necessarily out to make sure everyone they sold to benefitted economically, but, in order for them to gain wealth, they had to make sure that their customers could afford their products. Thus, inadvertently, each producer helped serve the self-interests of others, overall benefiting society, to benefit themselves.⁶ Much like the rest of society, pirates helped each other to make sure they maximized their own profits.

Historians have split the golden Age of Piracy into three smaller categories consisting of the Buccaneers from the 1680s to the late 1690s, the pirates of the 1700s to the 1710s and finally, the decline of the Golden Age or the Freebooters from the late 1710s to the late 1720s, which became the most aggressive groups of these outlaws.⁷ All

⁴ Ralph Davis. *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1973) Pp. 251.

⁵ Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, Pp. 251.

⁶ Peter Leeson. *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2009) Pp. 2-4.

⁷ Marcus Rediker. *Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, Pirates, and Motley Crews in the Age of Sail*, (Boston, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2014) Pp. 79.

three of these distinct periods consist of factors that drove economic, state, and military development for the empire and various economic opportunities for sailors and pirates alike. Each period also saw a fluctuation in the number of pirates and the number of merchant and navy sailors. The change in the number of seamen is attributed to the wars that persisted throughout the period such as the Nine Years Wars between 1688 and 1697, the War of Spanish Succession between 1701 and 1713, and finally the War of the Quadruple Alliance between 1718 and 1720.⁸ Legitimate sailors fared much better during wartime as their wages were higher and better living conditions. During peacetime, the navy and merchant ships cut crews down and hired new sailors for a fraction of the old wages to save money, driving the latter to sail under the Black Flag.

As wages and available positions on board ships declined after the War of Spanish Succession, merchant crews became increasingly discontent with how their ships operated and the ways in which they were treated. Crews would mutiny against their captains and quartermasters and take over the ship to find fortune their own way. Captain Kidd's crew crept ever closer to mutiny as his expedition to the Indian Ocean between 1696 and 1699 proved fruitless for the first years of the voyage. Kidd originally had a commission to cruise for pirates and French ships in the Indian Ocean, however, by 1698, the British East India Trading Company had spread word to the Lord Justices that Kidd and his crew had committed numerous piracies and word was then sent to the American

⁸ Matthew Garrod, "Piracy, the Protection of Vital State Interests and the False Foundations of Universal Jurisdiction in International Law," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 25, no. 2 (June 2014) 195-213. Pp. 197.

colonies.⁹ When he arrived in New York, Kidd attempted to blame the acts of piracy on his crew but this did not work as he had too many interactions with British E.I.C ships throughout his journey. The threat of mutiny continued to mount and became a real problem by the 1720s when pirates and others were at their most aggressive.

Important primary documents in this thesis consist of primarily admiralty trials of pirates and the Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America, and West Indies.¹⁰ These records focus on the Colonial Office Records from the American colonies and the India Office Records from the Indian Ocean and British Colonies in the East Indies. The Calendar of State Papers give in depth synopses of the larger state papers and discusses some of the more important matters throughout them. Many of the documents from this collection used in this thesis will focus on the mid to late seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century and correspondence between the overseas colonies and England concerning military and state development along with piracy within the empire and attempts to suppress it.

The trials of pirates give amazing insight into how captured pirates were tried throughout the end of the seventeenth into the opening years of the eighteenth century up to the 1720s. The two most prominent pirate trials used consist of Captain William

⁹ Person of quality. *A full account of the proceedings in relation to Capt. Kidd. In two letters. Written by a person of quality to a kinsman of the Earl of Bellomont in Ireland.* London: printed and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, MDCCI. [1701]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 15, 2022). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0105446020/ECCO?u=unl_earney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=7994bf3f&pg=1.

¹⁰ Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America, and West Indies, Vol. 1-37.

Kidd's trial¹¹ and letters sent between two unidentified people who were close to the Governor of New York, Richard Coote, who was one of the main investors in Kidd's final voyage.¹² These records of Kidd's trial proceedings and his execution display how he went from a highly regarded sailor and privateer to a pirate who rivaled Henry Avery's notoriety at the end of the seventeenth century. Kidd's trial caused a stir among the government and general population as many powerful Whig officials helped fund his final journey and eventually were tried themselves or, in the case of Richard Coote, turned Kidd in to save themselves and hopefully receive a reward.¹³ The other trial document is that of Stede Bonnet and his crew from 1718.¹⁴ Bonnet and his crew

¹¹ Kidd, William. *The arraignment, tryal, and condemnation of Captain William Kidd, for murther and piracy, upon six several indictments, At the Admiralty-Sessions, held by His Majesty's Commission at the Old-Baily, on Thursday the 8th. and Friday the 9th. of May, 1701. who, upon full Evidence, was found Guilty, receiv'd Sentence, and was accordingly Executed at Execution-Dock, May the 23d. As also, the tryals of Nicholas Churchill, James Howe, Robert Lamley, William Jenkins, Gabriel Loff, Hugh Parrot, Richard Barlicorn, Abel Owens, and Darby Mullins, at the same Time and Place for Piracy. Perused by the Judges and Council. To which are added, Captain Kidd's Two Commissions: One under the Great Seal of England, and the Other under the Great Seal of the Court of Admiralty.* London: printed for J. Nutt, near Stationers-Hall, 1701. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 15, 2022). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0124496246/ECCO?u=unl_earney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=bff92998&pg=1.

¹² Person of quality. *A full account of the actions of the late famous pyrate, Capt. Kidd. With the proceedings against him, and a vindication of The Right Honourable Richard Earl of Bellomont, Lord Coloony, late Governor of New-England, and other honourable persons, from the Unjust Reflections cast upon tehm. By a person of quality.* Dublin: re-printed for Matthew Gunn, Bookseller in Essex-Street, 1701. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 15, 2022). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0101397670/ECCO?u=unl_earney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=058d54f8&pg=1.

¹³ Robert C. Ritchie. *Captain Kidd*, Pp. 181-182.

¹⁴ *A complete collection of state-trials, and proceedings for high treason, and other crimes and misdemeanours; from the reign of King Richard II. to the end of the reign of King George I. In six volumes. With two alphabetical tables to the whole*, 2nd ed. Vol. 6.

operated in the same area of the North American colonies as Edward Teach, Blackbeard, and the judges repeatedly state throughout the trial that Bonnet had helped Teach escape the law many times before his execution. This trial demonstrates how the political opinions of piracy changed between the turn of the eighteenth century and almost two decades later. Kidd had to be sent back to England in order to stand trial and be prosecuted, while Bonnet stayed in colonies as the government had begun to allow colonial trials of sea robbers along with other criminals.

The historiography surrounding the British government, state and naval development, Atlantic trade, and piracy has changed dramatically over the last century. The history of British Atlantic economics and politics along with piracy have followed a similar trend that other disciplines of history have followed during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Piracy as its own discipline during the early twentieth century only portrayed the most notorious and well-known pirates such as Blackbeard, Henry Avery, and Captain William Kidd along with many more. The other side of piracy came in the form of travel literature spanning centuries. These stories greatly exaggerated and romanticized pirates and their depredations around the globe. These stories circulated

London: printed for J. Walthoe sen. R. Vincent sen. J. and J. Knapton, R. Knaplock, J. Roberts, J. Darby, S. Buckley, D. Midwinter and A. Ward, A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, B. Lintot, R. Gosling, W. Mears, B. Sprint, J. Tonson, W. Innys, J. Osborn and T. Longman, T. Woodward, R. Robinson, T. Saunders, B. Motte, J. Walthoe Jun. C. King, F. Clay, W. Battersby, J. Batley, T. Cox, J. Peele, E. Symon, S. Noble, R. Williamson, T. Wotton, D. Browne, B. Creake, J. Clarke, R. Hett, T. Osborne, L. Gilliver, J. Stagg., M.DCC.XXX. [1730]. Pg. 156-158 *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 14, 2022).
https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0124971068/ECCO?u=unl_kearney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=b977208f&pg=2.

through homes and other locations to show just how big the world was and allow people to live vicariously through these pamphlets. British Atlantic history also only focused on the Monarchy and the military during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not giving the ordinary sailors any time in the spotlight. Kings, generals, and governors were the topic of historical studies and their victories along with policies that helped expand their empire. These studies focused on the upper classes and high politics continued until the late 1970s.

Examining the historiography between the 1910s to the late 1970s and early 1980s, there are many interesting and useful works, but their focus falls more with politics than with pirates. Focusing on politics instead of pirates does still help in viewing how the Atlantic world operated and how the perception of history has changed over the last century. However, the disregard for pirates attributes to the difficulty in studying the government reactions to piracy and their actions across the British Empire. Beginning in 1911, Violet Barbour's work, "Privateers and Pirates of the West Indies,"¹⁵ discusses colonial problems that the colonists faced and barely touches regarding the actions of unlicensed privateers. During the Nine Years War and the War of Spanish Succession, English politicians would look the other way if pirates attacked mutual enemies and would attempt to employ them in the Royal Navy. This governmental attitude towards unlicensed privateers or pirates did not persist after wartime. "During either wartime or peacetime some governors in the British Caribbean would extend letters of marque, Sir

¹⁵ Violet Barbour, "Privateers and Pirates of the West Indies," *The American Historical Review* 16, no. 3 (April 1911) 529-566.

Thomas Modyford of Jamaica for example, to pirates and privateers who would in turn pledge loyalty to the governor, and in some respect the king, but continue on with their piratical depredations with whoever they came in contact with.”¹⁶ Work on pirates in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the political discrepancies they created did not necessarily get much attention during this period either.

In 1920 and in a second volume in 1922 Geoffroy Atkinson wrote a study of travel literature, *The Extraordinary Voyages in French Literature before 1700*,¹⁷ and, *The Extraordinary Voyages in French Literature from 1700 to 1720*.¹⁸ and discussed real and imaginary pirates. Being a study of French travel literature, this work does not provide a historical point of view on the subject, but the importance of this work does show that scholars were aware of the differences between real and imaginary pirates made up to make a good story. Finally, from this period, Captain Charles Johnson’s, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most Notorious Pirates*,¹⁹ originally published in 1724 and this edition being edited by Arthur L. Hayward in 1955 from the fourth edition published in 1726, discusses the most famous pirate captains that sailed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These accounts of famous pirates and their lives have been used even today in scholarly work on the subject and provide, much

¹⁶ Barbour, “Privateers and Pirates of the West Indies,” pp. 551 and pp. 565.

¹⁷ Geoffroy Atkinson. *The Extraordinary Voyage in French Literature Before 1700*, (New York, NY, Columbia University Press, 1920)

¹⁸ Geoffroy Atkinson. *The Extraordinary Voyage in French Literature From 1700 to 1720*, (New York, NY, Burt Franklin, 1922)

¹⁹ Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most Notorious Pirates*, ed. by Arthur L. Hayward (Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, London, UK, 1955)

like Barbour's and Atkinson's works, a great look into what historians and other scholars found important concerning piracy and the surrounding Atlantic world at this time. When the work did focus on pirates, they were always about the most infamous, like Henry Avery, who managed to attack and take a Mughal ship worth a fortune.²⁰ The study of seamen aboard pirate ships along with naval and merchant vessels did not come along until the late 1970s and 1980s, following suit with the wider change in history incorporating most fields. In 1932, Philip Gosse wrote, *The History of Piracy*,²¹ which discusses a very broad study of pirates and piracy between the Vikings in the North to the pirates and buccaneers of the Atlantic all the way to piracy in Southeast China. Gosse's work is very interesting for its time as it seems to share focus between the popular political and military world that many historians studied in the first half of the twentieth century and the importance of pirates around the globe.

As time moved on, the changing trends of historiography made its way into the Atlantic world with sailors and pirates alike. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, scholars were beginning to view piracy and the British Atlantic world in a different light. Piracy and the study of pirates especially changed, and historians began to treat it as its own historical discipline. Before this it was treated as an afterthought in the wider world of Atlantic and colonial politics. Not only were historians viewing pirates differently, but they were also studying the common sailor aboard pirate ships and what ultimately drove them to sail under the black flag in the first place. Economic disparities that presented

²⁰ Johnson, *A General History*, pp. 27.

²¹ Philip Gosse. *The History of Piracy*, (New York, NY, Longmans, Green and Co. 1932)

themselves after wartime and especially after the War of Spanish Succession in 1713 proved to be one of the largest factor that pushed merchant and navy sailors into the dangerous world that would make them rich beyond their wildest dreams, or so they hoped. The study of piracy is crucial to understand the political problems they caused for the blossoming British colonies in the Atlantic and around the Indian Ocean and this shift in historiography proved beneficial to see both sides of the expanding maritime world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Social and political organization aboard pirate ships and how it differed from merchant and naval vessels also began to make an appearance around this period, contributing greatly to understanding the underbelly of British Atlantic politics.

The historiography of Atlantic trade also experienced a shift around this same period moving toward the merchants and their experiences. Much like the study of piracy, the average sailors and crews began to be looked at and studied more thoroughly than before. Making this shift from the one percent of society to the majority of the population proves beneficial for this thesis in order to study the reactions of merchants after pirate attacks and study their requests to the colonial governments and parliament back in England for the better suppression of piracy, more materials to fortify port cities, or a larger naval presence to protect merchant ships as their sailed from one port to another with stocks of trade goods. Studying both sides of the Atlantic world, from pirates to merchants and governments, and having the materials to see real reactions from the government and the people inhabiting the colonies provides a clear picture of how the growing British Empire operated and how officials reacted to trade disruptions across the

globe. The study of politics and finance also falls into this category which have experienced similar trends in historiography. These fields have also shifted focus from the important figures in war, politics, and finance to either focus on smaller factors that have been overlooked in the past or widens the stage to not only give the important characters all of the attention, but also pay attention to smaller details and the general population who became affected by changing political policies and war.

Historiography in the late twentieth century associated with pirates and the Atlantic world experienced a shift focusing on the average crew members aboard ocean-going vessels. This transition of maritime study directly correlated with the shifts in historiography across most disciplines when historians and scholars began to focus more on the working classes as well as women's history. In 1973, Ralph Davis wrote, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*,²² discussing the economic development in the Atlantic and the growth of European powers in the Americas. Two other works that marked the shift in the 1980s are Marcus Rediker's, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World*,²³ and Robert C. Ritchie's, *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates*.²⁴ Rediker also wrote an article, "Under

²² Ralph Davis. *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1973)

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

²⁴ Robert C. Ritchie. *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1986)

the Banner of King Death: The Social World of Anglo-American Pirates, 1716-1726.”²⁵

Both of Rediker’s works focus on the social hierarchy aboard pirate ships in the early eighteenth century and how they dramatically differ from that aboard navy and merchant ships. Rediker also discusses why sailors decided to leave their lives and join ranks with pirates under the Black Flag. Economic problems plagued sailors after the War Of Spanish Succession and this became the main draw for sailors working in poor living conditions and being abused by their captains. Ritchie’s work focuses on the life of Captain William Kidd. Kidd is still one of the most well-known and infamous pirates for the late seventeenth century, but Ritchie almost exclusively focuses on his life instead of the lives of the politicians who sanctioned Kidd’s final voyage. This shows how the focus of the study of piracy even changed with how historians viewed the famous pirates.

The 1990s continues to see this style of historiography and the study of sailors, colonial governments, and economics follows alongside it. The study of piracy continued to look into the lives of those who sailed on the ships because it seemed like the best way to make a fortune on the seas. Works such as Peter Earle’s, *The Pirates Wars*,²⁶ along with Rediker’s, *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*,²⁷ and, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in*

²⁵ Marcus Rediker, “Under the Banner of King death: The Social World of Anglo-American Pirates, 1716-1726,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (April 1981) 203-227.

²⁶ Peter Earle. *The Pirate Wars*, (New York City, NY, Thomas Dunne Books, 2003)

²⁷ Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker. *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, (London, UK, Verso, 2000)

the Golden Age,²⁸ all focus on the average pirate and what inspired them to lead a life of crime in the British Atlantic world. The main differences between these works are the amount in which they study. Both of Rediker's works focus on life at sea, but *Villains of All Nations*, exclusively focuses on pirates between 1716 and 1726 while, *The Many Headed Hydra*, incorporates a broader study of life at sea for all sailors. Earle's work focuses on the fighting between pirates and navies in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. A few articles that also discuss pirates and their place in the wider world are Simon Smith's "Piracy in Early British America,"²⁹ which talks more about colonial governments vexing over pirates, their activities and how to better protect their homes. Smith also states that "resources to defend the coast were limited due to deteriorating relations with indigenous groups."³⁰ J.L. Anderson's, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predations,"³¹ is an economic and political study of Global European politics during the Age of Sail. Anderson makes references to pirates and how individual colonial governments allocated resources to pursue pirates but not much else on the topic is stated. Finally, in Peter Leeson's book, *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*,³² Leeson discusses how Adam Smith's "Invisible Hand" guided merchants and sellers to help others in order to benefit themselves and how the "Invisible Hook" differs from

²⁸ Marcus Rediker. *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, (Boston, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2004)

²⁹ Simon Smith, "Piracy in Early British America," *History Now* 46, no. 5 (May 1996): 39-48.

³⁰ Smith, "Piracy in Early British America," 34.

³¹ J.L. Anderson, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation," *Journal of World History* 6, no. 2 (1995) 175-199.

³² Peter Leeson. *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2009)

legitimate economics. Merchants who sold products to their consumers to make money helped create wealth for all and taking some of it with them for their troubles of producing a product, however, pirates did not create wealth for society they rather took from it without providing anything in return.³³ Leeson's work also makes a statement about Marcus Rediker's, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, stating that pirates did not necessarily always go to sea to revolt against the inequalities of society, they much more likely went to sea for one thing and one thing only, money.³⁴ Kris Lane's, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750*,³⁵ discusses the development of piracy between the first landfall in the Americas in the 1490s up to the mid-eighteenth century. Lane focuses on the privateers, buccaneers, pirates, and freebooters and how they operated in and around the Spanish Empire during this period. Lane also closely studies the stories that pirates and the people who they attacked tell and discusses the change in these tales.

One work that sticks out in regard to piracy and the Indian Ocean economy is Michael Pearson's, "Tremendous Damage or Mere Pinpricks,"³⁶ discussing how piracy affected the economy around India and Madagascar around the turn of the eighteenth century. The aim of this article is to quantify the pirate threat to Indian trade.³⁷ Pearson states that piracy constituted "mere pinpricks" when it came to economic hindrances for

³³ Leeson, *The Invisible Hook*, 4.

³⁴ Leeson, *The Invisible Hook*, 11.

³⁵ Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750*, (Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1998)

³⁶ Michael Pearson, "'Tremendous Damage' or 'Mere Pinpricks,'" *Journal of Early Modern History* 16, no. 6 (2012) 463-480.

³⁷ Pearson, "Tremendous Damage or Mere Pinpricks," Pp. 464.

merchants and that natural factors and human error caused a majority of the goods lost en route to their destination.³⁸ Pearson considers the actions of pirates from the Atlantic and the South China Sea studying their tactics of spreading fear through the waters. In the Atlantic, the author discusses that he could not find how these attacks caused enough panic to stop sailors from sailing. In the Colonial Calendar of States Papers, Captain George of the Royal Navy writes to the Secretary of the Admiralty that several merchants will not sail out of Boston in fear of pirates.³⁹ Other letters sent between the American colonies and England state that pirates have caused uproars among merchants and that trade is affected by their illegal excursions. Pearson's article further discusses larger pirate attacks on Indian trade primarily focusing on Henry Avery's attack on the *Ganj-i-Sawai* in 1696 and William Kidd's attack on the *Queda Merchant* soon after.⁴⁰ The affect that piracy had on colonial trade is discussed by other authors, such as Marcus Rediker, as having a strong enough hold on the merchants that they would not sail without protection periodically during the Golden Age of Piracy. Lauren Benton's work, "Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism,"⁴¹ focuses on the legal realm of the Atlantic world and how piracy fit into this intricate spiderweb of European globalization and growing global legal arena. Benton states that, "Pirates are the central

³⁸ Pearson, "Tremendous Damage or Mere Pinpricks, Pp. 464.

³⁹ Captain George R.N., to the Secretary of the Admiralty, June 1689, in *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 13, 1689-1692*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1901), 57-76. *British History Online*, accessed March 7, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp57-76>.

⁴⁰ Pearson, "Tremendous Damage or Mere Pinpricks," Pp. 468-469.

⁴¹ Lauren A. Benton, "Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47, no. 4 (2005) 700-724.

character in a story about the mutual influence of Atlantic legal politics and Mughal-European relations.”⁴² Benton’s work continues to focus on the intricacies that make up the word piracy and how the term changed in legal terms over the course of the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. Jon Latimer’s, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire*,⁴³ discusses how the buccaneers in the Caribbean helped influence the downfall of the Spanish supremacy in the region. Similarly, to Benton’s work, Latimer’s focuses on the factors that played into the changing colonial realm of the Caribbean and the Spanish Main, and how, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Spain lost its title as the leading colonial power and the British Empire grew into that place.

The historiography of piracy once again shifts around the 2010s, this time focusing on indigenous communities and women’s history. This is a very interesting change in the study of early-modern Atlantic piracy and sheds light on topics that have either been neglected in the past or not studied altogether. This period really sees scholars move away from studying pirates and their histories as a whole and instead looks to the experiences of individuals who were affected by pirates around the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. The study of indigenous and women’s history concerning piracy has been largely overlooked over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the study of women and piracy is exclusively confined to Anne Bonney and Mary Read, two infamous pirates that sailed alongside John “Calico Jack” Rackham. Other than these two pirates, documents,

⁴² Benton, “Legal Spaces of Empire, Pp. 701.

⁴³ Jon Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2009)

and monographs on women in the pirate world have been difficult to come by. Scholars in the past decade have taken to studying accounts of pirate's affairs after the sacking of ports and the particular experiences of indigenous peoples and women and what the pirates had them do while they were held captive. The studies of indigenous communities and women, beginning in the 1980s, has become an important part of the British maritime world as sailors moved from Europe to Africa or the Americas. Studies on families left behind by sailors to make a living or European contact with indigenous groups in the Caribbean are an important subject in studying the political reactions to colonial problems. The study of Atlantic trade and economics also made a slight change in the historiography. This movement, again making a transition to indigenous experiences, focuses on local reactions to European occupation and desire for trade goods. Molly Warsh discusses the reactions of indigenous groups and European desires for certain products in, *American Baroque: Pearls and the Nature of Empire, 1492-1700*.⁴⁴ The field of indigenous reactions to European colonization has been studied in the past, but a purely economic perspective from indigenous groups has only recently surfaced in the last few decades.

