The Creation of a Brotherhood in Early British America

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The Creation of a Brotherhood in Early British America

An Honors Thesis
Presented by
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To
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CHAPTER ONE: MASTERS, SERVANTS, AND ENSLAVED AFRICANS

Introduction

The seventeenth century intensified an unprecedented time of migration and exploration for Europeans in the New World, during this century many more European men left their homes than ever before to explore the Atlantic world and settle in the new colonies of America. Most of the men who migrated to the Caribbean were single or left their families behind in search of something that would give them something they lacked at home – opportunity. Some of these men migrated to Barbados and not before long; they formed one of the most successful sugar colonies of the century. By 1680 Barbados represented Britain’s most valued possession in the New World; Barbados' sugar exports were worth more than any of Britain's other American colonies.¹ How did Barbados become a sugar empire in just sixty years?

While much has been written about large sugar plantations and slavery on Barbados little has been written about the individual lives of the average White man, many indentured servants or former indentured servants, who lived on the island. Before exploring the database of wills I collected from the Barbados Department of Archives that examines the lives of these men in some detail I will examine the world these English men entered when they arrived on this deserted island. In addition, in order to understand what it meant to be a European man in seventeenth-century Barbados, it is fundamental that I contextualize what it meant to be both a planter, large and small, and an indentured servant on the Island at its founding as an English colony. Getting at the experience of both is difficult.

One of the few surviving documents describing life on this island in the seventeenth century is Richard Ligon's *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (1657). With both primary and secondary sources, I will try to conjure up a world of planter, servants, and enslaved Africans in Barbados during the seventeenth century. To Ligon, Barbados was an island filled with foreign plants and strange insects. Upon arrival to the island, the first thing Ligon noticed was the topography. Ligon was very interested in the landscape of the Island, the flora and the plantations. When Ligon first arrives to Barbados, he stated that:

> the Inhabitants of the islands, and shipping to, worse so grievously visited with the plague, (or as killing a disease,) that before a month was expired, after our arrival, the living were hardly able to bury the dead. Whether it were brought thither in shipping: (for a long voyages, diseases grow at Sea, and take away many passengers, and those diseases prove contagious,) or by the distempers of the people of the Island: who by the ill diet they keep, and drinking strong waters, bring diseases upon themselves, was not certainly known. But I have this reason to believe the latter: because for one woman that died, there were ten men; and the men were the greater deboystes [debauched].

With Ligon's first impressions we are exposed to the men that were, in his mind, debauchers. Ligon describes these men as drunks with poor diets and perhaps questionable sexual behavior. As we will find out, Ligon is no better than those he criticizes for their questionable lifestyles. Ligon clearly does not sugarcoat what he sees and since he himself is not a clergyman or reformer the source rings true.

Ligon and the other men like Colonel Modyford, who were aboard the ship that brought them to the island, the *Achilles*, did not plan to spend a long time in Barbados; they were actually headed to Antigua. When they found out that they could stay for a while, however, they looked for low-cost housing. Ligon discovered that in Barbados it was very easy for a man with money "to purchase a Plantation there ready furnished, and stocked with Servants, Slaves, Horses,

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Cattle, Assinigoes [young donkey], Camels, &c. with a Sugar work, and an Ingenio [mill that makes sugar cane].” Like Colonel Modyford and Ligon, many of the early settlers of Barbados believed Barbados was an island where one could earn quick money through maintaining the plantation lifestyle that included crops, servants and enslaved Africans. This was a land of opportunity, where if one was lucky and smart with his investment, he could earn enough to be wealthy both a financially and socially.

The compatriots of the Europeans, who migrated to Barbados, were in fact quite successful with tobacco cultivation in the English colonies of North America. The colonies in North America like the Chesapeake proved very successful after early growing pains. The Caribbean was just beginning to become a favored destination for Europeans in the 1640s, as it was still wide-open for settlement and free of hostile natives. Despite the fact that all these men and migrants were European, they were still rivals when it came to the colonies. Before Barbados took first place, Virginia reigned as the largest producer of exports from the British colonies to England. The early settlers of Barbados, whether they expected to or not, soon regulated Virginia's exports to second place behind Barbadian sugar.

It did not take long for the first settlers in Barbados to realize that Barbados was not going to cultivate tobacco in the same successful way as Virginia and other colonies. Planters in Barbados eventually focused on sugar but the remnants of a failed effort at tobacco cultivation, at first dominated the landscape. Even though the European market for tobacco remained vibrant, the tobacco produced in Barbados was not even comparable to that of Chesapeake. The English settlers of Barbados needed to find another crop that could make Barbados successful; sugar was the solution.

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3 Ligon, A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes, 66.
In *Sugar and Slaves*, Richard Dunn illustrates how sugar became the staple crop of Barbados. Dunn traces the origins of sugar production to the collection of sugar cane and other plants by the first English settlers of the Island. These men found what they needed in Surinam, where the Dutch had an outpost. Thirty-two Amerindians also came from Surinam and brought along the knowledge of sugar cultivation. Unfortunately, they did not know how to cultivate the sugar cane into anything other than a drink. The Dutch did however, know how to process the sugar cane into sugar and taught the English how to do this while also supplying them with enslaved African labor.\(^5\)

**Ligon's Narrative**

One-way to understand the roles of Barbadian, mostly English-born, men is to look at their interactions with one another, with the enslaved, and with women. By the time Ligon arrived in Barbados in 1647, he observed that distinct types of men made up the population. Ligon placed the men on the Island in three groups: masters, servants, and slaves.\(^6\) The masters were often the overseers of the enslaved Africans and maintained the plantations. The role of masters will be discussed in more detail in the sections on treatment of indentured servants and the relationships between masters and enslaved Africa women. Masters and planters both refer to the same men who ran Barbados in the seventeenth century. In *Gentlemen of Fortune*, Knight states, "The planters were plain and passionate men."\(^7\) These men wanted to leave England to start something of their own and they did that with any means possible. Dunn goes as far as to say that these men were not inherently racists, but rather "whites enslaved blacks because they

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\(^6\) Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, 93.

\(^7\) Derrick Knight, *Gentlemen of Fortune: The Men who made their Fortunes in Britain's Slave Colonies* (Great Britain: Fredrick Muller Limited, 1978), 23.
discovered this sort of labor system worked very well". He believes that economic gain was the prime motive for forced African labor.⁸

What were the circumstances that white servant found when they arrived in Barbados? According to Ligon, enslaved Africans were "preserved with greater care than the servants, who are theirs but for five years, according to the law of the Island." The bias here is clear, White men should be treated better than their African compatriots. Ligon specifically looked at diet as an indicator of treatment. Of course from an economic standpoint the investment of a planter when buying an enslaved African far exceeded the investment in an indentured servant. White servants worked to pay for their passage and were given the minimum to get them to the end of their contract. Enslaved Africans were a long-term investment requiring a careful balance of present investment and long-term survival.

Ligon's word choice here is key to understanding the treatment of enslaved Africans; they were "preserved", which most of the time is an adjective that is used to describe the maintenance of an object. While it can be concluded that both enslaved Africans and White indentured servants were tools of production, workers and nothing more to the plantation owners, they were treated very differently. The treatment of enslaved Africans will be discussed more in the section on master/enslaved African relations.

The life of a White indentured servant depended on whether or not their master was "merciful or cruel."⁹ If their master was merciful, they had enough food, and appropriate lodging. Ligon argued that this was the norm and was certainly the case when a master was a good Christian man. On the other hand, if their master were cruel, he would treat his servants in a way that defied the civilized behavior of a good Christian man.

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⁸ Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, 225.
⁹ Ligon, A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes, 94.
For the unlucky servant the workday began at six o'clock in the morning and ended at six o'clock at night, their only breaks were for lunch and dinner. Ligon says that if a servant complained, "they are beaten by the Overseer; if they resist, their time is doubled." Ligon wrote about a time when he saw an overseer beat an indentured servant and was surprised by the overseer's brutality. Ligon did not have the same empathy for enslaved Africans that he had for White indentured servants. After witnessing a servant being beaten by an overseer, he lamented, "I have seen such cruelty there done to Servants, as I did not think one Christian could have done to another." Ligon felt sorry for the servant and felt disgusted by the way his fellow Christian behaved. To Ligon, indentured servants were Christians and, therefore, worthy of better treatment. Christian at the time was often used as shorthand for civilized and accordingly did not refer to Africans. Dunn, in *Sugar and Slaves*, discusses Ligon's contention that enslaved Africans were treated better than White indentured servants. He asserts that while Ligon thought Enslaved Africans fared better his evidence "demonstrates that the servants were far more carefully fed, clothed and housed than the slaves." Through my own interpretation of Ligon's narrative, I completely agree with Dunn on this point.

