On The Margins of Empire: An Archaeological and Historical Study of Guana Island, British Virgin Islands

Mark Kostro

College of William and Mary - Arts & Sciences, mxkost@email.wm.edu

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On the Margins of Empire: An archaeological and historical study of Guana Island, British Virgin Islands.

Mark Kostro

Williamsburg, Virginia

Master of Arts, College of William & Mary, 2003
Bachelor of Arts, Rutgers University, 1996

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty of The College of William & Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Anthropology

College of William & Mary
May 2018
This Dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Mark Kostro

Approved by the Committee, March 2018

Committee Chair
Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor Audrey Horning, Anthropology
College of William & Mary

National Endowment for the Humanities Professor Michael Blakey, Anthropology
College of William & Mary

Associate Professor Neil Norman, Anthropology
College of William & Mary

Associate Professor Barbara J. Heath, Anthropology
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
ABSTRACT

The present study of Guana Island in the British Virgin Islands draws upon archaeological, archival, and architectural evidence to examine the material and spatial aspects of everyday life on the social, geographic, and economic margins of the British Empire between 1717 and 1845. Guana’s settlers were yeoman farmers, formerly indentured laborers, and fishermen displaced from other parts of the Caribbean who came to the Virgin Islands for the opportunity to seek their own fortunes in the small island territories initially forsaken by sugar planters as ill-suited for large scale sugar cultivation. Arriving with them, and with increasing frequency over time, were enslaved Africans forced into laboring in the cotton and sugar fields, on fishing boats, and as domestic servants. The present study seeks to better understand how the experience of eighteenth-century Virgin Islanders, both free and enslaved, compared to their counterparts in larger and wealthier Caribbean sugar colonies through a detailed study of households on Guana Island through time. Between the early eighteenth and mid nineteenth centuries, Guana’s households underwent substantial transformations in response to the expansion, contraction, and variation of the Virgin Islands’ plantation-based economy. Those transformations included measurable changes in settlement patterns, household composition, built environment, and household industry. At the local scale, the archaeological evidence illustrates how colonial processes are frequently tied to the economic use of the land; while at the regional scale, the archaeological evidence highlights the range experiences within the British Caribbean. The evidence presented herein also complicates long-held assumption that Guana’s colonial history was limited to the island’s occupation by Quakers. Indeed, Guana’s eighteenth century settlement occurred earlier, lasted longer, and included a greater number, and wider variety, of people than previously understood.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation represents more than a decade of fieldwork, archival research and writing, the completion of which would never have been possible without the patience, input and support of a very long list of people to whom I am very grateful. Foremost, I am extremely appreciative of Henry and Gloria Jarecki, owners of Guana Island, for their generous financial and logistical support of the archaeological research that was the basis for my dissertation, and for their long-standing efforts to preserve and protect the island’s archaeological and natural resources. Guana is a special place, enhanced through the Jarecki’s noble efforts, and I hope the entire Jarecki family finds this dissertation a useful and worthy addition to the impressive research archive they have so generously supported.

For the introduction to Guana Island, I am indebted to Dr. Edward Harris of the Bermuda Maritime Museum and the late Dr. Norman Barka of William & Mary who invited me to join them in the Guana Island Archaeological Project that would be the springboard for my doctoral research. It was always a great adventure working alongside them, and it has been a privilege to work in their footsteps. A heartfelt and special thanks to them both.

I am also very grateful to my all-star dissertation committee, each of whom has significantly impacted my scholarly development. Dr. Audrey Horning, my committee chair, was never without valuable guidance, scholarly insight, or encouragement throughout the long research and writing process -- an exercise that took so long that Audrey had time enough to change academic affiliations four times between three universities, and twice move across the Atlantic while I toiled away! Her discerning critique has considerably strengthened this dissertation. Thanks Audrey, for sticking with me. Dr. Michael Blakey, both through his classes and in our conversations in his lab, pushed me to reflect more deeply about the people in this dissertation and helped to focus the essence of what I was writing about. I am honored that he agreed to serve on my committee. Dr. Neil Norman offered much appreciated motivation and advice during the writing process and provided useful comments to help expand the dissertation’s anthropological relevance. Dr. Barbara Heath, while not joining my committee until my final year, still provided a much needed critical eye. Her thoughtful comments and kind words have been greatly appreciated.

I also owe a very special word of thanks to Dr. Lianna Jarecki for her years of friendship, ceaseless curiosity, and tireless advocacy for all things Guana-related. In each of my research trips to Guana, Lianna was my local guide and informant, and our many conversations about Guana and its people, both past and present, significantly informed the dissertation’s scope. I am forever indebted to Lianna for her patience, trust, and encouragement.
Other William & Mary faculty members have also been kind enough to extend their help at various phases of this research. First among them, Dr. Marley Brown, who over the years has been a teacher, boss, and mentor was generous with his support and blunt in his insistence that research results should say something meaningful. I am grateful for all of Marley’s feedback, and I am a better archaeologist thanks to our many conversations. Dr. Fred Smith, whose own Caribbean scholarship was an important inspiration for my own work, was a prolific cheerleader throughout the writing process. Dr. Martin Gallivan, graduate program chair for a large portion of my graduate school tenure, was a thoughtful and considerate counselor. As a research assistant to Drs. Rich and Sally Price, coordinating book reviews for the New West Indian Guide, I was exposed to a diverse body of Caribbean scholarship that proved extremely useful when it came time to contextualize my archaeological evidence. Rich’s ethnohistory seminar was also a very influential class for me on how to write anthropologically. An independent study with Dr. Mary Voigt was my introduction to household archaeology. Mary has also been a kind supporter and good friend for many years.

In the field I was fortunate to have the assistance of some of the finest field archaeologists working today. Paul Nasca accompanied me multiple times to Guana, as well as, many other tropical locations for comparative fieldwork. Paul’s archaeological talents are well known, and they certainly improved the quality of my dataset, but what I am most thankful for is Paul’s 20-years of friendship. The success of the 2006 field season was due in no small part to hard work and good cheer of Meghan Habas Siudzinski and Maria Salamanca-Heyman. Meghan and Maria earned my eternal gratitude for their many significant contributions. Likewise, Jason Boroughs, another long-time friend, was essential to the success of the 2007 field season. Over the years, other significant contributors in the field were Carl Drexler, Charlotte Andrews, Linda Abend, and Melissa Eaton. Thank you all for your time, energy and encouragement. Although not part of the archaeological teams, marine scientists Graham and Linda Forester were attentive witnesses to each of my field seasons, as were their children, and so were Graham’s various students. Their interest in our work, and my interest in theirs, discussed over countless dinners and cocktails, made working on Guana all the more stimulating.

On Guana, I am also very grateful to the island’s very gracious hotel staff for all their assistance in making each field season such a success. Everyone on Guana, from the managers, to the hotel room staff, the kitchen staff, the boat captains, and the maintenance staff, were always willing to assist us in any way they could. We were a far cry from the typical hotel guests, but were always treated with kindness, no matter how dirty we got. Thank you one and all.
At William & Mary, I was also fortunate to find myself allied with an exceptionally supportive, unselfish and intellectually inspiring community of friends. To Shannon Mahoney, Katie Sikes, Erika Laanela, Autumn Barrett, Dan Sayers, Alix Martin, Ellen Chapman, Sarah Chesney, Brendan Burke, Chuck Meide and Dave Brown, I thank you for all the intellectual and personal support during graduate school and beyond. At Colonial Williamsburg, I have been equally charmed to have had the support of my co-workers, both former and current, who have long-watched me suffer through this process. To Andy Edwards, Meredith Poole, Ywone Edwards-Ingram, Lucie Vinciguerra, Joanne Bowen, Steven Atkins, Lisa Fischer, Hank Lutton, Hans Schwartz and Ed Chappell, thank you all.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the incredible love and support of my family who encouraged me in spite of it all. There are no words that can express my sincere gratitude. My parents, Paul and Christine Kostro have always taught me to follow my interests with conviction. Thank you for being my first, and best, teachers and inspiration. My in-laws, Nell and Joe Ladd have likewise been steadfast in their encouragement. Thanks to my siblings Rysi and Malgosia, for their unyielding support and for keeping me grounded. Thanks also to my brothers and sisters-in-law, Suzanne, Bob, Jennifer, Kurt, Stephanie and John, as well as my grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins for all their loving support. In about the middle of this long dissertation path, William was born, and simultaneously became a powerful motivator and my favorite diversion. I’m a lucky father indeed. Finally, this dissertation would not have been neither started nor finished without the love and patience of my wife Kelly. I am grateful for the incalculable support she has given along the way, for being loving mother to William, and for the life we share. Kelly, I dedicate this work to you.
To Kelly, with love.
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Chapter 1. Introduction

In 1724, during a visit to the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Leeward Islands Governor John Hart wrote of the people he met there: “I found that first inhabitants were such as had fled from Barbados and the greater islands for debt or to avoid the punishment of their crimes, and have since been increased by pirates who have come in upon acts of Grace, and are married and settled there, whose posterity not knowing the world, remain there and cultivate the ground for a wretched subsistence” (C.S.P. 1724-1725, No.260)

Located in the northeastern Caribbean on the geographic and economic margins of the British Empire, the settlers seeking out their ‘wretched subsistence’ were plainly not affluent planters or well-connected merchants. Instead, the BVI’s population was made up of yeoman farmers, formerly indentured laborers, and fishermen displaced from other parts of the Caribbean who came to the Virgin Islands for the opportunity to seek their own fortunes in the small island territories initially forsaken by sugar planters as ill-suited for large-scale sugar cultivation (Armstrong 2003:22). Arriving with them, and with increasing frequency over time, were enslaved Africans coerced into laboring in the fields, on fishing boats, and as domestic servants. Life in the Virgin Islands, for both free and enslaved, was likely very different than that experienced by their counterparts in larger and wealthier Caribbean sugar colonies. The present archaeological study seeks to better understand the experience of eighteenth-century Virgin Islanders like those observed by
Governor Hunt through a multiscalar study of households through time on Guana Island, a small out-island within the British Virgin Islands settled by cotton planters in the early eighteenth century. The goals are to understand how local residents on the social, economic, and geographic margins of the British Caribbean responded to changing economic and political conditions within the empire, but also to explore how their responses differed from those living within Britain’s primary Caribbean outposts such as Barbados and Jamaica.

As implied by Governor Hunt, the early eighteenth-century settlement of the British Virgin Islands was a consequence, in part, of events occurring elsewhere in the Caribbean. Beginning with Barbados in the 1640s, smallholding tobacco and cotton planters rapidly turned to sugar as their principal export commodity following its introduction from South America by the Dutch. The change in cultigens set in motion a massive transformation of economic and social relations across the expanding British Empire (Parry and Sherlock 1956). Historians have distilled the central characteristics of this so-called “sugar revolution” as consisting of a rapid change from diversified agriculture to sugar monoculture, from small farms to large plantations, from indentured to enslaved labor, from sparse to dense settlement, from white to black populations, and from low to high value per capita output (Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh 1972; Dunn 1972; Sheridan 1974). From Barbados, the
sugar revolution spread to other islands in the region and reproduced comparable social, economic and environmental consequences wherever the sugar plantation was imprinted on the landscape (Higman 2000:229). Economic historians point to this expansion as a key component of the transition from feudalism to capitalism (Moore 2000); meanwhile archaeological evidence makes clear the materialization of that transition was slow and gradual (Hicks 2007; Woodward 2011). Not surprisingly, sugar has dominated the scholarship of colonial British Caribbean society and economy, and large sugar plantations populated by hundreds of enslaved Africans have rightfully received a great deal of attention from archaeologists, historians and the public (Craton 1978; Handler and Lange 1978; Mintz 1985; Armstrong 1990; Hicks 2007; Meniketti 2015). At the same time, the sugar plantation does not account for the experiences of everyone in the British Caribbean. Other large groups of people lived very different lives, including the great majority of colonists who owned only a handful of enslaved people or none at all (Reilly 2016; Chenoweth 2017), the sizable numbers of the enslaved who were held on smaller or non-sugar estates (Delle 1999; Singleton 2015); and maroons and other free people of African descent (Agorsah 1994, 2007; La Rosa Corzo 2005).

The British Virgin Islands is one such place where sugar’s accession was never complete. In the BVI, the combination of cotton production, maritime
trade, fishing and animal husbandry formed the basis of the colonial economy from its earliest days into the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Sugar estates were eventually established, although they were prominent for only a relatively brief period from 1759 to 1783, and subsidized by privateer trade with the North American colonies during the Seven Years War and American Revolutionary War (Harrigan and Varlack 1975:58; Cohen 2010:21-2; O’Neal 2012:11-3). While the mid to late eighteenth century remains of the BVI’s various sugar boiling and curing houses, distilleries, lime kilns, animals mills and windmills are still readily visible on the present-day landscape, and feature prominently in heritage tourism literature, underneath their crumbling ruins lies evidence of the BVI’s pre-sugar phase of cotton farms, provisioning plantations, and maritime settlements. This early phase of BVI history has been the subject of very little research except to rehash uncritical assertions of the early settlers’ poverty and lawlessness as claimed by Leeward Islands administrators (Dookhan 1975; Pickering 1997:19-43). Likewise, with the prominent exception of O’Neal’s (2012) rich ethnohistorical work on nineteenth century social transformations precipitated by the BVI’s plantation economy’s demise, most historical works of the BVI’s post-sugar era have been deeply ethnocentric. Lewishon (1966:62), for example, ignoring more than 100 years of smallholder-based agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and inter-island commerce, went so far as to say that the BVI simply “went to

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1 A complementary study of the United States Virgin Islands is Mark Hauser and Douglas Armstrong’s (2012) examination of the early-eighteenth century settlement of Cinnamon Bay on St.John.
de bush” until the arrival of “a new breed of white men to help the islands recovery.”

Over the last decade, historical archaeologists working in the Caribbean have increasingly explored the previously ignored time periods before and after sugar monoculture to illustrate the varying timelines, the occupied spaces at the margins of sugar estates, the wide array of living conditions, and the economic diversity of the region (Armstrong and Hauser 2017; Armstrong and Reilly 2014; Bates et al. 2016, Reilly 2013; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005). As Wilkie (2016:332) notes, “It is important for historical archaeology to continue to highlight the economic diversity of these colonial enterprises so that non-sugar islands are not rendered invisible in Caribbean history.” It is within this vein that the present archaeological investigation of Guana Island aims to contribute to Caribbean historiography by focusing on modest planters who lived on a small island within a marginal colony, but who were also entangled in the broader colonial context of merchant capitalism, chattel slavery and the Atlantic world. Following established approaches to the archaeology of households (e.g. Allison 1999; Barile and Brandon 2004; Blanton 1994), in combination with more recent trends that incorporate practice theory to frame analysis of household activities (Robin 2013), I examine the material and spatial dimensions of everyday life on four sites on Guana that span the BVI’s plantation-era as it transitioned from a cluster of pre-sugar cotton farms.
(1717-c.1759), to a consolidated sugar estate (c.1759-1785), and back to cotton and provision farms supplemented by animal husbandry and fishing (1786-1845). The four sites cut across wealth, status and ethnicity and collectively illustrate diachronic changes in settlement patterns, architecture, material culture and subsistence patterns at the local scale in relation to broader economic and demographic changes. In generating this micro-scale detail for the Virgin Islands, a second goal is to better understand how experiences varied within the British Caribbean as a means to illuminate the complexities of the economic and social networks of the Caribbean, and in its diverse legacies and historical memories.

**Physical Setting**

The British Virgin Islands, located approximately 50 miles east of Puerto Rico, are a British Overseas Territory under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the United Kingdom. Geographically, the BVI are part of the Virgin Islands archipelago that also includes the United States Virgin Islands (formerly Danish) and forms the eastern boundary of the Caribbean Sea with the Atlantic Ocean (Figure 1).
Figure 1. Physical map of the Caribbean. The arrow designates the location of the British Virgin Islands to the north of the Leeward Islands and east of Puerto Rico.

Figure 2. Twenty-first century geopolitical division of the northern Virgin Islands. Guana Island is an out-island located off the northeast corner of Tortola, the largest of the British Virgin Islands.
The British Virgin Islands consist of about fifty islands, mostly of volcanic origin, with a total area of less than fifty-nine square miles. Tortola is the largest of the islands (12 miles long and 3 miles wide), and the most densely populated, followed by Virgin Gorda, Jost Van Dyke and Anegada, which is a coral atoll (Figure 2). The islands are hilly and dry, with rugged coastlines interrupted by coves, sandy beaches, palm groves and mangrove swamps. The climate is subtropical and humid with average temperatures that range from 70 to 88-degrees Fahrenheit with hot summers and slightly cooler winters, and an annual rainfall is of just twenty-seven inches (Lazell 2005).

Figure 3. Aerial photo of Guana Island looking northwest.
The archaeological and historical investigations described herein are all located on Guana Island (Figure 3), the seventh largest island in the BVI, located .5-miles across the narrow channel from Tortola’s East End. Measuring approximately 850-acres, most of Guana is now covered by dry scrub woodland, although slopes and exposed areas exhibit evergreen scrub. Seismic and volcanic activity coupled with erosion has created a rugged topography with steep slopes usually in excess of 30-percent (Bartlett 2000). The Sugarloaf, located in the central eastern portion of the island, reaches an elevation of 246-meters above mean sea level and is the highest point on the island, followed by The Pyramid at 120-meters. Along the slopes, the island’s volcanic bedrock geology is overlaid with a relatively thin layer of soil and organic matter. The two peaks terminated in a shared lowland called the “flats”. The flats contain a salt pond surrounded by mangroves and grasses (Bartlett 2000). The elevation of the flats ranges between 3 and 15-meters above mean sea level. Soils within the flats consist of modern alluvial deposits of sand, silt, clay and gravel.

Today, most of the island is a wildlife sanctuary and nature preserve within which is nestled a small hotel known as the Guana Island Club built in the 1930s by New Englanders Louis and Beth Bigelow. Since the mid-1970s, the island has been owned by New Yorkers Henry and Gloria Jarecki, and today the island functions as a private seasonal residence for the Jarecki family and
as an upscale resort. High atop a ridge that looks out over the island’s salt pond and the flats is the hotel’s reception building and dining terrace which was constructed directly over the foundations of a building that, according to hotel staff, was an eighteenth-century plantation great house. Along the edge of the salt pond, the crumbling walls of a factory complex for processing sugar and distilling rum investigated in the late 1990s by Norman Barka and Edward Harris is the centerpiece of the island’s assortment of plantation-era ruins (Barka et al. 1999). The foundations of a second great house overlook Monkey Point at Guana’s southeastern tip, and paralleling the island’s beaches are a series of smaller building ruins and stone boundary walls.

**Project Background**

The household archaeological study of Guana Island derives from the long-term examination of the island’s historical archaeological and architectural heritage known as the Guana Island Archaeological Project generously funded by the Falconwood Corporation.² Led by Dr. Edward C. Harris of the

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² A corresponding archaeological investigation into Guana’s pre-contact Amerindian occupation was led by former US Virgin Islands Historic Preservation Archaeologist Elizabeth “Holly” Righter until her death in 2011. Righter’s vast artifact collection, field records and research files were subsequently lent to archaeology graduate student Debra Davis at the University of Missouri at Kansas City to synthesize as part of her planned doctoral dissertation on the pre-contact archaeology of the British Virgin Islands. Sadly, Ms. Davis died in 2014 before completing her dissertation and Righter’s archaeological materials were unwittingly thrown out before they could be reclaimed. Since 2015, renewed investigations of Guana’s pre-contact Amerindian occupation have been led by Dr. Brian Bates of Longwood University.
Bermuda Maritime Museum and Dr. Norman F. Barka of the College of William and Mary (Figure 4), the project was launched in 1998 on the heels of Guana Science, a long-term biodiversity study of the island’s flora and fauna that was initiated by Dr. James “Skip” Lazell in 1980, and marine studies organized by Dr. Lianna Jarecki in 1992. In total, thirty archaeological sites, historic structures and landscape features have been identified on Guana (Appendix A). The first nine sites (GN1-GN9) were recorded in 1998 during Barka’s and Harris’ initial visits to Guana (Barka et al. 1998). In 1999, eight additional sites were found and recorded based on observations reported by hotel staff and other visiting researchers (GN10-GN17). Seven more sites were recorded in 2003 (GN18-GN24). In 2004, the only new site added to Guana’s register of archaeological sites was a burying ground discovered near the White Bay beach bar (GN25). No new sites were identified during the 2006 field season, although five new sites were discovered in 2007 (GN26-30).

The level of investigation has varied considerably from site to site with only seven sites having undergone any systematic subsurface exploration (GN1, GN2, GN3, GN7, GN18, GN25, GN26); the remainder are known only from the surface middens, or the presence of above-ground architectural ruins. Under the direction of Drs. Harris and Barka, the focus of the archaeological investigations was a multi-year excavation of the Guana’s eighteenth century
sugar factory complex (GN1). Fieldwork co-directed by Harris and Barka at the sugar factory complex began in 1999 continued until 2003 (Barka et al 1999).³

In 2004 Dr. Barka retired from active fieldwork and I assumed co-direction of the archaeological program alongside Dr. Harris. Dr. Marley R. Brown III, then Director of Archaeology at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and Research Professor at William and Mary also joined the project team for the 2004 season.⁴ In 2004, the objective was an archaeological assessment of the stone foundation ruin (GN2) located a few meters behind the sand dunes along White Bay. Test excavations revealed significant below-ground archaeological resources in association with the ruin, including remnants of a plaster floor within the structure, stone and clay-paved surfaces adjoining the exterior of structure’s south wall, and significant mid-eighteenth century midden deposits extending north and south from the structure’s doorways. The results of the site’s investigation are detailed in Chapter 5.

³ College of William & Mary graduate students Paul Nasca and I assisted with GN1’s excavation in 1999. Assisting with excavations in 2003 were College of William & Mary graduate students Chuck Meide and Steve Fonzo.