The historiographical shift beginning in the early 2010s focused on indigenous communities and their reactions and interactions with pirates and colonists. Arne Bailuschewski's work in 2005, "Pirates, Slavers, and the Indigenous Populations in

⁴⁴ Molly Warsh. *American Baroque: Pearls and the Nature of Empire, 1492-1700*, (Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia; and The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2018)

Madagascar, c. 1690-1715,”⁴⁵ and 2008, “Black People Under the Black Flag: Piracy and the Slave Trade on the West Coast of Africa, 1718-1723,”⁴⁶ show the beginning of this shift by focusing on Madagascar and how pirates set up a small trading colony there in the late seventeenth century. These two works not only open the doors to the study of indigenous interactions with pirates, but they also show how important these interactions were for pirates and the development of hostilities between the two groups. There are articles that focus on economic and law histories of the British Atlantic and how the events that transpired in the early modern Atlantic world have shaped opinions today such as James G. Stavridis and Richard E. LeBron’s article, “Taming the Outlaw Sea,”⁴⁷ which focuses on modern piracy around the eastern African coasts but makes comparisons to piracy from ancient times and how it has developed over the centuries. Jane Hooper’s, “Pirates and Kings: Power on the Shores of Early Modern Madagascar and the Indian Ocean,”⁴⁸ discusses the benefits that indigenous groups experienced as they interacted with pirates and other European merchants on the island and how they learned about trade from these meetings. One particularly interesting work discussing the similarities in social structure of pirates and North American Indigenous groups is

⁴⁵ Arne Bailuschewski, “Pirates, Slavers, and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar, c. 1690 1715,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 38, no. 3 (2005) 401-425.

⁴⁶ Arne Bailuschewski, “Black People Under the Black Flag: Piracy and the Slave Trade on the West Coast of Africa, 1718-1723,” *Slavery and Abolition* 29, no. 4 (December 2008) 461-475.

⁴⁷ James G. Stavridis and Richard E. LeBron, “Taming the Outlaw Sea,” *Naval War College Review* 63, no. 4 (Autumn 2010) 73-84.

⁴⁸ Jane Hooper, “Pirates and Kings: Power on the Shores of Early Modern Madagascar and the Indian Ocean,” *Journal of World History* 22, no. 2 (June 2011) 215-242.

Matthew Bahar's, "People of the Dawn, People of the Door: Indian Pirates and the Theft of an Atlantic World."⁴⁹ Arne Bialuschewski published another work, "Slaves of the Buccaneers: Mayas in Captivity in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century,"⁵⁰ again looking into the problems that pirates and European explorers caused for Indigenous communities. The 2020s tend to really place an emphasis on the interactions between pirates, European sailors, Indigenous groups, and women, all talking about the benefits and problems that are caused by the interactions between these groups throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the mid 2010s, works discussing the changing in politics and laws concerning piracy came out and focused on different aspects of the colonial government against pirates. Douglas Burgess's, *The Policy of Pirates: Crime and Civil Disobedience in Colonial America*,⁵¹ talks about how laws changed dramatically throughout the final decade of the seventeenth century and the opening decades of the eighteenth century. Piracy went hand in hand with the development of colonial law. Similarly, Guy Chet's, *The Ocean is a Wilderness: Atlantic Piracy and the Limits of State Authority, 1688-1856*,⁵² discusses a borderlands history of the British Atlantic world and how pirates as well as naval and political development thrived in the Atlantic. Chet's work also

⁴⁹ Matthew R. Bahar., "People of the Dawn, People of the Door: Indian Pirates and the Theft of an Atlantic World," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 2 (September 2014) 401-426.

⁵⁰ Arne Bialuschewski, "Slaves of the Buccaneers: Mayas in Captivity in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (Jan 2017) 41-63.

⁵¹ Douglas Burgess. *The Policy of Piracy: Crime and Civil Disobedience in Colonial America*, (New Hampshire, University Press of New England, 2014)

⁵² Guy Chet. *The Ocean is a Wilderness: Atlantic Piracy and the Limits of State Authority, 1688 1856*, (Boston, Massachusetts, University of Massachusetts Press, 2014)

challenges that the British Empire did everything in its power to stamp out piracy as quickly as possible by the late 1720s, but illegal trade and piratical acts continued on well through the eighteenth century. Mark G. Hanna's, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*,⁵³ gives a great introduction and a broad overview of the rise of piracy and the British Empire throughout the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Another good resource on the development of piracy throughout the growing British Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is David Head's, *The Golden Age of Piracy: The Rise, Fall, and Enduring Popularity of Pirates*.⁵⁴ Head's work, much like Hanna's, covers the growth of Atlantic Piracy alongside the British Empire in the Caribbean and the Atlantic Ocean. He also covers the laws that are put into place in the closing years of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century to attempt to combat pirates legally and make trials easier for colonies. Finally, Head also discusses the views of pirates in their time and how the pirate has become a legendary figure into the twenty-first century. Kevin P. McDonald's, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves: Colonial America and the Indo-Atlantic World*,⁵⁵ shows how Atlantic pirates facilitated trade between the Indian Ocean and the American colonies, bringing from one place to another and for a cheaper price than most legitimate merchants. McDonald discusses how the demand for Indian goods in the North American colonies increased and merchants

⁵³ Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 2015)

⁵⁴ David Head, *The Golden Age of Piracy: The Rise, Fall, and Enduring Popularity of Pirates*, (Athens, Georgia, University of Georgia Press, 2018)

⁵⁵ Kevin P. McDonald., *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves: Colonial America and the Indo Atlantic World*, (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 2015)

were willing to go into an alliance with pirate traders to obtain them. This work focuses strays away from focusing on pirates and their lives to what they did economically in the European colonies. They did not do this out of care for the colonists, but to obtain wealth for themselves and their crews.

The historiography concerning piracy and political as well as naval development is quite extensive, and the study of how piracy affected trade and local colonial politics is discussed by region. This thesis will discuss how piracy affected the British Atlantic World as a whole and how the main body of government in England reacted and retaliated to the depredations made by buccaneers and pirates throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Colonial records show that these lawless sailors caused uproar among merchants, politicians, and the average people quite frequently, yet the British government did not send help or listen to the pleas for decades until the late 1710s and 1720s. It is important to not only study individual regions during specific periods, but to see how piracy affected the entirety of politics and trade throughout the growing British Empire and how it ultimately came to an end at the hands of the British government. Each era in the Golden Age of Piracy, the buccaneers, the pirates, and the freebooters plays an integral role in the development of political opinions during this period and how not only Parliament handled colonial complaints, but how the government and the military changed the way it participated with these groups.

Each chapter of this thesis will be divided into each of the smaller periods in order to study the political reactions from colonial governors and the larger political body in England in response to pirate attacks. Chapter 1 will consist of the period between the

1680s and the late 1690s. The Buccaneers committed crime at sea, but they were not nearly as aggressive as the later freebooters were. The colonial governments during this period also did not have any universal laws concerning piracy meaning that each governor could treat pirates however they saw fit and captured pirates had to be sent back to England for trial.⁵⁶ The Nine Years War also greatly affected the way that the Buccaneers were treated in the West Indies as some could be hired as privateers. The Buccaneers sailed between the West Indies and the Indian Ocean, but attacks on British East India Company convoys and Mughal treasure fleets created a very anti-pirate atmosphere, pushing most back into the Caribbean. Colonial governments sent pleas to Parliament for more resources to improve island defenses and better ships with more men and armaments. However, these pleas seemingly fell on deaf ears as any navy ships sent to the American colonies were run down and severely undermanned. Colonial panic only grew as merchants began to sail less between islands as the threat of being robbed grew. Investors also slowed sponsoring expeditions as the threat of pirates grew and made already uncertain voyages nearly impossible.

Chapter 2 focuses on the late 1690s to the early 1710s and the development of the navy and the state between the end Nine Years War and the end of the War of Spanish Succession. Piracy continued to grow throughout the Atlantic world and political and merchant discomfort only escalated during this period. Men like Henry Avery, Thomas

⁵⁶ "William III, 1698-9: An Act for the more effectuall Suppressions of Piracy. [Chapter VII. Rot. Parl. 11 Gul. III. p. 2. n. 5.]," in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 7, 1695-1701*, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1820), 590-594. *British History Online*, accessed March 6, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol7/pp590-594>.

Tew, and William Kidd spread fear throughout the empire and became some of the most wanted men in the world⁵⁷ causing even more outrage that the government did not have a law put into place to suppress pirates and that all captured pirates had to be sent to England for trial and no colony could do it themselves. Up until 1698 when King William III implemented “An Act for the more effectual Suppression of Piracy” the last monarch to create a law concerning piracy had been Henry VIII in 1536 with “the Offences at Sea Act.”⁵⁸ Along with studying the development of the state and navy, the treatment of sailors dramatically changed at the end of the War of Spanish Succession causing an influx of sailors turning pirate. The navy employed roughly 40,000 seamen but by 1713 and 1714, this number dropped below 10,000⁵⁹ and wages were cut for those who remained on navy and merchant vessels. The sacking of around 30,000 sailors drove these men to seek economic opportunities elsewhere, specifically on board pirate ships to hopefully make a fortune quickly.

⁵⁷ See Chapters 1, 22, and 23 in, Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most Notorious Pirates*, ed. by Arthur L. Hayward, (Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, London, UK, 1955)

⁵⁸ *A complete collection of state-trials, and proceedings for high treason, and other crimes and misdemeanours; from the reign of King Richard II. to the end of the reign of King George I. In six volumes. With two alphabetical tables to the whole*, 2nd ed. Vol. 6. London:

printed for J. Walthoe sen. R. Vincent sen. J. and J. Knapton, R. Knaplock, J. Roberts, J. Darby, S. Buckley, D. Midwinter and A. Ward, A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, B. Lintot, R. Gosling, W. Mears, B. Sprint, J. Tonson, W. Innys, J. Osborn and T. Longman, T. Woodward, R. Robinson, T. Saunders, B. Motte, J. Walthoe Jun. C. King, F. Clay, W. Battersby, J. Batley, T. Cox, J. Peele, E. Symon, S. Noble, R. Williamson, T. Wotton, D. Browne, B. Creake, J. Clarke, R. Hett, T. Osborne, L. Gilliver, J. Staggs, M.DCC.XXX. [1730]. Pg. 156-158 *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 14, 2022). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0124971068/ECCO?u=unl_kenney&sid=bookmark&ECCO&id=b977208f&pg=2. Pp. 158-159.

⁵⁹ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, Pp. 23.

Chapter 3 examines the end of the Golden Age of Piracy and the most aggressive era both for pirates and the government and the social order aboard pirate ships compared to that of merchant or navy vessels. The navy hired more sailors every year and hunting pirates became more important while active pirates declined between the years 1716 and 1726 in part due to fear of capture and execution or better opportunities for legitimate sailing jobs. Pirate trials also became more of a death sentence than a trial in this final period as many who had a trial typically sentenced to death, executed by hanging then their bodies were hung at ports to ward off any other pirates in fears of being next on the gallows. Bartholomew Roberts and fifty-two of his crew fell into the hands of British Royal Navy ships and were hanged all down the Gold Coast in Africa.⁶⁰ Social order aboard pirate ships greatly differed from order aboard merchant and navy vessels. Pirates adhered to a strict code of conduct aboard their ships and had a distinct social hierarchy that other ships did not. Captains could not dictate what the crew did and only had total control during times of battle or chase.⁶¹ Other than these few moments, the entire crew would be consulted to make decisions on where to sail next in contrast to the life aboard other ships being that the captain had total control at all times. Captains aboard pirate ships had to be elected by the crew and once in the role, the crew could easily elect a new captain. Captains could be replaced by cowardice or mistreatment of the crewmembers.⁶² Shares aboard pirate ships also differed as pirates split prizes more equally than merchant or navy captains. Buccaneer and privateering crews, along with others throughout the

⁶⁰ Peter Earle. *The Pirate Wars*, (New York City, NY, Thomas Dunne Books, 2003)

⁶¹ Marcus Rediker, "Under the Banner of King death," Pp. 209.

⁶² Rediker. *Outlaws of the Atlantic*, Pp. 68.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, adopted the Jamaica Discipline which stated that, “the captain of a buccaneer ship received two shares of any booty, officers one and half shares each, and seamen one share each.”⁶³ By following this code, and sometimes adding laws to it, pirate crews greatly diminished the economic disparity between captain and sailor. Captured captains reported that life aboard pirate ships did not agree with the normal practices that merchants and the navy were accustomed to, and the crew could easily move about the decks and the captain’s quarters as they pleased.

This thesis will discuss the evolution of political opinions and actions concerning pirates and piracy in the British Atlantic world between 1680 and 1730. Many factors contribute to ideological shift during this period and many scholars break the Golden Age of Piracy into three distinct parts, each with its own unique political sphere. Parliamentary officials and colonial politicians during the late seventeenth century attempted to capture pirates, but between lack of navy sailors in the colonial areas, pirates, or buccaneers, served the colonies in some military capacity and typically received some kind of pardon sent by the Great Seal of England for their previous wrongdoings. The buccaneers would usually return to a life of crime when the fighting ended. Corrupt merchants and politicians also played a part in the failures of suppressing pirates even when England started forcing certain Acts to be passed to make trade routes safer and foreign relations stronger. The period between 1680 and the mid-1690s sees the end of the buccaneers but the beginning of the attempts by the British government to

⁶³ I.C.B Dear and Peter Kemp. *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, (Oxford U.K., Oxford University Press, 2005) Pp. 288.

effectually suppress piracy. By the end of this period, the buccaneers, who mainly robbed from the Spanish in the Caribbean and from Indian merchant vessels in the East Indies, changed into the pirates that dealt heavy blows to every European seaborne empire and were branded, *Hostes Humani Generis*, the enemy of all mankind.

Chapter 1: Government in the Era of the Buccaneers: 1680-1695

Piracy became an important problem for the British Empire in the second half of the seventeenth century. Privateers had typically found easy work during the reign of Elizabeth I in the sixteenth century. During wartime, the British Royal Navy employed privateers as a way to combat European competitors around the American continents. As the navy grew, privateers were not as frequently employed and forgotten about once the fighting was over. Of this forgotten group of privateers, the buccaneers of America were born and would wreak havoc in the Caribbean for decades. This chapter discusses the transition from privateer to buccaneer and the role these outlaws played in the wider world of English politics. During the first half of the seventeenth century the English colonization efforts in the New World began to succeed as Spain's power declined. This is also when the first buccaneers began to make the Caribbean their home. As tensions back in Europe grew, warfare in the Caribbean became the epicenter of these power struggles. Fighting between all major colonial powers gave privateers jobs, however, as the fighting subsided, these privateers would join ranks with buccaneers and fall into the same occupation. As a result, these sailors mostly preyed on Spanish ships and not regularly on other European vessels. This was the beginning of the American buccaneers.

When Christopher Columbus landed in the Bahamas in late fifteenth century, the Spanish quickly took advantage of the new founded land and resources. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel of Spain were so pleased with Columbus's expedition they financed three more of his expeditions until his death in 1506. However, during his second expedition he could not successfully establish a colony in the New World and his career

began to decline shortly after.⁶⁴ Spain, having also reconquered the Iberian Peninsula, had new ambitions of a global empire. As their products from their colonies grew, other European nations became interested in the prospects of New World exploration and colonization. Other European powers followed Spain's lead and began establishing colonies shortly after Spain.

But for England, exploration was slow and met with little success early on. King, Henry VII, was busy with building his monarchy during this period after the War of the Roses. Despite the situation in England, Henry did send a few expeditions into the North Atlantic under John Cabot. In 1495, John Cabot was commissioned to explore the North Atlantic as it had been assumed that Columbus had only found an island and the coast of Asia was yet to be discovered.⁶⁵ Cabot sailed in May 1497 and by June he had landed in Newfoundland and returned to England by August. In May 1498, Cabot set sail once again but was lost at sea, yet the English did not lose hope as by 1506 a company had been set up by Bristol merchants for trade to the newly found northern shores. These expeditions continued to explore the northern Atlantic throughout King Henry VII and Henry VIII's reign but did not become a major concern until the second half of the sixteenth century. Thorough attempts at exploring the American continents did not prevail until Queen Elizabeth I's reign in the later sixteenth century.

⁶⁴ William D. Phillips, and Carla Rahn Phillips, *A Concise History of Spain*, (Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2016) Pp. 162.

⁶⁵ J.D. Mackie, *The Earlier Tudors: 1485-1558*, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 1957) Pp. 226.

Under Elizabeth, the English government began work to establish colonies in the Americas. These efforts were attempted when, John Dee, a close advisor to the Queen, and Humphrey Gilbert approved colonization acts in the Americas and in 1578 Gilbert set sail and had six years to establish a permanent colony.⁶⁶ Gilbert's attempt at colonization proved unfruitful as his ship sank on his way to North America. Another attempt at establishing a settlement occurred at Roanoke in 1585 under Walter Raleigh, but it failed within a few years. A successful English settlement in North America did not appear until the establishment of Jamestown in 1607, despite numerous attempts after Gilbert's voyage.

Colonial efforts in North America started in 1607 with Jamestown and efforts in the West Indies did not begin for the English until the 1620s. The new colonies sprang up and these were, "Undertaken almost entirely at their own expense by adventurers either singly or in proprietary or corporate groups, the colonies were not established according to any comprehensive design and during the early years received little direction and still less protection from the metropolitan government."⁶⁷ For the first few decades of the Seventeenth century, England and the government did not particularly care about these settlements besides the fact they helped England secure a fraction of the products of the Americas. England began to develop a more prominent presence in the colonies as they

⁶⁶ Allan Galloway. *Architect of Empire: Walter Raleigh*, (New York, NY, Basic Books, 2019) Pp. 27-35.

⁶⁷ Jack P. Greene. "Metropolis and Colonies: Changing Patterns of Constitutional Conflicts in the Early Modern British Empire, 1607-1763", in, Jack P. Greene. *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History*, (Charlottesville, VA, The University Press of Virginia, 1994) Pp. 43.

began producing more and they did not want this to be ruined by competition with one another or with England and the government did not want them to split into an independent polity.⁶⁸

Toward the end of Elizabeth's reign in the 1590s, excitement around a settlement in Guiana grew out of hopes of finding gold, this became one of the earliest ideas to establish settlements in the Caribbean close to Spanish colonies. Attempts to colonize two islands, St. Lucia in 1605 and Grenada in 1609, proved fruitless largely due to attacks by rival Europeans, which damaged the desire to establish a permanent settlement in the Caribbean.⁶⁹ Guiana still captivated explorers with the idea of gold or planting tobacco in the 1610s, but the colonists' views of the Spanish caused frequent royal intervention after 1612. This, along with other hostilities between Spain and England were fueled by English and Irish settlements around the Amazon River between 1611 and 1620.⁷⁰ Despite these hostilities with Spain, the English finally succeeded in establishing colonies at "St. Christopher in 1624, Barbados in 1627, Nevis in 1628, and Montserrat and Antigua in 1632. Jamaica became an English colony under Oliver Cromwell in 1655-1656."⁷¹ The Spanish, however, refused to recognize England's acquisition of Jamaica until the early 1670s. The English stated, "permitting that each nation can freely trade in

⁶⁸ Jack P. Greene, "Metropolis and Colonies, in, Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*," Pp. 45.

⁶⁹ John C. Appleby. "War, Politics, and Colonization, 1558-1625." In, Nicholas Canny. *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire, Vol. 1*, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 1998) Pp. 71.

⁷⁰ Appleby, "War, Politics, and Colonization," In, Canny, *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, Pp. 71.

⁷¹ Hilary Beckles, "The 'Hub of Empire': The Caribbean and Britain in the Seventeenth Century." In, Nicholas Canny. *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire, Vol. 1*, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 1998) Pp. 221.

the Caribbean, but they must refrain from trading in one another's waters."⁷² These islands proved highly beneficial to England's overseas empire as they provided vast economic opportunities for all classes. By the turn of the eighteenth century, the English Caribbean had become the most important part of the growing empire.

While the empire grew during the period between the mid-sixteenth century and mid-seventeenth century, privateers were heavily utilized by the English crown, especially during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I until her death in 1603. Elizabeth relied on privateers so much due to the Royal Navy being insufficiently outfitted and outmanned. At this point the navy consisted of smaller vessels and primarily the conscription of private men of war to protect English waters and wage war at sea. Privateers continued to be used by each European empire as their territory grew and tensions rose and declined between states. Elizabeth greatly relied on men like Francis Drake and John Hawkins to sail to the Spanish Caribbean and attack ports and treasure fleets in order to disrupt the Spanish monarch, Philip II, from receiving gold and silver. However, Drake and Hawkins, as well as the other privateers Elizabeth commissioned, had to keep the queen's involvement secret so that their missions could not be traced back the monarchy, such as her involvement in Francis Drake's circumnavigation.⁷³ Privateers were a very important group for Caribbean colonies through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries alongside buccaneers and pirates.

⁷² Simon Smith, "Piracy in Early British America," *History Now* 46, no. 5 (May 1996): Pp. 36.

⁷³ Kenneth R. Andrews. *Drake's Voyages: A Re-assessment of their place in Elizabethan Maritime Expansion*, (New York, NY, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967) Pp. 52.

Piracy developed in the second half of the seventeenth century alongside the fluctuation of power between empires. Piracy at this point began to increase due to the waning powers of the Spanish in the Caribbean and the Mughal state in the Indian Ocean, leaving an opening for illicit piratical opportunities.⁷⁴ Pirates flourished in the middle of these power vacuums because trade was affected by the unstable transition pushing seamen out of their jobs and thrusting into a life where they had to find their own economic opportunities. European settlements in the Indian Ocean gave rise to richer prizes for buccaneers and pirates causing a short lived migration from the Caribbean to the East Indies until the 1690s. This gave buccaneers access to richer prizes and safer harbors than the Caribbean did in the later seventeenth century.⁷⁵ During this period, the buccaneers of the Caribbean mainly focused on the Spanish trade ships instead of encompassing all shipping vessels. Between the 1630s and the 1670s, many buccaneers went from attacking Spanish treasure fleets, which would become better defended by the Spanish navy as the years progressed, to attacking the relatively poorly defended Spanish towns and harbors.⁷⁶ Into the 1680s and onwards, pirates began to exclusively commit acts of sea robbery encompassing any trading vessel in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean.

Piracy did not constitute a very noteworthy reaction to politicians back in England during the second half of the seventeenth century as they were more of a nuisance than a

⁷⁴ J.L. Anderson, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation," *Journal of World History* 6, no. 2 (1995) Pp. 191-192.

⁷⁵ Anderson, "Piracy and World History," Pp. 193.