Ligon sees Africans as uncivilized but has difficulty meshing what he sees with what he assumes. In one instance, Ligon discussed how some enslaved Africans went to extreme lengths to stop a cane fire. After buckets of water did not work, Ligon says he saw the enslaved Africans use their own naked bodies to stop the fire. In this powerful account he states, "And I have seen some Negroes so earnest to stop this fire, as with their naked feet to tread, and with their naked bodies to tumble, and roll upon it; so little they regard their own smart or safety, in respect of

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10 Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, 94.
there Master's benefit."\textsuperscript{12} In this moment, it becomes clear that Ligon does not feel empathetic towards the enslaved Africans, rather, he feels surprised by what they are willing to do for their master. Nothing is mentioned about whether or not the enslaved Africans went to such lengths because of fear of blame and subsequent retaliation. Also, nothing is recorded about the injuries such behavior might inflict like burns or death. He works to explain behavior that he does not understand into his paradigm. How could such uncivilized people act in this way? Perhaps they are simply loyal servants. Other explanations elude Ligon.

Both planters and indentured servants maintained regular contact with women, mostly African and later Afro-Caribbean women. Although African women appeared everywhere, Ligon rarely mentions them when describing his experience on the Island. The few times African women are mentioned, however, they are undoubtedly sexualized. Early, in his narrative, Ligon describes his interactions with women by telling the reader about the Black mistress of Padre Bernado on one of the Cape Verde islands. According to historian Jennifer Morgan, this was the first time Ligon saw a Black woman.\textsuperscript{13} Through Ligon's writing it is clear that he was very infatuated with this woman. Ligon described the priest's Black mistress as, "A Negro of the greatest beauty and majesty together: that ever I saw in one woman."\textsuperscript{14} Not soon after he met her, Ligon knew that he wanted the priest's Black mistress all to himself. Through his interpreter, Ligon flirts with the woman by giving her some trifles. Later, he states, "I would think of somewhat wherein she might pleasure me, and I should find her both ready & willing." It is not certain whether Ligon was successful in his attempt to seduce the woman, but he noted that the priest noticed the interest he took in her. Ligon also mentioned how jealous the men, like the

\textsuperscript{12} Ligon, \textit{A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes}, 95.
\textsuperscript{14} Ligon, \textit{A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes}, 64.
priest were when it came to their mistresses.\textsuperscript{15} Ligon, in particular, was a man that had "an eye for feminine beauty", by exploring Ligon's admiration towards enslaved African women we can learn more about exactly who were the White men in seventeenth century Barbados.\textsuperscript{16} It is obvious from these examples that enslaved, African women provided White men with more than just a source of labor.

Another example of Ligon's sexual interest in African women occurs in a description of enslaved, African women's breasts. He reported, "their breasts hang down below their Navels, so that when they stoop at their common work of weeding, they hang almost down to the ground, that at a distance, you would think they had six legs."\textsuperscript{17} This powerful statement tells the reader something very important about the male gaze and how White men like Ligon viewed enslaved, African women. Ligon saw these women first as enslaved Africans to work on the plantations and second, as sexually available. In her book, \textit{Laboring Women}, Jennifer Morgan states, "women's work and women's bodies are inseparable from the landscape of colonial slavery."\textsuperscript{18} The relationships that single White men had developed with enslaved, African women confirm Morgan's statement. Enslaved, African women not only provided work on plantations, they also provided bodies for White males to explore and abuse.

Given these few mentions, and the scarcity of White women on the island, one can conclude that many of the single men on the island during this time period were having relations with enslaved African women or at least thinking about it. Barbados was a male-dominated society, but the role of power had a different dynamic when these men were engaging in sexual relations with the enslaved, African women they owned. The number of White women on the

\textsuperscript{15} Ligon, \textit{A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes}, 56.
\textsuperscript{16} Dunn, \textit{Sugar and Slaves}, 247.
\textsuperscript{17} Ligon, \textit{A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes}, 103.
\textsuperscript{18} Morgan, \textit{Laboring Women}, 3.
Island was not only small but White women had little place in a male society, especially when single men not only preferred enslaved African women, as one historian argues, had unlimited access to them.\textsuperscript{19} Black bodies were exotic to White men. Male fascination came from their very difference. Many times African women's bodies were described as being distorted or monstrous. Alternatively, they were very often described in a sort of animalistic way like Ligon's view of the breasts of an enslaved, African working in the sugar cane fields.

Morgan states, "The meanings attached to the female African body were inscribed well before the establishment of England colonial American plantations." By creating a paradigm of us versus them, English men were more apt to view African bodies as distinct from that of White bodies. As we know from the early explorations of Africa, Africa was a continent full of foreign creatures according to many early Europeans accounts and African bodies were not excluded from this language and categorization. Many Europeans believed that Africans were animalistic creatures that were less than human, the question of whether or not Africans were humans continued into the eighteenth century. This could be why most early descriptions of African bodies were as Jennifer Morgan suggests "both desirable and repulsive, available and untouchable, productive and reproductive, beautiful and black."\textsuperscript{20} African bodies were clearly seen as foreign but at the same time, they held a particular kind of interest to White men. They we different, which made them full of uncharted territory and of course the English men who colonized Africa and the Atlantic world, were always looking for new territories to conquer.

\textbf{Life as a Master: The Story of Thomas Thistlewood}


\textsuperscript{20} Morgan, \textit{Laboring Women}, 16.
In order to contextualize the master and overseer experience of Barbadian men, this relationship between White Men and Black women is central. Although very little detail survives for seventeenth-century Barbados, an extraordinary description of these relationships appears in the eighteenth-century Jamaican diaries of Thomas Thistlewood. Trevor Burnard's works on Thomas Thistlewood specifically focus on the sexual encounters of one White planter in the Caribbean. Burnard describes Thistlewood as "a brutal slave owner, and occasional rapist and torturer, and a believer in the inherent inferiority of Africans." Although this is not a Barbadian source, many English settlers of Jamaica in the eighteenth-century were men from Barbados looking for new opportunities and land to cultivate.

Ligon and Thistlewood both wrote explicitly and freely about their sexual experiences or attitudes. Ligon did not hold back when he wrote about the priest's Black mistress or the way the breasts of enslaved African women looked while they worked on the plantations. Likewise, from his research, Burnard has concluded that, "Thistlewood took full advantage of the sexual opportunities offered to white men...White men were expected to have sex with black women, whether black women wanted sex or not." These men freely record their racist notions about African women in their writing because they were not afraid of social condemnation. To write about the bodies of enslaved African women and to write about sexual encounters with enslaved Africans shows that these men were not ashamed for their behaviors; they did not feel guilty. Which tells us that there was no law to punish their behavior, during this time.

In Thistlewood's case, two main themes arise from his writing that are crucial to learning and unpacking what it meant to be a White slave master or overseer, as well as a single man in

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the Caribbean in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: sexual access and property rights. Thistlewood never lost sight of his power compared to that of the enslaved Africans he oversaw. His diaries tell us that he accepted the violence that took place against enslaved Africans, both physical and sexual. Similar to Ligon, Thistlewood saw African slavery as a natural system. Male patriarchy and White dominance were never questioned. In fact, "Thistlewood believed slavery to be normative and Africans to be natural slaves. They were slaves because they fell outside the social contract that secured individual rights, a blessing reserved for European insiders."22 This is another example of enslaved Africans being labeled as something less than human.