⁴ The 2004 archaeological team also included Linda Abend (BMM), Charlotte Andrews (BMM), Ian Davidson (BMM), Melissa Eaton (W&M) and Kelly Ladd-Kostro (CWF).
Coinciding with the 2006 investigation of GN2, utility trenching to the east of the White Bay beach bar resulted in the inadvertent discovery of an unmarked eighteenth century burying ground for enslaved African laborers (GN25). An initial forensic investigation by the Road Town (Tortola) Police led to the recovery of two sets of human skeletal remains. Subsequently, members of the Guana Island Archaeological Project identified and recorded nine additional wood coffin burials within the burying ground. The intact burials were left undisturbed and reburied; whereas the two sets of excavated remains were transported to the United States for a bioarchaeological assessment at the College of William and Mary’s Institute for Historical
Biology (IHB) under the direction of Dr. Michael L. Blakey (Mahoney et al 2005).

Drs. Harris and Brown did not return to Guana after 2004, while I directed two additional seasons of fieldwork. In summer 2006, fieldwork included the full-scale excavation of the eighteenth-century midden deposits at archaeological site GN2; ultimately resulting in the collection of over 5500 fragments of eighteenth-century pottery, glass, personal items, architectural debris and faunal remains. In addition, immediately below the eighteenth-century midden was a rich Late Ceramic Age (A.D. 600 - 1200) Amerindian midden replete with pottery fragments and faunal remains. The feature was sampled, and a linear arrangement of stone possibly marking the boundary for a possible Taino ball court was also recorded.

In 2007 the fieldwork consisted of test pit excavations at archaeological sites GN3, GN7, GN18 and GN26 to establish their respective dates of occupation and to evaluate their potential for more thorough examination. Located along the shoreline at the southeast end of the flats, subsurface testing at GN3 revealed late eighteenth-century midden deposits in close proximity to the

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5 The 2006 field crew included Carl Carlson-Drexler, Maria Salamanca Heyman, Paul M. Nasca, and Meghan Habas Siudzinski. Assisting with the investigations in 2007 was Jason Boroughs.
possible warehouse ruins that mark the site's location. Reanalysis of the
great house ruins above Monkey Point (GN7), also known as the Lake House
ruin, revealed new information on changes to the site's buildings and nature
of occupation over time, although subsurface tests indicated only limited
preservation of midden deposits. Likewise, subsurface testing at GN18
resulted in only limited evidence of intact midden deposits in association with
the enigmatic masonry-lined well or cistern-like feature located along the road
leading to North Beach. Finally, subsurface testing of the newly identified
unmortared stone foundation (GN26) hidden in the densely wooded inland
flats behind North Beach revealed no midden deposits in association with the
foundation ruins.

Organization of Study

Chapter One situates the study of Guana Island's archaeological sites as part
of an emergent trend within Caribbean historical archaeology to explore
overlooked sites, themes, and time periods. The archaeology of Guana
reveals both pre-sugar and sugar landscapes situated on the margins of the
British Empire. In addition to laying out goals for the archaeological
investigation of Guana, Chapter 1 includes a description of Guana's physical
setting, and includes background information on the archaeological
investigations that commenced in 1998 that were the impetus for this
dissertation.
Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature on household archaeology as a productive method for studying historic households as discrete social units, as proxies for community-level patterns, and as nodes within a comparative framework. In particular, the chapter profiles how historical archaeologists have deployed the household as framework for analysis in a diverse range of contexts, but especially within the subfield of African Diaspora archaeology where it has been particularly useful as a methodological tool for revealing important historical nuances either muted or deliberately silenced in larger scale studies. Chapter Two also situates the archaeological study of Guana’s households within the Caribbean tradition of household archaeology.

For historical context, a broad overview on the human history of the Virgin Islands and the ongoing scholarly debates as related to the colonization of the Virgin Islands before and after the arrival of Europeans in the region in 1492 is presented in Chapter 3. Prefacing the overview of the Virgin Island’s pre-contact Amerindian occupation is a very brief synopsis of Irving Rouse’s (1960, 1972, 1977, 1992) influential culture/historical synthesis that has been the prevailing framework structuring Caribbean pre-contact archaeology since the 1950s. The ensuing discussion of the Caribbean’s pre-contact Amerindians briefly reviews the relevant archaeological evidence of how, when, and from where Amerindians settled the Caribbean. Naturally, I have
placed a greater emphasis on the evidence relating to the settlement and occupation of the Virgin Islands. To some, the moderately lengthy discussion on the pre-contact people and cultures of the Caribbean will seem out of place in a dissertation conceived as a case study on eighteenth century households. The intention, however, is to break with long-standing conventions of dividing the past into prehistory and history in favor of a narrative that emphasizes the Caribbean’s human past on an unbroken continuum.

Chapter 3 also presents an overview of the ill-fated attempts to settle the Virgin Islands by various European colonial powers in the early seventeenth century to the development of sun and sand tourism in the mid twentieth century. In between those bookends, I review the Virgin Islands’ formal settlement by English cotton farmers and fishermen in the second half of the seventeenth century; the local resettlement of poor and middling planters displaced from the Lesser Antilles in the early eighteenth century; the shift from cotton to sugar cultivation made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans in the second half of the eighteenth century; and in the early nineteenth century, the development of subsistence agriculture and livestock herding by the formerly enslaved in the wake of the Virgin Islands’ abandonment by the former plantocracy.
The historical overview sets up the documentary micro-history of Guana Island presented in Chapter 4. Drawing on primary documents found and analyzed in the British Virgin Islands, as well as in the British National Archives at Kew, Chapter 4 outlines a plausible occupational history of Guana that begins with the island’s settlement in the early eighteenth century and concludes with its probable abandonment of all residences on the island in the mid-nineteenth century. The documentary evidence reviewed herein enables the linkage of historical people to specific places on the landscape discussed in Chapter 5.

From 1998 to 2007, a total of thirty archaeological sites were identified on Guana, five of which are described in Chapter 5 to illustrate Guana’s evolving settlement in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Archaeological site GN2, dating to the mid-eighteenth century, consists of both well-preserved standing architectural remains and substantial buried midden deposits that are likely associated with a modest cotton planter’s residence. Meanwhile, archaeological site GN3 consists of both well-preserved remains of a masonry defensible house and the substantial buried midden deposits associated with modest planter or plantation overseer. In this case, however, the site dates to the next phase of Guana’s development as a probable sugar island. Archaeological site GN7 is marked by the remains of three mortared stone foundations of a late eighteenth century plantation great house.
complex nestled into the steeply-sloped hillside above Monkey Point on Guana Island’s southern tip. Architectural changes suggest a gradual simplification in building form and a corresponding reduction in the overall size of the dwelling over time possibly indicating changes in the social or economic standing of the dwelling’s occupants at the height of the sugar boom and after its collapse. Overlapping with the terminal occupation dates for GN3 and GN7, archaeological site GN27/28 consists of a pair of garden terraces set high into the hillside near the top of The Pyramid in close association with a large cache of discarded late eighteenth-century wine bottles. Following Smith’s (2008:104-133) analysis of alcohol-related materials recovered at Mapp’s Cave in Barbados, I interpret Guana’s Pyramid garden terraces as possible safe refuges, away from the view of the planters and plantation overseers, where enslaved plantation laborers engaged in alcohol consumption to temporarily escape the pressures of plantation work and life. Chapter 6 briefly reviews the dissertation’s goals and major findings.
Chapter 2: Caribbean Household Archaeology

At the height of Guana’s agricultural productivity, census records indicate that as many as 160 people lived and worked on the island. Today, however, most of the places and spaces that they inhabited are concealed by a dense tangle of understory vegetation that grew up in the wake of the island’s mid-nineteenth century abandonment. All but forgotten for more than a century were almost thirty plantation-era (1717-1845) building ruins or archaeological sites that were recorded during recent archaeological and architectural surveys of the island. The most common site type encountered during the surveys were household sites -- the domestic spaces and enclaves that Guana’s residents called home, and where they raised families, prepared and shared meals, tended their gardens, and possibly even buried their loved ones. Some sites were distinguished by standing architecture, others by little more than ground scatters of pottery and shell, but each instance represented a fresh opportunity to explore the complexity of day to day life on the periphery of the British Empire. In the tradition of household archaeology, in the present study I examine the archaeological remains of four eighteenth century household sites to gain a better understanding of the material and spatial dimensions of everyday life on Guana. The choice to focus this study on Guana’s eighteenth-century households is largely a response to recent trends in Caribbean historical archaeology including: recent interest in small planters, and to better understand the range of responses by residents of
different parts of the British Caribbean to British imperial efforts. This chapter critically assesses previous approaches to household archaeology.

For archaeologists, the idea of using the household as a unit of analysis originated in the 1970s and has since grown to become an important method for anthropological archaeological investigation in a wide variety of contexts across the globe. In their seminal 1982 article entitled “Household Archaeology”, Wilk and Rathje (1982:618) defined the household as “the most common social component of subsistence, the smallest and most abundant activity group” differentiating it from co-residents brought together by kinship ties (e.g. families) studied by ethnographers. In clarifying the definition, Netting, Wilk and Arnould (1984:xx) described the household as “task-oriented residence unit” noting that it is possible that all household members are related to one another, but it is not always so. Numerous ethnographic and ethnohistoric studies, however, have shown that the above functional definitions are not necessarily inclusive of all recognized household types. “Abroad marriages,” for example, wherein married spouses lived on different plantations are known to have taken place throughout southeastern North America (Gutman 1976). Conversely, coresident groups may be composed of multiple households or form parts of larger households (Pluckhahn 2010:334). Both dispersed and aggregated households recognized ethnographically are problematic for archaeologists, thus Nash
(2009:224) has proposed a more controlled definition of the “archaeological household” as a “...coresidential group that used the occupation surface, features, and artifact assemblage of a dwelling,” with the dwelling potentially including one or more structures and both indoor and outdoor spaces. Nash’s concept of the “archaeological household” is particularly useful for the study of Guana Island’s households. Extensive documentary research (Chapter 4) has in some instances revealed the names, ethnicity or status of a household’s residents, but more often than not they have been inferred, with the precision of the inference varying from one site to another. Although what constitutes a household varies, the relatively small size and ubiquity of domestic archaeological assemblages that constitute household assemblages make the household a pragmatic and productive choice as a widespread unit of analysis and has the added advantage of being an alternative to the conventional archaeological focus on elites, monumental architecture and prestige-good exchange (Plunkahn 2010:332-3).

In practice, the archaeological study of households ideally emerges from the contextual study of artifacts and other material remains of household activities in combination with the analysis of the building remains, either buried or extant. The analysis of the building remains involves much more than just understanding architecture as either an engineering or aesthetic achievement, but instead involves understanding how buildings embodied
cultural values, a commitment to place, and a plan of action (Robb 2007:75). Meanwhile, the portable remains of a household can be recovered from a building's interior, but more often than not, their recovery arises from the investigation of activity areas in the open spaces surrounding a dwelling known variously as compounds (Hayden and Cannon 1982; Killion 1987), courtyards (Roth 2000), patios (Tourtellot 1988; Sheehy 1991), houseyards, and backyards (Douglas and Gonlin 2012:5). By excavating these small-scale places in and around people’s homes, and within the spaces where they lived and carried out most of their daily activities, household archaeology aims to collect data on a range of topics, but especially subsistence, social organization, social relations and symbolic behavior (Kahn 2016:325).

Among its early advocates, household archaeology began as a reaction to the culture-historical tradition of defining historical societies into distinct ethnic and cultural groupings according to their material culture. With the advent of the processual turn in archaeology, material culture and architecture came to be seen not simply as traits to be listed and categorized, but as evidence of human behavior (Foster and Parker 2012:2). Processual studies also pioneered multi-scalar analyses of households as well as analyses of the variation within and between households. Early studies of households --

But as Dan Hicks and Audrey Horning (2006) point out, archaeologists’ interpretation of structural remains, while significant in their opinion, is often seen as less significant than buried artifact deposits.
sometimes referred to as ‘microscale’ investigations -- began as adjuncts to settlement pattern and activity area analysis, the results of which could then be extrapolated at the macroscale to generalize about community-level themes such as demographic trends, specialized production, and class structure (Tringham 2001:6926). An influential early example is Kent Flannery's (1976) edited volume The Early Mesoamerican Village which explores house structure and specialized activity areas at the village level, alongside interregional exchange networks in the service of exploring the origins of village life in the Valley of Oaxaca. Similarly, Wilk and Rathje (1982) stressed the importance of households as essential building blocks in the reconstruction of past societies and proposed that a focus on the household might help to “bridge the existing ‘mid-level theory gap’ in archaeology” between grand theories of culture change and artifacts. As Gerritsen (2004:143) notes, grand narratives by definition refer to temporal and spatial scales that were largely meaningless to the people involved in those changes. The focus on households, meanwhile, allows archaeologists to chronicle “smaller stories” that more closely reveal past people's' lived experiences.

The strong influence of processual archaeology is especially clear in Wilk and Ashmore’s (1988) petition that less attention should be placed on what households “are” (structure) and greater emphasis should be given to what
households “do” (function) and how they interact in their individual sociocultural environments. In these studies, ethnographic analogy and ethnoarchaeology were encouraged as tools for connecting behavior to the archaeological record (Wilk and Ashmore 1988:12). The study of “what households do” has been refined by the Marxist focus on ideology and social inequality (Rathje and McGuire 1982). For example, inter-household comparisons of household production, consumption, and prestige goods marking social difference have highlighted how issues of power, differentiation, and inequality are expressed within a given society (Beaudry 2015:2-3; Tringham 2001:6927-8).

However, as Allison (1999:1-2) argues, the long-standing focus on households “as measurable socio-economic units of the wider community” has led to an uncritical acceptance that “household compositions are known, and are relatively standardized and unchanging phenomena.” Especially common in the study of the past domestic behavior, according to Tringham (1991:101) are “strong implicit assumptions about generic gender relations.” In response, much of the household archaeology carried out in the 1990s was imbued with a focus on the gendered nature of household activities (e.g. Barile and Brandon 2004; Hendon 2006; Wall 1991), which led to the recognition that household members can be involved in a wide range of productive, consumptive or reproductive activities (Robin 2013:50). In placing
people, their practices and differences at the center of archaeological interpretations of the past, household archaeologists have taken a leading role in moving the discipline away from passive and impersonal depictions of social systems toward more humanized reconstructions of the past (Robin 2003). The latter works often invoke Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice as a framework for exploring how household activities (“everyday life”) structure the interactions between household members to their broader world. Practice Theory is a theory of how people, with their diverse backgrounds and their diverse objectives, make and transform the world which they live in. It is conceptual bridge between human agency and social structure working back and forth in a dynamic relationship. Or as Sherry Ortner (1984:148) outlines, “Practice Theory seeks to explain the relationships that obtain between human action on the one hand, and some global entity which we call ‘the system’ on the other.” The goal is to demonstrate that individuals actively construct the world around them, but they are also embedded in social contexts that shape this action. People’s actions are neither ‘mechanical reaction’ to structure nor those of a ‘conscious agents’ without structure (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:121-2).

A central component of practice is Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* which refers the physical embodiment of cultural capital – the collection of skills, tastes, posture, mannerisms, material belongings, and credentials that one acquires
through being part of a particular social group; or the deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that we possess due to our life experiences. What is seen as a given, or as appropriate action, is a product of habitus. According to Bourdieu, habitus functions as durable patterns of what he called “dispositions”, or “structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures (Bourdieu 1977:72).” Dispositions are internalized and embodied as postures, gestures and movements – and as aesthetic sensibilities or tastes for food, clothing, decor and cultural pursuits (Bourdieu 1977). People acquire socially learned dispositions through everyday living, experiencing, and interacting with the ordinary materials and spaces that make up their world, thus making the household a primary venue for the production and reproduction of social life. Accordingly, “The attention to the home, and in particular to the material and spatial dimensions of daily life through which people learn about their world, has made the theory of practice particularly amenable to archaeological thought (Robin 2013:27).”

While Bourdieu was interested in the logic of how practices are generated and reproduced, Michel de Certeau (1984) was interested in what practices produce or do, especially in the way people resist ruling structures and powers (Robin 2013:31). Focusing on the ordinary practices of everyday life, De Certeau distinguishes between two “ways of operating” (types of practice): strategies and tactics. He defines strategy as the “calculation (or
manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated” (de Certeau 1984:35-6). In other words, a strategy is the framework of the ruling institutions deployed against some external entity in pursuit of their objectives. Successful strategies require the acquisition of knowledge, the understanding of the structures within which you are trying to operate, and an understanding of the limits of the ways in which you can navigate through the structures (de Certeau 1984:53-4). Strategies are similar to Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, although they differ in that de Certeau sees habitus as the relationship to the structures, while strategies are the observable facts that result from the relationship to the structures (de Certeau 1984:58). For archaeologists, strategies can be recovered as material patterns observed through excavation and why they conform or deviate from what is expected.

A tactic, in contrast, is “a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus” and is operationalized in the space of the “other” as the “art of the weak” (de Certeau 1984:37). Tactics are dependent on time and the improvisational seizure of whatever resources are at hand (de Certeau 1984:xix). DeCerteau (1984:xix) notes that the importance of the tactic, therefore, is not found in the situation turned into an opportunity, but in the act and manner in which the opportunity is “seized”. “A tactic is determined by the
absence of power” just as a strategy is determined by, and relies on the presence of a place of power (de Certeau 1984:38). The classic example of a tactical action is the pedestrian moving through unmarked spaces and paths within a carefully planned city grid (de Certeau 1984:xix). While the spatial order constructed by city planners organizes what is possible (strategy), the pedestrian actualizes some of these and also invents others. Accordingly, for the archaeological study of everyday life, deCerteau provides a way to understand the variation between studies of society as structured and society as practiced (Robin 2013:33).

It could rightfully be argued that household archeology as a subfield derived primarily from the extensive work of archaeologists researching in Europe, the Southwestern United States, and Mesoamerica (Foster and Parker 2012:3). That is not to say that North American historical archaeologists have not also engaged with household archaeology’s theoretical and methodological development (e.g. Barile and Brandon 2004; Fogle et al. 2015). Among historical archaeologists, the work of Mary Beaudry and her collaborators at the Boott Mills boarding-houses in Lowell, Massachusetts stands out for their contributions to the broader dialogue on household archaeology with respect to developing alternative models of households, especially corporate or aggregated households (Beaudry 1989; Beaudry and Mrozowski 1989; Mrozowski 2012). Other examples of corporate or
aggregated households that have been investigated by historical archaeologists include: brothels (Seifert 1991; Costello 2002; Costello and Praetzellis 1999), religious communities (Starbuck 2004; DeCunzo 1995) and even fraternity houses (Wilkie 2010).

In a pair of reviews on historical household archaeology, Beaudry (1999, 2002) credits Charles Fairbanks’ so-called ‘backyard archaeology’ program at St.Augustine, Florida as the first historical archaeological research project to explicitly target household middens over architectural remains in order to better understand household activities (Fairbanks 1977). Drawing on the approach of processual archaeologists, Fairbanks aimed to find patterns in the data in order to make generalizations about other sites of the same culture and of roughly the same time period. This method deemphasized the prevailing view of finding the “oldest” or “most significant” site. Instead, the emphasis was placed on where activities took place, namely the backyards (Deagan 1996:25). Ultimately, the choice to focus in the backyard led to new understandings into how household composition affected diet and material culture in St.Augustine, including Kathleen Deagan’s (1973) valuable insights into identifying the role of Native women’s household activities in the archaeological record. Since Fairbanks’ pioneering backyard investigations, the practice of household midden excavation and analysis has evolved to a consideration of middens’ formation processes, function, and spatial
dimensions (e.g. Breen 2004; Dawdy 2006; Doroszenko 2001-2; King and Miller 1987) as evidence of household variation.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, historical archaeologists’ investigations of households were also heavily influenced by Stanley South’s pattern recognition approach. Arguing that each household “represents a system within a much larger system imposing on each household a degree of uniformity,” South (1977:86) sought to delineate “household patterns” consisting of broad artifact classes. Simply stated, similar sites should produce similar patterns, while atypical sites will have patterns that deviate from the norm. Embracing Lewis Binford’s call for archaeology to seek the processes by which cultures adapted and changed, South’s goal was an enhanced understanding of cultural evolution (South 1977:1-5). Most relevant to household archaeology was South’s “Brunswick Pattern” which used artifact distributions to delineate patterns of trash disposal at eighteenth-century British colonial sites in North and South Carolina (Beaudry 2002:307). Although this approach was widely used in the southeastern United States, a decade after publishing his monograph, South (1988:25-28) lamented how the practice of pattern recognition among historical archaeologists never matured beyond “particularistic, inductivistic exercises in identification and labeling” and was plagued by the “almost total absence of any linking of the archaeological patterns to past cultural processes”.

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Another prominent current in historic household archaeology studies that emerged in the 1970s was an engagement with the “new social history’s” focus on the study of everyday life of ordinary people over elites. Sometimes referred to as “history from the bottom up,” this approach was promoted as a way to better understand aspects of culture and society through the study of micro-level events (Gallant 2012:10). In this vein, Henry Glassie’s (1975) *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia* was especially influential among historical archaeologists. Rooted in structuralist theory, Glassie outlined what he saw as a fundamental transformation in ordinary houses in Virginia in the eighteenth century to new forms fitting with a “Georgian world view.” The new houses were ordered, symmetrical and segregated, and reflected a transformation to a more privatized way of life. James Deetz (1977) subsequently showed how a “Georgian worldview” applied to other classes of material culture, while Mark Leone (1988) went even further to suggest the ‘Georgian Order’ represented an ideology of merchant capitalism (Johnson 2006:318-9). Like South, Glassie, Deetz and Leone all sought to recognize a discernable pattern ingrained into material culture at the household-level, which in turn, pointed toward shifts in the larger worldview (Brandon and Barile 2004:5). Sarah Tarlow (2002) however, suggests the Glassie/Deetz model of “Georgianization” was overly fluid on account of the variability of what manifests as Georgian and because it takes place at different times in
different places. Echoing Tarlow’s critique, but also noting the methodological problems with Glassie’s original work, Hicks and Horning (2006:280) observe that by the 1990s the ‘Georgian Order’ thesis had evolved into a normative model to explain change in material culture.