⁷⁶ Smith, "Piracy in Early British America," Pp. 32-33.

major problem. Signing on as a privateer or a buccaneer during this period was not the same as becoming a full blown criminal and colonists saw it as a way to make money quickly. Settlers who worked for plantations that moved and could not afford to move with them typically did not have other jobs to turn to. These laborers had little to no opportunity to find new employment and would turn to piracy to make a living. Poor sailors would also be tempted by this way of life. This caused the buccaneers of the 1650s and 1660s to only recruit out of poor settlers or merchant seamen to join their ranks.⁷⁷

The small number of these buccaneers and privateers did not necessarily concern the English colonies in the Caribbean in the 1650s and 1660s as much as they would in the coming decades. Not much is discussed about privateers or pirates, besides small mentions, such as in May 1660 when around ten privateers were commissioned by England to protect the island of Jamaica from a possible Spanish attack.⁷⁸ Pirates and piracy did not become a topic for debate between the colonial governments and the government back in England until the mid 1660s. The last English naval frigate left Jamaica to sail back to England in 1660, leaving the island mostly unprotected from rogue privateers or pirates.⁷⁹ In 1664 the Caribbean islands were given instructions to

⁷⁷ Smith, "Piracy in Early British America," Pp. 30.

⁷⁸ Minutes of Council of Barbados, May 1660, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 1, 1574-1660*, ed. W Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1860), 479-480. *British History Online*, accessed March 15, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol1/pp479-480>.

⁷⁹ Violet Barbour, "Privateers and Pirates of the West Indies," *The American Historical Review* 16, no. 3 (April 1911) 529-566. Pp. 542.

help pay reparations to the Spanish for seized ships by the English and privateers. In August 1664 the main branch of government decided that if colonies would not assist in the restoration of goods and ships, they could be branded as pirates.⁸⁰ Discussions concerning pirates continued to rise through the end of the 1660s into the 1670s as more governors desired defenses for their islands and their trade.

The line that divided interests between Europe and the American continents acted as a political line and anything that the European continent agreed on did not always translate across the Atlantic during the late seventeenth century. Henry Morgan, a famous Welsh privateer, signed a contract from Sir Thomas Modyford, governor of Jamaica, to attack Spanish controlled Panama in 1670-1671 only months after the Treaty of Madrid was signed.⁸¹ The Treaty of Madrid, which was signed to cease hostilities in the Americas after the Anglo-Spanish War, caused somewhat of an uproar among the privateers. Sir Thomas Lynch, a colonel in the militia of Jamaica who later became Lieutenant Governor of the island, was sent to Jamaica to enforce the rules stated in the treaty about friendly relations with the Spanish. In the Caribbean, the hostilities privateers and other sailors harbored for Spain did not let up leading to continued attacks.⁸² Pardons were extended to the buccaneers who had served during wartime to settle down in the

⁸⁰ Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, August 19-22, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 5, 1661-1668*, ed. W Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1880), 222-231. *British History Online*, accessed March 15, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol5/pp222-231>.

⁸¹ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 95.

⁸² Peter Earle. *The Pirate Wars*, (New York City, NY, Thomas Dunne Books, 2003) Pp. 93.

English colonies and a few accepted. However, the rich prizes they could acquire in the Caribbean caused many to stay in the profession or go back when some voyages were too good to pass up.⁸³ At this point, the buccaneers began to cause more damage than they had in the past decades. In 1671 the Leeward islands desired assistance in the form of two men of war from the colony of Tortuga due to robberies conducted by a pirate.⁸⁴ However, defenses and naval vessels were not sent to the islands and if they were, it was the worst possible ships they could have asked for. As the 1670s moved to a close, colonial governors became increasingly aware of the dangers that pirates posed to their colonies and the trade of the empire. Governors began writing to England on how to proceed against the growing number of pirates scouring the Caribbean, looking for any prize they could capture.

By the 1680s, the presence of pirates drastically increased as they patrolled the Caribbean and the North American colonies. As a result of the Treaty of Madrid in the early 1670s, the English government began treating piracy as a more heinous crime than it had in the past. Before, piracy towards the Spanish in the Caribbean had been viewed as an honorable crime and as a result was widely accepted by the government. The cheap goods pirates offered to the colonies also helped officials allow these acts of violence and look the other way. Sailors who practiced piracy were not branded as the criminals they

⁸³ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 96-97.

⁸⁴ Sir Thomas Lynch to Secretary Lord Arlington, November 29, 1671, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 7, 1669-1674*, ed. W Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1889), 271-282. *British History Online*, accessed March 15, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol7/pp271-282>.

would become at the end of the century. As the policies changed surrounding piracy, more people were branded as pirates as the century moved forward. Any sailor committing acts of piracy was now branded as an enemy of mankind and viewed as a pest.⁸⁵ Piracy also continued to rise due to the lack of naval vessels allotted to the British Caribbean and North American colonies. The English government had pulled naval ships out of the area beginning in the 1660s in order to re-establish relations with Spanish territories. There were no defenses on the water that could chase pirates and capture them, only defenses on land that could deter them from anchoring nearby.

Buccaneers and privateers not only operated around the Caribbean and North American colonies during the 1680s, but they had also made their way into the Pacific Ocean at the beginning of the decade. This area of the American continent consisted of mainly Spanish colonies, but after a raid on Portobello in 1680, they crossed overland or sailed around Cape Horn, the southernmost part of South America, causing mayhem for the European colonies.⁸⁶ These depredations did not last as long as the buccaneers in the Atlantic did, but the chaos they caused was estimated to be great. Between 1680 and 1686 the Pacific buccaneers took approximately sixty-two ships, roughly two-thirds of the Spanish Pacific merchant fleet and conducted an untold number of land raids.⁸⁷ By the end of the decade the surviving members of these marauders returned to the Caribbean with little tangible wealth but had done tremendous damage to the Spanish Pacific world. Reports flooded to major Caribbean colonies of the sea-robbers spread to

⁸⁵ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 135.

⁸⁶ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 99.

⁸⁷ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 99.

the Pacific and news made it all the way to England that it seemed no colony was safe from rogue sailors. According to Peter Earle in, *The Pirate Wars*, the late 1680s experienced the emergence of the more aggressive pirates prominent in the late 1690s and early 1700s. These buccaneers and rogue privateers saw the end of the focus on Spanish prizes and “Ships of all nations, including those of England and her colonies, were now vulnerable and the geographical range of attacks extended enormously, with pirate attacks being reported not just in the Caribbean but all along the North American coast and across the Atlantic.”⁸⁸ This transition is subtle throughout the 1680s as official state papers suggest the steady increase in buccaneering and pirate activity across the Caribbean colonies and the North American coast, but by the end of the Nine Years War in 1697, piracy had taken on a new face.

Similar to the West Indies, the East Indies had its own political arena rather than following alongside the decisions and policies enacted in England. Colonies in the Indian Ocean had to make their own choices to help better their colony. One attack did force the government in England to take stronger control in the East Indies colonies. Henry Avery operated around the coast of Madagascar in the 1690s. He took over the ship he was sailing on in the Caribbean and sailed to Madagascar to seek his fortune. Avery attacked a Mughal fleet in 1695, taking all of the valuable possessions and claiming them for himself and later let the ship go. Once word reached the “Mogul, and he knew that they were English who had robbed them, he threatened loud and talked of sending a mighty army with fire and sword to extirpate the English from all their settlements on the Indian

⁸⁸ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 100.

coast.”⁸⁹ Avery’s attack on the Mughal fleet in the Indian Ocean caused such a massive uproar from the English government and the East India Trading Company that they promised that all who took part of the robbery would be captured. This caused the English to force pirates out of the Indian Ocean who would then relocate to the Caribbean and American continents. It would not be until the late 1710s when pirates would return to this part of the world after politicians allocated more funds to eradicating pirates in the Caribbean. Avery’s attack forced the English government’s hand to suppress piracy in the Indian Ocean and utilize the available forces to attack pirates. Before this, the government saw unfit to raise costs for merchants and consumers by moving less goods through trade routes at higher prices.⁹⁰ The English government along with the governments of the colonies and the Mughal Empire prioritized protection against rival Europeans or Indigenous groups rather than pirates.

Buccaneers always had a presence in the colonial Caribbean and North American colonies throughout the seventeenth century and mostly attacked Spanish ships and ports. However, for every attempt for European colonization of the New World, there were privateers and buccaneers that followed. These groups wanted to gain as much wealth as possible and hopefully retire before being caught or killed. Between 1655 and 1671 David Head discusses how buccaneering groups sacked approximately 60 settlements

⁸⁹ Charles Johnson, edited by Arthur L. Hayward, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most Notorious Pirates*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, London, UK, 1955) Pg. 27.

⁹⁰ Smith, “Piracy in Early British America,” Pp. 34.

around the Caribbean with incredible monetary gain.⁹¹ Buccaneers needed to acquire as much material wealth as they could in order to achieve their goals so everything from property to people caught their eyes in order to get a ransom. English, French, and Dutch buccaneers took native people during raids on colonial settlements for personal as well as financial reasons. Women captives were sold to logging camps while male captives were taken to Jamaica to sell by the buccaneers.⁹² When they arrived to sell their captives at logging camps, the buccaneers knew that males would not be taken as the loggers feared an uprising if there were too many male slaves in their camps.⁹³ Pablo Silva's 2020 article also discusses how buccaneers leading into the 1680s treated indigenous populations around Spanish ports and how they knew who would be sold and who would be kept.⁹⁴

Political officials abused their positions to gain personal wealth and many problems arose due to the people in these offices looking the other way when pirates anchored in their harbors. The Lords of Trade and Plantations, who advised the privy council as the empire grew, conducted a search through each governor's offices to instruct them to find which positions should be filled by the governor and which should be filled by the King and his council, and that each office is to be filled based off

⁹¹ David Head, *The Golden Age of Piracy: The Rise, Fall, and Enduring Popularity of Pirates*, (Athens, Georgia, University of Georgia Press, 2018) Pp. 133.

⁹² Arne Bialuschewski, "Slaves of the Buccaneers: Mayas in Captivity in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (Jan 2017) Pp. 50.

⁹³ Bialuschewski, "Slaves of the Buccaneers," Pp. 50.

⁹⁴ Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, "Afro-Mexican Women in Saint-Dominque: Piracy, Captivity, and Community in the 1680s and 1690s," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (Feb 2020) Pp. 11-12.

qualifications of the individual.⁹⁵ The King and his council filled positions in the colonies, placing people who would do a better job of enforcing Acts sent to them. In the case of Thomas Modyford, who was notorious for secretly employing buccaneers, was replaced in 1671 by Sir Thomas Lynch who did not enlist buccaneers or rogue privateers as his predecessor had. Between the period of 1680 to the 1720s, petitions from colonists, merchants, and colonial officials increased wanting more naval vessels to protect the islands. The allure of these rogue swashbucklers was fading during this period as they slowly became more hostile to all merchants not just enemies of the colonies. Matthew Garrod discusses how these petitions stated, “colonial governors in the West Indies and North America reported that their coasts were infested with pirates,” and, “piracy stood as the antithesis to mercantilism, threatening vital trade routes all around the empire.”⁹⁶ In 1681 there is discussion between the English Caribbean islands that any and all military and civil offices would do whatever they could within their power to suppress piracy.

Entering the mid 1680s, the King and his council began to notice and accuse colonial governors in the Caribbean and the North American territories of harboring and working with pirates and rogue privateers. On November 14, 1683, the King ordered the

⁹⁵ Lords of Trade and Plantations to Lord Carlisle, January 16, 1680, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 10, 1677-1680*, ed. W Noel Sainsbury and J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1896), 465-476. *British History Online*, accessed March 16, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol10/pp465-476>.

⁹⁶ Matthew Garrod, “Piracy, the Protection of Vital State Interests and the False Foundations of Universal Jurisdiction in International Law,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 25, no. 2 (June 2014) Pp. 199.

governor of St. Thomas to be seized by William Stapleton, an Irish planter who became the governor of the Leeward Islands between 1671 and his death in 1686, and attempt to hinder the harboring of pirates in the same port.⁹⁷ In April 1684, Sir Thomas Lynch of Jamaica along with the governor and magistrates of Massachusetts received orders from the King that they should do all that they could to help suppress piracy for Spain to keep relations good and that they must terminate assisting pirates by allowing them to harbor in their ports and offload goods to merchants.⁹⁸ Sir Thomas Lynch defended himself against any allegations that he had been harboring pirates and allowing them to sell goods in Jamaica, but he continued to be suspected of this. By August 1684, the Carolinas became a hot spot for pirate activity and that they were using the North American colonies as a base to rendezvous after attacks. By the end of 1684, many colonies had begun to implement more Acts attempting to suppress pirates, but by 1685, many official concerns grew as pirate attacks became more frequent and hindered trade throughout the Caribbean as merchants grew weary of sailing without protection.

As petitions and complaints about piracy flooded into England from the colonial governments, responses were written and actions were taken, even though the responses

⁹⁷ Order of the King in Council, November 14, 1683, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681-1685*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), 532-545. *British History Online*, accessed April 4, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp532-545>.

⁹⁸ The King to Sir Thomas Lynch, April 13, 1684, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681-1685*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), 612-623. *British History Online*, accessed April 4, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp612-623>.

were not as grand as the colonies had hoped. According to Louis Sicking in “The Pirate and the Admiral: Europeanisation and Globalization of Maritime Conflict Management,” piracy went against the law of nations and against humanity as a whole, however, Sicking states that piracy grew and moved alongside trade and the expansion of mercantilism.⁹⁹ Another article by Rebecca Simon states that the sailors accused of piracy were typically in the wrong place at the wrong time and did what was necessary for their survival and economic gain.¹⁰⁰ The desire to make a fortune on board a pirate ship always followed most sailors and is one of the most prevalent driving factors in sailors’ decisions to sign the articles. Colonies also traded with pirates and rogue privateers in order to obtain goods that were either far too expensive when a legitimate merchant had the item or could not be found due to stringent trading laws put in place barring colonies from trading with other nations’ merchants.¹⁰¹ With the inability of the English government to take considerable action to suppress pirates in the Caribbean and the colonial governments accepting bribes from pirates, their ranks were left almost completely unchecked and allowed to flourish throughout the American colonies.

As piracy grew throughout the Caribbean and North American colonies in the late seventeenth century, colonial officials kept a closer watch over what was happening and where buccaneers and freebooters came from. In 1681 some buccaneers had caused

⁹⁹ Louis Sicking, “The Pirate and the Admiral: Europeanisation and Globalisation of Maritime Conflict Management,” *Journal of the History of International Law* 20, no. 4 (2018) Pp. 430-431.

¹⁰⁰ Rebecca Simon, “Hard Violent: Unpredictable,” *History Now* 68, no. 2 (Feb. 2018): Pp. 26.

¹⁰¹ Rebecca Simon, “Hard Violent” Pp. 28.

damage to surrounding islands in the Caribbean from Jamaica. A few merchants had made it known that these attacks would have lasting effects on the island of Jamaica and hurt the reputations of honest working planters and other merchants if these robbers could not be reprimanded and future offenders stopped.¹⁰² More accounts in February 1681 state that Henry Morgan apprehended and executed a pirate by the name of Jacob Everson. Morgan had taken a single ship out into the harbor and boarded Everson's ship, shooting a few men while the rest jumped into the water, ultimately being executed while trying to escape and few being brought back to shore.¹⁰³ Morgan discusses in his letter to the Earl of Sunderland that the pirates that he had captured now awaited the death sentence. He also discusses the more pressing matter that the Spanish are the real threat to trade as they had captured over twenty ships within the year.¹⁰⁴ Pirates at this point are becoming a larger threat, but other factors in the disruption of trade are more pressing than pirates. Morgan continued to capture and execute pirates throughout the next few

¹⁰² "Colonel Long's draft of a letter for Jamaica," January 27, 1681, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681-1685*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), 1-7. *British History Online*, accessed March 16, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp1-7>.

¹⁰³ Sir Henry Morgan to the Earl of Sunderland, February 1, 1681, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681-1685*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), 7-15. *British History Online*, accessed March 28, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp7-15>.

¹⁰⁴ Sir Henry Morgan to the Earl of Sunderland, February 1, 1681, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681-1685*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), 7-15. *British History Online*, accessed March 28, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp7-15>.

months; however, the King revokes his commission as lieutenant-governor of Jamaica under the suspicion of working with certain pirates in the area.¹⁰⁵

Political officials in the Caribbean took different courses of action when it came to pirates and buying their goods, like Henry Morgan, an ex-privateer who was well received for his bravery fighting against the Spanish and later became Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica, who typically captured and executed them while others accepted bribes and allowed them to conduct business.¹⁰⁶ North American colonies had a growing number of pirates throughout the 1680s and their zenith came in the 1710s before the Royal Navy pushed them into the Indian Ocean in 1718. The colonial economics of the North American colonies began to rely on pirate goods and at some points could almost not turn them away. Renate Bridenthal discusses how Rhode Island specifically benefitted from pirates trading stolen goods to merchants and politicians. The Rhode Island colony so heavily relied on stolen goods procured by pirates that it not only affected their economy, but it also had an impact on the way the colony changed politically. Officials changed the admiralty jurisdiction laws, to the English government's disapproval, so that pirated goods could flow into the harbor more freely than before,

¹⁰⁵ The King to Sir Henry Morgan, September 7, 1681, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681-1685*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), 105-118. *British History Online*, accessed March 28, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp105-118>.

¹⁰⁶ Major James Banister to Sec. Lord Arlington, March 30, 1672, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 7, 1669-1674*, ed. W Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1889), 335-344. *British History Online*, accessed May 2, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol7/pp335-344>.

changing the way that colonies interacted with the “Old World.”¹⁰⁷ This happened to different extents all throughout the colonies, changing politics and trade as well as the tinkering with the laws put in place by the government who had no idea what the colonies needed to survive and to flourish.

This happened not only in the Caribbean and the North American colonies, but also in the Indian Ocean around this period. The East India Trading Company had established trade routes throughout India and Africa and pirates took advantage of the merchant vessels that sailed there. The Royal Navy could not afford to protect every merchant vessel and fleet that left ports leaving huge amounts of money ripe for the picking. Pirates had an intense presence in the Indian Ocean between the 1650s and the 1680s outnumbering the buccaneers of the Caribbean at the time. Pirates in the Indian Ocean had the most contact with indigenous groups in Madagascar. These indigenous groups developed a beneficial relationship with pirates as they introduced them to European oceanic trade and in return helped pirates survive on the island.¹⁰⁸ Originally, pirates exploited the small warring groups by selling goods to multiple chiefs and making a quick profit. As the seventeenth century marched forward, these indigenous communities took tactics and lessons from trading with pirates on maritime violence and some aspects of the political organization on board pirates ships.¹⁰⁹ Pirates not only traded with indigenous groups on Madagascar, but they also developed strong social

¹⁰⁷ Renate Bridenthal, “The Hidden History of Crime, Corruption, and States: An Introduction,” *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 3 (Spring 2012) Pp. 577.

¹⁰⁸ Jane Hooper, “Pirates and Kings: Power on the Shores of Early Modern Madagascar and the Indian Ocean,” *Journal of World History* 22, no. 2 (June 2011) Pp. 217.

¹⁰⁹ Hooper, “Pirates and Kings,” Pp. 218.

relationships among the population. Many decided to marry into ruling classes to gain more supplies and the native communities would in turn gain military support.¹¹⁰

Relations between these Malagasy communities and pirates grew to the point where a permanent settlement was established in the 1690s, but ultimately failed when the English government made efforts to push pirates out of the area and tensions with Malagasy communities became hostile.

The Indian Ocean acted as one of the most prominent hunting grounds for pirates in the late seventeenth century until the English forced them out into the Atlantic. Captain William Kidd's crew aboard the *Blessed William*, which they stole from Kidd, sailed to Madagascar in 1690 in order to make themselves a fortune. While they sailed in the area, they were able to make approximately 800 pounds per sailor and return to the Colony of New York and retire.¹¹¹ The region around Madagascar helped pirates tremendously when looking to obtain mass amounts of loot and maximize their profits. Pirates did mingle and intermix with indigenous groups throughout Madagascar, but most sea violence circulated around Indian trading vessels and a majority of European ships were not the prime target for pirates according to Michael Pearson.¹¹² Pirates attacking these trading ships would typically not harm many of the sailors if they surrendered and did not

¹¹⁰ Arne Bailuschewski, "Pirates, Slavers, and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar, c. 1690 1715," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 38, no. 3 (2005) Pp. 422.

¹¹¹ Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 2015) Pp. 215.

¹¹² Michael Pearson, "'Tremendous Damage' or 'Mere Pinpricks,'" *Journal of Early Modern History* 16, no. 6 (2012) Pp. 464.

put up resistance and mostly encouraged them to keep trading.¹¹³ At the end of the seventeenth century and up to 1710 as the relationships between pirates and indigenous communities grew and prospered, trade grew between the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean. As pirates moved products to the Caribbean for cheaper than most legitimate merchants, colonial officials would give letters of marque to pirates to act as privateers in order to secure trade goods and even slaves from Madagascar and surrounding coasts and bring them back to the North American colonies.¹¹⁴ This continued well into the 1690s, when finally, the English government pushed pirates out of Madagascar in 1698.¹¹⁵ Even though the pirates were pushed out of this region, the idea that it was a safe place lasted in stories and legends for pirates to return to when they ultimately left the Caribbean and North American colonies in the late 1710s.

The discussion of suppressing pirates came to be in the early 1680s as they became an increasingly worrisome group. In September, Sir Thomas Lynch, governor of Jamaica, got word from England of Acts he should pass on his island, some being the Revenue Bill, an Act for naturalization, and any piracy suppression acts, even though there were none drawn up for the empire as a whole at this point.¹¹⁶ One reason that trading vessels had problems with pirates is due to no uniform act suppressing piracy and

¹¹³ Pearson, "Tremendous Damage," Pp. 467.

¹¹⁴ Pearson, "Tremendous Damage," Pp. 472.

¹¹⁵ Hooper, "Pirates and Kings," Pp. 215.

¹¹⁶ Instructions to Sir Thomas Lynch, Governor of Jamaica, Sixty-One Articles, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681-1685*, ed. J W Fortescue (London, 1898), pp. 105-118. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp105-118> [accessed 28 March 2023].

the lack of any seaworthy naval vessels in the Caribbean.¹¹⁷ Colonial governors by 1683 had begun making preparations to defend themselves and attack pirates on their own without the help of any naval vessels. The governor of New Providence in the Bahamas wrote to Sir Thomas Lynch that pirates had attacked and taken goods from a ship in Carolina and attempted to trade in his port, however, they were prevented from doing this and were turned away. The governor stated that he had made war with that crew and any others who had committed acts of piracy.¹¹⁸ The piracy trials during this period were also much different than they would become in the eighteenth century. Henry Morgan had condemned four pirates to death; however, Sir Thomas Lynch was advised to only allow one to be executed while the other three should remain in prison.¹¹⁹ Lynch received his orders to keep the other three alive as they should await trial and Morgan had become quick to execute those accused of piracy. By the 1710s and the 1720s, any accused of piracy with some evidence proving this would be executed as a lesson to others not to find themselves in a similar fate.