The desirability of African bodies was rooted in their differences to White bodies. African or Black bodies were seen as slender, women were tall and their bodies were large and fit when they were young, as they grew older and worked on plantations their bodies showed the strain. The same things that made them desirable made them repulsive. Ligon was infatuated by the breasts of enslaved Africa women, while also being disgusted in the way they hung so low once they had children. Black bodies were available to White men because of the institution of slavery and because of the powerful that White men had in seventeenth century England and American colonies. At the same time, Black bodies were untouchable, as Morgan describes it because of the negative connotations that came with having sex with something/someone less than human, as enslaved Africans were often seen.23 White men struggled with these innate contradictions but it is clear that the struggle did not last too long because fornication between White men and enslaved African women was soon normalized. Regardless of everything else

22 Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 130.
that was at play when White men chose to have sexual encounters with enslaved African women, these women were in fact "beautiful and black" to White onlookers.

Sexual access was almost one hundred percent attainable for slave masters and overseers because of the power dynamics that were at play in the institution of slavery. Burnard states, "White sexual access to black or colored women appears to have been a principal reason why white men move to Jamaica."[24] In Jamaica and Barbados, plantation owners where accustomed to having power that was granted to them at birth since they were of the dominant, White race. This power was even more unlimited when they purchased enslaved Africans. There was no social consequence for White men who had sex with or raped enslaved, African women. With no social consequences and ownership, White men exercised their access to their enslaved, African women openly and regularly.

It is important to note here that Barbados had one of the first slave codes in the Atlantic, one of which would be continuously used as a reference for places looking to adopt plantation slavery. Dunn points out that the slave code for Barbados did not include anything on the subject of Black/White fornication. He says that it is obvious why planters did not include that subject in the slave code and that is because, "planters who drafted these codes had no desire to prohibit their extramarital liaisons with black prostitutes and mistresses."[25] The planter class wrote the laws so they could essentially do anything they wanted in Barbados.

White male patriarchy was the law of land. White dominance was institutionalized throughout the British Atlantic world including in Barbados and Jamaica. Men like Ligon and Thistlewood used this system to their sexual advantage. It was not enough that White men ruled the plantations and everything in them; their sexual access to enslaved, African woman gave

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White men the ability to act out their privilege wherever, whenever, and on whomever they saw fit. Burnard articulates, "Slave owners needed to show that they were strong, violent, virile men who ruled the little kingdoms of white autocracy that were Jamaican plantations." This meant that White men had license to behave anyway they liked, including the violent physical and sexual dominance of female enslaved Africans. To Thistlewood, having sexual encounters with enslaved, African women was normal, a day-to-day routine. As an overseer this was his right. Burnard says it best in his book, "Refusing to have sex with Thistlewood was not a realistic option." Property rights came with sexual access in the case of slavery.

The control of enslaved, African women set the context for the master and overseer experience of Barbadian men. It is through this subjugation that White men achieved their personal dominance. Dunn describes sexual encounters between White men and enslaved, African women as the master "commandeering his prettiest slave girl and exacting his presumed rights from her." For Thistlewood, twenty-three percent of his sexual encounters took place with twelve enslaved, African women, all of whom he owned or controlled. When masters had sex with enslaved, African women that were not their property, the property rights of other men came into play. Burnard says that relationships between White men could be "soured" through this conflict. Men fought over women but the women were treated as property to be controlled by one man or the other.

**The Agency of Enslaved, African Women**

While there was plenty examples of male dominance and control, there is also evidence that points to the agency of enslaved, African women. As stated earlier, it is impossible to

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separate their experience from the institution of slavery. White men saw enslaved, African women as laborers and producers of future laborers as Morgan states they had two main powers, "the ability to produce both crops and other laborers." \(^{30}\) From Thistlewood's diaries, it is clear that White planters had children with their enslaved, African women. A mulatto child did have White blood, so they had somewhat of a better life, in comparison to enslaved Africans.

Thistlewood often had relations with enslaved, African women, some of whom where black mistresses. Burnard describes what benefit Lettice, a Black mistress, would have by producing a mulatto child. He says, "Producing a mulatto child was also a way for Lettice to retain her privileged position as the mistress of a white man." \(^{31}\) These children were not omitted from the institution of slavery, although there are some instances where the children of slave masters and enslaved African women were set free. \(^{32}\)

In his book, Burnard makes a powerful statement of how enslaved Africans felt about slavery. He states, "That slaves accepted the inevitability of their condition does not mean that they welcomed it; that slaves did not resist slavery to the full extent of their ability does not mean they were contented." \(^{33}\) There were revolts of enslaved Africans throughout the Caribbean and there are many instances in which enslaved Africans went against the wishes of their masters.

Despite White male dominance, evidence shows that enslaved African women could sometimes find a way to empower themselves despite their terrible situation. This is not to devalue the harsh reality of seventeenth-century plantation slavery but rather provide some examples of enslaved African women's agency within the institution of slavery. In Thistlewood's case in particular, he would often pay his partners in money or another type of reward. Also,


\(^{31}\) Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 171.

\(^{32}\) A number of wills in the database reflect this.

\(^{33}\) Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 152.
some enslaved African women could gain money by prostituting themselves; this money could then someday be used to secure some type of stability for the women when and if they were freed from enslavement. Burnard states, "Slave mistresses of white men were particularly adept in turning their liaisons into commercial gain."\(^{34}\) Again, not everyone had this financial opportunity. Some enslaved, African women, however, had some control of their future (the saving of money to one day buy property), even though they did not have complete control of their bodies in the current moment.

One particular example we have of an enslaved, African woman gaining economic capital is Thistlewood's primary mistress, Phibbah. They lived together as master and concubine. Furthermore, Thistlewood writes of having 2,142 sexual encounters with Phibbah.\(^{35}\) The story of Phibbah is a very unique case. By the time Thistlewood died, Phibbah had substantial wealth for an enslaved African in the eighteenth century. According to Burnard, she could even lend money to Thistlewood!\(^ {36}\) This is not a typical story for many enslaved African women but it was possible.

**Conclusion**

Even though we have seen cases in which enslaved, African women receive benefits from their sexual encounters with White men most did not. Enslaved Africans were constantly dehumanized and treated as animals. Enslaved African, women were demoralized and had to do whatever their masters wanted, yes some gained a few benefits most suffered nothing but degradation.

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\(^{34}\) Burnard, "The Sexual Life of an Eighteenth-Century Jamaican Slave Overseer," 181.


White men were not only powerful because of their role as masters and overseers, but they also inherited power as men in a male-dominant society. These White men had never lived in a society where they were inferior; their entire lives, whether they were rich or poor, was dominated by the privilege of whiteness. To these Englishmen, Whites were innately and naturally better than Blacks. Slavery only emphasized this understanding allowing another human to be treated as an animal.

In did not take long for White men to create a society that socially accepted and condoned sexual encounters between White men and their enslaved African women. White men in Barbados lived in a society where it was normal to be single, get drunk, and have sexual encounters with enslaved, African women. To understand who these men were is crucial to understanding the development of one of the most economically flourishing plantation society. The role that these White men had as masters and indentured servants is key to unraveling the every day lives of men on the island and how they interacted with one another and their surroundings. Richard Ligon and Burnard's interpretations of Thistlewood's diaries show us who these men were in relation to their roles as indentured servants and masters.
CHAPTER TWO: INDENTURED SERVITUDE

"I have seen an Overseer beat a Servant with a cane about the head, till the blood has followed, for a fault that is not worth the speaking of; and yet he must have patience, or worse will follow. Truly, I have seen such cruelty there done to Servants, as I did not think one Christian could have done to another." Ligon visited Barbados in the Seventeenth century writing a detailed description of everything he encountered on the Island, including the lives of indentured servants. He suggests that enslaved Africans even received better treatment.¹ The issue of course was that a White "Christian" man treated another White "Christian" man like an enslaved African. White men were the most powerful people on the Island but Ligon felt that White indentured servants had lost their racial privilege. In other words, their degraded status as servants earned them the same treatment as enslaved Africans. They had morphed into the racial other.

Race, gender, and social status all intersected with labor and sugar production with White men at both the top and bottom of the labor system. Ligon, like most writers who have written about seventeenth-century Barbados and its labor history have told the story of poor mistreated White labors. Other contemporary sources have made this observation.² Historians have used these sources to make their own case. White indentured servants were brutally treated in the British American colonies before the colonies fully switched over to enslaved African labor. This chapter will explore the history of indentured servitude and critique the account of the poor, mistreated, White laborer. It is important to understand what indentured servitude was and what

² Look at the works on indentured servitude by Hilary Beckles and Simon Newman.
it meant to be White in the seventeenth century to fully see how Barbados developed into the wealthiest English colony.