Historical archaeologists’ search for micro-level (e.g. household) patterns in architecture and artifacts likewise dovetailed with the new social history’s focus on family as a unit of analysis, generational sequences, and people’s attachment to specific places (e.g. Demos 1970). According to Beaudry (2004:254), the integrated analysis of household refuse and architecture was recognized by a generation of historical archaeologists coming of age in the 1970s as a unique opportunity for archaeologists to contribute to the greater integration of anthropological studies of households and the new social history’s focus on family (e.g. Brown 1987). Since then, an emphasis on family history as a framework for understanding change over time in the archaeological record has remained an important line of inquiry for historical archaeologists. For example, Mark Groover (2004) noted that household succession was often the catalyst for landscape changes inspired by broader social, economic or aesthetic trends. In a separate study, Groover (2001) linked artifact distributions at the Gibbs Farm site in eastern Tennessee to a family cycle model developed by social scientists (after Goody 1958) to assess changes in household consumption over time.
The influence of the new social history’s emphasis on every day and family life was particularly evident in a series of household-focused studies at Colonial Williamsburg. For example, family history was used to frame the interpretations of archaeological and architectural changes observed at the Randolph family’s ‘urban plantation’ (Edwards et al. 1988; Kostro 2005). At the same time, previously undetected generationally-linked changes in behavior and use of space were revealed through the expanded incorporation of environmental evidence including soil chemistry, macro and micro botanicals, oyster shells and animal bone at several other sites within the eighteenth-century town site (Metz et al. 1998; Samford 1999a; Franklin 2004; Sullivan and Kealhofer 2004; Mrozowski et al. 2008). Meanwhile the physical reconstruction of buildings as part of Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area based upon archaeological and architectural evidence has had the opportunity to illustrate to Colonial Williamsburg’s visiting public “how the built environment was supposed to reinforce the social rules that designers and builders preferred, but was often subverted for their own purposes by those on whom the plans and buildings were thrust upon (Carson 2013:12).”

The household has also been a useful scale of analysis for African Diasporic-focused archaeologists, especially in juxtaposition to the community-scale studies typical of historians (e.g. Blassingame 1972; Genovese 1974;
Gutman 1976). Early works often looked for status-related variation within plantations inferred from house size, house design, and artifact assemblage composition. Classic studies include John Otto's (1975, 1980, 1984) search for material differences in plantation owner, overseer, and slave housing and material culture at Cannon's Point Plantation on the coast of Georgia. Likewise, Teresa Singleton (1980) considered differences in wealth and status among enslaved African households in antebellum Georgia, as well as how household assemblages and architecture changed in the transition from slavery to freedom (Singleton 1985). More recent works, although not always explicitly household in focus, have explored power relations on plantations, including both the power to dominate and the power to resist domination (McKee 1992). Brian Thomas (1998), for example, notes that although planters exerted immense control over the enslaved, the extent of their control into everyday life was quite varied. In comparing the household assemblages recovered from enslaved African dwellings located at various locations across Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage Plantation in Tennessee, Thomas observed that artifact assemblages recovered from quarters closest to the mansion included more expensive and higher-status ceramics than more distantly located quarters. According to Thomas, the ceramic variation is likely evidence of the increased influence of the planter over ceramic distribution, although he cautions against attributing differences between near and far assemblages to a presumed social hierarchy as other planter-sourced commodities were evenly distributed across the plantation’s slave quarters.
Subtle resistance to the planter’s control, meanwhile, may be read in the prevalence of an array of small personal items recovered from various dwellings that had been acquired through participation in a cash economy outside the plantation (Thomas 1998:545).

The close examination of houseyards has been a particularly important component of African Diasporic studies of households. Ywone Edwards-Ingram (1998) and Grey Gundaker (1998) convincingly reason how houseyards served as extensions of the household, and as Barbara Heath and Amber Bennett (2000:53) note, “together, the house and yard form a nucleus within which the culture expresses itself, is perpetuated, changed, and reintegrated.” The houseyard, according to Whitney Battle (2004), was also a shared space that facilitated cooperation and exchange between neighboring households. Admittance into the yard, and thus the household, however, was also a privileged and protected space. Various archaeologists have explored how yard sweeping functioned as a form of boundary maintenance with West African inspired social and cosmological connotations that buffered the household from places and influences beyond (Heath and Bennett 2000; Fesler 2010: 32-33; Boroughs 2015).

Moving indoors, the location of subfloor pits within enslaved African and African American dwellings throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth-
century Chesapeake have received considerable attention as evidence of the negotiation of power among the enslaved and between the enslaved and plantation overseers and managers (Kelso 1984; Kimmel 1993; Neiman 1997; Samford 1999b, 2007). Archaeologists have long debated a variety of uses for the pits, including: as root cellars for preservation of fruit and vegetables, as personal storage spaces (especially in non-kin based households), as "hidey holes" for stolen or pilfered goods, or as shrines following West African religious traditions. Whatever their purpose, the presence of these cellars suggests that slaves and slave households maintained some degree of property, space, and subsistence (Young 1997:95).

In their diachronic studies of Utopia plantation and the aforementioned Rich Neck plantation outside Williamsburg, Virginia, Garrett Fesler (2004) and Maria Franklin (1997, 2004) consider the family unit’s significance to the households. In particular, Franklin (2004:224) points out how households were both dynamic and cooperative; and how the artifacts related to household activities can reflect changes in household composition over time to accommodate new members or the withdrawal of others. Fesler (2004), meanwhile, linked how changes in house size, and the decrease in subfloor pits over time correlate to an increase in kin-based household units. Heath (2012) likewise noted the low frequency of subfloor pits within probable kin-
based households at Thomas Jefferson’s Poplar Forest plantation in the Virginia Piedmont. Andrew Wilkin (2017:425), meanwhile, suggests that the proximity of an overseer possibly influenced how space was used within quarters, including the use of subfloor pits.

Turning to the Caribbean, household archaeology has been an important analytical framework for both contact-period studies as well as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century plantation studies. At the Spanish colonial sites of La Isabela and Puerto Real, for example, Kathleen Deagan and her collaborators explored the variability in how Spanish households confronted the unfamiliar and complex conditions of early town life in the Americas (Deagan 1995:195). Archaeological evidence of dwelling spaces, clothing, household furnishings, and domestic organization for La Isabela’s non-elite residents was consistent with similar evidence for lower to middle class Iberian households of the late fifteenth century. Artifact comparisons of La Isabela’s elite and non-elite households revealed very little variation between the two enclaves suggesting that everyday life for elites at La Isabela was dramatically different than their status had afforded them in Spain. Discontent over the disparity between their Old and New World households likely influenced their written accounts in ways that may not have been perceived by non-elites who left no comparable written archive (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). Meanwhile, household archaeology at the sixteenth-century town site
of Puerto Real reflects both Spanish dominion over society and landscape, and the influence and incorporation of Amerindian, African and newly synthesized criollo traits into everyday life that stand in contradiction to Catholic, imperial and mercantilist ideals of the Spanish colonial system. As in St. Augustine (Florida), the roles women played in everyday life Puerto Real are manifested in strikingly gender-differentiated artifact assemblages. In places associated with women, non-European items were often included within the assemblage; while places where male activities took place are dominated by European items and technology (Deagon 1995).

Beginning in the early 1980s, household-focused excavations were initiated at a number of plantation sites throughout the Caribbean. These excavations first took shape as plantation-focused research efforts shifted away from the narrowly defined and often Eurocentric goals of historic preservation, to a more anthropologically-informed interest in people’s lived experiences. In practice, this meant temporarily forsaking the visually dominant agro-industrial ruins of sugar factories and fort sites to a search for nearly invisible plantation slave quarters known primarily from historical documents and maps (Handler and Lange 1978). Plantation great houses were also sometimes excavated, but the majority of Caribbean historical archaeology turned to investigating the lives of the enslaved, not just at the household-level, but also at the regional (Delle 1999) and island (Menniketti 2015)
scales. An important early example that bridges the transition to people-centered archaeology is Lydia Pulsipher and Conrad Goodwin’s Galways Plantation project on Montserrat. They initially focused on the architecture of the plantation’s sugar works (Pulsipher and Goodwin 1982), but turned to considering the lives of the plantation’s enslaved laborers (Howson 1995, Pulsipher and Goodwin 1999), and more specifically, how enslaved laborers cleverly located gardens to escape the surveillance of planters, and then used gardens not only for growing their own food, but also for surplus crops to sell (Pulsipher 1994). Their work foreshadowed numerous subsequent investigations on enslaved African household sites, provisioning gardens, and plantation landscapes.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Douglas Armstrong directed excavations at multiple household sites at the Drax Hall and Seville sugar estates in Jamaica. At Drax Hall, Armstrong (1990) identified and excavated ten house sites, including house yards, within the ‘Old Village’ indicated on historic estate maps. The occupation dates of the ‘Old Village’ sites ranged from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, spanning the transition from slavery to freedom on the plantation. The relative status of households through time was explored via the variation in the ceramic and glass tablewares, kitchenwares, personal items, architectural remnants, and faunal remains recovered from the various “Old Village” sites and the Drax Hall great
house that Armstrong also excavated. Meanwhile at Seville Plantation, Armstrong compared households from two enslaved African villages, one dating from the early eighteenth century, and the other from the late eighteenth century in addition to the planter’s residence and various manager’s houses (Armstrong and Kelly 2000, Armstrong 2011). Armstrong determined that the linear organization of the earlier households was most likely a reflection of the planter’s influence over their spatial arrangement, while the later village’s nucleated arrangement reflected a lapse in direct planter control, as well as broader temporal patterns of change including rebuilding efforts following natural disasters. Evidence of yard sweeping was read as an indication that the yard was a place where household and community activities took place. Artifacts including ground cowry shells, local earthenware, and locally made tobacco pipes suggest both continuities of African traditions and the local development of goods and trades by enslaved Africans (Armstrong and Galle 2007). A particularly significant find was the identification of houseyard burials at Seville. The archaeologically observed burial practices were reminiscent of Ghanaian house and yard burial practices intended to demonstrate a strong bond between the living and the dead (Armstrong and Fleischman 2003). In addition, a mid to late nineteenth-century East Indian laborer household was also uncovered at Seville (Armstrong and Hauser 2004). Distinct from Afro-Jamaican building and houselot patterns, the organization and orientation of space within this household conformed to South Asian vernacular architecture and uses of
space. Likewise, clothing and adornment-related artifacts were also unlike any from known Afro-Jamaican contexts, either free or enslaved.

Household archaeological investigations at Clifton Plantation, a cotton plantation in the Bahamas, have shed light on how enslaved Africans actively constructed New World identities. Laurie Wilkie and Paul Farnsworth (2005) suggest that culturally diverse enslaved Africans at Clifton expressed a generalized African identity through their purchase of mass-produced European ceramics featuring colors and designs that resembled remembered African decorative patterns or styles. Although their interesting argument carefully avoids the common pitfall of identifying culturally specific Africanisms in the archaeological record, the authors do take something of a leap of faith in claiming that the enslaved at Clifton actually had access to a market, and they do not consider what the range of decorations that was locally available might have been. Even if we accept that the Clifton enslaved were able to get access to the market, to what extent were their purchases simply a reflection of local availability rather than consumer choice?

Similar to Wilkie and Farnsworth’s agency thesis on enslaved Africans consumer choices, Elizabeth Kellar (2017) explores how material culture choices both animated and reflected changing notions of identity among the enslaved laborers at Adrian Estate before and after 1800 on the Danish
island of St. John. The pre-1800 assemblages, excavated from West African-style wattle and daub houses, reveal consumer choices that “root the West African (born) enslaved laborers in the familiar….and linking themselves in shared traditions” that differentiated them from their white enslavers (Keller 2017:252). So-called “familiar” choices included undecorated earthenware pottery that approximated West African pottery traditions and a preference for Dutch tobacco pipes like those introduced into Africa by Dutch slave traders.\(^7\) The pre-1800 assemblages also included curated white porcelain vessels that were likely looted objects taken during the 1733 St. John rebellion and later became tokens of triumph over the white planter class. The post-1800 assemblages, excavated from masonry houses built by Caribbean-born slaves, in contrast, suggests an emphasis on local social networks and social ties. In particular, according to Kellar, the proliferation of colored and patterned ceramics in later households are “loud signifiers” of their enhanced ability to participate in local markets (Kellar 2017:250), although she stops short of attributing their choices to any particular cultural grammar. While Wilkie and Farnsworth make an interesting, although not universally accepted, argument to explain the ceramic color and pattern choices at Clifton, Kellar’s “loud signifiers” explanation lacks the same depth. What made them loud? And what is the evidence that the enslaved at Adrian Estate perceived their so-called loudness. In addition, if the colored and

\(^7\) Andrian Estate’s white overseers evidently preferred English tobacco pipes (Keller 2017:243).
patterned ceramics are signifiers, who were the intended receivers of their message?

Both works also examine the replacement of wattle and daub slave quarters with masonry buildings. At Clifton, Wilkie and Farnsworth (2005) suggest the estate owner’s familiarity with the late eighteenth century British agrarian reform movement, as well as the picturesque landscape movement were important influences on the plantation’s architecture. With the aim of instilling “morality, discipline, thrift, industriousness, and economic ambition” among the enslaved at Clifton, the plantation owner dictated how houses were built and how they were arranged within the laborer village. In particular, the houses linear arrangement minimized gathering spaces and idleness, while the use of stone as a building material was meant to convince the growing number of slavery critics that living conditions on the plantation were no worse than those encountered by the laboring classes of England (Farnsworth 2001; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005:154). Agrarian reforms have also been cited as the motivation for the late eighteenth century replacement of wattle and daub structures with stone houses on sugar plantations on Danish St.Croix (Chapman 1991) and Barbados (Bergman and Smith 2014). Ken Kelly (2008), meanwhile, links the construction of ‘improved’ masonry houses on Guadeloupe to concessions made to African-descended plantation laborers as part of Napoleon's efforts to reverse France’s emancipation
efforts in 1802. At Adrian Estate on Danish St. John, however, the transition from wattle and daub to stone in plantation slave quarters was not driven by the plantation’s owners or overseers, but instead was impelled by the enslaved themselves, who viewed masonry construction as a way to communicate their value and “what they saw as their place in St. Johnian society” (Kellar 2017:252).

Another important household study from Armstrong (2003) was his investigation of the East End community, also on St.John. Located on the margins of St.John’s plantation lands, the multi-ethnic East End creole community included provision farmers, mariners, craftsmen and boat builders who were connected to a much wider regional network. Changes in the material culture excavated from three East End home sites revealed how over time the community transformed from one marked by binary divisions of white/black and planter/slave, to an integrated community with varied economic pursuits that distinguished them from the dominant plantation economy.

James Delle, best known for his regional-scale investigations of the spatial dimensions of Jamaican coffee plantations (Delle 1998, 2009, 2011), has also pursued household-level investigations of field houses located away from mapped village sites (Delle 2016). The field house sites included both
long-term residences and short-term shelters located away from the watchful gaze of the plantation overseer. Although not strictly a household study, Frederick Smith’s and Hayden Bassett’s (2016:45) consideration of the archaeological evidence for the occupation of caves and gullies in Barbados as “fluid sanctuaries from plantation life” hidden from the surveillance and control of the planters is worth mentioning. The notion of evading the planter’s surveillance is considered again in the following chapter on hilltop drinking on Guana.

It is without exaggeration, thanks in large part to the studies mentioned above, that much of what is known today about the everyday lives of enslaved Africans and Afro-Caribbeans is the result of household archaeological research. At the same time, we know surprisingly little about planter’s households in the Caribbean. Only a very small number of great houses have been archaeologically surveyed or excavated (e.g. Armstrong 1990), and in most cases, their excavation was carried out as just one component within a broader plantation-scale project (Watters 2001:91). Other planter or great house investigations include Mountravers on Nevis (Morris et al. 2003:51); Stewart Castle and Mona Great Houses on Jamaica (Galle 2007, 2011), the Lettsom Estate on Jost Van Dyke in the British Virgin Islands (Chenoweth 2011, 2017), and Concordia Estate on the Dutch island St.Eustatius (Barka 1996, 2001). In most cases, these consisted of
descriptions of the standing architecture and survey-level data collection. Chenoweth’s Jost Van Dyke study also considers how Quaker religious practices crossed with other aspects of daily life in the BVI, and how these practices were modified to fit the Caribbean’s slavery-based economy and society. Historical studies of white colonial wealth, meanwhile, have primarily focused more on the methods of wealth creation than the modes of its consumption (Petley 2014:438).

The most significant archaeological investigation of a planter’s household is Jessica MacLean Striebel’s (2015) study of the Little Bay Plantation on Montserrat. Evidence from archaeological, architectural and comparative sources indicate the plantation house was a Creole-style great house, a vernacular house form characteristic of middling planters in the eighteenth century (e.g. Edwards 1994). Meanwhile, excavated ceramics, glass and other categories of material culture reveal how the male planters at Little Bay cultivated a “white Creole masculinity” that was a contextually situated identity distinct from British men newly arrived in the West Indies or in the metropole (MacLean Striebel 2015:346).

Of course not all Europeans in the Caribbean were planters. Research related to overseers, indentured servants, merchants, soldiers and other European dominated components of the society is also significantly
underrepresented (Watters 2001:91), especially at the household level. Among the few household, or near-household, studies carried out thus far include an analysis of household ceramics recovered from late seventeenth-century urban contexts at Port Royal, Jamaica that sheds a useful light on the customs and standards of living of English merchants in the wealthiest city in the British Caribbean (Donachie 2001). On Nevis, the search for a historically-known Jewish synagogue led to the inadvertent discovery of a late eighteenth-century urban townhouse belonging to an English merchant and planter (Terrell 2005). Finally, on Barbados, archaeological investigations of urban merchant households in Bridgetown revealed how local notions of hospitality are visible in the town’s archaeological record and were critical in promoting the island’s economic success as a new sugar producer (Smith and Watson 2009).

Within the Caribbean, paralleling studies of the African Diaspora elsewhere, household archaeology has been an important framework for understanding the texture of enslaved African domestic life and how it fit into larger social processes at the local, regional, and global scales. By foregrounding the lives of those “of Little Note” (Scott 1994:3), Caribbean historical archaeologists have sought to overcome long-standing silences of enslaved and free Africans in the historical record (Trouillot 1995). But as Mary Beaudry (1996:4) notes, “there is no special revelation to be had merely by
offering the histories of the oppressed as counternarratives….it is the unraveling of the discourses both of the dominants and the ‘repressed’ that is key to our understanding of what is meaningful.” At the moment, the ‘unraveling of the discourses’ as advocated by Beaudry, is hampered by a lack of comparable household-level analysis of the Caribbean’s European colonizers. Drawing on excavations of four very different households on Guana Island in the British Virgin Islands, the homes of both enslavers and the enslaved the present study aims to contribute toward a more meaningful understanding of the Caribbean’s diverse history and its legacies.
Chapter 3: The British Virgin Islands: A Historical Sketch

The present study focuses on understanding the structure and function of Guana Island’s eighteenth-century households, although the people that made up those households were neither the island’s first, nor its last, inhabitants. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Virgin Islands, possibly including Guana, were initially colonized approximately 3000 years BP and were intermittently occupied by Arawakan-speaking Amerindians until just prior to the arrival of the first waves of Spanish explorers searching for a trans-Atlantic route to Asia in the late fifteenth century. European settlement began in the mid-seventeenth century with French, English, Dutch and Danish colonists who established modest cotton and provision farms on the islands. By the end of the century, the various Virgin Islands were divided into separate Danish and British territories, the latter under the administration of the Leeward Islands Colony. Sugar emerged as an important export in the second half of the eighteenth century which led to the importation of many thousands of captive Africans that had been sold into plantation slavery, and a short-lived era of prosperity for the BVI’s sugar planters. Following the collapse of the fragile sugar-based economy and the emancipation of the enslaved African workforce in the early nineteenth century, the majority of planters abandoned their estates and mostly repatriated to England. Although still a British colony, without the production of exportable commodities, the BVI were largely ignored by the imperial center. This left a
vacuum in which the remaining African-descended BVIslanders successfully established for themselves new communities among the deserted plantation-era great houses and factories (see O’Neal 2012). In the mid-twentieth century the Virgin Islands were transformed again, from a collective of smallholding farmers and fisherman in a remote corner of the Caribbean, to a bustling tropical tourist mecca catering to North American and European sun seekers. Chapter 3, drawing on a combination of primary and secondary sources, reviews each of these developments in detail. The historical context developed here is used to frame the documentary history of Guana Island presented in Chapter 4, and the archaeological evidence of how Guana’s eighteenth century households were formed, structured and functioned presented in Chapter 5.

**Columbian Encounters**

On November 14, 1493, while on his second voyage to the Americas, Christopher Columbus with his fleet of 17 ships stopped along the north coast of a small island identified on sixteenth-century maps as Santa Cruz (present-day St. Croix, USVI). Columbus happened upon the island in search of freshwater and local guides while enroute to rescue the sailors he had left at La Navidad on the Taino island of Hispaniola a year earlier.\(^8\) Having arrived

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\(^8\) The Taino in 1492 were actually a diverse group of Arawakan-speaking polities living in the Greater Antilles, Virgin Islands, Bahamas and northern Leeward Islands. In Columbus’ time, they referred to themselves by local place names (e.g. Borinquen in Puerto Rico), and did not
from the southeast, Columbus named the cluster of small islands at the north end of the Leeward Islands and east of the Greater Antilles as *Las Islas Virgenes* - supposedly in reference to St. Ursula and her 11,000 virgins martyred in the eleventh century (Jenkins 1923; Dookhan 1975:xii). An expeditionary team was sent ashore where they came upon a mostly deserted Amerindian village near present-day Salt River Bay. According to Dr. Diego Alvarez Chanca (1949), physician for the expedition, the villagers fled upon seeing the Spanish, although the Spanish did seize five or six women and boys. Upon returning to their ships, the Spanish intercepted an incoming canoe with four Amerindian men, two women and one or two boys. A short-lived skirmish ensued with casualties suffered by both sides before the Spanish took the Amerindians as captives (Morison 1963:212, 237-8). This brief encounter is often noted as the first documented instance of armed resistance by natives to the European colonization efforts in the Americas.