Trouble persisted as there was no clear way to make sure that laws were being enforced in the colonies. Throughout the empire, common law in England was the only

¹¹⁷ Barbour, "Privateers and Pirates of the West Indies," Pp. 529-531.

¹¹⁸ The Governor of New Providence to Sir Thomas Lynch, July 6, 1682, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681-1685*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), 259-270. *British History Online*, accessed March 30, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp259-270>.

¹¹⁹ The Same to Sir Thomas Lynch, July 29, 1682, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681-1685*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), 259-270. *British History Online*, accessed March 30, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp259-270>.

way to try criminals and any person accused of committing a crime was sent to England to stand trial. Douglas Burgess states in England multiple offices across the kingdom worked to enforce the King's law such as the system of justices, sheriffs, courts, and magistrates while in the colonial realm all of these positions fell under the colonial governor.¹²⁰ By the end of the seventeenth century the Lords of Trade and Plantation as well as the Court of Admiralty had been put in place to help colonial officials address laws more swiftly, but it did not solve the problem of the administration of justice. The Court of Admiralty did not have jurisdiction over colonial commercial matters or over piracy as pirates were viewed as no more than burglars at sea. Until the eighteenth century, these trials belonged to the common-law courts in England. Burgess also discusses that by 1746 the Lords of the Admiralty did not interfere with colonial privateers and their wrongdoings as the governor was the only one who could handle them and prosecute them.¹²¹ Piracy mixed with a justice system that solely rested upon one individual, who could easily be bribed, fostered a world of illicit trade in the second half of the seventeenth century. The inability by the empire to truly define piracy also caused an enormous amount of confusion for the colonies. Douglas Burgess states that, "Customary law provided the seemingly inflexible definition of pirates as traitors and enemies of the state, yet justices repeatedly termed them as "sea-robbers," no different from highwaymen. These were two very different kind of criminal."¹²² Piracy grew to

¹²⁰ Douglas Burgess. *The Policy of Piracy: Crime and Civil Disobedience in Colonial America*, (New Hampshire, University Press of New England, 2014) Pp. 15.

¹²¹ Burgess, *The Policy of Piracy*, Pp. 16.

¹²² Burgess, *The Policy of Piracy*, Pp. 17.

such an extent in the Caribbean and Indian Oceans due to these miscommunications between England and its colonies.

The government and the practice of shipbuilding changed in the second half of the seventeenth century. Between the 1620s and by the turn of the century, merchant ships and naval vessels were built separately and a trend towards specialized naval ships was implemented by the 1680s.¹²³ In the 1650s, Oliver Cromwell supported a stronger navy in the Caribbean around the growing empire to protect against Spain and any attempts at a hostile takeover of colonial territory. Cromwell's justification for supporting a larger naval presence against Spain mainly consisted of the "Spanish disrespecting their treaties with England of 1604 and 1630," which stated that trade would resume as normal outside of wartime.¹²⁴ Cromwell's underlying goal of establishing a naval and military presence around the colonies was to take control and establish a monopoly on trade and make the colonies follow his goal.¹²⁵ Over time, fighting broke out between the English and the Dutch in the late 1670s. This fighting generated public support for a stronger navy and opened many eyes to the very real economic rivalry between European powers in the Caribbean. It also caused the implementation of reforms in the colonies consisting of

¹²³ Michael J. Braddick, "The English Government, War, Trade, and Settlement, 1625-1688," In, Nicholas Canny, *The Origins of Empire*. Pp. 287.

¹²⁴ Ville Kari, "Freebooters and Free Traders: English Colonial Prize Jurisdiction in the West Indies 1655-1670," *Journal of the History of International Law* 21, no. 1 (2019) Pp. 50.

¹²⁵ Ville, "Freebooters and Free Traders," Pp. 50.

improved means of supplying ships and the formation of a naval battleline tactic where naval formed a line.¹²⁶

The development of English naval power and economic power experienced a somewhat sharp rise during the late 1670s and the 1680s. Even though the navy had gained support in the Caribbean, they were eventually pulled out and their numbers diminished in the 1680s due to the rising fear of the French navy that had become the largest in Europe and the beginning of the Nine Years War with France in 1688. After this, colonial governors pleaded with the English government for naval protection and these requests were met on some level. There were instances where multiple ships were requested to protect the harbor and only one would be sent. Protection of the colonies slowly became a more pressing matter as the seventeenth century drew to a close, but it would take time for real naval defenses to be sent. By the time William III and Mary Stuart took the throne in 1688 the navy had steadily reduced its debt, regularly paid its sailors, had professional training programs, and a steady stream of new warships were consistently produced.¹²⁷ However, when the Nine Years War began, this would “test every aspect of England’s strength and reveal the adequacy or otherwise of the foundations upon which her navy rested.”¹²⁸ The British navy had become within the century one of the most formidable in Europe, but the war would put that to the test, and

¹²⁶ Paul Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, (United Kingdom, Ashfield Publishers, 1998) Pp. 63.

¹²⁷ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, Pp. 65.

¹²⁸ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, Pp. 65.

they could not always risk allowing ships to patrol for pirates in the Caribbean when fighting the French in Europe.

The Glorious Revolution and the Nine Years War dramatically changed the way that the monarchy and government viewed overseas trade and imperial expansion. The English people throughout the second half of the seventeenth century were typically concerned with European politics as they believed it affected their lives and in turn concerned themselves with Spain's rise to global power. However, when the Spanish empire did not meet this expectation, the English continued to concern themselves with the next state to fill the hole Spain had left as a global power. Scholars believe that King James II "pursued no constructive or consistent foreign policy."¹²⁹ The King originally wanted to become a champion of European politics and a savior of sorts, however, after a short time, he left foreign politics behind and domestic issues kept him busy.¹³⁰ King James II and his government believed that wealth came from commanding territory and not from the people who toiled to move goods. The King created a monopoly on trade and excluded many merchants and other groups that relied on trans-Atlantic routes. The goal of the King and his government was to control trade routes as financial success was the key to global domination. The English people had hoped James would go to war with France, but he had been trained in the French military, married Louis XIV's choice of bride, and advocated for a strong alliance with France.¹³¹ He also worked to ease tensions

¹²⁹ Steve Pincus. *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, (New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 2009) Pp. 306.

¹³⁰ Pincus, *1688*, Pp. 306.

¹³¹ Pincus, *1688*, Pp. 316-317.

between the English merchants and French settlers in North America. He wanted to work alongside France in dominating the world. One of James' primary foreign policies focused on territorial expansion to gain wealth and subsequently, power. James II's quest for financial gain and global dominion pitted the English against the Dutch Republic as they were England's strongest economic rivals.

William III took the throne in 1688 and believed, contrary to James, that wealth came from the people and what they could accomplish while working.¹³² As the Atlantic trades opened to all in the late 1680s, only a few seriously engaged in the new economic activities. According to Nuala Zahedieh in, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire*, many merchants, approximately 60 per cent, would export goods worth less than fifty pounds and import a similar amount. Only around twenty-two merchants in the Caribbean and North American colonies had exported goods worth over 1,000 pounds. The reasoning behind the fear of trade came about due to human error on board ships, poor weather conditions, and pirates.¹³³ The Caribbean colonies by the late 1680s saw more corruption surrounding the governors and councilors on the islands and fears concerning pirates had only risen disregarding the improvement to the Royal Navy. In February 1689, the governor of Bermuda had been selling defenses to line his pockets

¹³² Pincus, 1688, Pp. 381.

¹³³ Nuala Zahedieh, "Overseas Expansion and Trade," in Nicholas Canny, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire*, (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 1998) Pp. 404.

and the island was left unprotected from pirates and others.¹³⁴ This form of corruption happened all around the colonies causing commercial and political problems.

William III had different political ideologies than James, and English animosities against the Dutch were shifted to the French. William III became the leader the English were looking for. He would help push for war against the growing threat of France. William III spent his time focused on the war with France and European political endeavors throughout the empire. The war with France also derived from the devastation Louis XIV had brought upon the British American colonies in Hudson Bay, North America, and the Caribbean.¹³⁵ The government, Whigs and Tories, at the time of William III believed that the French needed to be fought. However, both factions differed on how to restrain Louis XIV. The Whigs wanted to fight because they believed that England was a European power and the war should be fought at home while not paying attention to the colonies, while the Tories thought that France needed to be constrained to the continent and England should fight to take over the sea. William ultimately agreed with the Whig idea of a continental course of action rather than diverting resources to protect the British Atlantic world. The Whigs pulled naval ships into European waters to fight the French at home.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Henry Hordessnell to Lords of Trade and Plantations, February 22, 1689, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 13, 1689-1692*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1901), 4-11. *British History Online*, accessed April 6, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp4-11>.

¹³⁵ Pincus, 1688, Pp. 340.

¹³⁶ Pincus, 1688, Pp. 353-356.

The Nine Years War caused problems at sea for the English during 1689 and the opening years of the 1690s. Many Royal Navy ships were shuffled around the empire to help defend against the French. Between the Dutch and the English roughly 100 naval vessels operated around the English Channel. In 1690, the Anglo-Dutch fleet consisted of 85 vessels over 1,000 tons and at the Battle of La Hogue in 1691-1692, consisted of 99 naval vessels between the allies.¹³⁷ In the Caribbean and North American colonies at this point, the colonial and main body of government discussed pardoning captured pirates, who would typically work as privateers at times of war. In January 1690 correspondence between the colonies and England concluded that pardons must be extended by the Great Seal of England, and by issuing these, “Such a Pardon will strengthen the colonies by adding numbers of the best men for sea or land service.”¹³⁸ Many of these former buccaneers that were hired as privateers during the war tended to betray their captains or contracts. In the case of Captain William Kidd in 1690 after an attack on the French island of Mariegalante, Kidd had secured 2,000 pounds and the respect of colonial officials. However, Kidd’s crew consisted primarily of buccaneers who did not like listening to Kidd and the orders from higher up, so they stole Kidd’s ship, the *Blessed William*, and abandoned Kidd on Nevis because they enjoyed the freedom of being

¹³⁷ Julian Hoppit. *A Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727*, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 2000) Pp. 99.

¹³⁸ Order of the King in Council, January 9, 1690, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 13, 1689-1692*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1901), 200-215. *British History Online*, accessed April 7, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp200-215>.

buccaneers.¹³⁹ Along with the pardon being issued out to captured pirates in the Atlantic colonies, the navy had been stretched thin in the region also, allowing pirates to do what they pleased.

During the fighting between the European states, the merchants experienced a decline in the ability to conduct trade. Traders had to pay higher taxes and could not ship goods between ports during their prime shipping season due to the naval press-gangs patrolling the waters around Europe.¹⁴⁰ Merchants still sailed but with the navy inhibiting trade during the prime season, it was easier for pirates to steal supplies across the Atlantic and sell them to the colonies as they had few choices. Typically, pirates could escape prosecution in the 1680s because they were one of the most vital sellers to the islands when it came from overseas goods. In the closing decades of the seventeenth century, Charles Molloy wrote, *De Jure Maritimo et Navali: or a Treatise of Affairs Maritime and of Commerce*, which discusses the laws of the sea from the merchants point of view. Molloy's work focuses on merchants and how certain laws benefitted the navy more than the ordinary sailor. Molloy discusses how if, "a merchantman in a port or haven, and a pirate, sea-rover, or other thieves enter her and over-power her men, and then rob her, yet the master must be responsible."¹⁴¹ Competition between European Caribbean colonies

¹³⁹ Robert C. Ritchie. *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1986) Pp. 31-32.

¹⁴⁰ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, Pp. 63.

¹⁴¹ Molloy, Charles. *De jure maritimo et navali: or, a treatise of affairs maritime and of commerce. In three books. The fifth edition. By Charles Molloy, late Barrister at Law.* London: printed for R. Vincent and John Walthoe; and sold by Ralph Smith, at the Bible under the Piazza of the Royal-Exchange, Cornhill, 1701. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 15, 2022).

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0125327334/ECCO?u=unl_kenarney&sid=bookmark

also affected the English economy greatly. In the 1660s, England was producing most of the sugar used in Northern Europe, however, through the 1690s and into the eighteenth century, St. Dominique almost entirely pushed English sugar out of the European market.¹⁴² Intense competition and the increase in taxes for the support of the military during the Anglo-Dutch wars and the Nine Years War had a negative effect on merchants and the colonial economies.

By the late 1680s and 1690s, the buccaneers had hit their peak as the fearsome “pirates” of the Caribbean, North American colonies, and the Indian Ocean. The buccaneers began to threaten trade between the colonies and the European mainland hubs of empire. This period between 1686 and the Nine Years War saw the slow transition from buccaneers, and their influence on future sea-robbers, who shared similarities between privateers and the full-blown outlaw that would be nearly eradicated by 1730.¹⁴³ When men like Henry Avery and William Kidd became famous figures in the late 1690s, the transition from buccaneer to pirate was fully realized by the government across the European empires. The colonial governments around this period began to emphasize the importance of new acts against privateers and buccaneers as well as actively attempts to suppress those who anchored in colonial harbors. In April 1686 Governor Joseph Moreton of Carolina passed the act against privateers and the Lord Proprietors stated that he should do all in his power to apprehend any who land in his port and if any citizens are

ECCO&xid=3a4ad5de&pg=1. Pp. 211.

¹⁴² Davis, Ralph. *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1973) Pp. 255.

¹⁴³ Peter Leeson. *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2009) Pp. 8.

found to be entertaining pirates and accepting their illegal goods, it is the governor who should be punished for allowing illicit trade to flourish in the colony.¹⁴⁴ In August of the same year, many governors reported pirates hunting around their ports, hindering trade and striking fear in the public. The Caribbean colonies started requesting even more naval vessels and munitions as well as soldiers to help defend and ward off any pirates. The secretary of war, William Blathwayt received reports that pirates had gathered strength and that unless serious action is taken, the Caribbean would certainly never be rid of sea-robbers.¹⁴⁵ This trend persisted as trade between colonies continued to be disrupted by the buccaneers and others, causing officials to call for better protection in the area and more laws put in place to effectively capture these criminals.

The 1680s experienced the zenith of the buccaneers in the Caribbean, North American colonies, and the raiders in the Indian Ocean. This relatively small group of sailors created massive waves throughout the British empire, as well as the French and the Dutch overseas empires, and grew rapidly throughout the period up to the Nine Years War. The buccaneers created the foundations for the pirates that spawned countless legends about their travels and riches leading into the mid-1690s and early 1700s. Politics

¹⁴⁴ Lord Proprietors of Carolina to Governor Joseph Moreton, April 22, 1686, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 12 1685-1688 and Addenda 1653-1687*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1899), 168-182. *British History Online*, accessed April 5, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp168-182>.

¹⁴⁵ Lieutenant-Governor Molesworth to William Blathwayt, November 2, 1686, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 12 1685-1688 and Addenda 1653-1687*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1899), 270-282. *British History Online*, accessed April 5, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp270-282>.

surrounding this group caused dramatic changes in the way that the English government worked with its overseas colonies and affected certain policies. The main body of government in England took its time in acting against the buccaneers and rogue privateers in the Atlantic as colonial complaints grew steadily throughout the 1680s. Many governors and merchants alike developed deep rooted fears of these seadogs and by the Nine Years War, many sailors refused to sail unless the navy had a strong presence in the area. By the time William Kidd entered the scene by 1689-1690, the buccaneers were already making their transition from attacking Spanish fleets and ports to robbing any merchant vessel regardless of origin. Even the buccaneers in the Indian Ocean had originally focused on non-European vessels to capture and sell to colonies in the Americas, but they also develop a change to attacking any ship they consider a prize. Coming up after the Nine Years War, the pirates will take the stage as one of the most problematic groups in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean and cause the English government to place more effort into the suppression of piracy ultimately leading to their downfall in the 1720s.

Chapter 2: Pirates and Politics 1695-1710

By the end of the seventeenth century, England shifted away from commissioned pirates in transatlantic operations and toward building its own naval operations. As a result of the Nine Years War, the growing British Navy solidified England as a powerful global force by the end of the war. The Royal Navy gained experience that was then applied in future endeavors as the sheer size of the navy and financial backing from the crown grew considerably. By 1694, the English navy had gained strategic control over the seas and the Nine Years War allowed the navy to grow considerably larger than its enemies. As a result, England relied less on privateers and pirates as a tool to protect overseas interests. England unintentionally created a large population of thieves in the West Indies that would eventually backfire on its own colonial trade operations. Instead of commissioned work, pirates found new opportunities through increased violence and acts of terrorism against all European shipping vessels. The pirates that emerged during the Nine Years War wreaked havoc on European overseas trade and colonies during the closing years of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth.

This chapter examines the increasing threat of piracy in the American colonies and the Indian Ocean as it became a major problem for the British political and commercial world. Starting in 1695, after the Nine Years War, the British Navy became a much more hostile work environment but continued to grow regardless of the poor working conditions. The growth of the British Navy marked the end for commissioned privateers. As a result of a lack of commissioned work from England, pirates like Henry Avery, Thomas Tew, and William Kidd purposely and effectively lured merchant and

Royal Navy seamen to sail alongside them for potential riches. Colonial officials continued to work with pirates as there were rarely any real repercussions for this until the turn of the century. Due to these deals with the colonies, pirates had safe ports to unload stolen goods and lay low. Utilizing certain strategies, pirates were able to exploit shipping lanes, steal goods, and retreat to safety quickly and effectively. For England and its colonies, the growing threat of piracy created additional needs for defenses and culminated in a universal law to suppress piracy and keep merchant shipping safe.

Initial efforts to control the increased pirate population came with minimal resources, and colonies could not rely on the English government to send defenses. Often times when colonial officials would ask for more ships, they would be sent, but they were either smaller in size or fewer than what was requested. The Council of Trade and Plantations started adhering to requests by the American colonial governments for more and better ships and defenses. As a result, new governors were elected by the colonists or by the King to better enforce the anti-pirate ideologies that quickly grew throughout the empire. Officials who had dealt with illegal traders or pirates in the past were sent to trial for their wrongdoings and any illegal commissions they extended to pirates were discussed. These corrupt officials had to start suffering the consequences of their mistakes instead of reaping the benefits of their illegal deals. However, as the Nine Years War continued on the European continent, colonial officials could relax because many resources were continuously pulled from the overseas colonies back to Europe.

The Nine Years War caused stagnation in the development of European imperial powers. King William decided to fight the French forces on the European continent

instead of at sea. The main actors in this war were France on one side, and the Grand Alliance on the other, England, Spain, the Dutch Republic, and the Holy Roman Empire. The war was fought primarily on the European continent and the European overseas colonies were stripped of many defenses and money. France hoped to expand its territory into Dutch control lands, causing the Grand Alliance to form and the war began. This caused the English navy to be pulled out of the colonies and stationed around France and England. The English navy had been victorious over the French in some battles in the English Channel that helped uplift the sailors spirits and moral. In the winter of 1691-1692, the French planned an invasion force to land in England. If successful, this invasion would have helped the French establish a dominant presence in the English Channel. Instead, at the battle of La Hogue, an Anglo-Dutch fleet of 99 ships and around 6,700 guns defeated the French fleet half its size and sank fifteen vessels. No English ships were lost.¹⁴⁶ The French fleet was nowhere near destroyed, but this English victory boosted English moral and challenged French naval superiority in Europe. Even though English naval supremacy began to emerge during the Nine Years War, the effects of pulling the navy out of colonial waters took its toll. During the course of the war, approximately 3,000 to 3,500 English and Dutch, along with other allied forces, navy and merchant vessels were taken by French privateers.¹⁴⁷ The English and their allies sent ships to the Mediterranean in 1694, causing the French to greatly diminish its naval presence there. The number of sailors during the Nine Years War also increased from

¹⁴⁶ Julian Hoppit. *A Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 200) Pp. 99.

¹⁴⁷ Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* Pp. 100.

around 22,000 in 1689 to over 48,000 by 1695.¹⁴⁸ At the end of the Nine Years War in 1697, the English navy had at its disposal 323 vessels totaling nearly 160,000 tons.¹⁴⁹ Overall, the Nine Years War at sea consisted of few decisive naval battles. Even though the Nine Years War did not consist of large naval battles, it pushed England to the forefront of naval supremacy.

With the quickly massing British Navy, these ships were mainly utilized to transport soldiers to battles on land. Have been defeated in the English Channel, France dedicated its military to a continental war. The initial battles focused on preventing French expansion into the United Provinces.¹⁵⁰ However, England's military had been in decline at the end of the 1680s. After the revolution of 1688, the English military fell apart and their number quickly declined. In May 1689, only 10,000 English troops landed on the continent compared to the almost 40,000 troops England had a year earlier.¹⁵¹ England resorted to hiring soldiers from the other allied forces during the war, such as some Dutch, German, and Spanish troops. Within a few years of the war breaking out, neither side could strike the other down. By the mid 1690s, the two militaries were too evenly matched, and neither could win a victory that would end the war. In 1694, the French failed to harvest enough food and thus, they entered a horrible famine. This mixed

¹⁴⁸ Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* Pp. 102.

¹⁴⁹ Paul Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, (United Kingdom, Ashfield Publishers, 1998) Pp. 81.

¹⁵⁰ Jonathan I Israel, *The Emerging Empire: The Continental Perspective, 1650-1713*, in, Nicholas Canny. *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire, Vol. I*, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 1998) Pp. 441.

¹⁵¹ Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* Pp. 102.

with the death of French commander the Duke of Luxembourg, and failed battles after 1695, the French quickly slipped into defeat.¹⁵²

While the Nine Years War took its own toll back in Europe, piracy, and the increasing threat of violence on merchant ships quickly became a dominant presence in the New World. As the war was primarily fought on the European continent, King William decided it best to leave the sea alone and bring a majority of the Royal Navy back to the European continent. At the same time, the English overseas colonies in the Caribbean and North America had problems as the naval ships were pulled out at the beginning of the war. The French colonies in the 1690s had the ability to establish defenses and attack English ports which were little defended. In 1690 Lieutenant Governor Stede of Barbados wrote that the island had as good of defenses as they could without the navy present, but if the French were to send a few of their ships, they would cause great damage to the island and the people.¹⁵³ Throughout the colonies, governors and merchants complained that they had little defenses to deflect incoming attacks from the French. There were also no privateers for the colonies to commission to help defend their territory. By 1693 the colonies wrote that sailors left the colonies, being convinced by pirates to sail to Red Sea and the Indian Ocean to make a fortune and retire. Governor Beeston wrote the Lords of Trade and Plantations about how colonists were leaving with

¹⁵² Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* Pp. 106.