Historians of Barbadian history claim that White indentured servitude paved the way for the enslavement of Africans. Hilary Beckles, the major historian of early Barbados says, "The impact of black slavery upon the colonial economy and society from the mid-1640s, therefore, is central to any discussion of the experiences of white labourers."\(^3\) Beckles connects these two forms of bound labor to show that both were economic institutions, which mean that masters did anything they had to for financial gains, even if that was treating bound labors cruelly. David Galenson, who is an economist, argues that enslaved Africans were substitutes for indentured servants.\(^4\) Once African slavery took over as the primary source of labor on the Island, indentured servants were no longer in high demand. Recently Simon Newman has argued, that the "transition from bound white to enslaved African labor was built upon the hope that sugar could succeed where previous crops had failed."\(^5\) If this is true, planters and masters intentionally switched over to plantation slavery as a way to ensure the success of sugar crops. I think that White indentured servitude as an institution led way to the institution of slavery by focusing on economic gains while overlooking the treatment of workers.

Enslaved, African labor, Indenture Servitude, and Punishment

Unlike, enslaved Africans who had an unlimited term of service until the law abolished slavery and the slave trade; White indentured servants served for the term that they were

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sentenced to or which they volunteered for. Historian, Alison Games describes indentured servants as:

young servants, or so a demographic portrait of them suggests: 94 percent of the travelers were men; and 70 percent fell between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, the years when young adults in England were employed in service. The average age of the immigrants to Barbados was twenty-two. Those who come without money had to wait until freedom from service to advance themselves in Barbados society.⁶

Although both men and women were accepted as indentured servants, the information published indicates that most of the indentured servants in seventeenth century Barbados were men.

Newman states that indentured servants were needed to "plant, tend, and harvest the sugar cane, and then to build and work the sugar mills, the sugar works, and the distilleries."⁷ It is crucial to know who these men were and what they did in order to understand the institution of slavery as a whole. Some of these men were prisoners sent to the island. Those who volunteered to go work on the island served an average of six and three-fourths years. In the early years of settlement indentured servants did the bulk of the backbreaking work of tobacco production, which later switched to the more lucrative sugar.

Indentured servants served many different terms of service. Some served a year and some served ten years, it all depended on their master, their contract, and their individual situation. In White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627-1715, Beckles says that the average number of years that voluntary indentured servants served was 6.75 years, while political prisoners served an average of ten years.⁸ Servants more often than not lived on their master's

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plantation and it they finished their service they would not only have to find work but a place to live. Most of the time, they lived in a single room but if there were many of them on one plantation, they could have their own separate living quarters on the master's property.

Indentured servitude was used as a tool of punishment for the social deviants of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The British court in the seventeenth century could actually sentence criminals to Barbadian servitude. Being sent to Barbados or being "Barbadosed", which meant they were kidnapped illegally to secure bound laborers, became the fate of many vagrants, criminals, or convicts. The imprisonment and banishment of men and women who were not following societal rules guaranteed that the New World colonies were stocked with laborers and that Britain was free of real or potential troublemakers. The hope of the British Empire was that by serving out their time in Barbados, criminals would become better citizens and the only way to do that was to strip them away from Britain. This was a win for both the economic and social sector of Great Britain. Servants helped establish the magnificent sugar colony of Barbados.

While most writers have spoken about White bound labor as a punishment, Beckles describes three alternative ways Whites became indentured servants. The first was through recruitment, which ensured transportation to Barbados. The trip to Barbados was not only long and but costly in the seventeenth century. Second, Whites were laborers who were contracted. Lastly, some Whites paid their own passage to Barbados and voluntarily entered servitude upon their arrival to the island. Servitude for some people was a way to start over. Beckles states that servants were supposed to be registered at their departure port and that was where their contracts were to be recorded. This was not the case however, for the many laborers who were

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9 Newman, A New World of Labor, 71.
10 Beckles, White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 56, 2.
purchased/contracted in Barbados because often time registers in Barbados were not kept. There is often times no way of telling whether or not an indentured servant even made it to Barbados.

Beckles describes indentured servitude, as a form of punishment, which forms a connection between indentured servitude and slavery. Both of these forms of labor can be linked to punishment. Beckles declares that the state legalized "the transportation of individuals generally characterized as vagrants, beggars, and rogues -- the defenseless, unemployed poor."\(^{11}\) Criminals could serve out their punishment in Barbados, which was a way that was not only beneficial to Britain but also a way that separated the society and ensured that those who did not abide by laws were not tolerated and, therefore, were unfit to live in British society.

Servants were the first to be treated cruelly on the Island. Many of the cruel practices of indentured servitude are said to have laid the foundation of slave practices in Barbados. The way indentured servants were treated set the stage for slavery; in other words slavery, as an institution, could not have been successful without the tools and lessons learned from indentured servitude. Barbados not only formed one of the biggest sugar colonies of its time, but it also laid the framework and policies for plantation slavery because of all the laws and policies that surrounded indentured servitude. Indentured servitude was one of the easiest ways to make sure that Barbados advanced as a growing colony in the seventeenth century. Labor is key to the success of any economy. Galenson best describes the connection between indentured servitude and slavery by stating, "wherever slavery ultimately developed, indentured servitude had earlier been in use."\(^{12}\) Indentured servitude was the forerunner to Barbadian plantation slavery. Anyone who wanted to go to Barbados or anyone who was sent to work there was most certainly

\(^{11}\) Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados*, 46.
providing labor to the new world. By providing labor they were also providing Barbados with the opportunity to advance economically.

**Forced Labor versus Opportunity**

White indentured servitude was not only often cruel and inhumane; it paved the way for the ideas and practices of plantation and chattel slavery. To fully understand the role of White indentured servitude, one must consider understand the history and legacy of White bound labor. In *Black Men in White Skins*: The Formation of a White Proletariat in West Indian Slave Society, Hilary Beckles describes White indentured servitude as "a seventeenth-century colonial adaption of the traditional apprenticeship system."\(^{13}\) Britain had a long history with its apprenticeship system, which made it easy for Britain to transition to indentured servitude. Was indentured servitude an opportunity for those who were indentured, like apprenticeship, a chance to learn a skill, or simply forced labor?

Everyone wanted to voyage to the New World, but obviously not everyone could afford to do so. The high cost of travel often led people to indenture themselves to work. Once an individual arrived in Barbados as a bound servant they were required to immediately begin working for their master. As stated earlier the number of years varied and the outcome was different for everyone. This is where it becomes tricky to determine whether or not indentured servitude was a coerced form of labor, in its brutal form or an opportunity for travel, investment, and social mobility.

While authors describe the mistreatment of indentured servants, there are clear distinctions that separate the bound labor of White indentured servants and enslaved Africans. These distinctions are where one can label indentured servitude as a form of forced labor but also

\(^{13}\) Beckles, "Black Men in White Skins," 5.
potentially a form of opportunity. Some of the same authors that discuss how brutal White indentured servants were treated also lay out facts about all the opportunities White indentured servants had. They could receive land after they were freed, and they could become wage laborers.\textsuperscript{14} Many of these opportunities could also be called privileges. I argue that these privileges obviously came from the skin color of the indentured servants. Regardless of their socioeconomic and labor status, indentured servants were White, and race could trump class in this case.

White indentured servants had possessed the right to work off their time and service. While they worked, they had a place to live and eat and sometimes received wages on top of other benefits. After working off their service, they could be "launched onto the labor market with ten pounds sterling to experience colonial society as free individuals." Indentured servants enjoyed access to the White Barbadian society that non-Whites could never have. An indentured servant could serve their time and then, with luck and the right contacts, come to own a sugar plantation. They could become wage laborers and more often than not they did if they could live through their period of service.\textsuperscript{15} Indentured servitude could be a way out of poverty for low class Whites from England. On the other hand, however, there is also evidence to suggest that sometimes their lives did not substantially improve over time. Later in this chapter, I will explore wills that I collected and use them as case studies to further this analysis of forced labor or opportunity.

**Apprenticeship and Indentured Servitude**

The system of indenture allowed for what Beckles described as labor control. Law and custom made indentured servitude the primary source of labor to the British colonies of the new

\textsuperscript{14} Beckles, "Black Men in White Skins," 5.