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9 In 1780, an alternate explanation was offered by George Suckling, an eighteenth-century government official sent to the Virgin Islands. Suckling claimed the group was named in 1580 by Sir Francis Drake in honor of the “Virgin Queen” Elizabeth I (Suckling 1780:1).
The identity of the people encountered by the Spanish at Salt River Bay is the subject of a long-standing debate among scholars of the contact period Caribbean (Allaire 1977, 1980) - a debate that highlights the complexity of indigenous Caribbean social relations, identity politics and settlement patterns at the end of the fifteenth century. According to Cooper (1997:186), the Salt River Bay village was but one of an estimated twenty on St. Croix at the time, with a total population between 1200 and 3500 people living on the island. Columbus noted that Santa Cruz was the only Virgin Island with an extant indigenous population, while the other islands in the archipelago, located to the north and northeast, were uninhabited (Morison 1963:237). Correspondingly, archaeological excavations of pre-contact Amerindian village sites on St. Thomas, St. John, and Tortola have consistently revealed evidence of the Taino abandonment of those islands in the mid fifteenth century, preceding Columbus’s arrival (Bates 2001:338; Wild 2013).

In his journals, Columbus identifies his Cruzan captives as “caribes,” a term he understood from his Taino informants on Hispaniola as their name for the fearsome and war-like cannibals of the Lesser Antilles who mercilessly preyed upon the peaceful Taino (Keegan 1992:8-10). Columbus, however, had a very difficult time understanding his informants which lead to numerous misunderstandings. In Columbus’ own works: “Also I do not know the language, and the people of these islands do not understand me nor do I, nor
anyone else I have with me, them. And many time I understand one thing said by these Indians that I bring for another, its contrary; nor do I trust them much, because many times they have tried to flee” (Dunn and Kelley 1989:183). Regardless, the possibility of cannibals living on a nearby island fascinated Columbus and his crew, and fed their late medieval preconceptions of islands as dangerous and mythical places (Milbrath 1989; Rainbird 1999). This purported dichotomy between the non-violent Taino and their barbarous neighbors is repeated in other firsthand accounts (Chanca 1949) and strongly influenced subsequent narratives of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Caribbean (Las Casas 1951; Oviedo 1851-5). For example, the discovery of human long bones in Amerindian dwellings on Guadeloupe was interpreted as proof of cannibalism among that island’s inhabitants, while human remains found in Taino dwellings on Hispaniola were reported as revered relics of the deceased (Hulme 1993:207). Thereafter, the terms “Carib” and “cannibal” became synonyms regardless of the actual evidence for anthropophagy among the Lesser Antillean Amerindians (Boucher 1992:15; Hulme 1986:41).

Keegan (1992:9) argues that the differentiation of peaceful Taino and cannibalistic Carib was self-servingly perpetrated by the Spanish to justify native enslavement. Missionaries in the first decade of Spanish colonization had successfully convinced Queen Isabella to forbid slave-taking among the
agreeable Taino. In 1503, however, pro-slavery advocates successfully lobbied Isabella to exclude the irredeemable and rebellious ‘cannibals’ residing in the Lesser Antilles and Central American mainland from the ban in part to satisfy labor shortages on Spanish encomiendas (Boucher 1992:16). Effectively, any Amerindian who resisted the Spanish, regardless of their ethnic affiliation, was hereafter considered “carib” and was vulnerable to enslavement (Keegan 1992:10). In truth, the “caribs” as understood by Columbus and the other Spanish demonstrated little resemblance to the indigenous Island Caribs (Kalinago) living primarily in the Windward Islands of the Lesser Antilles (Hulme 1993). Nevertheless, for most of the twentieth century, historians and archaeologist accepted Columbus’ account as literal, and associated the ‘caribes’ with the historically-known Island Caribs of the Lesser Antilles (Loen 1935; Rouse 1948).

According to oral histories, recorded in the seventeenth-century by French Dominican missionaries (Breten 1665; Rochford 1665), the Island Caribs were descended from South American invaders (mainland Caribs or Karina) who had moved into the Lesser Antilles from the coast of the Guianas, killing (and allegedly eating) the indigenous Arawakan (Igneri) men of those islands and taking the women as concubines and slaves (Whitehead 1995:92-3). To the missionaries, the oral histories provided a plausible explanation for the curious phenomenon that seventeenth-century Island Carib men and women
spoke separate languages, the men’s language reportedly being a South American Cariban dialect. More recent linguistic analysis of the French-Island Carib dictionaries compiled by the missionaries, however, has shown that both men’s and women’s languages were actually Arawakan, although the men’s language did include Cariban elements (Taylor 1977). The linguistic evidence, instead, suggests the replacement of the indigenous Arawakan-speaking people of the Lesser Antilles was probably a more complicated dynamic that understood by the missionaries.

Archaeologists have also attempted to discern Island Carib origins through material culture (Lenik 2012:85). Suazoid pottery, manufactured by Amerindians across the Windward Islands between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, was unconvincingly attributed to the pre-contact Island Caribs in the 1960s (Bullen and Bullen 1964). The single biggest problem with the association was the fact that post-contact Island Carib pottery looks nothing like the preceding Suazoid wares (Allaire 1981). More recently, a pottery style known as Cayo has been linked to the Island Caribs (Boomert 1986, 2011). Small quantities of Cayo pottery have been found in both pre- and post-contact archaeological contexts in the Windward Islands and are comparable to Koriabo and Kaina complexes (ancestral to contemporary mainland Carib pottery) of coastal Guyana suggesting the possible point of origin for its introduction (Boomert 1986, 2011, Lenik 2012). Conversely, numerous Cayo
stylistic elements also exhibit a strong likeness to late Taino styles from Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (Bright 2011:197). Considering the late pre-contact / early post-contact date for Cayo, the stylistic similarities may be the result of heightened interaction between the Taino and Island Caribs, either through Island Carib raids on Taino settlements or via Taino refugees fleeing the Greater Antilles in the aftermath of the Spanish-Taino War (1511-14). For Keegan and Hofman (2017), the recognition of both mainland Koriabo and Greater Antillean Taino influences in Cayo pottery reflects a “mosaic-like cultural aggregate” that illustrates the dynamic interactions and wide-ranging composition of Amerindian society in early colonial times. Given the extent of the Amerindian interaction, Sued Badillo (1978) goes so far as to suggest that those labeled “Carib” by Columbus were ethnically no different than their “Taino” enemies. Building upon Sued Badillo’s argument, Hulme (1992) frames the ethnohistorical reports of Amerindian conflict in terms of tensions arising between economically and politically differentiated neighbors. The so-called “Caribs” of the Lesser Antilles had neither the sophisticated agricultural economy of the larger islands, nor comparably complex political structures. As a result, the more loosely organized inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles found their more sedentary and wealthy neighbors to be attractive targets precipitating animosity between the two. The resulting hostility felt by the Taino toward their predatory neighbors was conveyed to Columbus, who along with subsequent European writers, grossly magnified the differences between the Taino and the Caribs.
Ultimately, Spanish colonial policies of the early sixteenth century virtually eliminated the indigenous Amerindian presence in the Virgin Islands (Dookhan 1974:28). After the Spanish conquest of Puerto Rico in 1509, some Taino leaders formed an alliance with the Amerindians from Guadeloupe and Dominica to try and reverse the Spanish conquest using the Virgin Islands as bases from which Taino rebellions were staged (Figueredo 2006:395). The Spanish responded with massive violence, overwhelming the Amerindian forces by 1514, and raiding the Virgin Islands for laborers to enslave and work in mines on nearby Puerto Rico. Added to this, an ant plague in 1518, which caused significant crop damage and famine was followed by a deadly smallpox outbreak in 1519 (Figueredo 2006:396). Many of those who managed to elude capture, famine or death fled to other parts of the Caribbean, although a handful of Amerindian inhabitants were still living on St. Croix as late as 1587. By the 1620s, however, according to recently arrived French, English and Dutch settlers, the island was uninhabited (Morse 1997:36; Figueredo 2006:397).

Although the pre-Columbian archaeology of the Virgin Islands is not the focus of the present study, European colonists frequently settled on or near areas of earlier Amerindian habitation. Time and again, the ethnohistorical and archaeological records indicate that latterly vacated native-made landscapes
were among the first places targeted for European settlement in order to take advance of the anthropogenic landscape changes already carried out rather than taming virgin wilderness. On St. Kitts in the Lesser Antilles, for example, a 1628 contract between John Jeaffreson and Edward Johnson describes their taking over of ‘gardens latte beloninge to the Indians the Savage Natives of that Island’ (cited in Hicks 2007:25). Likewise, archaeological excavations at Heywoods Beach and Holetown on Barbadoes both revealed evidence of seventeenth-century structures built overtop of late Amerindian houses (Drewett and Bennell 2000:40; Leech 2006:155; Smith and Watson 2009:66). In North America, the English usurpation of Native settlement patterns is well known along the eastern seaboard (Cronon 1983:90; Walsh 1988:204; Deetz 1993:13-32; Hodges 1993; McCartney 2011). Although the motivations for overlapping the English settlement over the Native places certainly varied from one place to the next, in Virginia, English colonists frequently established settlements in places described as “Indian Fields” as a way to save time and energy rather than carve out new clearings from the dense forest (Potter and Waselkov 1994; Horning 2013).

The suspected intentional re-occupation of former Amerindian settlements occurred in tandem with a broader adoption of Amerindian material culture and foodways by European colonists which, within the Caribbean, is only just
beginning to be recognized.\textsuperscript{10} The same can be said of the interpersonal relations that emerged under varying conditions between Europeans and Amerindians.\textsuperscript{11} This work, however promising, is in its infancy within the Caribbean, and in the meantime the transition from the pre-Colonial to Colonial era remains poorly understood (Lenik 2012). This is especially true within the smaller islands of the Lesser Antilles and northern Leeward Islands, where there exists a gap of some 150-years between the first Spanish accounts of the islands and their inhabitants in the 1490s (e.g. Chanca 1949) and lengthier accounts recorded by French missionaries from the mid-1600s onwards (e.g. duTerte 1667) (Bright 2011:308). Similarly, few archaeologists have considered the impacts of indigenous people on European settlements (Armstrong and Hauser 2017:216).

Accordingly, the next portion of this chapter briefly reviews the archaeological evidence for the pre-Columbian settlement of the Caribbean. Following a short introduction the history of Caribbean pre-Columbian archaeology, I turn

\textsuperscript{10} A comparable example from the Cheseapeake region includes the recognition and interpretation of Native objects in early deposits at James Fort (http://historicjamestowne.org/collections/selected-artifacts/virginia-indians/). Horning (2013:164) notes how the finds represent "more than mere markers of economic exchange. Rather they reflect the complicated and variable relations between the English interlopers and the people of Tsenacommacah." See also King, Julia A. and Edward E. Chaney, 2004, Did the Chesapeake English Have a Contact Period? In Dennis B. Blanton and Julia A. King, editors, pp 193-221. Indian and European Contact in Context, The Mid-Atlantic Region. University of Florida Press, Gainesville.

\textsuperscript{11} A pioneering work in this vein from the Spanish circum-Caribbean is Kathleen Deagan's (1973, 1983) identification of mestizaje in the material record of St.Augustine.
my focus on the evidence for the Amerindian occupation of the Virgin Islands that preceded Columbus’s arrival on St. Croix in 1493. As told in the second half of this chapter, formal European settlement did not commence until the seventeenth century. Following a brief review of the efforts made and challenges faced by Europeans to colonize the Virgin Islands, I then turn to describe the BVI’s eighteenth-century settlement history as a marginal settlement within the larger British Empire.

*Pre-Columbian Archaeology*

In the mid-twentieth century, building on a body of scholarship more than one hundred years in the making, Yale-based archaeologist Irving “Ben” Rouse introduced a groundbreaking regional synthesis of Caribbean pre-Columbian archaeology that has had an enduring influence on the scholarship of the region (Figure 5). Following the North American tradition of classifying archaeological cultures into evolutionary stages (Willey and Phillips 1958), Rouse’s (1960, 1972, 1977, 1992) taxonomic framework for organizing Caribbean cultural development includes a Lithic Age (Paleo-Indian) defined by flaked-stone tools, an Archaic Age (Meso-Indian) defined by ground-stone tools, and a Ceramic Age (Formative/Classic) defined by the occurrence of pottery.
Figure 5. Caribbean Precolumbian Cultures and Ceramic Styles after Rouse (from Keegan and Hofman 2017).
Rouse explained these ages as the outcomes of three separate migrations into the Caribbean, and like other practitioners of the culture/historical approach, he used material remains from particular time periods to define “cultures,” which in turn defined “peoples” (Keegan and Hofman 2017:15-20). The result was the first sustained overview of the pre-Columbian Caribbean that considered the islands “as a series of stepping stones between northeastern South America, and the peninsulas of Florida and Yucatan” (Rouse 1964:499).

Rouse’s research set the agenda for a generation of archaeologists focused on the pre-Columbian Caribbean. However, in recent years, his approach has been challenged for its underlying assumptions and for over-simplifying the material differences from one period to the next (e.g. Curet 2004; Rodriguez Ramos et al. 2010). For example, flaked-stone tools are now recognized as also significant components of both Archaic and Ceramic Age sites throughout the region, and pottery is present in all three, blurring the perceived boundaries between the Ages (Keegan and Hofman 2017:20). Recently assayed radiocarbon dates have also contradicted long-held chronologies derived from the seriation of surface collected pottery that had formed the basis of Rouse’s taxonomy. Moreover, while Rouse (1992) portrayed the Taino that Columbus encountered in 1492 as the end-product of a linear evolution, recent interpretations suggest the Taino exhibited
substantial diversity from one island to the next (Keegan and Hofmann 2017). Nevertheless, while the chronologies have been refined, and the characterizations of the various Amerindian people have become more nuanced, many of the naming conventions developed by Rouse continue to be widely used by regional scholars and are used in this chapter for convenience sake.

**The First Settlers**

The first colonization of the insular Caribbean probably occurred sometime between 5000 and 3500 BCE (7000 and 5500 cal. yr. BP) (Fitzpatrick 2015:308). The earliest known archaeological sites are located on Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Hispaniola. Named after the Casimira site on Hispaniola (Cruxent and Rouse 1969; Rouse 1992:51), Casimiroid origins are not conclusively known, although Mesoamerica is the most commonly accepted source based on similarities in the early lithic traditions (Ramos et al. 2013:129-132). A second early dispersal into the Caribbean, designated by Rouse (1992:62) as Ortoiroid, occurred at roughly the same time. Traditionally the Ortoiroid are thought to have originated in northeastern South America (Boomert 2000:68-74; Reid 2009:14), although newly analyzed paleobotanical assemblages from early Ortoiriod sites in the Greater Antilles revealed introduced plants native to the Isthmo-Columbian area, not Venezuela, thus suggesting southern Mesoamerica as an alternate
possible point of origin for the Greater Antilles Ortoiroid (Pagan-Jimenez et al. 2015).

Krum Bay, an Ortoiroid site located on St. Thomas (USVI) and dated to 900 BCE (2900 cal. yr. BP), is the oldest known archaeological site in the Virgin Islands. Krum Bay artifacts include fine-grained basalt flake tools, hammerstones, edge grinders, partially ground stone celts, and beads and pendants of stone, bone, and shell. Subsistence remains indicate shellfish gathering, fishing, and hunting of birds and turtles were the major sources of food (Lundberg 1989:190-8). For the British Virgin Islands, there is no published evidence of Archaic settlements, although Gross (1976:236) and Figueredo (cited in Davis 2011:14) both report on possible Archaic-style tools on Sage Mountain, Tortola’s highest peak, and a pair of “Archaic Age” biface axes were also recovered during the 1997 excavations at Belmont, also on Tortola (Drewett and Bates 1999:15; Drewett 2007:748). In addition, according the James Lazell (2005:314), possible evidence of a pre-ceramic occupation of Guana Island was recovered by biologist Michael Gibbons who excavated faunal remains and a chert handaxe, but no pottery, from the floor of Guana’s so-called “Bat Cave” on the west-facing slope of Sugarloaf.12

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12 Excavated charcoal samples were reportedly radiocarbon dated to 2000-1500 cal. yrs. BP, although Davis (2011:12) cautions the dates may be off by as much as 30%. Even accounting for the error, the dates are more consistent with established early Saladoid occupations rather than Archaic ones. Unfortunately, according to Lazell (2005:192, 223), Gibbons’ cave finds were subsequently lost.
The Saladoid Migration

The beginning of the Caribbean’s so-called “Ceramic Age” occurs around 500 BCE (2500 cal. yrs BP) with the movement into the insular Caribbean of pottery-producing Arawak-speaking people, known as the Saladoid, from the lower and middle Orinoco River valley in Venezuela (Fitzpatrick 2015:311). Saladoid sites are well-known throughout the Virgin Islands. Longford, Prosperity and St. Georges are all prominent Saladoid-era sites on St. Croix (USVI). On St. Thomas (USVI) the multi-component Tutu village site includes a well-defined Saladoid component that is one of the most closely studied in the Caribbean (Righter 2002). Additionally, isolated Saladoid-style pottery fragments have also been found at Coral Bay, Cinnamon Bay, and Cruz Bay, on St. John (USVI). In the BVI, the Gun Creek site, located on Virgin Gorda, is described as “very late Saladoid” or transitional to the later Ostionoid tradition (Figueredo 1980).

Saladoid pottery is well-known for being highly decorated, thin-walled and well-fired. A wide variety of vessel shapes and sizes were produced, including griddles used for baking a variety of root crops and plants. Notable decorative motifs include white on red paint (WOR), zone-incised cross-hatching (ZIC), and black and orange painted polychrome wares, although undecorated wares are the most common. Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic modeled adornos used for handles are also common features (Berard
2013:188). Hofman (1993:207) interprets the relative homogeneity of early Saladoid pottery as evidence of extensive inter-island interaction, while later deposits show increased differentiation between island assemblages suggesting that inter-island interactions may have declined over time. The complex shapes and intricate designs of Saladoid pottery reflects a rich tradition of religious and mythological beliefs where people, animals and supernatural creatures blended into each other (Saunders 2005:239). Over time, corresponding to the increase in stylistic diversity, the elaborate designs that characterized early ceramic assemblages became more simplified (Bates 2001:44-46).

Lithics were important as demonstrated by the positioning of Saladoid settlements near quarry sites and the development of a micro-lapidary tradition. Beads and pendants were made from semi-precious stone and shell. Finished products, in addition to the raw materials to make them, circulated throughout the region, including the South American mainland, further evidencing the wide extent of the Saladoid exchange network (Berard 2013:188). Rock art also becomes commonplace, and featured a diverse assortment of zoomorphic, geometric and anthropometric designs, often located near freshwater sources, within caves, and on stones lining ballcourts (Haywood et al. 2013).
Saladoid villages were circular with dwellings built around a central plaza used for both everyday activities and communal rituals. Villages sites are often characterized by thick middens with abundant shell and crab remains in contrast to post-Saladoid sites where crab remains are few (Rainey 1940; Keegan and Hofman 2017). Ritual objects tend to be small rather than monumental, suggesting a more personal and less communal character to these ceremonies (Curet 1992). At some sites, the central plazas included carefully planned burial complexes with hundreds of interments (Crespo-Torres 2000; Curet and Oliver 1998; Keegan 2009; Siegel 1997). Siegel (1992, 1996, 1997) interprets the location of burials within central plazas as evidence for ancestor veneration.

The Saladoid people practiced a mixed subsistence that included the hunting of land animals, fishing, mollusk collecting and root-crop horticulture (Peterson 1997). Stable-isotope analysis suggests that terrestrial sources of protein (hutia, iguana, land crabs, freshwater fish) were initially favored, but over time, marine sources became increasingly important (deFrance, et al. 1996; Stokes 1998). In addition to food crops, Saladoid farmers also grew tobacco and cotton (Drewett and Bates 2003).
The Ostionoid: Ancestors of the Taino

The Ostionoid cultural tradition developed out of the Late Saladoid around 600 A.D. (1400 cal. yr. BP) in Puerto Rico and eastern Hispaniola. Unlike previous traditions that traced their origins to mainland migrations into the insular Caribbean, the Ostionoid are believed to have developed internally (Saunders 2005:2012-3). Rouse (1992) subdivided the Ostionoid into early (A.D. 600 - 1200) and late (A.D. 1200 - 1500) phases, the latter culminating in the emergence of Taino chiefdoms in the Greater Antilles and parts of the northern Lesser Antilles.