¹⁵³ Lieutenant Governor Stede to Lords of Trade and Plantations, March 1690, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 13, 1689-1692*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1901), 220-224. *British History Online*, accessed June 7, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp220-224>.

pirates to go to the Red Sea. He wanted to extend a pardon to these colonists to keep them in the colony for support from threats, but he could not bring himself to pardon all of these new pirates.¹⁵⁴ These letters continued to flood into the hands of the Lords of Trade and Plantations as pirates became increasingly reckless and there were no responses for their pleas for naval defenses.

As for the colonies in the Americas, French occupied spaces came under attack from their main colonial competitors, the English, Dutch, and Spanish. The French fought the English in North America, the Dutch in India, and the Spanish in the Caribbean.¹⁵⁵ As a result of their defeat at La Hogue, France focused most of its military operations on land instead of the sea. By the end of the war, the English may not have gained much territory on the continent but paved the way for English dominion over the Atlantic compared to their European rivals.

The English economic and territory expansion efforts came to a halt between the beginning of the Nine Years War in 1689 and the end of the War of Spanish Succession in 1713 and did not resume until the mid-eighteenth century. However, even though there was a halt in this expansion, there was not any decline either. Britain could retain what it had created before these wars due to “Britain’s financial sinews could take the strain of war, her shipping could carry on despite the depredations of privateers, her traders could

¹⁵⁴ Lieutenant Governor Beeston to Lords of Trade and Plantations, July 1693, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 14, 1693-1696*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1903), 123-136. *British History Online*, accessed June 7, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol14/pp123-136>.

¹⁵⁵ Israel, *The Emerging Empire*, In, Nicholas Canny, *The Origins of Empire*, Pp. 441.

find alternatives to closed markets, and certain industries were stimulated by armaments orders.”¹⁵⁶ The Royal Navy during the Nine Years War did not play a major role in putting economic stress on France or on their overseas ambitions or at home, they blockaded France, which was their main role. Many of the English people wanted the navy to attack France’s overseas holdings for economic gain, but lack of preparation and organization hindered these ideas, and nothing came of it.¹⁵⁷ Even though the Navy did not play a significant part during this war, they still managed to learn how to be a better Navy. The sailors gained useful experience they had not had in the past and, as stated above, the Navy grew to over three-hundred ships.

By the end of the 1690s, the colonial governments in the Caribbean and in the Indian Ocean were pleading to the King and the English government to act against piracy in the overseas colonies. Laws in the colonies concerning pirates varied drastically from colony to colony and politician to politician. What really forced the government’s hand was the corruption of North American officials and the numerous attacks on vessels in the Indian Ocean. Colonial officials had always been watched for committing any crimes by the government, but they typically got away with accepting bribes and commissioning pirates. Despite this major problem plaguing the English colonial government, dealing with pirates benefitted the governors and the colony itself. Goods coming from England and around the globe were relatively easy to come by via the black market in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It was far easier to acquire items through

¹⁵⁶ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, Pp. 71.

¹⁵⁷ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, Pp. 79-80.

these means than through a legitimate merchant. In 1694 Lieutenant Governor Goddard of Bermuda accused the Governor, Isaac Richier, of commissioning and harboring pirates.¹⁵⁸ Another official accepted 2,000 pounds and allowed pirates safe harbor in Boston in September of the same year.¹⁵⁹ These petitions about corrupt officials continued to flood into the offices of London politicians.

Almost every colony had a governor who was corrupt in one way or another. Many made deals with pirates on a daily basis and allowed their harbors to act as bases before they set out on a voyage. Governor Benjamin Fletcher of New York was one of the biggest dealers of pirates as his successor, Richard Coote, the Earle of Bellomont, tried for years to clean up the mess he had made while in office. By the end of the seventeenth century, English officials back in Europe started efforts to crack down on crimes of piracy and bribery. Governor Fletcher traded and accepted bribes from a wide array of pirates from small and unheard of to some of the most infamous pirates of the time such as Thomas Tew and some of Henry Avery's crew. Thomas Tew became a close friend of Fletcher after his first piratical voyage. By 1695, Fletcher was facing accusations about his illegal activities by Peter Delanoy, the mayor of New York, who

¹⁵⁸ Governor Goddard to Lords of Trade and Plantations, January 1694, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 14, 1693-1696*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1903), 222-232. *British History Online*, accessed May 31, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol14/pp222-232>.

¹⁵⁹ Copy of Sir William Phip's Accounts, September 1694, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 14, 1693-1696*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1903), 341-354. *British History Online*, accessed May 31, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol14/pp341-354>.

stated he was offering safe harbor to the Red Sea pirates who returned with gold and other riches.¹⁶⁰ His successor, Richard Coote, wrote endlessly to the Lords of Trade and Plantations and to the government in England detailing what Fletcher had done during his time in office. On May 8, 1698, Richard Coote stated that he found proof that Fletcher had been dealing with pirates and accepting bribes to safely harbor any coming into the colonies.¹⁶¹ Later that same year in August, Samuel Roberts had information that proved Fletcher accepted 400 pounds from Robert Glover, a known pirate, to help keep him out of trouble.¹⁶² Throughout the period when he was being accused of helping pirates, he defended himself saying that he never offered protection without his council's approval and that it was not his fault if the people he commissioned turned pirate afterwards.¹⁶³ He was sent to England to stand trial, but the Tory government there decided to pursue his case no further, allowing him to retire to Ireland.¹⁶⁴ Benjamin Fletcher died there in 1703.

¹⁶⁰ Peter Delanoy to ?, June 1695, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 14, 1693-1696*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1903), 495-513. *British History Online*, accessed May 31, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol14/pp495-513>.

¹⁶¹ Minutes of Council of New York, May 1698, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 16, 1697-1698*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905), 191-206. *British History Online*, accessed June 6, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol16/pp191-206>.

¹⁶² Information of Henry Watson, August 1698, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 16, 1697-1698*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905), 399-406. *British History Online*, accessed June 6, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol16/pp399-406>.

¹⁶³ Alice Davis, "The Administration of Benjamin Fletcher in New York," *The Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association*, 2, no. 4 (October 1921) Pp. 243.

¹⁶⁴ James S. Leamon, "Governor Fletcher's Recall," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 20, no. 4 (October 1963) Pp. 542.

Other colonial governors committed the same crimes Fletcher did, but his case was one of the most pressing and New York was accused of being the largest hideout for pirates during the last decade of the seventeenth century.

Despite the growing number of pirates, colonial governors wrote to England complaining of the lack of privateers in the Caribbean due to the attraction of the riches of the Red Sea. There was a small number of pirate attacks around the Indian Ocean and Red Sea in the 1680s, but by the mid 1690s, the American pirates had planned to make their fortunes across the Atlantic.¹⁶⁵ The privateers that were usually employed by the government during times of war were nowhere to be found. The governor of Jamaica, William Beeston, wrote to the Lords of Trade and Plantations in 1693 about pirates making their way from the island to the Red Sea and returning with immense riches.¹⁶⁶ Beeston also discusses how Jamaican colonists began deserting the island for these expeditions. Other colonies reported pirates enticing large numbers of colonists and sailors to sail alongside them for the Red Sea. These voyages, more times than not, dwarfed what sailors made in a lifetime. In 1695 during Henry Avery's expedition, each sailor made off with 1,000 pounds. Also, during the end of the eighteenth century, in Thomas White's crew, each sailor made around 1,200 pounds after a successful raid.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Earle. *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 113.

¹⁶⁶ Lieutenant Governor Sir William Beeston to Lords of Trade and Plantations, June 1693, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 14, 1693-1696*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1903), 111-123. *British History Online*, accessed May 29, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol14/pp111-123>.

¹⁶⁷ Peter Leeson. *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2009) Pp. 13.

These voyages were not the norm, but many pirates could expect huge profits after a successful raid and would most likely continue raids when they needed more money.

In 1698, the Lords of Trade and Plantations and the other governors began to force the King's hand at creating an anti-piracy law. In February the same year, two letters were written to the British East India Company stating that pirates from Madagascar had caused approximately five million rupees of damage to Surat and surrounding towns.¹⁶⁸ These pirates would fit out their ships and crews in the North American colonies, sail to the Indian Ocean, harbor at Madagascar or a small island, such as Saint Mary's, attack ports and ships, and then sail back to America. In March of 1698, the Council of Trade and Plantations wrote to the King that implementing a law to effectually suppress pirates in the colonies was a necessity otherwise pirates would never stop causing problems.¹⁶⁹ In the meantime, colonies were advised to follow the Jamaica Act against pirates, which stated they could be tried in the colony. This was a very similar law to King William's Act, the more effectual suppression of piracy. In order to deter any further depredations in the Indian Ocean, a squadron of royal ships were outfitted in England and sent to attack pirate ports and any pirates sailing on the waters. Commodore

¹⁶⁸ Extracts from Two Letters to the East India Company, February 1698, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 16, 1697-1698*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905), 97-111. *British History Online*, accessed June 8, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol16/pp97-111>.

¹⁶⁹ Council of Trade and Plantations to the King, March 1698, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 16, 1697-1698*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905), 132-140. *British History Online*, accessed June 8, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol16/pp132-140>.

Warren was sent out and by July 22, he was writing to the Council of Trade and Plantations about the scope of his power against pirates and those who trade with them.¹⁷⁰ This expedition did not accomplish what it had intended, but fear of being captured caused pirates to flee back to the American colonies.

Globalization was one of the driving factors that allowed piracy to grow and expand into the issue it became in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the period of European imperial expansion, the world became smaller in some ways. European colonies had been established on the American continents and throughout Africa and into Asia. Communication between all of these places became easier as ships became better and faster. By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, products were being shipped from the colonies back to Europe. Everything from plants and food to animals was changing the lives of Europeans. Alfred W. Crosby's book, *The Columbian Exchange*, states that maize had made its way to southern France by the 1670s and by the turn of the eighteenth century had become a staple of the French diet.¹⁷¹ By the eighteenth century, the global economy had grown due to the constant movement of people in the world. Shipping became one of the most important factors for global strength, whether it be commercial or militarily, every colony needed supplies from somewhere else in the world. Stuart McCook discusses how agricultural exports helped

¹⁷⁰ Captain Thomas Warren to Council of Trade and Plantations, July 1698, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 16, 1697-1698*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905), 349-353. *British History Online*, accessed June 8, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol16/pp349-353>.

¹⁷¹ Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. (Westport, Connecticut, Praeger Publishers, 2003) Pp. 179.

economics thrive during the first half of the eighteenth century.¹⁷² Pirates were able to prey on this shipping and provide cheap goods because they had no production costs. All they wanted was more money than they had before. Globalization helped pirates make a living on the open oceans by providing them with almost entirely free goods produced by others across the globe.

“King William’s Act For The More Effectual Suppression of Piracy” became an important part of political discussions between the end of the Nine Years War and 1700. It took the government this long to implement a new anti-piracy law because they enjoyed having the ability to commission these men during wartime when the navy needed trained, seasoned sailors. However, the men that the government had commissioned in the past did not exist anymore, these pirates were ruthless and had no problem attacking any ship they found. Sir Charles Hedges, chief justice of the Admiralty, discussed a universal anti-piracy law with the Board of Trade and Plantations in 1697, but with the war occupying everyone’s minds, the idea was pushed aside.¹⁷³ It was not until the war had ended that this idea was seriously considered again by Hedges and the rest of the government. Piracy had become a much larger problem during the war as ships were moved around and colonies had little protection from attacks. By mid 1698, Secretary of State James Vernon was told a new law concerning piracy trials in the colonies was needed. Colonial governments had not done much to suppress piracy on

¹⁷² Stuart McCook, “The Neo-Columbian Exchange: The Second Conquest of the Greater Caribbean, 1720-1930,” *Latin American Research Review* 46, Special Issue (2011) Pp. 13.

¹⁷³ Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, Pp. 153.

their own and if they did, their courts could not try the pirates they captured.¹⁷⁴ By now, the government quickly prepared an Act to be sent to the colonies.

As the government worked on creating a new Piracy Act, pirates still ran rampant in the American colonies. Throughout 1699, the colonial governors pleas to England were constant. In January, the Council of Trade and Plantations again wrote to the King about sending more ships to protect merchants, colonists, trade, and businesses from pirates in the Caribbean and in North America.¹⁷⁵ Pleas continued and in March the Royal African Company wrote the Council of Trade and Plantations hopeful that the council would send ships to Guinea for protection and that they would not allow pirates to victual in North America.¹⁷⁶ King William also went to the House of Commons to give a speech about how illegal trade hurts the growing empire, "...if some good Bill were prepared for the more Effectual preventing and punishing unlawful and clandestine trading, which does not only tend to defraud the public, but prejudices the fair merchants, and discourages our own manufacturers."¹⁷⁷ Finally, in 1700 with the capture of William

¹⁷⁴ Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, Pp. 153.

¹⁷⁵ Council of Trade and Plantations to the King, January 1699, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 17, 1699 and Addenda 1621-1698*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1908), 1-19. *British History Online*, accessed June 9, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol17/pp1-19>.

¹⁷⁶ Royal African Company to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 1699, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 17, 1699 and Addenda 1621-1698*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1908), 110-124. *British History Online*, accessed June 9, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol17/pp110-124>.

¹⁷⁷ David Jones. *The life of William III. late King of England, and Prince of Orange. Containing an account of his family, ... Intermixt with very many original papers, letters, memoirs, ... Illustrated with divers cuts, medals, &c.*, 2nd ed. London: printed for S. and

Kidd, the Act was passed and prepared to be sent to the colonies, the first Piracy Act since 1536.

The Act was prepared and sent to the colonies at the beginning of 1701. King William's Piracy Act did help colonies try harder to capture and prosecute pirates, as they could now do so without sending them back to England. However, this new Act could only do so much in so far as there were still corrupt officials accepting bribes and harboring pirates in exchange for goods. Another downside of the Act pertained to the course of action against people deemed accessories to piracy. The King wrote to Governor Richard Coote about how any accused of aiding pirates had to be sent to England and could still not be tried in the colonies alongside the pirates.¹⁷⁸ This caused concerns among the Council of Trade and Plantations along with other politicians as they feared the colonies would not try and catch these accessories. If pirate trials could be conducted in the colony, but accessories could not, there was no need to look for them once pirates were in captivity. This rule would not be changed for years to come despite the lack of captured accessories. King William died in 1702 and his successor, Queen Anne, had to not only take the role of monarch, but also deal with a new anti-piracy law and enforce it across the empire.

J. Sprint, and J. Nicholson; James Knapton; and Benj. Tooke, 1703. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 15, 2022).

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CB0132669245/ECCO?u=unl_kearney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=ee90c37e&pg=1. Pp. 553.

¹⁷⁸ Draught of a letter for H.M.'s Signature to Governor the Earl of Bellomont, January 1701, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 19, 1701*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1910), 53-62. *British History Online*, accessed June 9, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp53-62>.

Pirate culture also took shape at this time through increased aggression and various strict codes aboard their ships. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, pirates acted more hostile towards any merchant ship or naval vessel they believed they could capture. They did this partly as a show of force, to make a name for themselves, and would act especially violently toward unwilling sailors. Colonial officials wrote to England stating that attacks from pirates increased during this period. By 1697, new legislation sought to uniformly suppress and try pirates due to the continued complaints of increased violent encounters.¹⁷⁹ Pirates began attacking ships that produced profit no matter where they came from. They attacked ships all across the empire from the Caribbean to the North American colonies, all the way to the Indian Ocean which held the most profitable ships. For example, Francis Nicholson, the Governor of Maryland, wrote to the Duke of Shrewsbury about pirates returning from the Red Sea with enormous amounts of wealth, bribing colonial officials, and retiring in the American colonies.¹⁸⁰ Others complained about pirates finding safe harbor in the American colonies grew, and about how honest seamen were pulled into the pirate life with promises of immense riches. Even though pirates profited greatly from these robberies, they were not

¹⁷⁹ Council of Trade and Plantations to the King, December 1697, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 16, 1697-1698*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905), 53-61. *British History Online*, accessed May 31, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol16/pp53-61>.

¹⁸⁰ Governor Nicholson to the Duke of Shrewsbury, June 1695, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 14, 1693-1696*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1903), 495-513. *British History Online*, accessed May 30, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol14/pp495-513>.

always violent when they came aboard a prize. The pirates of the 1690s and early 1710s slowly became the fierce rogues that Captain Charles Johnson wrote about in his 1724 work, *A General History of Pirates*. These swashbucklers steadily grew in number from the 1690s after the Nine Years War until the early 1710s.

Historians estimate the number of pirates active in the Atlantic between 1716 and 1726 to be approximately 4,000 strong.¹⁸¹ Unfortunately, the number of pirates scouring the seas between 1690 and 1710 is difficult to estimate, but their numbers grew during this period. The pirate population grew in the Caribbean and the North American colonies due to the lack of strong colonial defenses and easy prey in the form of undefended merchant shipping. For these rogues, this became a relatively easy occupation.

Many depictions of pirates in modern day media portray them as lawless lunatics who did whatever they wanted whenever they wanted and had no regard for their lives or the lives of others. This was not the case for the real-life pirates. Pirates from the 1690s onwards followed a strict code aboard their ships. Peter Leeson, author of *The Invisible Hook*, discusses how, “Contrary to conventional wisdom, pirate life was orderly and honest.”¹⁸² Pirates did care about lives in the way that it affected their profits while engaged with a potential prize. If either ship was damaged, that came out of their profit, along with injured crewmates and the death of merchant crewmen. Voting was also encouraged for every member of the ship. Entire crews would vote on a list of articles that they followed to maintain order while on the sea. These articles, or the laws, were

¹⁸¹ Marcus Rediker. *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, (Boston, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2004) Pp. 29-30.

¹⁸² Leeson, *The Invisible Hook*, Pp. 45.

reminiscent of the Jamaica Discipline, which is the code of conduct created and followed by their predecessors, the buccaneers and the privateers. The articles were agreed upon at the beginning of the voyage or when a new captain was elected.¹⁸³ Captains, quartermasters, and other shipboard officials were elected by popular majority and could be relieved of those positions if they proved unfit or disobeyed the articles. As discussed in the introduction, pirate crews all had a vote and profits from successful voyages were split into shares for each person. Captains, quartermasters, and other specialized members were given between one and two shares while everyone else received one full share.

Among the hundreds of pirates scouring the Atlantic, the Caribbean, and the Indian Ocean, three pirates in particular provide insight to piracy in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The first, and one of the most well-known pirates of the time, was Henry Avery. During the 1690s, he pulled off one of the largest robberies in history, plundering the *Ganj-i-sawai*. Avery started his career as an apprentice on a merchant ship and eventually found his way onto a ship preparing to journey to the Caribbean as a second mate.¹⁸⁴ On board this vessel he incited a mutiny and with his new ship, renamed the *Fancy*, sailed to Madagascar. Once the *Fancy* left Madagascar, Avery and his crew met with a few other pirate ships and discovered a Mughal fleet belonging to the Emperor Aurangzeb. The *Fancy* attacked and plundered 50,000 pounds from a

¹⁸³ Marcus Rediker. *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, (Boston, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2004) Pp. 65.

¹⁸⁴ Charles Johnson, edited by Arthur L. Hayward, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most Notorious Pirates*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, London, UK, 1955) Pp. 24.

smaller ship in the fleet and ultimately overtook the Ganj-i-Sawai.¹⁸⁵ Another author, Michael Pearson, estimates that Avery collected 50,000 pounds from the Fated Muhammed, a ship escorting the Ganj-i-Sawai, and roughly 600,000 pounds from the Ganj-i-Sawai itself.¹⁸⁶ After the fight, Avery and his crew deserted the other vessels and made their way back to the American colonies where they hoped to retire. Avery sold his ship to Governor Nicholas Trott of the Bahamas.¹⁸⁷ Avery did not stay in the colonies long and made his way back to England where he disappeared from history.

The second example of piracy in the late seventeenth century includes Thomas Tew. Originally from the Rhode Island colony, Tew then moved to Bermuda in 1691 where he received a commission from Isaac Richier, the governor. According to his commission, Tew was to sail to Africa and assist the Royal African Company and attack a French settlement on the Gambia River at Goree.¹⁸⁸ Ultimately, Tew changed course, and his overall objective, and sailed to the Red Sea. On this voyage, Tew and his crew found a rich prize that paid enormous profits for himself and his crew before sailing back to Rhode Island.¹⁸⁹ Then in 1694, Tew's crew wanted to go back out and make more

¹⁸⁵ Peter Earle. *The Pirate Wars*, (New York City, NY, Thomas Dunne Books, 2003) Pp. 117.

¹⁸⁶ Michael Pearson, "Tremendous Damage or Mere Pinpricks," *Journal of Early Modern History* 16, no. 6 (2012) Pp. 468-469.

¹⁸⁷ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 117.

¹⁸⁸ Eric Jay Dolin. *Black Flags, Blue Waters: The Epic History of America's Most Notorious Pirates*, (New York, NY, Liveright Publishing Co., 2018) Pp. 52.

¹⁸⁹ Charles Johnson. *A general history of the pyrates, from their first rise and settlement in the island of Providence, to the present time. With the remarkable actions and adventures of the two female pyrates Mary Read and Anne Bonny; contain'd in the following chapters, ... Chap. I. Of Capt. Avery. II. Of Capt. Martel. III. Of Capt. Teach. ... By Captain Charles Johnson*, 2nd ed. London: printed for, and sold by T. Warner, 1724. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 15, 2022).

money as they had squandered all they had made from the first voyage. Governor Benjamin Fletcher of New York granted Tew a commission, in exchange for 300 pounds, to sail back to the Indian Ocean in 1694-1695.¹⁹⁰ Governor Fletcher handed out many privateering commissions throughout his time in office. These commissions typically paid him well, but it finally came crashing down on him when the next governor, Richard Coote, became governor of New York and accused him of dealing with pirates and accepting stolen goods. Thomas Tew never returned to New York as this expedition proved to be his last. He died of a cannonball strike while in the Indian Ocean.¹⁹¹

As for the third example of piracy in the late seventeenth century, Captain William Kidd is one of the most well-known pirates in modern times. Kidd was born around 1645 in Greenock, Scotland to a family of a Presbyterian minister and found his way into the Caribbean by 1689.¹⁹² Kidd spent his time as a privateer during the Nine Years War in the Caribbean and eventually acquired his own ship to command. While he served in the Caribbean, he gained a reputation as a brave and honorable man and an experienced seamen.¹⁹³ The ship he commanded, the *Blessed William*, had about eighty

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0101317343/ECCO?u=unl_kenney&sid=bookmark&ECCO&xid=bc940058&pg=1. Pp. 37-38.

¹⁹⁰ Dolin, *Black Flags, Blue Waters*, Pp. 54-55.