\textsuperscript{15} Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados*, 141.
Prior to indentured servitude, apprenticeship was a very common form of labor, where young men and women were sent to live and work with someone to gain a new trade skill. Beckles states that the institution grew out of the feudal system of apprenticeship and that indentured servitude was close to the "ideal type" of labor control, chattel slavery. Historians can trace forced labor back to the beginnings of the human race. As it went beyond the restrictions and customs of apprenticeship, indentured servitude was able to do all the things that were not accepted during apprenticeship, like the severe punishment of laborers.

According to the works of Ligon, Beckles and Galenson; White bound laborers were treated like no Christian or White man should be treated, they were dehumanized and reminded of their inferiority as lower class laborers. Although I understand that White bound laborers faced discrimination and were treated harshly because of their socioeconomic status, I do not agree that they were Black men in White skins. Saying that they were Black men in White Skins undermines the fact that Black men had little to no privileges in Barbadian society and over look the race and gender privileges that White men possessed.

White bound laborers entered labor contracts that were known as indentures. These contracts were signed and determined the specific work the bound laborer was supposed to do during his or her specific time of indenture. This is why some White bound laborers were mistreated and abused. Galenson points out that the transition from the British apprenticeship system to the indenture system first occurred in large numbers in the British colony of Virginia. The colony of Virginia served as an example for the other British colonies that were developing

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17 Beckles, White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 71.
18 Galenson, White Servitude in Colonial America, 11-12.
in the seventeenth century. The system of indenture came about so flawlessly because its structure, in theory, maintained many of the same qualities as the apprenticeship system.

With no ready labor supply in Barbados, indentured servitude provided a labor force for the island and young men were the best laborers because they had strength and needed money to ensure a successful future for themselves. These young laborers contributed to the socioeconomic success and development of the colony. Similar to apprentice labor, indentured servitude played a role in the transition of labor. Both of these types of laborers were capital investments to their masters, while allowing servants the opportunity to invest in their futures. Beckles goes as far in his argument as to strip the humanity from servants by stating, a "servant was not a free person operating under a contractual obligation, but rather primarily a capital investment with property characteristics." It is important to understand the indentured servant through many different lenses. Of course, they were capital investments, but they were also White men in a Euro-centric society and world. In addition, they were also poor and the property of other men and at the same time individuals that could be freed one day from controlled labor. At the conclusion of this chapter I will go into more detail about what this all means for the humanity of indentured servitude.

**Case Studies**

As I was looking through my list of 71 single males, I decided to make three lists. The first list is all the men that are most likely indentured, the second list is all the men that are likely indentured and the last listed is everyone is least likely indentured. I have formed these lists by creating a set of markers that I believe describe someone as indentured or as not indentured. Some of the characteristics that I used to categorize these single men as indentured include the

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following: low income, little to no legacies, no families (children and/or wives), no ownership of property including enslaved Africans and large amounts of land. Male testators were most likely not indentured servants if the man owned enslaved Africans and land, had families (children and/or wives, possessed large amounts of money, left large legacies, listed occupations in their wills.

These lists only work to tell us if these men were indentured at the time of their deaths, the only way of knowing if some of these men were once indentured is to look for their names as servants in their masters' wills and then see if those names connect to wills left later by the servants. This is hard to do with the database I collected, but it is possible. This section, however, will focus on two cases that are obviously of indentured men and examples of servants in their masters' wills. These wills can provide snapshots of the lives of single White men, potentially indentured servants and show that these men were present on the Island.

I know a large portion of men on the island was indentured but I have no way to do a statistical analysis with the sample that I collected. A lot the questions about indentured servitude cannot be answered because of the lack of information the individual provides. In here book, *Unwelcome Americans*, historian Ruth Herndon tells the stories of poor New Englanders in the eighteenth century by using historical records. In her Appendix, Herndon illustrates the problem of voice in original documents. I also faced this problem in the wills I researched. There is no way of telling if individuals wrote their own will. I assume that testators understood even if they did not write their own wills. People who "marked" their will with a symbol most likely did not know how to write but made a statement about their approval of the document's content.

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Regardless, historical records like the wills I have collected provide a great deal of information about an individual and seventeenth-century Barbadian society.

John Banister was a single man who was aboard the ship *Recoverie* in 1650, which was sailing to Barbados when his will was created. His will was proved three months after it was written. A proved will meant it had been recorded and viewed by the relevant official on Barbados. Wills were proved after a testator's death so Banister wrote a deathbed will. He probably developed a sickness on his way to Barbados or he boarded the ship already ill. Based on who he left legacies to and what he left behind, it can be inferred that he was traveling alone with all of his belongings. He may have a family back in Britain but there is no reference to them. What makes John Banister's will so fascinating is that he left everything he owned to someone who was on the ship, none described as his friends or family. He left legacies to the commander, officers, surgeon, carpenter, cook, and cooper of the ship. He also left to each "common man" five shillings a piece within twenty days after arrival of the ship at Barbados, supposedly after his estate was sold. John Banister was intimate with the crew rather than the passengers of the ship. He might have been a seaman himself, or simply a young man on the move like those who received his meager estate.\(^\text{21}\)

John Osbourne was also aboard a ship to Barbados when his will was created. His will, however, was recorded as he dictated his wishes to a third party. Death caught him off guard making him too sick to write his own will or he was simply illiterate. John Osbourne was aboard the ship *Dolphin* in 1653. His will says that everything he owned was in a "drawer" that he apparently inherited from George Butter. He stated that his cousin, Ceriseham [Gersham?] had a letter for his brother Anthony and sister Elizabeth. We can infer that John Osbourne was a man

\(^{21}\) Recopied Will Books, Record Series RB6, 1649-1693, Volume 11, 446. The Barbados Archives. Cave Hill, Barbados.
with few resources but with at least a friend willing to give him a legacy, a cousin willing to carry his mail, and a family -- a sister and a brother.\textsuperscript{22}

William Beresford was a married man and a chirurgeon.\textsuperscript{23} He deathbed will is important to this section because it shows a master's relationship with his servant and it shows the presence of servants on the island. In his will, William not only frees his servant but he leaves his servant, Andrew Bayley, his "phisiehe? books linin and woolen clothes." I have seen servants left as property to other people and servants feed, but this is the only record I saw of a master giving his servant his books. That in itself is very powerful because it shows that William cared about Andrew's future and possibly his literacy and education.\textsuperscript{24}

Jane Blake was a widow or as she puts it "the relict and executrix of George Blake of London esqr." Jane's will is copied almost entirely below:

To all to whom these presents shall Jane Blake of London widow the relict and executrix of the Testament of the Last Will of George Blake late of London esqr decd late whilst he lived Sewer? in Ordinary [and] put my Honored friend Robert Legard esqr my true and Lawfull attorney for me and in my name to enter into and upon all that plantation called or known by the name of Hillcotts in the parish of Christ Church in the island of Barbados as also in and upon other Lands tenements houses buildings and here dilament's whatsoever with eten and every of their apputenancces? in the said Island to me in any wise belonging and Size possess and take all Christian Servants and all negroes Slaves Coppers stills untensils materialls and other goods and chattel whatsoever also to me belonging or appertaining in the aforesaid Island and the said Plantation Lands Tenenants and other ete? premises and every or any part or parcell thereoff is grant bargain sell assign sete? or to form lete in fee simple or for any term or number of years of or for any term or number of years or for terms? or otherwise accordng to his good discertion at the best Improvement ______________ is any person or persons whatesoever and in order to the better and more effectual? execution of the said will Trust by me soe reposed in my said Attorney
What I find fascinating about Jane's will is that she does not even give the name of her "Christian servants," they are simply included in a long list of her other property and in this instance striped

\textsuperscript{22} Will Books, RB6, 13:26.
\textsuperscript{23} Surgeon.
\textsuperscript{24} Will Books, RB6, 11:442.
of individual identities. This example provides a stark contrast to William Beresford's will. Both William and Jane's will showcase the presence of indentured servants on the Island, while providing different examples of a servant’s relationship, or lack of, with their masters.