The Ostionoid developed into a number of different local complexes as they dispersed across the Greater Antilles, and into the Bahamas and Jamaica (Fitzpatrick 2015:324). In the Virgin Islands and eastern Puerto Rico, the early Ostionoid is known as the Elenan Ostionoid subseries, and includes two different ceramic styles: the earlier Monserrate style (A.D. 600-900) and the later Santa Elena style (A.D. 900 -1200). On Puerto Rico, the two styles are distinctive from one another, but in the Virgin Islands, the differences are negligible. As a result Elenan Ostioniod pottery is customarily known by the regional idiom “Magens Bay/Salt River I” in reference to the archaeological horizons where they were locally first recognized (Hatt 1924; Vescelius 1952; Lundberg et al. 1992; Lundberg 2005; Lundberg and Wild 2006; Righter et al. 2004).
During the Elenan Ostionoid, settlement patterns suggest an emergent site hierarchy with some villages serving as agricultural hamlets or activity camps, while others functioned as regional centers of power (Curet 1996; Rouse 1992). At the same time, large structures for housing extended families gave way to smaller nuclear-family dwellings, and monumental architecture, including ceremonial plazas and ball courts (batays) became more widespread. In addition, religious objects connected to the worship of zemis, spirits or anthropomorphic figures, increased in both number and size during the Elenan Ostionoid. Concurrently, burials shifted away from central plazas to the interiors of houses (Curet and Oliver 1998). Torres (2012) suggests the abandonment of plaza burials in favor of burials beneath dwellings in the post-Saladoid era is evidence of the emerging localization of social identity, and a stronger expression of individual lineages.

Major Elenan Ostionoid sites in the Virgin Islands include Magens Bay, Hull Bay, Botany Bay and Tutu sites on St. Thomas (USVI); and Calabash Boom, Trunk Bay and Cinnamon Bay on St. John (USVI). Detailed ceramic vessel-type analysis by Lundberg (2007) illustrates the gradual replacement of Saladoid pottery by distinctively Ostionoid pottery, suggesting the change from one age to the next was more of a gradual shift than a dramatic replacement. On Tortola (BVI), a major Elenan Ostionoid village site was
also excavated at Belmont Bay. Additional Elenan Ostionoid sites have also been identified on the small islands surrounding Tortola, including Jost Van Dyke (Bates 2001) and Guana Island (Righe 1987, 2007, 2008; Barka and Harris 1999; Bates and Farrell 2016).

![Figure 6. Archaeological sites GN2, GN6 and GN31 within the ‘flats’ of Guana Island.](image)

Guana’s Elenan Ostionoid occupation has been the focus of a series of investigations, including archaeological surveys led by archaeologists Elizabeth “Holly” Righter (1986-2008), Deborah Davis (2012) and Brian Bates (2016-present) (Figure 6). Righter’s survey unearthed rich midden deposits
containing a mix of decorated Monserrate/Santa Elena-style pottery and undecorated utilitarian wares (GN6). The pottery was found in association with abundant faunal remains and a small number of ceremonial objects distributed over a wide area in the southeastern corner of the flats at the base of the slope ascending to the east (Righer 1987; 2007). Righter (2008) also excavated an intact human burial from within GN6 that she found in close association with a nearly complete Santa Elena-style ceramic bowl (Figure 7). Davis’ testing of the same area likewise recovered abundant Montserrat/Santa Elena-style pottery and faunal remains, but also noted later Taino-era Esperanza wares. Among the later pottery finds was a half of a molded anthropomorphics figure that Davis interpreted as Guabancex, the Taino hurricane goddess (Figure 8). Bates’ recent survey refined GN6’s boundaries, and also identified a concentration of Late Ceramic Age ceramic fragments to the immediate south of the inland salt pond (GN31). Bates’ ongoing research hopes to determine if GN31 is in fact a new site, or second component of the settlement first recorded by Righter (Bates and Farrell 2016).

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13 Barka designated the Amerindian site identified by Righter as GN6. Barka’s 2003 field notes and photos indicate he excavated two 50 x 50cm test units within what he judged to be the core of the site within a donkey paddock north of the garden. A controlled (piece-plotted) surface collection of this same area was carried out in 2004.
The next phase of Caribbean Amerindian history is associated with the arrival of new cultural influences from Hispaniola around A.D. 1200 (Curet 2005:24). In Rouse’s cultural chronology, this final phase is known as the Chican subseries (aka Chican Ostionoid), and includes the Taino chiefdom societies encountered by Columbus in 1492 (Saunders 2005:271). Geographically, the Chican Ostionoid extends from eastern Cuba, to the Bahamas, and possibly as far south as Saba in the northern Lesser Antilles. In the Virgin Islands and eastern Puerto Rico, the Chican Ostionoid is associated with Esperanza style ceramics which are characterized by combinations of incised lines, punctuation and molded head lugs (adornos). As with earlier ceramic types, Esperanza style pottery is also known by its local name, in this instance: “Magans Bay / Salt River II”. Other artifacts that characterize the Chican Ostionoid include stone objects such as: *zemis*, masks, *duhos* (ceremonial
stools), and stone collars. Strong evidence of woodworking including, vessels, musical instruments, zemis and duhos, is evident in Hispaniola (Curet 2005:24). Meanwhile, bone was used for making vomit spatulas, spoons, and as inlays into wood objects.

The most notable archaeological evidence of the Taino in the northern Virgin Islands was recovered at Cinnamon Bay on St.John (USVI) where National Park Service archaeologists have excavated a 400-year long stratigraphic sequence mirroring Taino development on Puerto Rico. Wild (2001) argues that Cinnamon Bay functioned as a ceremonial center as evidenced by sequential deposits of ceremonial vessels and ritually broken vessels, mixed with zemi figures and food offerings (Righter et al. 2004). Meanwhile, on St.Croix, a “Classic Taino” ball court was excavated at Salt River Bay (Hatt 1924; Morse 2004).

Spanish chroniclers described the Taino social and political organization as consisting of local chiefs (caciques) ruling villages, who in turn were governed by regional chiefs and a paramount chief. Within the social hierarchy, below the caciques were the nitainos (aristocratic nobility) followed by naborias (commoners). In addition to the cacique was the behique, a shaman or healer who communicated with the spirits through drug-induced trances (cohoba) (Keegan 2013:71-72).
Taino villages (yucayeques) were well-organized spaces that included two types of structures—bohío and caney—that were made of wood and covered with thatch (Highfield 1997:166; Olazagasti 1997:137). Bohíos were the commoner’s houses and were round or bell-shaped, and could hold up to fifteen families. Residential houses surrounded the ballcourt, and larger villages often possessed several smaller courts. Deceased ancestors were often buried within dwellings, but cave burials for elites are also known (Curet 2005:25). On the other hand, caney were generally rectangular and were frequently located at the end of a plaza or ball court (batey). They served as the residences of caciques and other elites, as council houses, temples, and the place where visitors were received.

Agriculture was a central part of daily life (Highfield 1997:165). The Taíno practiced swidden agriculture, cultivating small plots known as conucos. The crops were used to make several types of foods, like casabi (cassava bread), that was cooked on flat ceramic griddles called burén (Olazagasti 1997:131). Non-food plants that were grown included the silk cotton tree (cf. Ceiba sp.) for making canoas (canoes), the hibuero tree (Crescentia cujete) for its calabash fruit used for storage containers, tabaco used in the cohoba ritual, and Sea Island cotton (cf. Gossypium sp.) for making sleeping hammocks, clothing, storage nets, and fishing nets (Olazagasti 1997:135–137). Ceramic
spindle whorls used to spin cotton have been recovered in excavations across the Virgin Islands (Drewett and Bates 2000; Figueredo 1977; Righter 2002). The Taíno exploited marine resources by using nets, hooks, and large arrows, in addition to collecting shellfish (Rouse 1992:13).

At the time of Columbus’ arrival in the Caribbean, the Taino played a rubber ball game known as batay. The game is believed to have been used for conflict resolution between communities (Alegria 1951). Batay was played between opposing teams consisting of 10 to 30 players using a solid rubber ball within enclosed ceremonial plazas or ball courts with earthen walls or upright stones. Excavated ballcourts on Puerto Rico, Vieques and at Salt River feature large flat stones standing on end; in some cases, carved with elaborate petroglyphs (Alegria 1983; Hatt 1924; Morse 1990; Siegel 1999). Puerto Rican ball courts had an average area of 1026.2-square meters (.25-acres), ranging up to 5199.7-square meters (1.29-acres)(Siegel 1999), while the area of the one at Salt River measures 750-square meters (.19-acres). The considerable effort of clearing vegetation from the court areas, as well as maintaining them and the surrounding settlements, significantly affected the environment in ways that would have been both visible and potentially exploitable to the incoming wave of European colonists seeking opportunities to minimize their efforts in establishing settlements.
In addition to the aforementioned ball court clearings lined with carved stone, recent archaeological excavations suggests variation in the level of ball court elaboration. In the BVI, Peter Drewett (2002, 2007) has identified a possible Taino batay at Belmont on Tortola that was significantly more modest and included only small relatively flat stones marking that ball court’s boundary -- one of which included a petroglyph of a setting sun. Although only a single petroglyph has been found, other site features are consistent with ball courts elsewhere, including: intentionally buried whole pots and exotic items found in combination with faunal evidence suggesting feasting. Accordingly, Drewett (2002, 2007) argues the Belmont batay was ceremonial center related to ritual events triggered by the position of the sun passing directly over the apex of the adjacent hill on Midsummer’s Day, the day marking the change from the dry to the wet season.

Possible evidence of a modest batay or ceremonial plaza has also been identified on Guana. Archaeological excavations in 2006 of the eighteenth-century houseyard midden associated with the stone foundation ruin at GN2 revealed a distinct line of nine irregularly-spaced stones oriented northwest to southeast (Figure 9). The stones were found directly under the eighteenth-century midden layers and simultaneously overlaid a large stratified pit feature containing Monserrate/Santa Elena style pottery (A.D. 600-1200), ceramic spindle whorls, marine shells, fish bones, and a small number of bird
and hutia (*Isolobodon portoricensis*) bones -- the latter being an extinct non-indigenous species of rodent that was an important food source during the Late Ceramic Age. Also recovered in association with the line of stones was a fragment of a stone collar or belt used in ball games.\textsuperscript{14}

![Figure 9. Possible batay boundary stones at GN2 (numbered 1-9). The yellow line indicates the limits of the Amerindian pit feature.](image)

Interestingly, the great majority of pre-Columbian archaeological sites in the Virgin Islands incorporate Chican phase occupations, especially on Tortola (BVI), where all but two of the thirty-three known Amerindian sites include Esperanza style ceramics (Drewett and Bates 2000:114; Bates 2001). Their relative increase over earlier sites suggests a local expansion of the Taino

\textsuperscript{14} Righter (2007:808) likewise recovered fragments of two possible ball belts or stone collars in association with Elenan Ostionoid pottery at GN6.
population after A.D. 1200, but radiocarbon dates from Cinnamon Bay, Tutu and Salt River all indicate their abandonment at approximately the same time in the mid-fifteenth century (Wild 2013), although the reasons for the apparent depopulation are unclear.

Most historians attribute the depopulation to the either conflict with, or encroachment of, the so-called Island Caribs from the lesser Antilles. Hulme’s (1992) thesis that the antimosity arose due to economic disparity and political differences is a compelling explanation that benefits from not relying on ethnic stereotypes (e.g. peaceful Taino / marauding Carib), but does lack direct evidence. Figueredo (2006:394), meanwhile, suggests ritually orchestrated warface best explains the nature of the interaction, but not necessarily its cause. The direction of the depopulation, therefore, may not be so simple as a Taino retreat to more familiar territory (Greater Antilles). In the context of a highly mobile and multicultural Amerindian society, as some have recently suggested, Amerindian Virgin Islanders may have relocated, or were taken, south to the Lesser Antilles (Sued Badillo 1978).

Regardless of the reason for their departure, upon leaving the Virgin Islands, the Amerindians left behind a landscape shaped by roughly 2500 years of human occupation. The islands encountered by Columbus and his crew were no more a pristine wilderness than they were the mythical places described in
folklore. Instead, the landscape of the Virgin Island was an anthropogenic one molded and shaped by successive generations of Ostiones, Saladoid and Ostionoid peoples building settlements, farming and fishing (Newsom and Wing 2004:114-171). While Enlightenment notions of noble savages living in conformity with nature were very influential in the early scholarship on the human ecology of the pre-contact Caribbean, recent evidence refutes this concept of ecological nobility (Redford 1991). As elsewhere, archaeologists and historical ecologists are increasingly coming to understand that most Caribbean islands were significantly altered by human activities before European contact (e.g. Fitzpatrick and Keegan 2007; Fitzpatrick et al. 2008). On the land, forests were cleared by girdling and later burning trees to make way for settlements, agricultural plots (canucos) consisting of maize, cotton and manioc, fruit tree orchards, and for building plazas and batays. Trees were also cut for fuel and for carving massive ocean-going canoes used to travel between the Greater Antilles and northeastern South America. Figueredo (1978) suggests that part of the reason for the apparent Island Carib movement into the northern Leeward Islands and Greater Antilles was to harvest trees from which to build canoes as the supply of trees from the southern Lesser Antillies was severely diminished. In their place, plants potentially useful to Amerindian subsistence may have grown more readily in association with human settlements as part of a co-evolutionary dynamic (Newsom and Wing 2003:128).
The anthropogenic changes to the land also had a corresponding impact to marine ecosystems encircling the islands. In particular, land clearance increased erosion and infilling of coastal recesses causing an expansion of mangrove habitats (Keegan et al. 2003). The resulting sedimentation was also lethal to coral reefs and likely destroyed some of these habitats (Fitzgerald et al. 2008). Environmental change was already in motion prior to contact, but the rate of change significantly increased following the arrival of Europeans and the introduction of plantation-based agriculture. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, commercial fishing and land development would further escalate the rate of environmental change.

The archaeological record of the pre-contact Caribbean makes clear that Amerindians had measurable impacts upon the landscapes that they inhabited. The nature of those impacts, and their long-term ecological effects is an understudied line of research. The focus herein is not the environmental consequences, but rather how those impacts influenced European

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In addition, although not part of the present discussion, the Amerindians’ dependence on marine resources for subsistence also had a significant effect on marine ecosystems. There is also good evidence that reef fish were being over-harvested throughout the pre-contact Caribbean which led to the destabilization of reef fish populations (Wing and Wing 2001), and eventually led to a greater emphasis on pelagic species over nearshore ones. The overexploitation of shellfish species has also been documented, especially in the Late Ceramic periods, although its impact is not well understood (Keegan et al. 2003; Torres 2003).
settlements in subsequent centuries. The archaeological research on Guana presented in Chapter 5 begins the process of answering that question.

“A knot of little islands, wholly uninhabited, sandy, barren, and craggy”

Following the brief skirmish on St. Croix in November 1493, Columbus’s 17-ship caravan sailed through the northern Virgin Islands on their way to Hispaniola. Oral tradition holds that Columbus gave Tortola (roughly translated as ‘turtle dove’) its name as he sailed past, although his journals are clear that he named the island as _Santa Ana_. Upon reaching Hispaniola, Columbus founded La Isabela, the first permanent Spanish settlement in the Western Hemisphere. Spanish settlements were subsequently established on Puerto Rico in 1508, Jamaica in 1509, and Cuba in 1511. At the hands of the Spanish, the indigenous Taino people suffered gravely; many succumbing to European diseases to which they had no immunological response, many others dying in one-sided armed conflict with soldiers and settlers, or while enslaved in mines and on tobacco and sugar plantations (Rogozinski 1994: 23-33). To meet the mounting demand for labor in mining and agriculture, the Spanish began to exploit a new labor force: enslaved Africans. The first enslaved Africans were brought to the New

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16 Dutch colonists in the seventeenth century called the island Nieu Ter Tholen, after a coastal island that is part of the Netherlands (C.S.P., Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1696-1697, No. 382). When the British took over, the name evolved to Tortola.
World as early as 1505, where they mined precious metals and raised sugar, coffee, and tobacco (Saunders 2005: 254).

In the sixteenth-century, Spanish colonization efforts remained focused on the Greater Antilles, and during this time the Virgin Islands were never formally settled, although they were intermittently used as provisioning stops for ship convoys arriving in the Caribbean from across the Atlantic. Sir Francis Drake is said to have favored the harbor at Virgin Gorda (BVI) as a preferred port of call (Pickering 1997:35). In 1597, more than a century after Columbus’ initial Caribbean landfall, George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland described the Virgin Islands as a “knot of little islands, wholly uninhabited, sandy, barren, and craggy” after passing through the island group on his way to besiege Puerto Rico (Varlack and Harrigan 1977:11). The lack of an extant indigenous population likely added to their appeal as ships’ captains did not have to worry about being ambushed while taking on provisions. Ten years later, while on their way to Virginia, the Jamestown settlers stopped for three days in the Virgin Islands to rest, collect wood, and to hunt birds and sea turtles.17 George Percy described the brief layover in his journal:

On this Iland wee caught great store of Fresh-fish, and abundance of Sea Tortoises, which served all our Fleet three daies, which were in number eight score persons. We also

17 The precise location of Percy’s provisioning stop within the Virgin Islands is unknown. Most secondary sources indicate St.Thomas (USVI), but others suggest it was Tortola (BVI). Both islands are noted for having excellent harbors.
In the early seventeenth century, various European nations began to challenge Spain’s monopoly on colonization in the Americas on the grounds that many of the islands claimed by Spain were not, nor had they ever been, occupied by the Spanish. Great Britain, France, Holland, and Denmark all established Caribbean island colonies in the seventeenth century (Rogozinski 1994:57-58). The Dutch, possibly as early as 1615, were the first Europeans to attempt a permanent settlement in the Virgin Islands. According to an unsourced account on the BVI’s government’s website (BVI Government, n.d.), a Dutch privateer named Joost van Dyk, with support from the Dutch West India Company, organized the initial settlement, including the construction of a small fort, on the west end of Santa Ana (Tortola).\(^{18}\) Virtually nothing is known about the early settlers, although historians have generally characterized them as transients (pirates or privateers) rather than as colonists (Pickering 1987, 1997).

\(^{18}\) The small island of Jost Van Dyke off Tortola’s north coast is supposedly named after the Dutch privateer. Likewise, Little Dix Bay on Virgin Gorda, is also said to be named after van Dyk. Cawley (2015:335) notes, however, that primary sources which corroborate this information have not been identified.
In 1627 and 1628, the British Crown claimed the Virgin Islands and granted a royal charters to the Earl of Carlisle to colonize the islands (Pickering 1997:36; Cohen 2010:20). According to the French Dominican missionary Jean Baptiste DuTertre (1667), a small British settlement was established on Tortola in the early 1640s, but the colonists were killed by the Spanish shortly thereafter (Harrigan and Varlack 1975:4).

Notwithstanding the threat of additional Spanish hostility, or the pending British royal charters, the Dutch West India Company renewed its efforts to establish a Dutch foothold in the Virgin Islands in the 1640s, and by 1648 had ‘fixed themselves on Tortola’ and built a fort (Martin, Vol. II 1834:380; Varlack and Harrigan 1977:12). The seemingly inevitable Spanish attack on the Dutch Tortolan settlement was headed off with the signing of the Treaty of Munster in 1648. The treaty ended the 30-year long war between various Protestant and Catholic states in Europe, and recognized the right of existence of Dutch colonies in the Caribbean. Henceforth, the Dutch were for the most part unmolested by the Spanish (Pickering 1997:36).

In the 1660s, the British attempted to reassert their claim on the easternmost Virgin Islands that now make up the modern British Overseas Territory consisting of the islands of Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Jost Van Dyke, and the many small islands surrounding them (Edwards 1801:500). Nearly
simultaneously, Danes initiated the settlement of St. Thomas (1665), and soon after, St. John (1718) and later acquired St. Croix (1733); islands that today make up the United States Virgin Islands (Burns 1954:365; Dookhan 1974:31-50). Both efforts entailed either the incorporation or displacement of incipient Dutch settlements, or as described at the time, ‘Hollanders and Caribs’ (Host 1791, reported in Knox 1852:45). The mention of “Caribs” by Host stands out given the Taino’s abandonment of the Virgin Islands prior to contact, and the islands subsequent abandonment by Amerindian rebels in the sixteenth century. One possibility is that the “Caribs” recorded alongside the “Hollanders” were enslaved Amerindians imported to the Virgin Islands by Dutch slave traders and planters. Seventeenth-century ethnographies and modern scholarship typically understate the role of Caribbean Amerindian slavery outside of sixteenth-century Spanish colonization. Arena (2017), however, argues that Amerindians play a much larger role in the seventeenth century colonial economy than is typically acknowledged.

In the case of the British islands, colonial policy primarily consisted of incorporating the Dutch settlers. In 1665, John Wentworth, an English sea captain, led a surprise attack on the Dutch on Tortola just prior to the start of the second Anglo-Dutch War (Cawley 2015:335). Wentworth captured sixty-seven enslaved Africans which he subsequently sent to Bermuda to be resold (Bernhard 1999:146). The removal of the enslaved Africans to Bermuda is the
earliest known reference to enslaved Africans in the Virgin Islands. Wentworth’s attack also caused extensive property damage to the settlement, although he failed to displace all the Dutch settlers (Lefoy 1879:229-234).

In 1672, British Leeward Islands Governor William Stapleton seized Tortola from the remaining Dutch settlers and destroyed their fort, removed their cannon, and relocated the settlers to St.Croix (C.S.P. 1669-1674. No.896). Those relocated included not only Dutch men and women, but also Irish, English and Welsh settlers. Interestingly, in the aftermath of the resettlement to St.Croix, the Danes were still in the early stages of establishing themselves on St. Thomas, and were given permission to use anything they found on Tortola to aid them in their settlement efforts; sugarcane cuttings were reported as “the most precious find” (Varlack and Harrigan 1977:15). As mentioned previously, historians have typically characterized Tortola’s early Dutch settlements as little more than pirate or privateer hideouts, but the Danes’ recovery of sugarcane indicates otherwise. However recent, experimental, or widespread, the report of sugarcane cultivation suggests some early colonists were making capital investments consistent with long-term settlement. Beyond planting a crop that would take between 12 and 16 months to mature, sugar production required significant financing for infrastructure including: mills, boiling houses and distilleries. These facilities needed to be in place and operational prior to harvest as the sugar cane
would begin to spoil within 24-hours of being cut if not processed (Galloway 1989).