¹⁹¹ Copy of a report from the Attorney General of New York to Governor Lord Bellomont, September 1698, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 16, 1697-1698*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905), 455-468. *British History Online*, accessed June 2, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol16/pp455-468>.

¹⁹² Robert C. Ritchie. *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1986) Pp. 27.

¹⁹³ Charles Johnson, edited by Arthur L. Hayward, *A General History*, Pp. 386.

or ninety former buccaneers, and fell under the orders of Captain Thomas Hewston of the *Lion*.¹⁹⁴ Kidd, now being part of this larger squadron of Royal Navy ships, sailed to and attacked the French colony of Mariegalante. The English ships were successful and returned to the island of Nevis to await further orders. However, Kidd's crew of buccaneers were not happy about following orders from Kidd and the Royal Navy captains. Governor Christopher Codrington of Nevis wrote to the Lords of Trade and Plantations about Kidd's crew abandoning him on the island and stealing nearly 2,000 pounds of loot from their former captain.¹⁹⁵ Kidd requested to chase his old crew but could not catch up and lost them at New York where he was thrust into a battle between the old government of the colony and new government appointed by King William III.

Kidd sided with the winning side in the battle and decided to leave the sea life behind for a short time. Kidd made his way to London to get a privateering license to hunt pirates in the Indian Ocean. His request was approved by the Great Seal of England and the King in 1696 and his voyage was financially backed by a few powerful Whig officials and the Governor of New York, Richard Coote.¹⁹⁶ Kidd made his way into the Indian Ocean and turned pirate. He attacked a ship named the *Quedah Merchant*, which became his main ship until he landed in the Caribbean where he left it.¹⁹⁷ He was

¹⁹⁴ Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, Pp. 30.

¹⁹⁵ Governor Codrington to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, March 1690, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 13, 1689-1692*, ed. J W Fortescue (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1901), 224-243. *British History Online*, accessed June 5, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp224-243>.

¹⁹⁶ Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, Pp. 54.

¹⁹⁷ Person of quality. *A full account of the proceedings in relation to Capt. Kidd. In two letters. Written by a person of quality to a kinsman of the Earl of Bellomont in Ireland.*

eventually captured in New York and sent to England to await his trial. On May 9, 1701, Kidd's trial began and after a long debate, he was found guilty by the court.¹⁹⁸ William Kidd was sentenced to death and executed at Execution Dock in London on the 23 of May 1701 and remained there for some time as a warning to any other seamen who thought committing piracy would pay out as some had believed.

The Act that King William had sent out expired and colonial governments had again written complaints about their depredations in the colonies. During Queen Anne's reign the Council of Trade and Plantations advised her to send a revision of the Piracy Act out to the colonies. From the beginning of her reign, she still received word that pirates were flooding the colonies and that governors protected them. In April 1703, the council told Queen Anne that George Larkin, the man originally tasked with delivering the Act to the colonies, was detained in Bermuda by Governor Bennett.¹⁹⁹ She stated that

London: printed and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, MDCCII. [1701]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 15, 2022). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0105446020/ECCO?u=unl_kenney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=7994bf3f&pg=1. Pp. 15.

¹⁹⁸William Kidd. *The arraignment, tryal, and condemnation of Captain William Kidd, for murther and piracy, upon six several indictments, At the Admiralty-Sessions, held by His Majesty's Commission at the Old-Baily, on Thursday the 8th. and Friday the 9th. of May, 1701. who, upon full Evidence, was found Guilty, receiv'd Sentence, and was accordingly Executed at Execution-Dock, May the 23d. As also, the tryals of Nicholas Churchill, James Howe, Robert Lamley, William Jenkins, Gabriel Loff, Hugh Parrot, Richard Barlicorn, Abel Owens, and Darby Mullins, at the same Time and Place for Piracy. Perused by the Judges and Council. To which are added, Captain Kidd's Two Commissions: One under the Great Seal of England, and the Other under the Great Seal of the Court of Admiralty.* London: printed for J. Nutt, near Stationers-Hall, 1701. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 15, 2022). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0124496246/ECCO?u=unl_kenney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=bff92998&pg=1. Pp. 60.

¹⁹⁹ Council of Trade and Plantations to the Queen, April 1703, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 21, 1702-1703*, ed. Cecil Headlam

he should be released at once, Larkin was then let go and continued his mission delivering the Act. The following year the Queen and the Council of Trade and Plantations sent an update to William's Piracy Act. In July 1704, the council agreed to send a revised copy of the Act for the trial of pirates to be renewed.²⁰⁰ This decision was met with great satisfaction from the colonies, as they had been calling for a new Act to be passed by the Queen. The Act did continue to help colonial governments suppress piracy, but there was still a lot to do. Pirates had continued support from some governors and the lack of a naval presence hindered the eradication of pirates completely since they were almost unchallenged at sea. It would not be until Woodes Rogers expedition in 1718 that pirates were finally pushed out of the Caribbean.

The pirate trials of the eighteenth century greatly differed from those that occurred before King William's Piracy Act and the revised Act of Queen Anne. The trial of Captain William Kidd took place in London because the Piracy Act had not been sent to all of the colonies yet or he would have most likely been tried in New York. Just a few years later in 1704, pirate John Quelch was tried in Boston under Governor Joseph Dudley. Quelch operated in the Caribbean and became a pirate when he and his loyal crewmembers let their captain die by boarding his cabin door for two days and set sail for

(London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1913), 377-394. *British History Online*, accessed June 11, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol21/pp377-394>.

²⁰⁰ Plantations General, July 1704, In *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations: Volume I, April 1704 - January 1709*, ed. K H Ledward (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920), 27-32. *British History Online*, accessed June 11, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp27-32>.

Brazil.²⁰¹ Once Quelch and his crew arrived in Brazil, they attacked and captured a Portuguese fishing vessel. Between November and December 1703, Quelch took nine Portuguese ships off the coast of Brazil.²⁰² Once the crew had been captured and put on trial, it was said that their crimes of piracy were worse because they attacked Portuguese ships. Since the Portuguese were allies and friends of the English, it would have been more strategic for Quelch to attack the French or Spanish. On June 20, 1704, Quelch and his crew were found guilty of committing acts of piracy and murder and were sentenced

²⁰¹ John Quelch, Approximately, and Massachusetts. Court Of Admiralty. *The arraignment, tryal, and condemnation, of Capt. John Quelch, and others of his company, &c. for sundry piracies, robberies, and murder, committed upon the subjects of the King of Portugal, Her Majesty's allie, on the coast of Brazil, &c.: who upon full evidence, were found guilty, at the Court-House in Boston, on the thirteenth of June, by virtue of a commission, grounded upon the act of the eleventh and twelfth years of King William, for the more effectual suppression of piracy: with the arguments of the Queen's council, and council for the prisoners upon the said act: perused by His Excellency Joseph Dudley, Esq., captain-general and commander in chief in and over Her Majesty's province of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New-England, in America, &c.: to which are also added, some papers that were produc'd at the tryal abovesaid: with an account of the ages of the several prisoners, and the places where they were born.* London: Printed for Ben. Bragg, 1705. Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/99163093/>. Pp. 2.

²⁰² John Quelch, Approximately, and Massachusetts. Court Of Admiralty. *The arraignment, tryal, and condemnation, of Capt. John Quelch, and others of his company, &c. for sundry piracies, robberies, and murder, committed upon the subjects of the King of Portugal, Her Majesty's allie, on the coast of Brazil, &c.: who upon full evidence, were found guilty, at the Court-House in Boston, on the thirteenth of June, by virtue of a commission, grounded upon the act of the eleventh and twelfth years of King William, for the more effectual suppression of piracy: with the arguments of the Queen's council, and council for the prisoners upon the said act: perused by His Excellency Joseph Dudley, Esq., captain-general and commander in chief in and over Her Majesty's province of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New-England, in America, &c.: to which are also added, some papers that were produc'd at the tryal abovesaid: with an account of the ages of the several prisoners, and the places where they were born.* London: Printed for Ben. Bragg, 1705. Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/99163093/>. Pp. 4.

to death. Ten days later, Quelch was hanged near Charles River in the Massachusetts Bay colony.

The trial of Thomas Green showed how even those accused of piracy were treated during trials. Throughout Green's trial, he and his crew stated that they were innocent and had not committed any acts of piracy. One account states that Green and his crew were innocent because they were only mere accomplices and had not actually directly committed piracy themselves.²⁰³ Others discussed how Green, and his crew had taken the ship Annandale around England and that they committed numerous piracies off the coast of Malabar.²⁰⁴ Green continuously stated throughout his trial that he was an innocent man and that he nor his crew had committed piracy. His first mate, John Madder, also stood by his captain's defense and said they had done nothing wrong or illegal. Green, his first mate, and some of his crew were executed in Scotland in 1705 after an unfair trial. During his final speech, Green stated that he had never heard of the ship Worcester, which he was accused of attacking and robbing, or the captain until he landed in Scotland and was accused of piracy.²⁰⁵ This trial shows how easy it was for people to be sentenced

²⁰³ Thomas Green. *Information for Captain Thomas Green commander of the Worcester, Captain John Madder his chief mate, and others, against Mr. Alexander Higgins Advocat, procurator-fiscal of the High Court of Admiralty*. [Edinburgh?]: s.n., [1705]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed January 18, 2023). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CB0130956489/ECCO?u=unl_kenney&sid=bookmark-ECCO&xid=af1708eb&pg=1. Pp. 1.

²⁰⁴ *A True and impartial account of the proceedings against Capt Green and his crew, together with the confessions of severals of them under sentence of death*. [Edinburgh]: s.n., [1705]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed January 18, 2023). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CB0130454650/ECCO?u=unl_kenney&sid=bookmark-ECCO&xid=2a9f4f7b&pg=1.

²⁰⁵ *Remarks upon the tryal of Capt. Thomas Green and his crew: Lately printed in Scotland and re printed here in London; wherein the proceedings of their High Court of*

to death when accused of committing piracy. Some trials were short and did not require much evidence. People could be looked at and executed without proper representation in court.

Pirates continued to plague the American colonies despite the increasing attempts to suppress them. Governors still allowed pirates to harbor in their ports and sell their stolen goods. The English government did not send ships to the colonies to protect against pirates until the 1720s. In 1707, a new Piracy Act was sent to the colonies and still, pirates wreaked havoc. Governor Seymour of Maryland wrote the Council of Trade and Plantations stating that pirates had burned the town of Annapolis and still, the government would not send ships to defend the colonies against this threat.²⁰⁶ The colonies attempted to push pirates out of interfering with government officials and decisions, but to no avail. The real threat to pirates in the Caribbean and the North American colonies occurred in 1713 when Woodes Rogers, a privateer who served in the War of Spanish Succession, led an expedition to Madagascar to hunt pirates and scout possible locations for a new colony. However, when he returned to England, his ideas for

Admiralty and consider'd, their arguments to convict the pretended criminals refuted; and the said captain and his crew are fully clear'd and purg'd from all aspersions of piracy, robbery, and murder, for which he and others have been, under a form of justice murder'd, and the rest remain in prison under the sentence of death, tho' not yet put in execution. London: [s.n.], Printed in the year, 1705. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed January 18, 2023).

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CB0130426946/ECCO?u=unl_kearney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=173d7c2d&pg=1.

²⁰⁶ Governor Seymour to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 1707, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 23, 1706-1708*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1916), 446-473. *British History Online*, accessed June 12, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp446-473>.

a new colony were dashed and he turned his sights to the Bahamas, where pirates infested the waters. This expedition marked the beginning of the end for the golden age of piracy in the British Atlantic.

Chapter 3: The End of the Golden Age, 1710-1730

The British government finally began to viciously hunt pirates and cleanse the seas of these pests at the end of the 1710s. The expedition of Woodes Rogers to take over the colony of Bermuda also played an integral role in banishing pirates from the Caribbean. As Royal Navy ships continued to improve and merchant vessels gained more protection, it became increasingly difficult for pirates to strike. However, that did not mean piracy ended because of the renewed efforts by the British Government. Pirates still sacked ships and wreaked havoc throughout the world in the coming centuries all the way to present day. Pirates like Stede Bonnet, Benjamin Hornigold, Bartholomew “Black Bart” Roberts, and the most infamous Edward Thatch, better known as Blackbeard, were some of the most feared men of this period, but were either killed in battle or executed. These men acted as a beacon of unity to most pirates of their day, but after they had been killed, the pirates numbers were greatly diminished after 1730. Sailors asked to join the ranks of pirate ships were now timid and not as keen to go on the account as they had been in previous years. King George I also issued more pardons during his reign to entice pirate crews to give up their fellow sea dogs and claim freedom. Colonial governors and their governments also turned their backs on pirates during this period. There was now nowhere for this group of people to go to sell goods or lay low.

With so many new unemployed sailors, the British government had to take a strong stance against pirate violence and theft. For starters, the American colonial governors began to treat pirates more harshly in the 1710s. During the War of Spanish Succession colonial officials stated that using force to suppress pirates did not work.

Instead, the model to handle piracy in Madagascar was the example. According to the James Douglas, Earl of Morton, a member of Queen Anne's Privy Council, the best way to decrease their numbers was,

*"...an effectuall means to reduce the said pyrates and utterly destroy their settlement at Madagascar by bringing them voluntarily to Great Brittain with their effects..." and, "haveing been informed that the attempts of reducing the said pyrates by force or otherwise have in severall late reigns proved ineffectuall..."*²⁰⁷

Ideas like Morton's were not necessarily popular throughout the entire British empire as many colonists and officials wanted to raise forts to protect ports and have the Royal Navy warships stationed around the harbor constantly. Other ideas, like in the Virgin Islands, argued for an attempt a peaceable integration of pirates into the colony. Captain Walton, a Royal Navy captain patrolling in the Virgin Islands, stated that pirates could "...come and settle here, and become usefull and advantagious subjects to our crowne."²⁰⁸ Again, these ideas are few and far between. Many colonies sought to disrupt pirate trade and eradicate them from the oceans by sheer military might.

²⁰⁷ Earl of Morton and Others to the Lords Committees of Trade, July 1709, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 24, 1708-1709*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1922), 408-426. *British History Online*, accessed July 16, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp408-426>.

²⁰⁸ Capt. Walton to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 1711, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 25, 1710-1711*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924), 423-432. *British History Online*, accessed July 16, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp423-432>.

Other efforts to minimize the level of bribes colonial officials accepted further hindered piracy. Despite the many bribes early on to colonial officials in the American colonies, the officials during this period began to take their jobs more seriously and understood that there were repercussions for dealing with pirates. Pleas to Parliament in London continued to ask for defenses against pirates. In 1709, Edmund Drummer, an English shipbuilder, wrote to William Popple, a merchant, that “when peace shall come, leave to the world a brood of pirates to infest it.”²⁰⁹ The colonists and colonial governments alike did not fear war as much as they feared pirates. The need for good defenses increased during the 1710s as pirates became increasingly aggressive in this period. In Virginia, Alexander Spotswood, the governor, wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantations that he would like to erect a small fort at Point Comfort to protect against privateers during wartime and pirates during peacetime, as they are to be expected to prowl along the coast.²¹⁰ Back in the Caribbean, pirates began to somewhat settle in the opening years of the 1710s. In 1711, the Board of Trade and Plantations discussed how the Virgin Islands, if settled, would become a refuge for pirates and other runaways from

²⁰⁹ Mr. Dummer to Mr. Popple, January 1709, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 24, 1708-1709*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1922), 193-214. *British History Online*, accessed July 14, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp193-214>.

²¹⁰ Lt. Governor Spotswood to the Council of Trade and Plantations, August 1710, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 25, 1710-1711*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924), 161-185. *British History Online*, accessed July 14, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp161-185>.

the Leeward Islands.²¹¹ Pirates had taken a step back during these few years from attacking port cities and colonies, creating small communities on uninhabited Caribbean islands.

Pirates during the War of Spanish Succession had been conscripted into service as privateers, and the ones who did not want to serve began leading a semi-sedentary lifestyle on small, uninhabited islands. As the Royal Navy had continued to grow since the time of the Nine Years War and the War of Spanish Succession privateers were no longer needed and pirates did not attack merchant shipping as much. By the end of the war in 1713, the Royal Navy employed nearly 50,000 seamen, however, by 1715, their numbers had dropped considerably from 50,000 to approximately 13,000.²¹² This sharp drop in naval employment played a role in the revitalization of piracy but was not the only contributing factor. Trade shrank after the war as materials were no longer needed in some parts of the British empire or they were not needed as quickly. Wages for merchant sailors decreased significantly after the war due to the surplus of goods and seamen. This surplus was good for a few years as goods were sent in bulk from England to the colonies and vice versa. This trade boom gave unemployed navy sailors a job, but by the mid 1710s, a lull in trade laid off even more sailors. At the peak of the War of Spanish Succession, merchant sailors could expect anywhere from 45 to 55 shillings per month

²¹¹ Virgin Islands, April 1711: Journal Book O, In *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations: Volume 2, February 1709 - March 1715*, ed. E G Atkinson (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1925), 258-267. *British History Online*, accessed July 14, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol2/pp258-267>.

²¹² Marcus Rediker. *Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, Pirates, and Motley Crews in the Age of Sail*, (Boston, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2014) Pp. 83.

and by 1713, only half that amount.²¹³ Mix these changes after the war with the now free privateers, a large population of jobless sailors flooded the decks of pirate ships.

The sailors, who had once lived as pirates, had been relieved of duty after the war, many fled back into piracy to make ends meet. Fortresses had been built throughout the port cities and more ships were sent back to the Caribbean and North American colonies. However, much as the colonies and the navy had treated piracy in the past, they continued on that path. Before the War of Spanish Succession began, ships had been allocated, even though only a handful, to the colonies, yet they did not do their best to suppress piracy, nor did the governors. Naval vessels stationed around the Caribbean in the early 1700s did not want to eradicate pirates due to merchant ships hiring them for naval escorts. Navy commanders were not required to listen to colonial governors and were paid better for accepting escort jobs.²¹⁴ Colonial governors would also press members of the public to help suppress pirates as the naval ships were too busy hiring out their services instead of attending to pirates. This practiced continued on a smaller scale in the mid 1710s. Lieutenant Governor Moody wrote to Lord Bolingbroke stating that he desired to “be authorized to command the inhabitants to joine with the soldiers upon any invasion of pirates, or other enemies, for publik safety, and to employ them at convenient times.”²¹⁵ One month later, his request was granted, and Moody could forcibly press

²¹³ Rediker. *Outlaws of the Atlantic*, Pp. 83.

²¹⁴ Hugh F. Rankin, *The Golden Age of Piracy*, (Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, VA, Distributed by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, INC., New York, NY, 1969) Pp. 20.

²¹⁵ Lt. Governor Moody to Lord Bolingbroke, January 1714, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 27, 1712-1714*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1926), 284-295. *British History Online*, accessed July

colonists to fight against any pirate threat. Largely because of the continuous lack of naval protection or naval personnel taking their position seriously, pirates utilized shallow areas as an advantage. Compared to the smaller pirate ships, the larger naval vessels could not follow between the small islands scattered throughout the Caribbean and North American colonies.

As previously stated, the number of sailors employed by the navy during the war dropped significantly to almost a fifth of what it had been at the height of the fighting. These experienced sailors, who were seasoned in maritime occupations, joined forces with the many of the pirates in the Caribbean to avoid being thrown into poverty. The Bahamas were the best place for these outcasts to swarm to. In 1703, the French and the Spanish attacked Nassau and New Providence in the Bahamas and many of the English settlers fled to safer ports. The government gave up on promoting the island and by 1714, it seemed like the most logical place for pirates to settle.²¹⁶ There were plenty of small, uninhabited islands to choose from and the ones which were inhabited by indigenous groups enjoyed the products that the pirates brought with them. The takeover of the Bahamas seemed to cause good for everyone involved. The harbor was big enough to keep hundreds of pirate vessels but the water was too shallow for the larger Royal Navy Men-of-War that prowled the seas.²¹⁷ Merchants and other legitimate mariners dropped anchor and purchased the cheap goods that pirates had taken from other traders and

30, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp284-295>.

²¹⁶ Hugh F. Rankin, *The Golden Age of Piracy*, (Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, VA, Distributed by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, INC., New York, NY, 1969) Pp. 19.

²¹⁷ Rankin, *The Golden Age of Piracy*, Pp. 19

smuggled them into the colonies for a massive profit. This blow to English shipping, and on a larger scale European shipping, eventually led to the commission of Woodes Rogers in 1717 and 1718.

The colonial government as well as the crown and Parliament back in London had taken this issue far more seriously during the reign of King George I. The previous monarchy had dealt with war after war and they needed the Royal Navy to fight the French and the Spanish. King William chose to fight a war on the European continent and pulled the navy out of the colonies. This allowed pirates to flourish throughout the Atlantic. After Queen Anne died and the War of Spanish Succession ended, the navy was cut down and unemployed seamen needed jobs, thus a massive number of pirates flooded into the sea.²¹⁸ King George I claimed the throne in 1714, officially ending the Stuart Monarchy and began the House of Hanover. The increased complaints coming from the Caribbean and North American colonies finally got a response from his government. Colonial governors became royally appointed instead of by the colonists. King William's anti-piracy act had been renewed by Queen Anne during her reign, but in 1710, the renewed act began to expire across the empire.²¹⁹ By 1718 the Council of Trade and Plantations began to decide who in the colonies would always have the power to try

²¹⁸ Marcus Rediker, "Under the Banner of King Death: The Social World of Anglo-American Pirates, 1716-1726," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (April 1981) Pg. 224.

²¹⁹ Lt Governor Bennett to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 1713, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 25, 1710-1711*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924), 108-122. *British History Online*, accessed July 19, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp108-122>.

pirates in piracy trials. Another decision was made that all colonial governors did not have the ability to pardon pirates, this power was reserved solely to the Great Seal of England.²²⁰ King George I's government also issued a number of pardons from the late 1710s to the early 1720s in an attempt to lure pirates to give up their lives at sea. The laws concerning pirates and piracy trials continued, allowing governors and the colonial governments more power when deciding how to punish pirates. Many times, pirates were sentenced to execution and as time passed, it became more common that these men were given a trial as a formality and the sentence of death had been decided.

Additionally, the British government after the War of Spanish Succession began to take greater steps at suppressing piracy in colonial waters. Even though the navy had been reduced, the lack of fighting allowed for more ships to be distributed to the colonies and the actions of George's government helped effectually suppress pirates into the 1720s.²²¹ Throughout 1716, many reports of pirate depredations were sent to the Council of Trade and Plantations and to the crown. In May 1716, Governor Peter Haywood of Jamaica was issued instructions to watch and capture any who commit robberies and piracies in the Caribbean and around Florida and send them to England with their effects.²²² Then in June of that same year, Governor Archibald Hamilton of the Virgin

²²⁰ "Journal, February 1718: Journal Book T," in *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations: Volume 3, March 1715 - October 1718*, ed. K H Ledward (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924), 333-345. *British History Online*, accessed July 19, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol3/pp333-345>.