These are just a few stories of the White men who were living in Barbados in the seventeenth century. Each will has something different to offer and a different story to tell whether it is about the man who is alone aboard a ship that is sailing to Barbados, or it is the story a master presented about his indentured servant. The lives of these men were all connected and affected by Barbados's sugar economy and it is clear that these men were present and discussed on the Island in the seventeenth century.

The Most Brutal form of Labor

Although the literature covered in this chapter mostly supports the claim that indentured servitude is the most brutal form of labor, I have to disagree with the statement. I believe that the race of these laborers over ruled their socioeconomic status. Unlike enslaved Africans, Whites in Barbados had a skin color that allowed them privileges even if they did not always have those opportunities at their fingertips. Due to their skin color enslaved Africans did not hold the same privileges as their White servant counterparts. In fact, enslaved Africans were not even offered the same opportunities that White indentured servants were.

I believe the only reason historians and writers focus on the brutal treatment of White indentured servants is because it is ironic that in a White male-dominated society, White male indentured servants could be susceptible to violence that was reserved for the racial inferiors of the time. Ligon was clearly a man of his time, but is it necessary for writers in the twentieth and twenty first century to continue to tell the story of the mistreated White laborer? I am not

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denying the poor treatment of White laborers that was indeed brutal but I do not think it should be the only story told. If we examine the quote by Ligon that the beginning of this chapter he states, "Truly, I have seen such cruelty there done to Servants, as I did not think one Christian could have done to another."²⁶

Christian, for the British at this time is virtually synonymous with White men and did not apply to enslaved Africans even though some Whites on the island of Barbados in the seventeenth century attempted to convert enslaved Africans to Christianity. Enslaved Africans were not White nor Christians, so it was probably easier for observers to look past their brutal treatment on Barbadian plantations. We as humans often times feel more empathetic towards people who are similar to us. In psychology, the cross-race effect is often talked about when discussing race relations, biases, prejudice and discrimination. The cross-race effect is the inclination that one has to more effortlessly recognize individuals of one's own race. This is connected to the perceptual expertise hypothesis that proposes the notion that we can more precisely recognize emotions in individuals of the same race as ourselves. This is due to the tendency that we tend to socialize more with people who are the same race as ourselves.²⁷

Within the context of the cross-race effect and perceptual expertise hypothesis it is easy to see why Ligon was so taken aback by an image of a White indentured servant being beaten to the point of bleeding. I believe those two theories explain the sympathy and apathy writers have felt towards the treatment of White indentured servants on the island of Barbados. I do not however, feel that the claims that came from these experiences are correct. White indentured servants definitely had a harsh time in indentured servitude but to go as far as to say that they were the most brutally treated in the colony completely ignores the reality that to be White in the

²⁶ Ligon, A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes, 94.
seventeenth century provided privileges to even the poorest man. These privileges have been listed throughout this chapter and cannot be swept aside. Race often times has a way of triumphing over class and in seventeenth-century Barbadian society it is clear that race gave even the poorest individuals advantages.
CHAPTER THREE: FICTIVE KINSHIP

There were many reasons why men migrated to Barbados and why most of the time, these men were alone when they arrived. Some of the reasoning why they migrated alone was due to their age and or socioeconomic status. Barbados was filled with potential. At the same time, many poor English men had few choices at home and took a gamble as an indentured servant. Their dreams were to make enough money to eventually start a life and plantation of their own. Once these young men arrived they often depended on one another as servants of earlier planters or as fictive kin. They created a brotherhood of necessity. This is seen in the way the legacies were structured by those who left wills. Unrelated men gave each other legacies ranging from money to land. There are times when children were listed as godchildren of the deceased but more often than not there is no connection mentioned between individuals. Sometimes legacies went to children of various unrelated individuals. Many of these examples have led me to believe that there were meaningful and significant relationships on the island that we will never be able to recreate or fully understand, but hopefully we can begin to contextualize it.

Will Database
During the month that I spent doing archival research at the Barbados Archives Department, along with my professor Lisa Wilson, we collected over five hundred wills. The database we created used forms from both Microsoft Access and Microsoft Office. The wills we collected range from the 1640s to the 1690s. Out of more than 200 wills I collected, I found over 60 single men. Each one of these single men have a story to tell about seventeenth century Barbados and their stories can be told through a close interpretation of their wills and legacies. There are a total of 71 single men and although I will not go into details about all of them, each story is important to tell. These men created the Barbados historians write about today.
My work on relationships between men in Barbados is in large part possible because of the work of Alison Games, who is the only other historian to look specifically at these relationships. Games, describes how the British colonies in the seventeenth century were created as a result of migration. Her book titled, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* illustrates the rich history of the migration, mostly men from Great Britain to the various colonies in the New World. These men were mostly indentured. By analyzing the London port register of 1635, Games shows her readers how the British colonies went from territories to plantations. I agree with Games, that migration is the key factor in the establishment of the British colonies of the seventeenth century.¹

Close proximity, high morality rates, the goal of creating the biggest sugar colony of the century, and the disproportional ratio of men to women, all of these themes define Barbados in the seventeenth century. In their wills Barbadian single men often described each other with the following adjectives: "beloved", "true", and "well beloved". This could just be an example of the formal language at the time or these adjectives could describe friendship, fictive kinship, or even romantic relationships. We however, have no idea what these adjectives actually describe with the information provided to us by the wills. My best guess is that these adjectives are describing friendships and fictive-kin relationships. Within the database we can see that most of these single deceased men left legacies to other men and it was not just muscovado sugar or shillings; in fact most of the time, these men left their entire estates to their "beloved friend". These men were single, so they did not have wives or children to inherit.

**An Anthropological Theory**

To fully contextualize the relationships between single men on the island of Barbados, it is important to understand what kinship is and how fictive kinship is constructed. In order to do this, I must start with the beginning of social and cultural anthropology. Two of the leading pioneers of social and cultural anthropology focused their research on kinship. Lewis Henry Morgan worked on social organizations, systems of kinship and human thought and experience. In his anthropological textbook, Jerry D. Moore, describes Morgan's work on the understanding of the connections of society as key to the transformation of understanding the development of all human society.\(^2\) Claude Lévi-Strauss created structuralism to help analyze cultural systems like kinship. Morgan and Lévi-Strauss shaped the study of kinship and the foundation of cultural/social anthropology.

Social and cultural anthropology focuses on society and relationships among individuals in the society. The textbook, *Sharing Our World, An Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology*, provides insight on social and cultural relationships that can further our understanding of gender, social roles and kinship. In the book, the author uses the term pater, to define, "a man who plays the social role of father to a child", this is distinguished from a genetic parent who plays the same role.\(^3\) In some cases, I believe all men on the island were in one way or another paters to the young men and boys on the island. With a community based on sugar, everyone knew everyone. It was part of the way to survive and continue thriving as a colony.

*Sharing Our World, An Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology*, also defined kinship as a term that is "term used by anthropologists to describe sets of relationships

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considered primary in any society, also called family and relations, but demonstrating huge variety in different societies in practice." Kinship can be used in many different forms and by exploring those forms it will be easier to understand fictive kinship among the males of Barbados. For centuries, anthropologists have understood kinship as "rules for passing on status, roles, good and membership in particular social groups from one generation to the next." Almost everything people own, whether it is tangible or not, is passed on to those around closest to the deceased, often times that is their kin. It also states that, "inheritance is important in all societies" and I completely agree.\(^4\) Neighborly relations and economic transactions are also both closely related to kinship. These two factors will be discussed later when I begin to describe the lives of the single men in Barbados.

In Linda Stone's *Kinship and Gender*, she discusses how both gender and kinship are social processes. Gender is culturally constructed and is "considered to be something that we as human actors ourselves continually generate in our everyday lives." Kin selection is based on genealogy, but sometimes it is based on a society's social groups. Kinship can serve many different functions in a society. Stone describes a major change in kin relations in the 1970s, during that time, people around the world constructed relationships that looked and seemed like biological kinship relations but were "actually relationships based on common residence, certain rituals, food sharing, and so on."\(^5\) Fictive kin relationships can sometimes be based on economic relationships, as we have seen in Barbados, specifically in the way that some Barabadian families had single men as their tenants.