**Formal Settlement**

William Stapleton’s 1672 incursion and the subsequent placement of Tortola and Virgin Gorda under the administrative umbrella of the Leeward Islands government is often cited as the founding date for the formal British settlement of the Virgin Islands (e.g. Cohen 2010:20; Dookhan 1975:3). Efforts at establishing sustainable settlements, however, were minimal or undercut by external factors. Obstacles included ongoing disputes, sometimes violent, between the various European colonial powers over who claimed, or aspired to command the Virgin Islands; an absence of exploitable natural resources; and finally, a terrain and climate that was perceived as inimical to large-scale agricultural development.

British control of the Virgin Islands was contested by the Dutch, Spanish, and even the small German state of Brandenburg through the end of the seventeenth century. The Dutch challenge was part of a continuation of the long series of efforts by the Dutch West India Company to colonize the islands that began in the 1620s. Even after Stapleton’s removal of Dutch settlers in 1672, the Dutch continued to press their case for Tortola into the
1680s (C.S.P. 1685-1688. No.813), only abandoning their claims after receiving a Danish invitation to assist in the settlement of St. Thomas (Dookhan 1975:5; Armstrong 2003:23). In 1695, the British spurned the Brandenburgs who tried to acquire Tortola for use as a new base of operations and port for their expanding trade in enslaved Africans (C.S.P 1696-1697. No. 382). In their reply to Brandenburg’s request for Tortola, the British conceded that while the island had little value as a colony to the British, they were concerned that a Brandenburg-run port on Tortola would significantly reduce the revenues of British interests in the Lesser Antilles (C.S.P. 1696-1697. No.1347). The Spanish, meanwhile, although not prepared to establish settlements themselves, were relentless in disrupting British settlement efforts as a protection of Spanish interests in the Greater Antilles. In 1685, and again in 1686, the Spanish attacked Tortola and Virgin Gorda causing extensive property damage and killing numerous inhabitants (C.S.P 1685-1688. Nos.17, 683 and 678). The raids stopped short of flipping British control of the Virgin Islands to the Spanish, but did temporarily reduce their population to just two persons, “Jonathan Turner and his wife, living on Tortola” (C.S.P. 1696-1697. No.1347).

Formal settlement was further hindered by a perception that the Virgin Islands lacked exploitable resources. That is not to say there weren’t valuable natural resources present as large stands of timber survived intact in the
Virgin Islands for much longer than elsewhere in the Caribbean. Tortolan timber was especially prized as a building material after the remaining Leeward Islands forests were cleared in the seventeenth century to make way for sugar cultivation (Dookhan 1975:19). Accordingly, woodcutters commissioned by the Governor of the Leeward Islands were sent to harvest Tortola's timber and bring it back to Antigua. Woodcutters regularly visited the Virgin Islands through the end of the seventeenth-century, most likely setting up temporary logging camps (C.S.P. 1675-1676. No.954, No.1677-1680. No.599). Dookhan (1975:19) notes that the importance of timber from the Virgin Islands partially explains why the British were unwilling to accept a foreign presence there.

The Virgin Islands’ lack of large expanses of cultivable land, combined with a relatively arid climate, was another check on British settlement. Beginning on Barbados and St.Kitts, agro-industrial sugar production had been rapidly spreading from one island to the next since the mid-seventeenth century (Dunn 1973). The steep and rocky terrain and relatively dry climate of the Virgin Islands, however, were less than ideal for sugar cultivation. Furthermore, soils are thin, and prone to wind and water erosion, while rain is highly erratic with very destructive tropical downpours in the rainy season, followed by weeks of drought. Although the Danes salvaged sugarcane cuttings from Tortola in 1672, there is no record of any seventeenth-century
sugar exports from the Virgin Islands. The little agriculture that was taking place, was probably mostly subsistence related, or consisted of small-holdings of cotton, tobacco, and indigo (Dookhan 1975:19). Evidently unimpressed upon visiting the Virgin Islands in 1716, Leeward Islands Governor Walter Hamilton noted “Tortola good for little” (CO 152/11 no.6, encl.a). For the most part, sugar planters continued to disregard the Virgin Islands until the second half of the eighteenth century, long after it was introduced on Barbados.

“**They Lived Like Wild People**”

In the late seventeenth century, and through the 1710s, the population density of Tortola remained very low (Table 1). In 1678, Stapleton reported there were only fifteen white settlers on Tortola. He did not mention any enslaved Africans, in contrast to his reports for other islands, suggesting that there were few if any present (Cawley 2015:236). In the mid-1680s, Spanish raids temporarily reduced the Virgin Islands population to just two persons, although in 1690, the Governor of the Leeward Islands reported there were fourteen men, a few women and a small number of enslaved Africans living on Virgin Gorda and planting cotton. By 1696 the population of Virgin Gorda had increased to approximately fifty armed men and their families, and between seventy and eighty enslaved African laborers (C.S.P. 1696-1697. NO.1347).
Although ostensibly under the administration of the Leeward Islands governor based on Antigua, there was little to no local oversight of the Virgin Islands by British colonial officials. Dookhan (1975:14) cites the lack of a profitable local economy and low population as hindrances to establishing a local government. In attempting to govern from afar, Leeward Islands officials frequently complained of their inability to regulate the behavior of Virgin Islanders. In 1709 Governor Daniel Parke wrote of Tortolans: “they live like wild people without order or Government, and have neither Divine nor Lawyer amongst them, they take each other’s words in marriage; they thinke themselves Christians because they are descended from such” (C.S.P. 1708-1709. No. 597).

The supposed “wild people” of the Virgin Islands were mostly individuals displaced from other parts of the British Caribbean in the wake of the rapid reorganization of land use and labor triggered by the mid-seventeenth century ‘Sugar Revolution’ on Barbados. Early seventeenth-century agricultural work on Barbados’ cotton, tobacco, indigo and ginger farms was primarily carried out by free and indentured Europeans. Many servants willingly signed contracts of indenture in search of opportunity in the New

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19 Near the end of the seventeenth century, a deputy-governor of the Virgin Islands was appointed, answerable to the Leeward Islands governor, although the deputy-governor had no official duties and received no pay (Dookhan 1975:20).
World; while the poor and imprisoned of England, Ireland and Scotland were sometimes sent involuntarily (Dunn 1972:69).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Date</th>
<th>Tortola White</th>
<th>Tortola Black</th>
<th>Spanishtown White</th>
<th>Spanishtown Black</th>
<th>Other BVI White</th>
<th>Other BVI Black</th>
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<th>Total Black</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>14+</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1696</td>
<td></td>
<td>50 + &quot;families&quot; 70 to 80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50+ 70-80</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>44</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>367</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1717</td>
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<td>176</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>2 families</td>
<td>476+</td>
<td>484</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>203</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>630</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>780</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>465</td>
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<td>396</td>
<td>1204</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>1184</td>
<td>6121</td>
<td>1 / 5.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Population of the British Virgin Islands, 1678-1754 (Sources: CO 152/11 no.6, encl.vi; CO 152/11, no.67, encl. viii; CO 152/28 no.Bc83 and Bc86; C.S.P. 1696-1697, No.1347; Burns 1954:461)
Supplementing their labor were enslaved African and Amerindian laborers, who formed roughly a third of Barbados’ labor pool before mid-century (Handler and Lange 1978:15, Arena 2017), although those demographics changed dramatically once labor-intensive sugar production came to dominate the economy. Historians, for the most part, have maintained that the rapid expansion of sugar monoculture spurred a demand for plantation laborers that quickly outpaced the existing supply of indentured servants and enslaved Amerindians. When planters could not find enough servants, they turned en masse to enslaved Africans as sugarcane field and factory workers (Dunn 1972:71-73: Handler and Lange 1978:17). Historian William Green (1988), however, argues the reverse, suggesting it was not a need for more labor that spurred the demographic changes, but rather, it was an oversupply of enslaved African labor that escalated the development of Caribbean sugar monoculture. Green notes that sugarcane was previously grown alongside cotton, tobacco and other provision crops, but only on a small scale as its cultivation and processing was very time consuming. However, with the availability of large numbers of relatively inexpensive laborers via the Atlantic Slave Trade, sugar cultivation suddenly became commercially viable.

Regardless of which came first, as planters increasingly relied on enslaved Africans for plantation labor, the indentured poor whites initially brought into Barbados became expendable. Some stayed on and eked out a living on
minor provision plots and in the urban areas (Reilly 2016), while others attempted to make their way in the less populated islands of the Lesser Antilles (Armstrong 2003). Simultaneously, small cotton and tobacco planters unable to afford the investment in additional labor, let alone the infrastructure to process cane into sugar, were also sidelined in the new sugar-based economy. In the face of rising expenses, many elected to sell their small farms to a minority group of well capitalized planters intent on aggressively consolidating contiguous small farms into large sugar estates. Upon selling, many former small landholders went in search of land and other opportunities in the Lesser Antilles or even further north to the Virgin Islands (Handler and Lange 1978:17; Watts 1987:376). The outward migration was compounded by the entry of the French into the Second Dutch War in 1666 that led to the dislocation of 5,000 to 8,000 planters and servants from St.Kitts. Most fled to the adjacent island of Nevis, but others moved to further afield within the British Caribbean, possibly including the Virgin Islands (C.S.P. 1661-1668, No.587). In 1709 Governor Parke noted that many of the newly arrived settlers of both Tortola and Virgin Gorda were small and poor planters who had been driven off their farms, “by the rich men’s ingrossing their land (CSP 1708-1709 no. 557)”. Virgin Gorda was the main site of settlement, followed by Tortola. From these islands, settlers eventually moved to the surrounding small islands, including Guana.
The sudden influx of people to the Virgin Islands is recorded in a pair of censuses compiled in 1716 and 1717 (Table 1). In the earlier census, a total of 78 households were recorded on Virgin Gorda, Tortola and Beef Island, amounting to a population of 367 white colonists and 185 ‘negros’, presumably enslaved Africans (CO 152/11 no.6, encl. vi). Most white households (85%) consisted of a man and a woman, and sometimes children, although there were also five unmarried male heads-of-households and seven ‘Widdows’. The census points to a relatively even sex ratio among the white settler population suggesting they arrived as either couples or families. Wells (2015:275) argues the Virgin Islands were unique in this regard (along with Bermuda among the British island colonies). Elsewhere in the British Caribbean at this time, men typically outnumbered women by a ratio of as much as 2 to 1, although this ratio was down significantly from 5.41 to 1 in the mid seventeenth century. The decline in the sex ratios of the British Caribbean continued, and by the second half of the eighteenth century the white populations on most islands were relatively balanced between men and women (Wells 2015:275).

Despite the fact that women made up as much as half the region’s white population in the mid-eighteenth century, their experiences have largely been ignored by both contemporary observers and modern scholars (Beckles

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20 The latter figure (5.41/1) derives from Jamaica in 1661 (Wells 2015:275).
1993:66, O’Callaghan 2004:17). Among the few eighteenth century commentators, Edward Long (1774) portrayed white women in his three volume *History of Jamaica* as “lively, of good natural genius, frank affable, polite, generous, humane,” on the one hand; but on the other, lamented the adverse effects of close daily association with enslaved Africans on mothering skills, speech, dress and ambition. Class prejudice also profoundly influenced how women were perceived (Jones 2007). Long (1774) was particularly critical of rural and poor white women, citing tainted morals and manners that undermined the ideals of womanhood and European superiority. For the most part, however, white women were “peripheral to the consciousness” of their peers (Mair 1974:38). In the historiography of the Caribbean, meanwhile, the emphasis upon the politics and entrepreneurship of white men in shaping the Caribbean world has had the added effect of marginalizing the “ideological, social and economic inputs from white women (Beckles 1993:66).” The prevailing historical understanding of white women as marginal actors is most succinctly distilled in Mair’s (1974) frequently cited assessment of the differential social worth of Jamaican women: the “black woman produced, the brown woman served, and the white woman consumed”. The primary emphasis on the consumptive role of white women in the Caribbean continues to be a popular historical trope. Meniketti (2015:193), for example, notes the “tremendous burden” white women and children posed on white Nevisian society. In contrast, Beckles (1993:80) notes how white women throughout the British Caribbean made “valuable
contributions to the development of the colonial economy and society, not only as the domestic partners of planters, merchants, overseers and managers, but also as large and small-scale owners of slaves and other forms of property." Without evidence of how white Nevisian women or children were any more of a “tremendous burden” than men, Meniketti’s position serves only to perpetuate the long-held misperception of white women’s roles in the colonial Caribbean.

A closer look at the census data also reveals information about the size and racial profile of Virgin Islands’ households (Figure 10). Approximately one-third (32%) of the white households included no enslaved Africans, while 42% of households included between one and three enslaved Africans. The fact that three-quarters of households in 1716 included three or fewer enslaved Africans is consistent with an economy comprised primarily of small-scale farms or maritime trade, rather than sugar production which required large gangs of laborers to plant, maintain, harvest and process the crop. Households holding between 4 and 6 enslaved Africans accounted for 18% of the total, followed by 8% of households holding between 7 and 10 persons. In 1716, the largest number of enslaved Africans in any one household was ten. As noted by Armstrong (2003:35), the fact that ‘whites’ made up the majority of the population is another indication that the Virgin Islands were still mostly populated by small-scale subsistence farmers and sailors.
The population of the Virgin Islands, however, was increasing very quickly. Only a year later, the number of households increased by one-third from 78 to 104, with the white population increasing to 476 and the enslaved African population to 484 (C.O. 152/11, no.67. encl.viii). As the white population grew, so did the percentage of white slave owners. The census indicates the number of slaveholding households increased from 68% in 1716 to 78% in 1717. Over that same time period, the number of slaves held by each household nearly doubled from 2.37 per household in 1716 to 4.65 in 1717.

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21 O’Neal (2012:12) states the BVI population in 1717 included 795 whites and 547 blacks, but does not indicate his source.
Households owning between 1 to 3 enslaved Africans now accounted for 36% of households; while those holding between 4 and 6 enslaved Africans accounted for 15% of the total; and those holding between 7 and 10 enslaved Africans accounted for 13% of the total. However, the most significant change from the previous year was in the number of households owning greater than 10 enslaved Africans which increased from just 1 household in 1716 to 15 households (14%). Among these ‘large’ households, the average number of enslaved Africans was 16 per household, and collectively they accounted for nearly half (48%) of the local enslaved African population.

Ultimately, the differences evidenced in the 1716 and 1717 censuses reveal a population in rapid transition. The small, poor or subsistence farmers of the early eighteenth century were increasingly giving way to a new class of planters previously unknown locally. Most significantly, the newest arrivals brought with them small to medium-sized groups of enslaved African laborers to be used in the effort to transform the islands’ rugged terrain into the next generation of Caribbean cotton and sugar estates. Indeed, the sudden increases of both white settlers and enslaved Africans from one census to the next attests to the fact that after more than forty years of very slow, incremental growth, the population and economy of the Virgin Islands was now on the cusp of significant expansion and change that would become the norm for the next sixty to seventy years. By 1720, the number of whites had
increased to 574, and the number of enslaved Africans rose to 630 (C.S.P. 1720-1721. No. 204). By 1724, the white population had again increased to 760, and the enslaved African population rose to 1430 (C.S.P. 1724-1725. No.260). Relative to the 1716 census, the white population increased by 107% in just eight years, while the enslaved African population increased by 717% over the same period of time.

As previously mentioned, cotton estates proliferated during this early period. The level of initial investment for establishing a cotton plantation was significantly less than that required for sugar. Cotton did not require specialized mills, factories or large gangs of labor; in addition, cotton could be grown on more marginal lands than could sugar (Beckert 2014:88). Reimert Haagensen, a Danish official on the nearby island of St.Croix (now USVI) in the 1740s, estimated that a planter with four to eight enslaved laborers could produce enough cotton to live comfortably and still accumulate capital for reinvestment in land and enslaved Africans (Haagensen 1758, cited in Tyson 1992:4). Cotton was also favored by planters in newly settled territories who planted cotton as a first crop for a few seasons to break the soil and would then use the cotton profits to move into sugar (Beckert 2014:89).

Beyond its population figures, another interesting data point found in the 1717 census is the places of birth for each head of household (Table 2). The vast
majority (74.5%) were creoles -- people of predominantly European descent, but born in the Caribbean. Most were born in smaller British possessions in the Lesser Antilles, including Anguilla, Antigua, St.Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat. Non-British islands, including St.Eustatius (Statia), St. Martin, and St. Barts in the Lesser Antilles, were also prominent places of birth listed in the census. While the displacement of poor and small farmers from Barbados to the Lesser Antilles is well-known among Caribbean historians, the 1717 census highlights a comparable, but much less well-known displacement of Lesser Antillean colonists to the Virgin Islands. In the closing decades of the seventeenth century, as undeveloped agricultural land on Barbados grew increasingly scarce, ambitious sugar planters increasingly looked upon the Lesser Antilles for expansion. As had previously occurred on Barbados, the poor and small farmers, tradesmen and fishermen of the Lesser Antilles now had to contend with the newly arrived class of wealthy sugar planters. The 1717 census suggests that many Lesser Antillean-born colonists responded by leaving their homes in favor of resettlement in the Virgin Islands. But as the data on the rapid increase in the number of enslaved Africans also suggests, the Virgin Islands were on their own way to becoming a sugar colony in their own right.

Finally, the census indicates that roughly a quarter of the Virgin Islands’ white population was born outside the Caribbean. Other New World creoles
included one person from Bermuda and another from South Carolina. The rest of the Virgin Islands’ population was European-born, hailing primarily from England, Scotland and Wales (12.5%), followed by Ireland (7%), France (3%) and Holland (1%), although the census does not indicate if the non-creoles arrived directly from Europe, or if they were previously established elsewhere in the Caribbean before moving on to the Virgin Islands. Despite the population’s apparent diversity and cosmopolitan makeup, Leeward Islands Governor John Hart wrote unflatteringly in 1724: “upon inquiry how they came to settle those miserable islands, I found that the first inhabitants were such as had fled from Barbados and the greater islands for debt or to avoid the punishment for their crimes, and have since been increased by pirates who have come in upon acts of Grace, and are married and settled there, whose posterity not knowing the world, remain there and cultivate the ground for a wretched subsistence” (CSP 1724-25. No.260). The census combined with Governor Hart’s comments makes clear that the Virgin Islands settlement was not a carefully organized venture, but rather an improvised one, carried out by heterogeneous lot of people united only by the fact that they lacked the finances, political ties or support networks to seek better prospects.

As the Virgin Islands’ population grew, so did conflicts between the settlers. The Governor (based on Antigua) tried to empower local officials to
adjudicate the disputes, but to no avail. The Virgin Islands remained, for the most part, very loosely governed into the third quarter of the eighteenth century. In the absence of a strong local government, illicit maritime trade became a significant component of the local economy that helped to subsidize planters’ pockets, as well as their investments in sugar factories, rum distilleries and enslaved African plantation laborers (Dookhan 1975:25-38). The lax administration of government, however, also benefited enslaved Africans plotting to escape their enslavement. As noted by the frequent petitions to the Governor, without local law enforcement, enslaved Africans faced relatively few impediments in their efforts to steal a boat and sail to Puerto Rico where they could receive freedom in exchange for embracing Catholicism (Hall 1985).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
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<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermuda</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>62</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 2. Places of birth for heads of households, 1717 census of Tortola and Spanish Town (CO 152/12, no.67.viii).
The Quaker Experiment

In the early 1720s, among those arriving in the Virgin Islands were planter Abednego Pickering, his wife, three children, and ten enslaved Africans. Pickering previously resided on Anguilla in the Lesser Antilles, however, chronic drought and poor soil conditions drove many of that island’s residents to resettle elsewhere (C.O. 152/11, No.6: Hamilton to the Committee on 10 April 1716). The 1717 BVI census indicates that as many as 20% of its residents were colonists resettled from Anguilla. Initially the Pickerings settled at Spanish Town on Virgin Gorda, but eventually relocated to Tortola (Jenkins 1923). The ten enslaved Africans that arrived with the Pickerings further indicates they were among the BVI wealthiest residents as measured by household size.

On Anguilla, the Pickerings were part of the local meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and remained faithful followers after moving to Spanish Town. The Quakers were a religious sect founded in England in the mid-seventeenth century by Protestant dissenters led by George Fox.\(^{22}\) Quaker ideology stressed the importance of a direct relationship with God and a belief in the ability of each person to experientially access “the small

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\(^{22}\) According to Gragg (2009:17), the Society of Friends was founded in Yorkshire, England in the spring of 1652 when George Fox received a sign from God that led him to begin organizing a religious society.
light within”. From the beginning of the Quaker movement, Friends traveled extensively to spread the Quaker message abroad, including inevitably, the British colonies in the New World (Hamm 2003:18-22). Within the British Caribbean, large Quaker communities were formed on Jamaica and Barbados, with smaller communities scattered across the Lesser Antillean islands (Durham 1972).

In 1727, John Pickering, Abednego’s son, hosted at his home, Joshua Fielding, a Quaker missionary from London. Fielding spent roughly a month in the Virgin Islands between Spanish Town (Virgin Gorda) and Tortola. At Spanish Town, Fielding organized “large meetings at the Governor’s (Pickering’s) house and elsewhere on the island”; while on Tortola he attended many “large and comfortable meetings”. Fielding described the people he met on Virgin Gorda as “very kind and attentive”, while Tortolans were described as “sober” and “friendly” (cited in Jenkins 1923:6). A decade later, James Birkett, a Quaker merchant from Antigua arrived on Tortola and reportedly found a group of a half-dozen residents “pretty fully convinced of our [i.e. Quaker] principle” whom he assisted with organizing regular meetings (cited in Jenkins 1923:9). The visits by Fielding and Birkett had a

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23 Barbados in the late seventeenth century had one of the largest Quaker communities outside of England, and was extolled as the “cradle of Truth” because on account of more than 1000 Friends living on the island.
lasting impact that culminated in 1741 with the formal establishment of the Tortola Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Jenkins 1923).