²²¹ Rediker, "Under the Banner of King Death," Pp. 225.

²²² H.M. Instructions to Governor Haywood, May 1716, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 29, 1716-1717*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 76-101. *British History Online*, accessed July 30,

Islands also received word that he should write accounts of pirates sailing in those waters.

The Council of Trade and Plantations states,

*“It will be of service, if for the future you would be more particular in your accounts, of any pirates in those seas, as to their force, from whence they come, what country men they are, when, and in what place they appear’d.”*²²³

This attitude from the crown and the Council of Trade and Plantations persisted, and governors were put in charge of suppressing piracy around their colonies. However, pirate raids were still increasing throughout the American colonies, and they did not have enough worthy ships to defend the shores. In September 1716, the Bahamas had complained so many times that the Council of Trade and Plantations stated the crown should allocate more funds to protect islands instead of waiting to send resources until after an attack.²²⁴ More complaints continued to flood into Parliament, and they soon began to take the threat of piracy more seriously to the point of eradication. Pirates of this period focused on making money as many pirates had in the past, however, these pirates were willing to go to greater lengths to make their fortunes.

2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp76-101>.

²²³ Council of Trade and Plantations to Governor Hamilton, June 1716, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 29, 1716-1717*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 107-128. *British History Online*, accessed July 30, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp107-128>.

²²⁴ Council of Trade and Plantations to Mr. Secretary Methuen, September 1716, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 29, 1716-1717*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 177-181. *British History Online*, accessed July 30, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp177-181>.

One of the most feared and well-known pirates throughout the Atlantic coast of the Americas was Edward Thatch better known as “Blackbeard”. *A History of the Robberies and Murders of the most Notorious Pirates*, states that “Edward Teach was described as a Bristol man born, but had sailed some time out of Jamaica in privateers in the late French war; yet, though he had often distinguished himself for his uncommon boldness and personal courage, he was never raised to any command till he went a-pirating...”²²⁵ Blackbeard’s birthplace has been disputed between a few historians. Many believe that he could also be from an American colony. Historian Arne Bialuschewski states in his article, “Blackbeard off Philadelphia: Documents Pertaining to the Campaign against the Pirates in 1717 and 1718,” that, “It is not entirely clear when and where Blackbeard was born, a few sources indicate that he was from Jamaica.”²²⁶ Even though his exact place of birth is unknown, it is most likely Bristol or Jamaica. Thatch first sailed alongside pirate Benjamin Horingold around 1716. Thatch gained Horingold’s trust and was made captain of his own ship. Thatch and Horingold attacked a Spanish silver ship that had wrecked off the coast of Florida, however, on their way back to Jamaica, a few of their crewmates made off with the recovered silver and forced the pair to make up their losses by resorting to piracy.²²⁷ By 1717, Blackbeard shifted his operations further north just off the eastern coast of North America.

²²⁵ Charles Johnson, edited by Arthur L. Hayward, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most Notorious Pirates*, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, 1955) Pp. 45.

²²⁶ Arne Bialuschewski, “Blackbeard Off Philadelphia: Documents Pertaining to the Campaign against the Pirates in 1717 and 1718,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 134, no. 2 (April 2010) Pp. 166.

²²⁷ Bialuschewski, “Blackbeard off Philadelphia,” Pp. 166-167.

Once Blackbeard arrived on the Atlantic coast of the North American colonies, he met a plantation owner, Stede Bonnet. Being from Barbados, Bonnet gained a reputation of a true gentleman. When he picked up the pirate life it came as a shock to most people who knew him because he was one of the few that had made himself a good life through other means.²²⁸ Bonnet sailed alongside Blackbeard during his pirating career. In May 1718, Lieutenant Governor Bennett of Bermuda wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantations voicing concerns about threats from pirates and his worry about Bonnet and Blackbeard. Bennett writes that, “if a pardon did not come out very soon they were resolved to attack this island and make a new Madagascar of it...” and, “before those pirate vessels that went lately out from Providence there were several others at sea, one Tatch with whom is major Bonnet of Barbados in a ship of 36 guns and 300 men...”²²⁹ Cruising alongside them were other ships with several hundred men on board. Bennett also states that if they were to join together and attack the colony, their forces would greatly outnumber those available on the island.²³⁰ Bonnet and Blackbeard caused untold mayhem even though they operated for a short duration, between 1717 and 1718.

²²⁸ Johnson, ed. By Hayward, *A General History of Pirates*, Pp. 67.

²²⁹ Lt. Governor Bennett to the Council of Trade and Plantations, May 1718, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 30, 1717-1718*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 242-264. *British History Online*, accessed August 3, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp242-264>.

²³⁰ Lt Governor Bennett to the Council of Trade and Plantations, May 1718, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 30, 1717-1718*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 242-264. *British History Online*, accessed August 3, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp242-264>.

The trial of Stede Bonnet took place in October 1718 in South Carolina. However, Bonnet escaped custody and had to be retrieved by Colonel Rhett, the man that had captured him the first time and brought him back to be sentenced.²³¹ During his trial, Bonnet proclaimed that he was innocent and his crew forced him to go pirating. He stated he wanted no part in it, but he feared his crew.²³² His testimony did not convince anyone and Bonnet was sentenced to death due to his close relationship with Blackbeard and their depredations along the North American coast and the Caribbean. Bonnet was sentenced to death along with nearly 30 others from his crew. On December 10, 1718, Stede Bonnet was executed at White Point near Charlestown.²³³ The infamous Edward

²³¹ Mr. Gale to Col. Thomas Pitt, junr. So. Carolina, January 1719, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 31, 1719-1720*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1933), 1-21. *British History Online*, accessed August 4, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol31/pp1-21>.

²³² *A complete collection of state-trials, and proceedings for high treason, and other crimes and misdemeanours; from the reign of King Richard II. to the end of the reign of King George I. In six volumes. With two alphabetical tables to the whole*, 2nd ed. Vol. 6. London: printed for J. Walthoe sen. R. Vincent sen. J. and J. Knapton, R. Knaplock, J. Roberts, J. Darby, S. Buckley, D. Midwinter and A. Ward, A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, B. Lintot, R. Gosling, W. Mears, B. Sprint, J. Tonson, W. Innys, J. Osborn and T. Longman, T. Woodward, R. Robinson, T. Saunders, B. Motte, J. Walthoe Jun. C. King, F. Clay, W. Battersby, J. Batley, T. Cox, J. Peele, E. Symon, S. Noble, R. Williamson, T. Wotton, D. Browne, B. Creake, J. Clarke, R. Hett, T. Osborne, L. Gilliver, J. Stagg., M.DCC.XXX. [1730]. Pg. 156-158 *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 14, 2022).

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0124971068/ECCO?u=unl_kearney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=b977208f&pg=2.

²³³ *A complete collection of state-trials, and proceedings for high treason, and other crimes and misdemeanours; from the reign of King Richard II. to the end of the reign of King George I. In six volumes. With two alphabetical tables to the whole*, 2nd ed. Vol. 6. London: printed for J. Walthoe sen. R. Vincent sen. J. and J. Knapton, R. Knaplock, J. Roberts, J. Darby, S. Buckley, D. Midwinter and A. Ward, A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, B. Lintot, R. Gosling, W. Mears, B. Sprint, J. Tonson, W. Innys, J. Osborn and T. Longman, T. Woodward, R. Robinson, T. Saunders, B. Motte, J. Walthoe Jun. C. King,

Thatch, or Blackbeard did not get the benefit of a trial, no matter how slim the chances to be set free were for pirates in the eighteenth century. Blackbeard met a horrendous death at the end of 1718 during battle against First Lieutenant Maynard off the coast of North Carolina. On November 22, Blackbeard was killed in battle along with nine others from his crew. His severed head was “hung at the end of the bowsprit and taken by Maynard to Bathtown for public display.”²³⁴ Pirates entering into the 1720s were not typically given a fair trial, killed in battle, or executed on the ship that captured them.

In 1717 during a piracy trial against five accused sailors, the King’s Advocate discussed how piracy became detrimental to colonial trade and how pirates could bring a full stop to that trade, and possibly destroy European governments.²³⁵ At this point, and throughout the 1720s when the golden age of piracy came to an end, the colonial governments finally began to report all of the troubles that pirates caused. Piracy “stood as the antithesis of mercantilism: creating insecurity for vital trade routes and threatening to destroy trades routes to the West Indies, America, Africa, and the East Indies.”²³⁶ The changes that came at the end of the 1710s changed how all of the colonies viewed piracy.

F. Clay, W. Battersby, J. Batley, T. Cox, J. Peele, E. Symon, S. Noble, R. Williamson, T. Wotton, D. Browne, B. Creake, J. Clarke, R. Hett, T. Osborne, L. Gilliver, J. Stagg., M.DCC.XXX. [1730]. Pg. 156-158 *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 14, 2022).

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0124971068/ECCO?u=unl_kearney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=b977208f&pg=2.

²³⁴ Williams, Neville. *Captains Outrageous: 7 Centuries of Piracy*, (Barrie and Rockliff, London, 1961) Pp. 155.

²³⁵ Matthew Garrod, “Piracy, the Protection of Vital State Interests and the False Foundations of Universal Jurisdiction in International Law,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 25, no. 2 (June 2014) Pp. 199.

²³⁶ Garrod, “Piracy, the Protection of Vital State Interests and the False Foundations of Universal Jurisdiction in International Law,” Pp. 199.

In the colonies, piracy was once openly accepted by officials as a way to assault rival colonies and their trade, it had now become disadvantageous to British trade and that of its allies.²³⁷ Common law courts that had so often let pirates off in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth had been replaced by Vice-admiralty courts that were far harsher on pirates and much more likely to sentence them to death.²³⁸ King George issued a pardon stating that all crimes committed in the act of piracy before January 5, 1718 would be forgiven and those who turned themselves in could keep their loot. This was a show of how bad piracy had become for the British government and colonial trade.²³⁹ Due to these changes, British Atlantic piracy was nearly eradicated by the end of the 1720s and did not constitute a large reaction for the remainder of the eighteenth century and onward.

As pirate activity continuously increased during the 1710s, trade routes continued to fear what these men would do. Pirates of the 1710s and 1720s sought revenge on merchant and naval captains for the ill-treatment of the common sailor. Pirates would establish small bases near trade routes to attack merchantmen, but also far enough from the powers of the European empires.²⁴⁰ As pirates attacked these merchant fleets, they caused even more widespread panic than that of the pirates' predecessors. The pirate base at the Bahama Islands eventually led to a torrent of complaints flooding into London and

²³⁷ Steven C Hahn, "The Atlantic Odyssey of Richard Tookerman: Gentleman of South Carolina, Pirate of Jamaica, and Litigant before the King's Bench," *Early American Studies* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2017) Pp. 556-557.

²³⁸ Hahn, "The Atlantic Odyssey of Richard Tookerman," Pp. 557.

²³⁹ Rankin, *The Golden Age of Piracy*, Pp. 90-91.

²⁴⁰ Marcus Rediker. *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World*, (Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1987) Pp. 257.

gave rise to the famous expedition of Woodes Rogers in 1718.²⁴¹ As early as 1715, other Caribbean colonies asked for a new government to be placed in the Bahama Islands. In June 1715 John Graves stated that due to the islands consisting of only poor inhabitants, they do not possess the ability to bring pirates to justice. He asked the Council of Trade and Plantations to petition the King and his council to send a new government and place the islands under the protection of the crown.²⁴² In July 1719, Woodes Rogers petitioned to the Lord Proprietors of the Bahama Islands stating that, “The Bahama Islands lying without any form of government or settled inhabitants, proposes that they surrender the government to the Crown...”²⁴³ Rogers was then appointed governor of the Bahama Islands later that same year and set sail. Merchants had sent numerous petitions to the crown discussing how important the Bahamas were and that there would be fatal consequences if any pirates were given the ability to establish a strong colony of their own.²⁴⁴ The expedition of Woodes Rogers was seen as a success and the pirates were

²⁴¹ Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Pp. 257.

²⁴² Petition of John Graves to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 1715, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 28, 1714-1715*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1928), 198-215. *British History Online*, accessed July 30, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol28/pp198-215>.

²⁴³ Woodes Rogers to the Lord Proprietors of the Bahama Islands, July 1717, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 29, 1716-1717*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 344-364. *British History Online*, accessed July 17, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp344-364>.

²⁴⁴ Petition of Merchants of Bristol to the King, July 1717, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 29, 1716-1717*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 344-364. *British History Online*, accessed July 17, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp344-364>.

pushed into the uninhabited islands around the North American colonies and sent to the African coast.

Woodes Rogers' expedition to the Caribbean to attack the pirate settlements in the Bahama Islands was the first successful engagement for the British government and the American colonies. Rogers was appointed governor of the Bahamas and then commissioned to eradicate the pirates settled there. In December 1717 Rogers's commission was discussed and approved by the Council of Trade and Plantations and allowed him to sail and take over the governorship. The confidence in Rogers and expense it reflected in the Council's comments. The Council stated,

*"Since therefore the Parliament have now voted the necessary supply demanded by H.M. for the security of those islands, and since Capt. Rogers together with his friends...do actually stand at a considerable daily expense in demurrage on the ships which they have on their own charge fitted out for the transporting of the new governor."*²⁴⁵

Rogers wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantations about his arrival on the island in October 1718. He said on July 26 he met little resistance and successfully took the fort in Nassau and that less than half of the pirates remained on the island after his arrival.²⁴⁶ In Marcus Rediker's article, "Under the Banner of King Death," he states,

²⁴⁵ Council of Trade and Plantations to Mr. Secretary Addison, December 1717, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 30, 1717-1718*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 117-141. *British History Online*, accessed July 28, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp117-141>.

²⁴⁶ Governor Woodes Rogers to the Council of Trade and Plantations, October 1718, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 30, 1717-1718*, ed.

“Rogers’s efforts largely succeeded, and pirates scattered to the unpeopled inlets of the Carolinas and to Africa.”²⁴⁷ Madagascar was revived as a pirate haven and acted as a temporary spot to settle after a successful piratical raid. The pirates enjoyed the Caribbean the most due to its shallow waters and easily accessible hiding spots from the larger Royal Navy ships. But after Rogers’s expeditions, they dispersed and had to relocate to new, relatively unknown hunting grounds.²⁴⁸ This was one of the most significant signs of the decline of the pirates.

Following the success of Woodes Rogers’ expedition to the Bahama Islands in 1718, there was a surge of increasingly successful attempts to capture pirates or convince them to turn themselves in and gain a royal pardon. In 1718, the Council of Trade and Plantations deliberated and sent a pardon to all American colonies concerning pardons in hopes of getting pirates off the seas. South Carolina had been complaining of the increased number of pirates frequenting their shores in August and the numerous problems it had caused the colony.²⁴⁹ At the beginning of 1718, the Act for the More Effectual Suppression of Piracy was again revived under King George I and pardons had

Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 359-381. *British History Online*, accessed July 28, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp359-381>.

²⁴⁷ Marcus Rediker, “Under the Banner of King Death: The Social World of Anglo-American Pirates, 1716-1726,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (April 1981) Pp. 205.

²⁴⁸ Rediker, “Under the Banner of King Death,” Pp. 205

²⁴⁹ A letter from Mr. Johnson, Governor of South Carolina, to the Board, August 1718, In *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations: Volume 3, March 1715 - October 1718*, ed. K H Ledward (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924), 419-429. *British History Online*, accessed July 31, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol3/pp419-429>.

been luring pirates into colonies to surrender themselves. In February 1718, Lt. Governor Bennett of Bermuda wrote that over 300 pirates turned themselves in to be pardoned. Bennett also stated that more, upon hearing the news of such a proclamation would soon do the same.²⁵⁰ Bennett also discussed that pardons issued to pirates would be the only way to keep them from scouring the seas and that pardons should be issued as quickly as possible. These pardons were only a temporary fix to the problem, however, the colonies and the King and his council agreed that issuing pardons was a good defense against them.

Even though the royal pardons were extended to pirates beginning in the late 1710s, pirates continued to sail and commit piracies on the seas. The only line of defense so far had been a skeleton crew of Royal Naval vessels and even these were no match for the maneuverability or speed of the smaller ships pirates sailed in. Pirates preferred the shallow waters and small islands to escape the larger Royal Navy vessels and preferred ships that they, “kept clean and fast, and frequently shifted into swifter or more seaworthy vessels, so that they had few of the ship deterioration problems faced by the Royal Navy.”²⁵¹ Another problem that the colonies faced before they were truly able to protect against and suppress piracy was the Royal Navy ships docked in their ports. After the War of Spanish Succession, Parliament did not want to send too many ships to the

²⁵⁰ Lt. Governor Bennett to the Council of Trade and Plantations, February 1718, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 30, 1717-1718*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 168-186. *British History Online*, accessed July 31, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp168-186>.

²⁵¹ Earle, Peter. *The Pirate Wars*, (New York City, NY, Thomas Dunne Books, 2003) Pp. 184.

American coasts in order to save money and recoup their losses. In the immediate aftermath of the war in 1715-1716, England needed to defend its coasts against the Jacobite Rebellion and devoted little to the anti-piracy campaign on the other side of the Atlantic.²⁵² But, by the early 1720s, the English government had begun to send better and more ships to the colonies, nine ships patrolled the West Indies, five on the North American coasts, and three in Newfoundland during fishing season.²⁵³ This new increase in defenses, that had been desired for decades, finally came but it would not be until the end of the 1720s that piracy would no longer be the serious threat it had been since the end of the seventeenth century.

Pirates in the early to late 1710s mainly used a variety of different fear tactics to force a surrender from potential prizes. Before the 1720s when pirates became ruthless criminals, they preferred to only fight when absolutely necessary. Fear made taking prizes far easier and safer than attacking the enemy and possibly wasting all the spoils and risking the lives of crewmen. Marcus Rediker discusses in his book, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, that the acquired loot was distributed between the crew and then went into a common fund for the overall welfare of the ship and crew. According to Rediker, this fund provided injured crewmen with monetary compensation and, “by this welfare system pirates attempted to guard against debilities caused by accidents, to protect skills, to enhance recruitment, and to promote loyalty within the group.”²⁵⁴ For example, one of the most notable instances of fear tactics comes from the contemporary

²⁵² Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 185.

²⁵³ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, Pp. 185.

²⁵⁴ Rediker, *The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Pp. 264-265.

stories of Edward Thatch, or the infamous Blackbeard. Eric Jay Dolin in his work, *Black Flags, Blue Waters*, discusses how the brutal stories of Blackbeard were just that, stories. Blackbeard "...is often portrayed as a ruthless, even murderous character who terrorized his foes...there is no evidence of Blackbeard harming anyone to get what he wanted."²⁵⁵ According to historian Arne Bialuschewski in a 2010 article titled, "Blackbeard Off Philadelphia," the image of Blackbeard as a ruthless murderer was painted by the media during and after his death.²⁵⁶ This was a common practice for pirates to look more intimidating than they actually were in order to prevent a battle. As time moved on however, they did become the ruthless bloodthirsty rogues that they were portrayed to be.

Pirates did become increasingly aggressive during this period. As they captured ships, they wanted to know where the loot was hidden and would resort to torture in order to get their hands on it. Peter Leeson, author of *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*, he discusses how, "Pirates did in many cases torture captives. But they did so rationally to increase their profits...Pirates skillfully deployed their infamous instruments of terror, generating a reputation for cruelty and madness that spread throughout the maritime world."²⁵⁷ Most of the time, when punishment was given to the masses of a ship, it was to make a statement to the rest of the world. Techniques such as walking the plank was not useful when the crew was set free, and stories were told of

²⁵⁵ Dolin, Eric Jay. *Black Flags, Blue Waters: The Epic History of America's Most Notorious Pirates*, (New York, NY, Liveright Publishing Co., 2018) Pp. 210.

²⁵⁶ Bialuschewski, Arne, "Blackbeard Off Philadelphia: Documents Pertaining to the Campaign against the Pirates in 1717 and 1718," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 134, no. 2 (April 2010) Pp. 170.

²⁵⁷ Peter Leeson. *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2009) Pp. 108.

their time aboard a pirate ship. Instead, pirates would threaten to burn captives alive and cut off ears to force them to tell where loot was kept.²⁵⁸ This helped pirates gain a reputation and make merchant ships more likely to surrender to avoid the brutality of being captured by pirates. However, as the Royal Navy became a greater threat to pirates, they slowly became more aggressive to counter the increasing attempts by naval vessels and merchant ships to capture and execute them.

Even though pirates were known for being some of the most brutal and dangerous men scouring the seas, torture was not an activity they wanted to participate in daily. The torture of regular seamen was kept to a minimum unless absolutely necessary in the eyes of the pirates. In many instances, average sailors were treated with kindness and the captains were the recipients of torture aboard pirate vessels or those who had killed their fellow pirates. In the cases of merchant captains, when a ship was captured, pirates would administer the “Distribution of Justice” by questioning the crew and asking how they had been treated by their captain.²⁵⁹ In the event that the merchant crew had praised the captains, they were treated with kindness and released. William Snelgrave was one of these captains. His crew vouched for his honesty and kind treatment aboard the ship and the pirates rewarded him by giving him a captured ship with goods loaded on board. Pirates would put bounty’s on heads if they had been the ones responsible for the capture and execution of fellow pirates. In the case of Alexander Spotswood, he was a target among the pirates. Spotswood was the man who had sent the expedition out to sea and

²⁵⁸ Leeson, *The Invisible Hook*, Pp. 112.

²⁵⁹ Marcus Rediker. *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, (Boston, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2004) Pp. 86.

returned with Blackbeard's head hanging from the ship as a warning to all who dared sail as a pirate. Torture was a tool to strike fear into those sailing the seas and those safe on land.

The articles aboard pirate ships became one major reason that captured merchants thought they were barbaric. Pirates had decided to create strict codes that resembled those of the Buccaneers of the mid to late seventeenth century and continued to build off of those from the 1700s and early 1710s. The codes themselves remained similar to earlier pirates but the way that captives perceived pirates on their ships came from these codes. Codes aboard pirate vessels helped maintain order and a sense of real freedom away from the oppressive navy and merchant crews, Peter Leeson states that, "contrary to conventional wisdom, pirate life was orderly and honest."²⁶⁰ Pirates were fair to one another and even sometimes referred to as a "fraternity" in the way that most pirates operating on the seas would mingle with one another and often crewmen would switch ships depending on the final destination. The reason that pirates created codes to begin with was to establish order aboard their ships and among the crew. Pirates operated without any form of external government and therefore all punishments had to be dealt with on board. These rules worked mostly due to self-interest and if they were not given guidelines, what would stop them from benefitting themselves by taking from their fellow crewmates? If these people could not work together and theft and fighting ran rampant the ship would fall apart and they could not effectively gain more loot by

²⁶⁰ Leeson, *The Invisible Hook*, Pp. 45.

working together.²⁶¹ Codes were there to help pirates work together and give each man what they were owed at the end of the voyage. The articles also helped when pirates were captured. These rules gave them a sense of brotherhood and, most of the time, they attempted to keep their brothers from being found during questioning.