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As a species, we as humans, have a unique ability to construct our own social categories. Stone describes the process of how humans "make kin as well as grow their own." Kinship is a creation both biological and social, and as humans we are able to have a chose in our kin relations. These forms of kinship beyond biology "create networks of cooperative, political alliances across time and space through levels of social organization." Kinship relations are crucial to the movement of a society forward, both social and economic. This is part of human adaptation and life.

Fictive Kin

In Constructing Family: A typology of voluntary kin, the writers describes four types of fictive kin. The four types of fictive kin are substitute family, supplemental family, convenience family, and extended family. This article chooses to use the term voluntary kin instead of fictive kin. The writers say that by using the term fictive kin, fictive kin are "defined by how they are different from the conventional understanding of family, [by] focusing on what fictive family member slack." I, however, will continue to use fictive kin because it is the most widely accepted term used by scholars.

Voluntary kin is very important because it can lead to belonging, emotional closeness, protection, security and social support. When it is related to working class families or single men, the outcomes that can be produced from voluntary kin are especially important. Social networks are crucial to the expansion and development of a society and the individuals who live in it. Voluntary kin is important when an individual has little to no contact with their biological family. Voluntary kin can serve as a substitute family and that is most likely what happened in

6 Stone, Kinship and Gender, 53, 54.
Barbados. Many people moved to Barbados by themselves and by doing so left most of their contact with their families behind. By creating fictive kin relations men in Barbados were able to fulfill their social, emotional and economic needs. Adaption is necessary for human life and creating fictive kin is a basic need for humans to adapt, especially after migrating to a new place.

**Narratives of Fictive Kin among Single Men**

The database that I collected from the wills in the Barbados Archives Department has provided me with a lot of information. Some of the information is not used directly in this section because this focuses on a specific type of single man in Barbados, Single men who had close connections with each other and family groups. I would like to make it clear that male friendships and male-family connections are not the only friendships or connections on the island. There were cases when women were listed as executors and when women were the only people listed as receiving legacies. At the same time, some of the men could have been widowers, which would explain the lack of women represented in their legacies. Also, men could have had connections with women but did not leave them specific legacies in their wills.

The following narratives exclusively focus on males who left legacies to other men. These close relations are consequences of the systems of indentured servitude and plantation slavery. Men on the island of Barbados were tied together by these two systems that economically and socially fueled their experience on the island. By working closely and living in close proximity to each other, men created life-long bonds and tight-knit relationships. Even if men were indentured servants, they could have still built lasting relationships during the time of their indenture. Some of these men had a lot to give, while others had not so much. Regardless of how much they left, these men's wills have played a critical role in the understanding of fictive relations in Barbados in the seventeenth century. By applying theories from social and cultural
anthropology, we can situate these wills in an historical context and provide a story for the many men who lived, worked and flourished in Barbadian society.

Bryan Canana was a single man who lived in Barbados during the 1650s. His wills was written on August 18, 1652 and at that time he left everything that belonged to him to Thomas White, who was the son of John White. Thomas White could be a godson to Bryan or Bryan could have served as Thomas' fictive father figure or uncle. Regardless, of the relation between Bryan and Thomas, Bryan left everything he owns to Thomas and usually legacies go to family, so Thomas and Bryan were most likely fictive kin. It can also be inferred that Bryan was a planter, even though it is not listed. This is due to the fact that Bryan left Thomas White, 10 acres of land and whatever else he owned.8

Dennis Gibow or Dennis Gibbons⁹ was a man who had accumulated a large amount of wealth during his time lifetime. Dennis' friend Edward or Edmond Morris was listed as his executor. Dennis left Edward five hundred pounds of tobacco. Dennis also left Edward's son and wife legacies. Edward was most likely Dennis' fictive brother and that is why he left Edward's family legacies as well. He left Edward's son, John Edward "seven acres of land being in the pish of St. Phillips for his father to look over in his minority five hundred pounds of tobacco due from William Heyatts on the first day of May one thousand six hundred fifty and one 1 bleeding sowe 2 shootes all apparel shirts clothes." He gave Edward's wife, Anne, "one thousand pounds of tobacco to be paid the fifteenth day of May the date hereof." He made sure that all of Edward's family had a piece from the life he lived. Dennis was obviously very close to this family, closer

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9 In her compiled and edited volume of Barbados will record Joanne Mcree Sanders writes Dennis Gibbons, but when I transcribed the will, I read Dennis Gibow.
than he was to his biological family, since none of them are listed. There were also two other men listed to receive legacies on Dennis' will.\(^{10}\)

James Daniel also died in the 1650s. His will was a verbal or deathbed will. His will states "on his death bed James Daniel gave his estate to Richard Davis & Walter Follett. He died 23 Nov 1652." In his legacies, he left Mr. Richard Davis all of his estate with "only the shop tools excepted". He left his shop tools to Walker Follett. This is an example of male friendships because both of the people he leaves his legacies are men and most likely his close friends if these are the people he is thinking of in the last seconds of his life.\(^{11}\)

Robert Band was a resident of the Parish of St. Michael and asked in his will to be buried in the Parish's churchyard. All of Robert's executors were men and listed as his friends. He had a very close relationship to the Cattlin family; this family could have served as a substitute family for Robert who seemed to be alone on the island. Robert left legacies to both John, his wife Anne and their children with the same names, John Junior and Anne Junior. Robert left John and Anne 500 pounds of sugar, while leaving John Junior and Anne Junior 500 pounds of Muscovado sugar. His two executors were left with nothing, which is very odd when considering male friendship at the time. It could be possible that Robert felt that he owed more to the Cattlin family, then his executors. Why was it that the Cattlin family received so much from Robert while the people he left in charge of his will receive nothing? This will tells that above male friendship Robert valued family. This could have started out as Robert and John as friends and fictive kin and then transformed into an entire fictive family.\(^{12}\)

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\(^{10}\) Will Books, RB6, 11:439.
\(^{11}\) Will Books, RB6, 14:323.
\(^{12}\) Will Books, RB6, 14:361.
Richard Mills was a vitner, which means that he made wine. Richard Mills' will was particularly interesting because he devoted most of his will to praising God and hoping that he was worthy of entering the Lord's kingdom. This is a pristine example of male friendship and fictive kin relations. These men truly and deeply loved and cared about the well being of each other. Richard had two close friends, who were his executors in trust and listed as his "well beloved friends." He also wrote that after all his debts were paid for and his funeral was taken care of, the rest of his estate was to be equally divided between Captain Ralph Parrot and Captain John Lewis, who took care of him during his sickness. Captain Ralph Parrot and Captain John Lewis were obliviously very caring and loyal friends to Richard, especially since they took care of Richard.\(^\text{13}\)

John Ethrington was a planter from the Parish of St. Lucy. He left his entire estate, both real and personal to his "kinsman" George Heathcott. His plantation in St. Lucy was fifteen acres and some of his personal items included, four enslaved Africans and two cattle. The enslaved Africans and cattle were his only property listed in his legacies. I put this example in here because of the term kinsman. The use of this term shows that the some people on the island did have kin relations that were recognized, which is important because those people may have built different types of relationships with their neighbors than the people who were longing and looking for substitute family or families on the island.\(^\text{14}\)

Thomas Baldwin was a cooper; he was a shop owner and seemed to be a man who was pretty well off based on his will. Thomas was a resident of Parish of St. Michael. Thomas' executor was also a workingman; he was listed as a merchant. Thomas left everything he owned to Marcus Braud, his executor. There is nothing listed in the will that indicated what the

\(^\text{13}\) Will Books, RB6, 15:221.
\(^\text{14}\) Will Books, RB6, 15:206.
relationship between Thomas and Marcus was but if he is leaving everything to him, it is safe to assume that they were at least friends or colleagues. Thomas' will also lists many of his household items, which included: "chattels, goods, wolen, brasse, pewter, pipe, etc. [and] everything in the shoppe chambers: profit, commodities, etc. and all real and personal estate in Barbadoes." They could have also been partners since Thomas was a cooper and Marcus was a merchant, either way they must have been an incredible bond since it was the only legacy listed.\(^\text{15}\)