Figure 11. Print of the Meetinghouse ruins (on right) of the Fat Hogs Bay on Tortola, based on a sketch by Joseph Gurney about 1840. Next to the Meetinghouse ruin are the vaulted graves of Thomas Chalkley, John Estaugh, John Cadwallader and Mary Hunt (Jenkins 1923:66).

From 1741 to 1762, the membership of Tortola Meeting held monthly meetings, maintained correspondence with Quaker Meetings in England and North America, and received visiting missionaries. Surviving minutes list 84
people as members, and record the deaths of 15, in addition to the births of 53. Prominent among them is the Parke family of Guana Island.24

In 1923, the ‘Minutes’ were the basis for a sympathetic community history of Tortola’s Quaker Meeting published by Charles Jenkins entitled, *Tortola: A Quaker Experiment in the Tropics*. The book describes the rise and fall of this small religious community from the 1730s through the 1760s. Jenkins recounts how the local Meeting initially flourished and met regularly at a purpose-built meeting house on land donated by John Pickering at Fat Hogs Bay on Tortola (Figure 11).25 The formal meeting, however, did not endure. From the beginning of the Meeting, the Minutes include numerous entries relating to the struggles of the local membership to moderate their behavior in order to remain in compliance with Quaker teachings including: “having resolved to take his pleasures while he lives”, and for “engaging in that odious exercise of dancing” (cited in Durham 1972:61). Punishments ranged

24 An original set of the minutes is preserved in the Special Collections at Haverford College in Philadelphia. A dog-eared set of blurry photocopies of the minutes is also held at the Government House in Road Town on Tortola. A transcription of the minutes was made from the Government House photocopies and are on file with the author.

25 Long after the Tortola Meeting disbanded, its meeting house was occasionally visited by Quaker pilgrims. In 1839, Quaker evangelist and abolitionist Joseph John Gurney of Norwich, England visited the meeting house among several other local Quaker landmarks. Shortly after Gurney’s visit, three Philadelphia Friends, George Truman, John Jackson and Thomas B. Longstreth explored the ruins of the abandoned meetinghouse and burying ground during their week-long stay on the island. In 1913, Charles Jenkins also visited the meeting house site where he recovered a single loose brick as a memento. The ruins of the Fat Hogs Bay Meeting House are extant and were recently investigated as part of John Chenoweth’s 2011 doctoral dissertation on the archaeology of Quakerism in the Virgin Islands.
from a public reprimand to disownment. By the early 1760s, the tenets of Quakerism proved too confining for the majority of Tortolan Friends, and its membership elected to disband. *A Quaker Experiment* remained the only published history of the territory until the 1970s, and subsequent historians (e.g. Durham 1972; Lewishon 1966; Pickering 1987, 1997) have relied heavily on the work for information on the early settlement history of the BVI. As a result, there has been a tendency to conflate the Quaker community’s history with the more general history of the BVI, when in reality the Quakers never exceeded more than a small percentage of the territory’s land-owning population.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Quaker Meeting was all but forgotten on Tortola, although the community did persist in the memories of a handful of British and American Quakers who remembered the island as the birthplace of some of the eighteenth century’s most prominent Friends, including: Dr. John Coakley Lettsome, founder of the Medical Society of London; William Thornton, architect of the United States Capitol Building; and silversmith Richard Humphries, who upon his death left his substantial personal fortune for the establishment of the Institute for Colored Youth which later became Cheney State University (Pennsylvania) in 1902. Each was born on Tortola to Quaker parents, however all three left at an early age in
order to further their educations abroad. Lettsome and Thornton were sent to London, while Humphries relocated to Philadelphia (Pickering 1983:157-193).

Tortola’s Quaker Meeting is also well-remembered because, as Quaker-led anti-slavery efforts gained traction in North America and England in the second half of the eighteenth-century, Tortola was the site of two manumissions of enslaved Africans by Quaker plantation owners. In 1776, Samuel and Mary Nottingham, who lived primarily on Long Island in New York, but also owned Tortola’s Long Look plantation, manumitted 25 enslaved Africans on Tortola and notably granted them common ownership of Long Look estate "in perpetuity" (Pickering 1997:134-135). Long Look, also known as Nottingham Estate, survived as a distinct community of descendants into the twentieth century (McGlynn 1980). A second, possibly earlier manumission, is attributed to John Coakley Lettsome in 1767. Lettsome, while living in London had inherited his father’s plantation on Jost Van Dyke Island, and shortly thereafter is widely reported to have manumitted the enslaved Africans that were working on his father’s estate; although their legal freedom was not actually secured until the 1790s (Chenoweth 2011:92).26 For the vast majority of Quakers, however, especially within the plantation-based economies of North America and the Caribbean, slave

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26 An in depth historical and archaeological investigation of the Lettsome family’s Virgin Island estate on Jost Van Dyke is detailed as part of John Chenoweth’s 2011 dissertation.
holding was uncritically accepted as part the natural order well into the nineteenth century (Hamm 2005; Soderlund 1985). In fact, at the time of his death, John Pickering was among the wealthiest Virgin Islands planters and owned approximately 500 enslaved Africans (Jenkins 1923:51). Lettsome and the Nottinghams aside, the short-lived Tortola Meeting of the Society of Friends was no exception in largely overlooking the inhumanity of slavery.

**Economic Expansion & Over Expansion**

The second quarter of the eighteenth century, the period during which the Tortola Meeting of the Society of Friends was founded, was also a time of significant economic growth for the Virgin Islands. In 1739, surveyor general of customs, Robert Dinwiddie stated that Tortola and Virgin Gorda were expected to produce approximately 750,000 pounds of cotton, and 350 hogsheads of sugar, as well as large quantities of provisions (C.O. 152/23. No.77. Dinwiddy to the C.T.P., 29 April 1740). The actual quantities supposedly exceeded those predictions (Dookhan 1975:27). Moreover, Dinwiddie, who traveled extensively between the Caribbean, North America and England, described the cotton produced in the Virgin Islands as “by all esteemed to be the best island for cotton of any in America” (C.O. 152/23.No.77. Dinwiddie to the C.T.P., 29 April 1740). By 1751, according to Lieutenant-Governor James Purcell, cotton production had increased to
1,000,000 pounds and muscovado sugar production increased to 1,000 casks (C.O. 152/27. No.Aa77. Purcell to the C.T.P., 11 July 1751).

Cotton remained the Virgin Islands’ principal export through most of the 1750s, although recent surges in the price of sugar drove many local planters to use their cotton proceeds to finance a switch to sugar by the end of the decade. Sugar, although considerably riskier, offered planters hopes of greater profit (Wadsworth and Mann 1931:186). With an eye toward planting every available space with sugar cane, cotton farmers not only converted their existing fields to sugar, but also reclaimed provisioning grounds previously allotted to enslaved Africans causing food shortages among the enslaved. The switch to sugar also required a heretofore non-existent infrastructure that included boiling houses, curing houses and warehouses and the importation of markedly greater numbers of enslaved Africans. By 1756, the number of enslaved Africans in the Virgin Islands had increased to 6121, up 355% since 1724. By comparison, the white population increased to 1184, up only 64% over the same time period, primarily due to recent arrivals of planters for the Leewards (C.O. 152/28. No.Bc83 and Bc86). Another way of quantifying the change in the population is a simple ratio of whites to blacks. In 1716, when cotton was still king, the ratio of whites to blacks was approximately 2:1, but the following year, it was 1:1, and in 1724, it rose to almost 1:2. By 1756, just three years before sugar eclipsed cotton
as the colony’s principal export, the ratio was approaching 1:6, undoubtedly reflecting the recent efforts to bring more and more enslaved African sugarcane field and factory workers to the Virgin Islands.

The sugar-based plantation economy characteristic of most of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Caribbean was successful in the BVI only for the twenty-seven years from 1756 to 1783 (Cohen 2010:20). As a result of that prosperity, the status and value of the Virgin Islands jumped in importance among British colonial officials. In 1773, Virgin Islanders were granted their own civil government and judicial courts separate from the Leeward Islands in exchange for agreeing to pay a four and a half percent duty on all produce exported (Dookhan 1975:46). In addition, Great Britain agreed to include Virgin Islands-based merchant vessels in the guarded convoys leaving St. Christopher, which prevented the merchant ships from being attacked by hostile nations or privateers. The sudden economic importance of the islands was also reflected with the opening of a packet station on Tortola in 1785, greatly expediting the transport of goods, passengers, and mail back and forth from England (Pickering 1987:37).

The Virgin Islands’ sudden prosperity in the third quarter of the eighteenth century arose in large part to increased trade with North American colonies during the Seven Years War and the American Revolution due to blockades
of the other and more agriculturally productive islands (Cohen 2010:20). In 1783, at the height of the sugar plantation era, an American sailor described Tortola as “greatly cultivated & in a very flourishing state. The plantations extensive and the slaves numerous (1781-2 “The Log of the [S/S] Pilgrim”; cited in Tyson 1977:92). Tortola’s sugar plantations were also documented by an 1798 plantation map published by Robert Wilkinson (Figure 12). The map was commissioned by wealthy absentee planter, Isaac Pickering Esq. of Fox Lease in Hampshire, England, the son of prominent Tortolan Quaker and one-time Lieutenant Governor John Pickering, and grandson of Abednigo Pickering. For each estate, the map lists the estates’ owners name and the estate’s output (sugar, cotton and pasture). According the map, there are 58 sugar estates on Tortola, 10 cotton estates, 2 estates dedicated to pasturing animals, and 1 property is noted as “Public Land”. The crops or land use on the 32 remaining estates is not identified. Notably, Guana Island’s southeastern tip is also shown on the map, although its owners and use are not identified. The map shows what appears to be square structure along Guana’s coastline, but unfortunately gives no explanation for the icon. In 2007, an investigation of an late eighteenth century building ruin coinciding the icon suggests it was built in part as a local variant of an English “defensible house” (see Chapter 5).
The successes of Tortola’s sugar planters, however, were short-lived. Following the conclusion of the hostilities between Great Britain and the newly-formed United States of America, the Virgin Islands’ economy took a sharp downward turn catching many deeply indebted planters off-guard. Accustomed to a bullish sugar market during the war, many planters had taken on considerable debt in order to import more enslaved Africans, purchase additional land, or to build and maintain sugar processing facilities.
The financial fall-out was quick, and as early as 1790, many over-leveraged estates were sold off at deep discounts as there were “very few able to buy and pay for them (O’Neal 2012:13)”. The large number of estates without crops on the 1798 Wilkinson Map may indicate those plantations which had already closed their operations as a result of the economic downturn.

**Enslaved Africans in the Virgin Islands**

As elsewhere in the Caribbean, the economic prosperity enjoyed by Virgin Islands sugar planters in the second half of the eighteenth century was made possible only because of the exploited labor of enslaved Africans. At the height of Virgin Island’s sugar production in 1774, the number of enslaved Africans reached 9000 (cited in O’Neal 2012:12), most of whom worked as plantation field laborers. In the early years, planters on Tortola and the surrounding islands purchased enslaved Africans on the nearby Danish island of St.Thomas and also from the Dutch on St.Eustatius (Smith 2009:53-54). But as sugar production expanded; slave-trading ships began arriving in Tortola’s Road Town harbor directly from the west coast of Africa (Dookhan 1975; Lewisohn 1986). According to the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, no less than 58 ships carrying a total of 15,401 captive Africans left from Africa for Tortola between 1748 and 1806.27 Ships left from a variety

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27 The database also indicates the British Navy intercepted ten ships illegally transporting captive Africans between 1807 and 1812 and were subsequently brought to Tortola which the government had designated for free black settlement. Tortola’s “Liberated Africans” were
of African ports, with 57% of the departures coming from the Bight of Biafra (n=17), the Windward Coast (n=9) and West Central Africa (n=7). The rest came from unspecified ports. Generally speaking, historians have estimated that 15% of the captive Africans headed for the Caribbean died during the month long Atlantic crossing (Horn and Morgan 2005:30). Captive Africans heading to Tortola fared slightly better relative to the whole. According to the *The Database*, 13,821 captive Africans were disembarked in the Virgin Islands (Table 3), indicating a mortality rate of 9% of those who left the African continent. Upon landing, however, approximately one-third died within the “seasoning” period during the first year (Curtin 1968).

In most years, two or three ships arrived in Road Town, each with a human cargo of approximately 250 captive Africans for sale. Upon arriving in Road Town, the slave traders found a strong demand for new arrivals, especially males, as a natural increase of the population was nowhere close to satisfying planters’ labor needs. Some historians, such as Orlando Patterson (1967), have gone so far as to suggest that planters actively discouraged natural increase because pregnancy and child-rearing were too time consuming. The extreme labor demands on sugar plantations took a heavy toll on the health and fertility of the enslaved Africans, however when

required to either enlist in military or naval service, or serve a 14-year long “apprenticeship” after which they were free. Each newly freed African was allotted a plot of land for a house and growing provision crops within an area known as Kingstown along Tortola’s southern coast, to the east of Road Town (Dookhan 1975:97-119).
combined with the long-standing practice of sugar planters maintaining a male-dominated labor force through preferentially buying men over women, the natural increase of the enslaved population was impossible (Tadman 2000). In other words, the annual need for new arrivals of enslaved labor was the direct result of the sugar planters calculation that they could maximize profits by continually skewing their labor force toward men at the expense of women and families.

According to *The Database*, the steady stream of Tortola-bound slave ships was punctuated with two notable surges. The first occurred just after the end of the American Revolution which had significantly disrupted the annual flow of captive Africans brought into the Caribbean. From 1775 to 1780, according to *The Database*, no captive Africans were disembarked at Tortola, but once the hostilities were over, five ships carrying 2,282 captives arrived in Tortola in 1782; and eight ships with an additional 2,274 captives arrived the following year before dropping back to pre-war levels. A second surge occurred immediately before the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. Over a five-year period from 1803 to 1807, fourteen ships carrying a total of 3,103 captive Africans arrived in Tortola. Although plantation agriculture, especially sugar cultivation, in the Virgin Islands was already in the midst of twenty-year long downward spiral (O’Neal 2012:13), the increase in imports may have
been in response to local planters’ anxieties that the slave trade’s pending abolition would precipitate a labor shortage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of captives disembarked</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1748</td>
<td>131</td>
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<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>209</td>
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<tr>
<td>1751</td>
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<td>1805</td>
<td>602</td>
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<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>529</td>
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Table 3. Total number (n=13,821) of captive Africans arriving in the British Virgin Islands (1748-1806) according to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

The regular injection of recent African captives into the local enslaved community meant that through the end of the slave trade, African-born slaves
tended to outnumber those who were Creole-born. This same pattern was common across the British Caribbean, and understanding how their African or Creole natality influenced the wider enslaved communities' cultural identity has long been a central project of African Diaspora scholars working in the region. Two contrasting interpretive models have ultimately come to dominate these analyses. The continuity model emphasizes the retention of African beliefs and symbols (e.g. Africanisms) to explain the nature of societies and cultures in the Americas (e.g. Herskovitz 1958). Alternatively, the various creolization models derived from Mintz and Price (1976) privilege cultural creativity and the New World environment. More recently, in an attempt to advance African Diasporic studies beyond the long-standing continuity/creativity debate, Matory (2005) suggests a contextual approach that highlights how the identities and communities forged in the New World by Africans and their descendants were ultimately products of both local circumstances and a continuing transatlantic dialogue. Unfortunately, for the Virgin Islands there has been very little research into the enslaved African experience, let alone identity formation, with the notable of exception of Katherine Smith's 2009 doctoral dissertation. For Smith, the persistence of
African derived practices such as *Obeah*\(^{28}\) and *jumbies*\(^{29}\), and the existence of *camfou*\(^{30}\) dances is evidence of the local enslaved population’s maintenance of a strong African cultural identity. Smith goes on to suggest that a more creolized identity did eventually emerge beginning in the early nineteenth century, but not until after the slave trade was abolished, and not until Methodist missionary efforts to Christianize Tortola’s free and enslaved Africans began.

As plantation laborers, depending on the timing of their arrival in the Virgin Islands, most enslaved Africans were engaged in either cotton or sugar cultivation. As previously discussed, cotton was the primary local export through end of the 1750s, and even after it was surpassed by sugar as the main crop, it continued to be an important part of the economy. Cultivation techniques in the anglophone Caribbean varied little during the eighteenth

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\(^{28}\) Anthropologists Kenneth Bilby and Jerome Handler (2004) define *Obeah* as encompassing “a wide variety of beliefs and practices involving the control or channeling of supernatural spiritual forces, usually for socially beneficial ends such as treating illness, bringing good fortune, protecting against harm, and avenging wrongs. Although obeah was sometimes used to harm others….in post-emancipation times, colonial officials, local white elites and their ideological allies exaggerated the antisocial dimensions of obeah, minimizing or ignoring its positive functions. This negative interpretation became so deeply ingrained that many West Indians accept it to varying degrees today, although the positive attributes of obeah are still acknowledged in most parts of the anglophone Caribbean”.

\(^{29}\) Also known as ‘duppies’, these are spirits associated with the recently deceased who are called upon to either help or to cause harm (Dobbin 1986).

\(^{30}\) Described by at least two Methodist missionaries in the early nineteenth century as a dance during which the dancer would “receive information from their Dead Relations (Letter from Methodist Missionary Charles Hodgson, 8, February 1808)”. The dance is probably the same, or closely related to, the *comfa* possession dance found mostly in the Guianas (McCartney 1976:100; see also Gibson 2001)
century across both time and space, and required fewer field hands. Cotton cultivation was generally less arduous than work on a sugar estate (Higman 1995:167). During the rainy season (May-June or Sept.-Oct.), enslaved field workers planted the cotton in banked rows placed six to eight feet apart. In each row small, shallow holes, spaced at two to three foot intervals, were dug by hoe and several seeds were placed therein. During the six month growing season, the plants need to be weeded periodically, and they had to be topped and pruned. There were generally two harvests yearly with each harvest lasting two or three months, in contrast to the frenzied pace required for sugar. The picked cotton was dried in the sun for several days, after which it was ginned and packed into bales for shipping (Tyson 1992:15-16).

From the mid-eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century, the majority of enslaved Africans in the Virgin Islands worked on sugar plantations. The methods of cultivation and management techniques used by British planters did not change much over time or from one colony to the next. Without exaggeration, the days were long and hard, lasting upwards of ten hours in the field, and longer during the harvest season (Goveia 1965:130). Fieldworkers on sugar estates were typically organized into gangs based on age and order of importance with respect to the work they were required to carry out. The first gang, comprised of enslaved Africans between the ages of about 19 to 44 years old, was required to prepare the soil, plant and manure
the sugar canes, cut the canes when mature, and work in the mill during the harvest season. Cane land was prepared for planting by ‘holing’ -- the excavation of four to five foot squares to a depth of six to nine inches. The number of holes dug in a day varied between 60 and 120, depending on soil conditions (Higman 1995:162). Holing, according to Goveia (1965:119), “was universally agreed to be one of the most laborious tasks of cultivation that the West Indian slaves had to perform.” Planting and manuring followed holing. The planting of 350 to 400 canes was regarded as a day’s work and the manure was carried to the fields “in baskets on their heads” (Goveia 1965:119). Stress on the first gang increased by the fact that cane holing overlapped with the harvest or crop season. At harvest time, first gang field laborers were required to cut the ripe cane using large knives called bills and transport it to the crushing mill within 48 hours to prevent fermentation and spoilage. In the Virgin Islands, because of the steepness and irregularity of the terrain, the harvested cane was sometimes delivered from hillside fields via “wooden spouts or troughs” rather than carts (Wentworth 1834:153). At the sugar factory, the first gang performed a variety of tasks such as mill feeders, furnace stokers, sugar boilers, and rum distillers (Higman 1995:164). Numerous contemporary accounts detail how the work in and around the crushing mill was extremely dangerous (Craton 1974:192). Hands and clothing were very susceptible to getting caught in between the mill’s turning rollers, as Edward Littleton (1689) describes, “If a Mill-feeder be catch’t by the
finger, his whole body is drawn in, and he is squeez’d to pieces” (Dunn 1972[1973]:192).

The second gang, consisting of adolescents and those over the age of 40, performed a range of lighter field tasks. They worked with hoes and bills to weed and clean the canes, and carried manure to the fields. During the harvest season, the second gang worked in the fields to remove trash (dry leaves) for use as fuel in the boiling house. At the sugar factory, they removed the crushed cane (bagasse) from the mill, dried it so that it could be used as fuel, and eventually brought it to the boiling house furnaces (Higman 1995:166). Large sugar plantations sometimes also had a third gang composed of children who gathered grass for the estate livestock, and were often referred to as the ‘grass gang’ or ‘meat gang’. Some also carried water to the field laborers or cooked. Still others looked after the children of mothers working in the field gangs (Higman 1995:167).

As for the enslaved Africans’ living conditions, including provisioning and housing, there is very little detail specific to the British Virgin Islands. Among the few documentary sources is Thomas Woolrich’s (1790, cited in Dookhan 1975:80-81) testimony, a merchant who lived on Tortola from 1753 to 1773. With regard to provisioning, Woolrich recalled that in the 1750s, the enslaved were allotted small plots of land to grow their own food. Provision grounds like
those discussed by Woolrich were common throughout the British Caribbean as it was in the plantation owner's financial best-interest for the enslaved to grow their own food and to be as self-sufficient as possible (Craton 1997:155). On the one hand self-provisioning provided the enslaved greater control of their food, but on the other, the additional burden of having to provide for their own subsistence while engaging in the intense demands of sugar production was likely a significant stress that compounded already difficult lives (Marshall 1991).