Trials of pirates had come quite a long way since the late seventeenth century. All persons accused of piracy had to be sent back to England to await trial there until King Williams' Act which allowed the colonies to try pirates in their own courts. However, this Act did not allow those accused as an accomplice to be tried in the colonies and they had to be sent to England along with any loot taken from pirate ships. This Act expired multiple times, thus allowing pirates to flourish in the colonies. Moving into the end of the Golden Age of Piracy in the late 1710s and 1720s, many trials were held as a formality. Many pirates were executed regardless of a fair trial or not. For example, Lt. Governor Spotswood of Virginia stated in May 1719 that, "only two of the eight Councillors who insisted on being sole judges in criminal cases would sit on the trial of divers pirates, the reason being that there is 100 pounds sterling to be shared among the judges in the courts of Oyer and Terminer, and for the trial of pirates nothing at all."²⁶² Spotswood further elaborated how this deters judges and other court officials from serving the colony against pirates. Spotswood also states that there is over 17,000 pounds

²⁶¹ Leeson, *The Invisible Hook*, Pp. 52-53.

²⁶² Lt. Governor Spotswood to the Council of Trade and Plantations, May 1719, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 31, 1719-1720*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1933), 85-101. *British History Online*, accessed August 3, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol31/pp85-101>.

left after securing the colony during the Indian War, building a church at Williamsburg, a prison, and rewards to those who have suppressed pirates, yet none goes to those who serve in court during piracy trials.²⁶³ It became a great benefit to allow pay to judges serving on these trials and made them more effective.

As pirates entered the 1720s, it became increasingly difficult for them to continue their way of life. Colonial governments finally had universal laws clearly outlining how to handle and suppress pirates and the Royal Navy began to take its job of suppression more seriously than it ever had. They used better ships and they utilized different kinds of vessels that could follow pirates into the shallow waters they preferred. Also, the training that navy sailors received helped them combat pirates more efficiently than they had in the past. Everyone around pirates was progressing and moving forward, but the pirates themselves had quickly found themselves practicing a dying art. After the execution of Blackbeard and the expedition of Woodes Rogers that pushed the pirates out of the Caribbean, moral was at an all-time low. King Williams' Act suppressing pirates had been renewed during the reign of Queen Anne and King George, but it still did not allow the trial of accessories to piracy. That addition did not come around until 1722 when King George renewed the Act once again, allowing accessories to piracy to be tried in the colonies along with the captured pirates.²⁶⁴

²⁶³ Lt. Governor Spotswood to the Council of Trade and Plantations, May 1719, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 31, 1719-1720*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1933), 85-101. *British History Online*, accessed August 3, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol31/pp85-101>.

²⁶⁴ Simon Smith, "Piracy in Early British America," *History Now* 46, no. 5 (May 1996) Pp. 36.

The 1720s saw a sharp decline in the pirate population and the inevitable end of the golden age. Aggression on all sides, pirates, merchants, and the navy greatly contributed to the downfall of the pirates during this period. Merchant ships would paint extra gun ports on the sides of their ships to give the allusion that they were well armed.²⁶⁵ More and more colonial governors were scared to sail out into the waters due to the threat they faced from pirates once they truly began to capture and execute them. In 1716 the Governor of Antigua wrote that he refused to leave the island in fear of what pirates might do to him if captured.²⁶⁶ Governor Alexander Spotswood also wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantations in 1724 stating his concern regarding pirates,

*“Your Lordships will easily conceive my meaning, when you reflect on ye vigorous part I’ve acted to suppress pirates: and if those barbarous wretches can be moved to cut off the nose and ears of a master for but correcting his own sailors, what inhuman treatment must I expect...”*²⁶⁷

At this time, the colonies in the East Indies and around Africa had been writing to the Council of Trade and Plantations about the ability to capture and execute pirates on their shores. In December 1720, Mr. Burchett wrote to the Lords of the Admiralty asking for a commission to try and execute pirates in the East Indies and Africa and to send these letters on to the Secretary to the East India and the Secretary of the Royal African

²⁶⁵ Leeson, *The Invisible Hook*, Pp. ?

²⁶⁶ Rankin, *The Golden Age of Piracy*, Pp. 82.

²⁶⁷ Col. Spotswood to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 1724, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 34, 1724-1725*, ed. Cecil Headlam and Arthur Percival Newton (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1936), 112-126. *British History Online*, accessed July 18, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol34/pp112-126>.

Company for names of those who could fill these commissions.²⁶⁸ In January 1721, names were sent back to Mr. Burchett that would fill these commissions in trying pirates in the east. This helped pursue, capture, and execute pirates in Africa. Captain Ogle became one of the most well-known naval captains to capture and execute pirates off the west coast of Africa. He managed to engaged Bartholomew Roberts, one of the most feared pirates in the early 1720s, and kill him in battle.

Captain Ogle, an admiral in the Royal Navy after serving as a junior officer during the War of Spanish Succession, gained a reputation by killing Bartholomew Roberts, better known as Black Bart. Roberts was one of the most successful pirates in the Golden Age, capturing hundreds of ships and prowling around the North American colonies, the Caribbean, and Africa. In February 1722 Ogle met with Roberts ship off the coast of Cape Lopez and began to fight. Roberts gave his men instructions and fought as hard as possible until a grapeshot from Ogles' ship hit him in the throat. His crew realized their captain was gone and threw him overboard as he had requested.²⁶⁹ In 1723 pirates had been sailing around the coast of Africa and causing mayhem for many

²⁶⁸ Two Letters from Mr. Burchett, Secretary to the Lords of the Admiralty, December 1720, In *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations: Volume 4, November 1718 - December 1722*, ed. K H Ledward (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1925), 239-240. *British History Online*, accessed August 5, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol4/pp239-240>.

²⁶⁹ Johnson, Charles. *A general history of the pyrates, from their first rise and settlement in the island of Providence, to the present time. With the remarkable actions and adventures of the two female pyrates Mary Read and Anne Bonny; contain'd in the following chapters, ... Chap. I. Of Capt. Avery. II. Of Capt. Martel. III. Of Capt. Teach. ... By Captain Charles Johnson*, 2nd ed. London: printed for, and sold by T. Warner, 1724. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed October 15, 2022). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0101317343/ECCO?u=unl_kearney&sid=bookmarkECCO&xid=bc940058&pg=1. Pp. 272.

merchants and other colonists. These pirates demonstrated just how aggressive they had become. Instead of typically reasoning with ships before opening fire to minimize injuries, these men burned and looted any ships that got in their way.²⁷⁰ The pirates that plundered the African coast became more pressed for volunteer crewman from captured ships. Forcing sailors to take up roles on pirate ships happened more frequently during this period than ever before on both sides of the Atlantic. American pirates would often allow crewmen to state in newspapers that they had impressed sailors so that they would have a better chance of avoiding the gallows. The trial of pirates captured by Captain Ogle in 1722 resulted in 72 of the 91 crewmembers being hanged or sentenced to servitude in African colonies.²⁷¹ Pirates at this point were harshly judged by the Courts of Admiralty and many times would not even make it to court as captains were able to execute on board their ships after a fight.

Pirates still continued to cause problems for the colonies in the mid 1720s, but their numbers were diminishing fast. Even though there was still a threat from pirates, the colonial government and the British government had implemented enough laws and

²⁷⁰ *A full and exact account, of the tryal of all the pyrates, lately taken by Captain Ogle, on board the Swallow man of war, on the coast of Guinea.* London: printed, and sold by J. Roberts, in Warwick-Lane, MDCCXXIII. [1723]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed June 26, 2023). https://link-gale.com.unk.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/CW0123770518/ECCO?u=unl_earney&sid=bookmark-ECCO&xid=edfc74c4&pg=3.

²⁷¹ *A full and exact account, of the tryal of all the pyrates, lately taken by Captain Ogle, on board the Swallow man of war, on the coast of Guinea.* London: printed, and sold by J. Roberts, in Warwick-Lane, MDCCXXIII. [1723]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed June 26, 2023). https://link-gale.com.unk.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/CW0123770518/ECCO?u=unl_earney&sid=bookmark-ECCO&xid=edfc74c4&pg=3.

found how best to suppress piracy in and around the colonies by this period. Due to King George I's pardons extended from the late 1710s into the early 1720s, many pirates had sailed into ports to accept these. Trials also became a death sentence for those accused of piracy as most of them hanged such as the trial of 58 in Jamaica. On May 18, 1722, Sir Nicholas Lawes, Governor of Jamaica, wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantations stating that 58 pirates had been captured and brought to trial where 41 were hanged.²⁷² In June that same year, Governor Alexander Spotswood of Virginia wrote that, "As the colony is now secured against the attempts of pyrates and other enemys on its sea frontiers, by the erection of sundry substantial batterys whereon sixty pieces of cannon are already mounted and all necessary stores of warr supplied."²⁷³ These improvements in defense against pirates continued to climb and it was far easier for colonies to receive what they had requested than it had been ever before.

Pirates all over the American colonies and in Africa were being captured and executed at a quick rate. With the new laws, it was easier for royally appointed colonial officials to put people they wanted in offices instead of by electing them through the colonies. This allowed the British government to place like-minded people in offices to

²⁷² Governor Sir N. Lawes to the Council of Trade and Plantations, May 1722, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 33, 1722-1723*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934), 68-79. *British History Online*, accessed August 6, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol33/pp68-79>.

²⁷³ Lt. Governor Spotswood to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 1722, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 33, 1722-1723*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934), 79-99. *British History Online*, accessed August 6, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol33/pp79-99>.

make trying and executing pirates easier.²⁷⁴ The colonial ports on Africa, Madagascar, and India also began to take steps at forcing pirates out. French colonies had complained to the British about the threat piracy posed on their Indian Ocean trade and ports in Madagascar. The French had sent a few warships to capture the pirate threat throughout the 1720s and managed to catch some of them. Many pirates went into hiding on the island, finding protection from different groups on the island. The British and the French turned their attention toward the coast of India and working on suppressing piracy there in the late 1730s. piracy in Madagascar was no longer a concern for the European governments as many had fled or died.²⁷⁵ Back in the American colonies, pirate trials and the Royal Navy were claiming the lives of many pirates. The island of St. Christopher had accused fourteen people of piracy in 1723, five of which were executed.²⁷⁶ Governor Hart of St. Christopher again tried sixteen people in 1724 and eleven hanged.²⁷⁷ The

²⁷⁴ Steven C. Hahn, "The Atlantic Odyssey of Richard Tookerman: Gentleman of South Carolina, Pirate of Jamaica, and Litigant before the King's Bench," *Early American Studies* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2017) Pp. 543.

²⁷⁵ Jane Hooper, "Pirates and Kings: Power on the Shores of Early Modern Madagascar and the Indian Ocean," *Journal of World History* 22, no. 2 (June 2011) Pp. 229.

²⁷⁶ Governor Hart to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 1723, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 33, 1722-1723*, ed. Cecil Headlam (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934), 271-282. *British History Online*, accessed August 6, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol33/pp271-282>.

²⁷⁷ Governor Hart to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 1724, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 34, 1724-1725*, ed. Cecil Headlam and Arthur Percival Newton (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1936), 71-76. *British History Online*, accessed August 6, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol34/pp71-76>.

threat of Piracy remained, but it was not as worrisome as the laws that had been implemented in the colonies seemed to be working.²⁷⁸

By 1726 the Atlantic pirates were on the run, nowhere was safe. They had been pushed out of the Caribbean, North America, and the Indian Ocean, inevitably being captured and executed or dying in hiding. William Fly, a pirate operating around the North American colonies in 1726, captured five ships during his short time as a pirate. The final group Fly and his crew captured revolted and detained Fly and the rest of the ship, taking them to Boston Harbor to be tried.²⁷⁹ Fly and a handful of other pirates were hanged on July 12, 1726.²⁸⁰ This execution marked the end of the Golden Age of Piracy, as less than 200 pirates sailed the sea between the years 1723 and 1726.²⁸¹ Pirate numbers were dwindling, and everyone was on the lookout to bring these criminals to justice. On October 4, 1726 another pirate trial was held at Boston accusing John Baptist Jedre, John Baptist Jr., James Mews, Philip Mews, and John Missel for acts of piracy committed in the ship, the Tryal.²⁸² All five were found guilty of committing acts of piracy and sentenced to death.

²⁷⁸ Council of Trade and Plantations to Lt. Governor Hope, July 1726, In *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 35, 1726-1727*, ed. Cecil Headlam and Arthur Percival Newton (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1936), 96-115. *British History Online*, accessed August 6, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol35/pp96-115>.

²⁷⁹ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, Pp. 4.

²⁸⁰ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, Pp. 1.

²⁸¹ Rediker, *Outlaws of the Atlantic*, Pp. 64.

²⁸² Jedre, John Baptist, and Massachusetts. Court of Admiralty. *The Trials of five persons for piracy, felony and robbery, who were found guilty and condemned, at a Court of Admiralty for the trial of piracies, felonies and robberies, committed on the high seas, held at the court-house in Boston, within His Majesty's province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England, on Tuesday the fourth day of October, anno domini, 1726.*

By the end of the 1720s, pirates still roamed the seas, but their numbers had declined greatly since the end of the War of Spanish Succession. They had no more brotherhood they could count on when meeting other ships and could no longer attract other sailors from captured ships. The parts of the world these rouges once called home and knew so well had become a hunting ground for the Royal Navy. Pirates were not welcome in colonies unless they turned themselves in and helped produce goods to benefit the colony and the crown. There was nowhere to turn to, and the lives of the once world renowned swashbucklers had come to an end. The world had changed around the pirates, social, political, and military developments made pirates obsolete. They did not keep up with the changing times and became a story for sailors to tell on their journeys. The pirates of the coming centuries were nothing like their Golden Age counterparts of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

Pursuant to His Majesty's royal commission, founded on an act of Parliament made in the eleventh and twelfth years of the reign of King William the Third, entituled, An act for the more effectual suppression of piracy; and made perpetual by an act of the sixth year of the reign of our sovereign Lord King George. Boston: Printed by T. Fleet, for S. Gerrish, at the lower end of Cornhill, 1726. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed June 27, 2023). https://link-gale.com.unk.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/CW0123991006/ECCO?u=unl_kearney&sid=bookmark-ECCO&xid=8b522a91&pg=1. Pp. 4.

Conclusion

The Golden Age of Piracy caused untold mayhem around the globe. Many European naval vessels and merchant ships were ransacked and destroyed. All for this group of rogues to make a fortune. Between the years 1680 and 1730, the population of pirates, and the practice itself, became one of the most prominent political problems for the English government. Colonial governments as well as Parliament did not react quick enough to quell the rising population and in turn pirates ran rampant through the Caribbean, the Atlantic Ocean, and Indian Ocean. The colonies welcomed the presence of the early buccaneers due to little threat posed to English shipping and the cheap goods they procured from captured Spanish vessels.²⁸³ The same went for the pirates of the late 1690s and early 1710s. This group attacked a broader range of European shipping, but the goods they offered from their raids allowed them to get rich from the colonies. However, the pirates of the late 1710s and 1720s experienced the downfall of their kind on the open sea.

The buccaneers of America allied with the British American colonies and assisted the islands by protecting them during wartime for a price. The buccaneers acted as privateers which helped secure them a spot in the good graces of colonial governments and the English Parliament. During peacetime, they acquired enough Spanish goods to sell that caused the colonies to look the other way.²⁸⁴ Parliament back in England had its

²⁸³ Simon Smith, "Piracy in Early British America," *History Now* 46, no. 5 (May 1996): Pp. 32-33.

²⁸⁴ Rebecca Simon, "Hard Violent: Unpredictable," *History Now* 68, no. 2 (Feb. 2018): Pp. 28

hands full with the Anglo-Dutch Wars and the Nine Years War throughout the late seventeenth century and piracy was not viewed as a major problem that needed to be fixed. Colonial governments still wrote to England complaining about the buccaneers and how they should be stopped. Governors wrote asking for financial assistance and for higher quality defenses due to the increase in pirate activity and the threat they posed to trade.²⁸⁵ However, Parliament had its' hands full with multiple wars during this period and could not always fulfill these requests and instead sent poorly staffed ships that needed repairs.

At the end of the Nine Years War in the late 1690s, the Royal Navy began to grow considerably. By the beginning of the War of Spanish Succession, buccaneers were not needed like they had been in previous engagements, the increase in naval ranks assisted the lack of need for privateers.²⁸⁶ This mixed with the depredations committed by a few rouge sailors, the buccaneers transitioned into full blown pirates. These sailors had attacked European shipping for years by the beginning of the war, but their attacks became more brutal and their relationships with the colonies began to change for the worse. Colonial governments became weary during this period and complaints only rose about the threat pirates posed on their ports and goods. Still, Parliament did not send adequate defenses to the colonies for protection due to the navy fighting against the French. Many colonies saw fit to continue trade with pirates and offer safe harbor

²⁸⁵ Matthew Garrod, "Piracy, the Protection of Vital State Interests and the False Foundations of Universal Jurisdiction in International Law," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 25, no. 2 (June 2014) Pp. 199.

²⁸⁶ Julian Hoppit. *A Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 200) Pp. 102.

because they still sold goods cheaper than merchants, they made more money off of bribes, and they did not want to get on the bad side of any pirates. Colonial governors could also be forgiven for working with pirates in some cases.²⁸⁷ Merchants from colonial ports refused to leave if they knew a notorious band of criminals stalked the seas near them. This lasted until the mid-1710s when Parliament decided to allocate more funds to the eradication of this group that plagued the seas. Parliament could distribute more resources throughout the empire by the mid-1710s due to the end of the War of Spanish Succession and the decline of fighting in European waters.

Pirates transitioned from a helping hand in wars around the American colonies and raiding Spanish shipping in the second half of the seventeenth century to the enemy of all mankind by the turn of the eighteenth century and nearly destroyed only thirty years later. The government of King George I cracked down on piracy in the late 1710s and 1720s due to the end of the War of Spanish Succession. More ships could be allocated to assist the colonies now that they were not needed around Europe.²⁸⁸ Numerous expeditions and raids on known pirate havens helped push pirates out of their bases, the most successful being the expedition of Woodes Rogers in the Bahama Islands.²⁸⁹ Once they had been scattered across the Atlantic it became increasingly difficult for them to continue pillaging ships and raiding small settlements. The Royal

²⁸⁷ James S. Leamon, "Governor Fletcher's Recall," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 20, no. 4 (October 1963) Pp. 542.

²⁸⁸ Marcus Rediker, "Under the Banner of King Death: The Social World of Anglo-American Pirates, 1716-1726," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (April 1981) Pp. 225.

²⁸⁹ Rediker, "Under the Banner of King Death," Pp. 205.

Navy allowed more ships to be sent to the American colonies and the Indian Ocean to suppress piracy more efficiently. Colonies also became wary of dealing with pirates, and colonial governors across the empire were being royally appointed in order to help enforce Parliaments' anti-piracy rhetoric.

Pirates continued to operate throughout the world and piracy is still very relevant in parts of the world today. However, the period between 1650 and 1730 saw the dramatic rise of some of the most notorious pirates known to history. This period is very important not only for Atlantic piracy, but for the American colonies as well. The changes that effected colonial governments during this period helped lead to the American Revolution. American colonial governors were widely appointed by the colonies themselves, however, during the golden age of piracy, governors were increasingly royally appointed in hopes that they would do a better job at enforcing royal laws. These royal appointments caused problems in the colonies throughout the eighteenth century because the new governors did not know what the colonies needed. There is still much more to discuss about pirates, piracy, and British political reactions to this group.

Pirates and piracy had a much larger impact on the world than it is portrayed in scholarship today. Some historians believe that piracy in the Indian Ocean during the Golden Age was not a major problem for merchants.²⁹⁰ Other factors such as human error or weather played a much more significant role in merchant fears. As these did constitute

²⁹⁰ Michael Pearson, "'Tremendous Damage' or 'Mere Pinpricks,'" *Journal of Early Modern History* 16, no. 6 (2012) Pp. 464.

a major problem for sailors, not just in the Indian Ocean, but the entire Atlantic Ocean, piracy played a more vital role. In many of the letters going back and forth between England and the colonies, pirates, all over the empire, were a very real threat to all merchant shipping. By the 1690s, pirates in the American colonies regularly made their way to the Indian Ocean in order to loot rich prizes and return to the American colonies after their voyages.²⁹¹ Pirates played a vital role in the development of colonial politics as well.

Many studies follow pirates in a small geographic region or over a short span of time. Larger and more general studies of pirates and their place in the Atlantic World are very uncommon when researching in this field. Some studies on piracy during the Golden Age can also briefly mention pirates and then move on to another topic about political development. This work helps show the political impact piracy had all over the British Empire during the entire Golden Age of piracy. Pirates were one of the factors that led the English government to royally appoint colonial offices instead of allowing the colonies to do it themselves. Placing someone in the office helped enforce the laws that Parliament wanted to enforce. In the case of pirates, these royally appointed governors were harder to bribe and enforced the anti-piracy laws more swiftly than the colonially appointed governors.²⁹² This change in the way that colonial politics operated would affect the coming decades leading up to the American Revolution.

²⁹¹ Earle, Peter. *The Pirate Wars*, (New York City, NY, Thomas Dunne Books, 2003) Pp. 113.

²⁹² Steven C. Hahn, "The Atlantic Odyssey of Richard Tookerman: Gentleman of South Carolina, Pirate of Jamaica, and Litigant before the King's Bench," *Early American Studies* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2017) Pp. 543.

The importance of this thesis is to show how big the role of pirates played in the Atlantic World between 1686 and 1730. These sailors hold no similarities between themselves and how they are portrayed in popular culture today. They were not a group of random people who stole from the rich and gave to themselves day in and day out. These sailors were real people with real problems and they were thrust into the pirates life due to lack of economic opportunity. Whether it be from losing a position on a naval vessel after a war or wages getting cut on board merchant ships, pirates went from a hard life to a harder one, but they were paid for those hardships. It is important to understand pirates believed they had few other opportunities in the world to make a livable amount of money. Sailors chose the pirate life for riches and due to that, the face of colonial politics changed greatly during the Golden Age of piracy.

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