John Brinagh died in the middle of the 1670s and left everything to his well beloved friend Richard Mathers. In his will he states "all my whole and sole estate personal and real whether it be due unto me by bills bonds accountor or any other manner of way or ways from any manner of person or persons within the island above name" (Barbados will record #). In some cases, I think "well beloved friend" can represent a fictive kin relation among men. I believe there is clearly a different between calling someone a friend and a well beloved friend, even in the formal language of seventeenth-century Barbados. John and Richard could have had a brotherhood along with their economic partnership, which is most likely the case.\(^\text{16}\)

William Garver\(^\text{17}\) was a cordwainer in Barbados, which means that he made shoes. He was the only Cordwainer that I found in my sample of men in Barbados (note: my sample contained 255 wills). He left most of his property to his executor and loving friend, Mr. Thomas Allen. At the same time, he left Mrs. Davis, the wife of the cordwainer Mr. William Davis, "I silver drameuf? that hath to the bottom a spanish shilling with my name on the out side of it"

\(^{15}\) Will Books, RB6, 15:46.  
\(^{16}\) Will Books, RB6, 9:280.  
\(^{17}\) In her complied and edited volume of Barbados will record Joanne Mcree Sanders writes William Garner, but when I transcribed the will, I read William Garver.
(Barbados will record #). Why did he leave a legacy for Mrs. Davis, not Mr. Davis? Maybe it is because he and Mr. Davis were close, kin-like friends but now Mr. Davis is dead or William could be a close friend with Mrs. Davis and not Mr. Davis. Another interesting thing about this will is the way that William addresses James Greaves. He states "my man" after James' name. Does that mean that James was his friend, family, or servant? We do not know the answer but I think he was most likely his indentured servant.\textsuperscript{18}

William Edwards was a man in Barbados who had close male friendships. William Edwards' could very well be an example of pristine male friendship that could have developed into fictive kinship or that was a fictive kin at the time of his death. William left legacies to his two Godsons William Sparuck and John Price. William left William Sparuck, the son of his friend James Sparuck, "two thousand pounds of muscovado sugar in the hands of Mr. Edward Harlaston and to be in the hands of his father James Sparuck until he shall attain to the age of seventeen years". William left John Price, the son of William Price, one thousand pounds of muscovado sugar in the hands of Edward Harlaston until he is eighteen years old. The rest of his estate went to James Sparuck and William Price, to be equally divided. William's will has no woman mentioned or listed, not even the wives and mothers of the men listed as receiving legacy. It is clear that William had a deep friendship with both James Sparuck and William Price; he also felt some responsibility for their male children, as he was their Godfather.\textsuperscript{19} Does this mean that William was just a man of male friendships?

William Haynes was most likely a widower in Barbados. This is not clearly stated in his will but the fact that he has a son he leaves a legacy to is a clear indicator that he was married at some point and no longer is. During the seventeenth century it was not likely that married

\textsuperscript{18} Will Books, RB6, 9:300.
\textsuperscript{19} Will Books, RB6, 14:1.
couples would get a divorce, so William's wife must have passed away before he wrote his will. William Haynes was a resident of the Parish of St. John's in the 1670s. William lists Edward Haynes and John Haynes as his executors in trust. Edward and John are also listed as his brother and cousin. William had two other men listed as his brothers and they were Richard Berriman Senior and William Cockman. These two men do not have the same last name as William so they could have been his stepbrothers or fictive, non-biological kin. Later in his legacy, William lists John Haynes as his Godson, this would mean that John Haynes is both his Godson and his cousin; regardless John receives ownership of William's only enslaved African Allonzo. The rest of William's property was to be spilt between Edward Haynes and Robert Haynes, who was listed as William's son.\(^\text{20}\)

William Canbus was a resident of the Parish of St. Lucy during the 1680s. William left everything to his loving friend and countryman, Mr. Abell Poyer Senr. Senr is short for Senior. The legacy he left for Abel Poyer was:

One Negro girl by name Betty Caubus now in possession of Mr Israel Armstronge which I hired to him" and "two Bills now in my possession Payable unto me by Daniel Leach the one of which Bills beaeth? Date the 21st day of April 1679 for the sum of Sixteen hundred pounds of good Musco Sugar for work done. The other Bill is for the Sum of two thousand four hundred ninety and five pounds of the like Muscovado Sugar to be paid me upon demand by the abovesaid Daniel Leach his heirs Executors and assigns(Barbados will record #). Will did not have much but what he did have he chose to give to Mr. Poyer, which indicates a strong bond between these two men.\(^\text{21}\)

Teagne Collahon was a resident of the Parish of Christ Church and a planter. Teague’s executors Mr. Richard Wynn, Mr. Thomas Barry and Mr. Henry Freeman were all listed as his beloved friends. He left them all in charge of his estate for five years after his death, he wrote

\(^{20}\) Will Books, RB6, 14:13. 
down that they should "hold and posses the profit + advantage of all my said Real + Personal Estate for + during the space + term of Five years", after such time his property was to be transferred over to the control of his brother John Collahon. I found Teagne's will particularly interesting because he listed the daughter of Mr. Richard Wynn, Mrs. Marth Wynn as his beloved friend. There were not a significant number of wills that listed women as beloved friends, so it is fascinating that this will shows a friendship that was out of the norm!

Lastly, an amazing example of how an indentured servant can become a part of a family is seen in the wills of Richard and Joane Vines, who died 25 years apart. Richard and Joane were married before Richard passed away. In Richard's legacy he says William Maxewell, his servant, must spend "two yeares of his time and he to remaine a servant to my wife to make up my ac[c]olts [c has a ^ over it] and to gett in my debts and to practice the remainder of his time." In Joane's will that was written 18 years after Richard's tells shows that William Maxewell is no longer a servant, but he is actually listed as Joane's "trusty friend". Joane also, leaves William a legacy of 20 shillings sterling so he can buy a mourning ring. What is even more fascinating about the relationship that Will Maxewell has with this family is a legacy that Joane leaves to her granddaughter Sealaughinda. Not only is Sealaughinda listed as Joane's granddaughter, she is also listed as the daughter of William Maxewell. The only way to describe how William went from a servant to a trusty friend and how is daughter became listed, as Joane's granddaughter is fictive kinship.

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22 Will Books, RB6, 40:419.
CONCLUSION

France, Spain, and Great Britain were all trying to colonize and settle on the Caribbean islands in the seventeenth century. The explorers who traveled and colonized these islands were primarily men. Men created the settlements and governed these new colonies. The English first visited Barbados in 1624 and created a permanent settlement on the island in 1627. Twenty years later, Richard Ligon landed on Barbados and wrote his own first hand account of the island. His account is one of the best records we have today about Barbados during its first twenty years.

In his account, Ligon places the men on the island in three distinct categories: masters, servants, and enslaved Africans. By exploring the lives of the White, European-born single men on the island I was able to situate them within the first two categories and examine their interactions with enslaved Africans. Masters were not only the men who managed the island's courts, governments, and plantations but they were also cruel sexual manipulators. Indentured servants were both the men who were brutally beaten and the men who oversaw and sometimes beat the enslaved Africans. Furthermore, enslaved Africans were more than victims, they also exercised agency when they could.

Chapter 1 looked at the lives of men on the Island in the three groups that Ligon came up with. Chapter 1 goes into detail about the lives of slave masters and the lives of indentured servants. While both of these groups are White men, their experience is completely different because they are at two different places on the class hierarchy. Furthermore, Chapter 1 also explored the relationships between enslaved, African women and their White masters.

White men who were bound to indenture had a completely different lifestyle and experience in Barbados than their higher-class counterparts. Chapter 2 explored the origins of indentured servitude exploring the issue of the treatment of indentured servants on Barbados.
Ligon argued in his narrative that they were treated harshly. While, Simon Newman has argued that this treatment set the stage for the brutalities of slavery I argue, however, that socioeconomic class was trumped by race, at the end of the day indentured servants were White, and European-born.

Chapter 3 explored the domestic lives of single men on the island in the seventeenth century through the wills they left behind. These men were not leaving legacies to their biological kin or families. In their short lives on the Island of Barbados these men were able to create a meaningful and I would argue intentional societies. They created a fictive kin community.

The thriving colony of Barbados in the seventeenth century rose on the foundation of these relationships. These White men worked together to build Barbados into the wealthiest sugar colony in the mid-seventeenth century World. Unrelated White men worked the Island and set the stage for what was to come, great wealth but also extraordinary brutality directed at the African "other."