The self-provisioning system that ultimately emerged consisted of a two-tiered system in which fruit trees, vegetables, and any plants anticipated for household consumption were cultivated within yards immediately surrounding dwellings (i.e. houseyards). These were the spaces in which the repeated activities of daily life took place, and in these spaces it was also common for the enslaved to raise small livestock such as chickens, pigs and goats (Pulsipher 1990, 1994). At the same time, enslaved Africans across the Caribbean, produced surpluses that they were permitted to sell at weekly markets for a profit (Higman 1988; Mintz and Hall 1960). These crops, including corn, root vegetables and starches, cabbage and breadfruit were typically grown on larger tracks (e.g. “Negro grounds”) in more remotely

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31 Although most sugar planters also issued small rations of sugar, cane juice, or molasses and rum (Craton 1974:192).
situated locations (Heath and Bennett 2000:40; Mintz 1974:236). Archaeological investigations of enslaved African houseyards, including studies of their layout and associated material culture, are well known from throughout the Caribbean (Armstrong 1990). However, direct investigations of provision grounds have been primarily focused on locational studies (Bates 2015).

The ability of the enslaved to sell their surplus and to accumulate profits ultimately facilitated the development of internal island markets in which the enslaved were both producers and consumers (Mintz 1983; Reeves 2011). Potential purchases included imported foods such as salt pork or beef, bread, rice and flour, as well as clothing, furniture, household ceramics and rum (Bates 2015:84). In 1752, commenting on the importance of the enslaved Africans as both producers and consumers in Tortola’s market, Deputy Governor James Purcell reported “And indeed where so much of the business is done by slaves...it would be very inconvenient not to permit the parties this privilege nor did I ever hear any complaint” (C.O. 152/27. Letter from Deputy governor James Purcell relating to the State of these islands, 31 January 1752). On Jamaica, William Beckford (1790:II:153) remarked that only the most “industrious” among the enslaved profited from their additional labors, although Bates (2015) argues the productivity of provision grounds were most acutely affected by the quality and size of the plots, while Reeves
(2011) proposed that the time needed to cultivate and maintain remote plots varied by the labor structure of the individual plantation.

Over time, however, as more land was placed under cultivation and the enslaved population expanded, the size of the provision plots grew smaller, and food shortages became commonplace. Exacerbating the food shortages were severe droughts that withered the food crops being grown. Woolrich vividly recalled, “the negroes suffer greatly, near to a famine; and slaves have pined away and died, as food could not be procured. Never saw a gang of negroes that appeared to him any thing like sufficiently fed” (Woolrich 1790).

Woolrich (1790) also described the houses commonly built and occupied by enslaved Africans: “Their houses are small square huts, built with poles, and thatched at the top and sides with a kind of Bamboo; built by the negroes themselves.” Inside, according the Woolrich (1790), “the field negros lie on the ground, in the middle of the huts, with a small fire generally before them; have no bedding; some obtain a board or mat to lie on before the fire; a few of the head negroes have cabbins of boards, raised from the floor, but no bedding, except some who have a coarse blanket.” Fifty years later, Trelawney Wentworth (1834) who visited Tortola in the 1820s described houses occupied by enslaved Africans as, “a frame-work of wood, planked at the sides and end, and in some instances of stone walls of similar
dimensions; the area being sufficiently large to admit of a division into two rooms of about eight or ten feet square; and a span roof thatched with the dried leaves of sugar cane.” The differences in how the dwellings are characterized is notable: instead of “poles”, the latter houses were built upon a “frame-work”; walls were described as “thatched” by Woolrich, and “planked” by Wentworth; and the earlier houses were “small,” the later ones large enough to be divided into two rooms “eight or ten feet square.” Accounting for the changes is not particularly straightforward. The builders of earlier houses were likely African-born, and likely drew on their own experiences with construction in Africa to build their Virgin Islands homes. The latter builders, meanwhile, were likely Creole-born, possibly second or third generation residents, and grew up surrounded by a very different built environment that included not just African-derived construction, but also a diverse array of European building traditions and preferences. The material differences might also reflect an altered natural environment, as well as differences in what was available, which likely changed through time, but also from one plantation to the next. The size of the buildings might also be related to material availability, but might also reflect differences in household composition including the relatedness of the co-residents.

Closely related to house form and manner of construction is the spatial patterning of how the homes of enslaved Africans fit into both the physical as
well as cultural landscape of the British Virgin Islands. On the Lettsome family cotton estate, a combination of documentary and archaeological evidence indicates that enslaved laborers homes were situated in the vicinity of the planter’s house (Chenoweth 2011). On sugar estates, there is no specific data on the British Virgin Islands, but the regional pattern indicates enslaved laborers were clustered in small villages that were generally situated close to the estate factory (Clement 1995).

Needless to say, the enslaved Africans in the BVI did not flaccidly accept their enslavement. As elsewhere in the Caribbean, enslaved Africans in the BVI employed a range of resistance strategies against planters including work stoppages and slowdowns, but also more overt acts including marronage, rebellion, self-mutilation and even suicide (Dookhan 1975:83; Smith 2009:81). In the Virgin Islands, maritime marronage (enslaved Africans who took to the sea to escape plantation bondage) was especially widespread.32 Lacking natural barriers such as jungles, swamps or mountains, would-be maroons escaped as stowaways on military and trading ships or stole fishing boats and canoes. Typically, they fled to Puerto Rico where they united with other runaways in the forest and were shielded by the Spanish government (Pickering 1997:111-119). Planter complaints to the Governor led to the

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32 According to historian N.A.T. Hall (1985:476-498) maritime marronage was equally widespread in the neighboring Danish Virgin Islands.
eventual passage of the Virgin Islands Slave Code in 1783, more than a quarter of which was dedicated to addressing the problem of runaways (Smith 2009:90).

Others resisted through direct action against their enslavers. In 1790, an insurrection broke out among the enslaved on the estates of Isaac Pickering, but it was quickly put down and its leaders executed. The revolt was sparked by the rumor that freedom had been granted to slaves, but that the local planters were withholding knowledge of it. Small revolts also occurred in 1823, 1827 and 1830, although in each case they were quickly curbed. Probably the most significant insurrection occurred in 1831 when a plot to kill all of the white population of Tortola and to escape to Haiti. Word of the plot caused widespread panic, but it was immediately quelled with military assistance provided by the Governor of St. Thomas (Dookhan 1975:83-86: Smith 2009:81-94).

Finally, a particularly devastating response to the despair and bleakness of plantation slavery was self-mutilation. Dr. George Porter reported that, in 1793, a pact was made among some of the enslaved on Tortola to cut off “his or her left arm so as to disable them from future work.” Porter goes on to recount that “in the space of one month, eight Negroes, two of which were women had their Bills ground sharp and deliberately performed this operation
on themselves” (cited in O’Neal 2001:8). According to Dookhan (1975:83), suicide by hanging or poison was common among the newly imported.

**Collapse of the Plantation System**

The early nineteenth century was a period of significant economic depression for the remaining cotton and sugar planters in the British Virgin Islands. Increased competition from new sugar-producing areas including Cuba, Brazil and the East Indies significantly reduced the investment returns of Virgin Island planters. Likewise, cotton exports, which enjoyed a two-decade long resurgence between 1780 and 1800, faced new competition from North American cotton producers. From 1790 to 1810, cotton imports to Great Britain from North American growers increased from 0 to 50% of the market share pushing many Caribbean growers out of the market (Beckert 2014:121).

In September 1819, the faltering plantation economy was dealt a crushing blow when a massive hurricane passed through the northeastern Caribbean. In the British Virgin Islands, damages to buildings, boats, crops and livestock exceeded £300,000 and included the destruction of nearly all dwellings, storehouses, the harbor facilities and most of the sugar factories. Fourteen planters, or their family members, were killed in the tempest, including Mary
Bell Hetherington, the wife of the President of the Virgin Islands Council. It was also reported that more than eighty of the enslaved were killed in the storm (C.O. 239/5. Enc. in Colquhoun to the Treasury, 29 November 1819). A year after the storm, Trelawney Wentworth (1834:175) described its lingering effects on the landscape:

*Extensive tracts of land which bore the marks of tillage, but which were no longer in cultivation, lay before us in every side; and the soil had been so much washed by the heavy rains, and impoverished by long culture, as to afford only a scanty herbage to a considerable number of sheep.*

Among the long term effects of the hurricane was the heavy accumulation of additional debt by the planters who attempted to repair the damages. Dookhan (1975:65) notes, “proprietors who before 1819 had been considered persons of opulence found great difficulty in obtaining sufficient credit to enable them to carry on the cultivation of their estates, little prospect being attached to their ability to repay.” After the 1819 hurricane, with so many estates critically damaged or for sale, there was a sudden depreciation of property in the BVI, to almost half of what it had been before the storm (Dookhan 1975:65). Ultimately, the poor growing environment of the Virgin Islands, the fluctuations in world commodities markets, and finally the 1819 hurricane combined to bring an end to local plantation economy. Many planters reacted by emigrating and leaving their estates in the hands of overseers, or abandoning the properties altogether (C.O. 314/15. Longden to
Hill, 31 May 1865). By the mid-nineteenth century, there were only 201 whites remaining in the Virgin Islands (Dookhan 1975:129). Enslaved Africans, meanwhile, did not have the option of leaving. Most continued to labor on plantations under overseers; others were transferred to estates elsewhere in the region, especially Trinidad and British Guiana (Watkins 1924:137); still others were offered their freedom in the BVI.

**Emancipation, Apprenticeship & Smallholding**

In 1833 the British Parliament passed the The Slavery Abolition Act that abolished slavery (with exceptions) throughout the British Empire. Emancipation officially came into force the following year, but in actuality, full freedom was delayed since ‘apprenticeships’ lasting between four and six years were put in place to ease the transition from slavery to freedom. As elsewhere, the restrictions placed on ‘apprentices’ were not unlike those placed upon the enslaved. Apprentices were required to work 45 hours a week for free, and thereafter they could only work for predetermined wages. Their movement between estates was restricted, and assorted regulations were enacted to “ensure the punctual discharge of services, and for the punishment and prevention of insolence, insubordination, vagrancy, rioting, combined resistance and escape (Dookhan 1975:120).” The apprenticeship experiment was widely criticized which led to its premature abolition in 1838, thus legally freeing 5,115 BVI apprentices (Dookhan 1975:124).
In the post-apprenticeship era, plantation managers needing labor on their estates were now obliged to pay wages. Short on capital, many planters turned to a sharecropping system known as *metairie*, in which the planters provided land and equipment, with the formerly enslaved providing the labor, with both sides splitting the profits (Dookhan 1975:128-9). In addition to wage-labor or sharecropping, former slaves in the BVI supplemented their income through an extensive internal economy that included local trade with St. Thomas. Particularly lucrative was rearing of horned cattle and other livestock. The development of the livestock industry permitted many formerly enslaved men and women to significantly improve their standards of living (Smith 2011:241). The success of the BVI’s cattlemen did not go unnoticed by colonial administrators, who imposed an annual tax on cattle in 1840 to shore-up the colony’s diminishing revenue base. As a result of the tax, the colony’s tax burden was shifted from predominantly white absentee landowners to predominantly black cattle farmers when the number of taxpayers rose from under 300 to over 1,000 (Smith 2011:244). In 1853, the colony’s already oppressive and unpopular cattle tax was increased by 50% sparking the “Cattle Tax Riot” -- a key moment marking the beginning, “of a truly indigenous Virgin Islands society” according to historians Norwell Harrigan and Pearl Varlack (1984:6). To Harrigan and Varlack, the event stood out as a determined endeavor on the part of the people to break with
the past. The three-day riot resulted in the death of one protester (but no white people), considerable property damage, and the temporary evacuation of Road Town’s white population to St. Thomas. Positive political changes brought about by the riot included a greater attention to developing a system of taxation that was within the means of the people (Smith 2011:244-255).

In the wake of the plantation economy’s collapse, property in the Virgin Islands was greatly devalued, thus enabling some of the BVI’s African descended population to acquire their own lands and begin their own small farms (O’Neal 2012). Longstanding legislative impediments to land ownership by freed blacks were also repealed. In 1841, a discriminatory tax “on all lands in cultivation otherwise than in the cultivation of sugar-cane, cotton, or indigo” that was intended to discourage smallholder farms was rescinded (Dookhan 1975:134). Even more significant was the adoption of West Indies Encumbered Estates Act in 1864 which enabled either the owners or creditors to apply for debt-ridden estates to be sold by judicial decree.\(^{33}\) The proceeds of a sale were to be divided among an estate’s creditors, and the purchaser would receive the property free of liabilities (Green 1991:256). In the Virgin Islands, the principal buyers of encumbered estates were the formerly enslaved. Immediately after local adoption, eight

\(^{33}\) Under earlier laws, estates could not be sold unless their debts were paid. The act was originally passed by the British Parliament in 1854 and was adopted by most British colonies with the exception of Barbados, Trinidad, St. Lucia and British Guiana (Green 1991:226-227).
major estates totaling 780-acres were sold at an average of £1.5s per acre. Five of these estates (Cotton Bay, Spring Gut, Johnson’s Gut, Appleby, and Capoon’s Bay) had been in Chancery for 35 years, while three others (Joe’s Hill, Diamond, and Hawk’s Nest) had been similarly encumbered for 44 years. By 1865, the majority of the land in the British Virgin Islands was owned by former slaves and apprentices, and by the end of the century, almost all the land was owned by black smallholders holding less than 100-acres (Dookhan 1975:135-6). The white population of BVI was reduced to just 52 residents in 1881 (C.O. 152/146. Enc. in Glover to Kimberley, 26, Ec. 1881. No.405). Twenty years later, the only white residents on Tortola were the President of the Virgin Islands Council and a medical doctor (Harrigan 1971:79).

As land in the British Virgin Islands transitioned from being exclusively white-owned, to primarily black-owned, there was a corresponding transformation in land use. Sugar and cotton cultivation was replaced by mixed economy that included animal husbandry including cattle, goats, sheep, pigs and horses for export to St.Thomas, and the planting of ground provisions such as yams and potatoes for local consumption. Supplemental activities included lime production, charcoal burning, and fishing. Cotton cultivation, lapsed since the 1820s, was briefly revived during the American Civil War (1861-1865) when American production was disrupted and price suddenly spiked, but was
quickly phased out again once American production resumed (Dookhan 1975:138).

A second important change in the second half of the nineteenth century was a shift from reliance on English markets to a reliance on the nearby Danish Virgin Islands, especially St.Thomas. The last sugar exports that left direct from Tortola were in 1848, which was also the last year that the BVI had direct contact with European merchants. As a result, from the 1850s onwards, St.Thomas became both the primary external market for British Virgin Islands livestock, fish, produce and charcoal, but it also came to constitute its conduit to the wider world (O’Neal 2012:60). The close proximity of St.Thomas meant that British Virgin Islanders could easily travel there in small boats and canoes for weekly supplies. Toward the end of the century, St.Thomas also became a destination for Virgin Islanders seeking non-agricultural employment, as well as a doorstep to exploring a wider world. Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, the African descended population of the BVI fell from 5,892 in 1859, to 5,575 in 1861, to 5,235 in 1881, and to 4,607 in 1899 (Dookhan 1975:141).

The second half of the nineteenth century represents a remarkable period of economic independence and social transformation for the formerly enslaved and their descendants in the British Virgin Islands that was likely
unimaginable to previous generations. Within just a quarter century since the end of apprenticeship, ownership of almost all the land in the Virgin Islands had been transferred from white plantation owners engaged in global commodities markets to formerly enslaved smallholders focused on subsistence farming and local trade (Harrigan and Varlack 1991; O’Neal 2012). Local colonial officials, not surprisingly, were unimpressed with the emergent smallholder economy. In 1869, President A.W. Moir wrote, “I could not see but with sad disappointment sugar estate after sugar estate totally abandoned or parceled out in patches of cane yielding but poor returns to unscientific and prescribed cultivation bestowed on them” (cited in O’Neal 2012:51). Fifty years later, little changed in the opinion of colonial officials. According to a 1907 government report, “The old Virgin Islands families abandoned their...estates to their former laborers, who raised degenerate stock and subsisted on fish and root crops, with the help of a certain amount of sugar and bad rum for local consumption” (cited in Harrigan and Varlack 1975:74).

Popular histories of the Virgin Islands, primarily written from a macroeconomic perspective that focused on the boom and bust cycle of the English-dominated plantation-based economy, have been similarly ill-considered and in some instances disparaging of BVI’s post-plantation era and the developing initiatives of African-descended smallholders. Vernon
Pickering (1987:61), for example, citing the colonial administration’s disinterest in the Virgin Islands, impugned the late nineteenth century as an era of “decline and disorder.” Colonialist attitudes and racist leanings are also commonplace as attested by Florence Lewishon’s (1966:62) deeply flawed comment that with the wane of the sugar cultivation, the islands simply “went to de bush” until the arrival “a new breed of white men to help the island recover.” In addition to their individual flaws, collectively these histories give the impression that the history of the BVI is exclusively a function of British colonial administrators, religious partisans, and global market forces; and have little to contribute on the lives, culture, decision-making or influence of the enslaved and freed Africans during the plantation era who made up the vast majority of the BVI’s population, or their post-emancipation descendants who made up nearly all of the population. Accordingly, with so few other sources, archaeology holds great promise to significantly inform us about not only about the individual lives and social networks of the BVI’s African descended community, but also the broader history of the BVI as well. Chenoweth’s (2016) preliminary probing of a post-emancipation settlement on the nearby island of Great Camanoe (another BVI out-island) attests to the good preservation of both above-ground architecture, as well as surface and subsurface artifact middens associated with nineteenth-century sites. Similar levels of good preservation have been observed on Guana and hold good potential for future investigation.
In the meantime, documentary and ethnographic work, has thankfully, been not only more comprehensive, but also more sophisticated. Harrigan and Varlack (1991:26), for example, note that the BVI’s relative invisibility to Great Britain was actually an advantage that allowed African-descended smallholders to establish an economic base that was in many ways unique in the Caribbean (see also O’Neal 2012). Cohen (1998:197), meanwhile, in looking to the future, noted that because so much of the land was in the hands of formerly enslaved Africans and their descendants so early, combined with the BVI’s economic isolation as late as the mid-twentieth century, the BVI were shielded from the economic exploitation and land speculation that other British colonies, such as Jamaica or Antigua, experienced.

The Twentieth Century

In 1902, the local British Virgin Island Legislature was eliminated, and the territory was subsumed within the larger Leeward Islands colony. In an attempt to boost local agriculture, an agricultural station was established on Tortola, but it quickly failed. Instead, the small-scale agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and charcoal production developed in the second half of the nineteenth century continued to be the basis of the local economy. There were, however, some new opportunities. During the 1920s and 1930s, many
men temporarily moved abroad to work in the sugar fields of Cuba and especially Santo Domingo (Cohen 2010:21). Another boost was Prohibition in the United States which brought considerable prosperity to many local mariners willing to smuggle liquor into St.Thomas or Puerto Rico. Charcoal producers also benefited from Prohibition, some significantly, as large bags of charcoal were used to hide the bootleg liquor stashed in the bottoms of ships (Mauer 2000:52). During World War II, many BVIslanders went to work on St.Thomas after the United States began construction on several military facilities on that island, including an airfield, a submarine base, and a munitions factory (Mauer 2000:57). Harrigan and Varlack (1975:127) note that “upwards of 50 percent of the working population entered St.Thomas.”

The late 1930s and 1940s was a period of significant political organizing throughout the Caribbean that included important nationalist movements in Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Jamaica. The people of the British Virgin Islands likewise grew restless for the reinstatement of a representative government, which was ultimately restored in 1950 (Cohen 2010:22-23). During the 1950s, the rise of long-distance air travel and Fidel Castro’s assumption of power in Cuba caused a sudden and dramatic increase in tourism in the neighboring United States Virgin Islands. The resulting onset of wage-paying hospitality and other tourism-related jobs once again lured many British Virgin Islanders to St.Thomas. Hoping to develop an equivalent tourism boom, the
BVI government passed its first tourism incentive legislation in 1953 to encourage hotel construction (O’Neal 2012:65). Tourism had great potential, but also had very little infrastructure. In 1960, only the Government House, Hospital and Administration Building in Roadtown had electricity. Telephone service was very limited, there were no banks, and there were only 12-miles of drivable roads (Everitt 2007:15). Within a decade, however, tourism began to be a major factor with the opening of Laurance Rockefeller’s Little Dix Bay Hotel on Virgin Gorda in 1964; and on Tortola, the Moorings charter yachts in 1969. Tourism continued to grow, and since 1976 tourism has been the leading sector of the economy (Cohen 1995:405). Since the mid-1980s, the BVI’s next most important industry has been off-shore banking and financial services. Due to these forces, the BVI has risen to become one of the wealthiest corners of the Caribbean (Mauer 2000).
Chapter 4: The Documentary Record of Guana Island

This history of Guana Island has long been linked to the mid-eighteenth century “Quaker Experiment” in the Virgin Islands (e.g. Jenkins 1923), although the archival research profiled herein will show that Guana’s eighteenth century settlement occurred earlier, lasted longer, and included a greater number and wider variety of people than previously understood. Whereas the goal of Chapter 3 was to provide a macro-view on the human history of the Virgin Islands, the aim here is to focus specifically on Guana. Drawing on primary documents found and analyzed in the British Virgin Islands, as well as in the British National Archives at Kew in London, Chapter 4 outlines the known history of Guana beginning with the island’s early eighteenth century settlement and concludes with its probable abandonment of all residences on the island in the mid nineteenth century.

Early Settlement and Subdivision

The earliest known mention of Guana Island is in a report written in 1716 on the Virgin Islands that listed the island among nineteen others that were considered “good for nothing but to feed goats on being Rockey, Barren Land having Nothing but Seruby Bushes thereon” (Colonial Office 152/11 #6 encl.(v)). Although attempts to settle the Virgin Islands extended back to the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the population of the island group one hundred years later was still very low, and for the most part, concentrated
on Virgin Gorda and Tortola. Guana’s “Rocky, Barren Land” was not an obstacle for very long. A letter dated December 15, 1716 from the Governor of the Leeward Islands to the Council for Trade and Plantations (London) included the first mention of anyone living on Guana -- the family of Patrick Conner, including his wife, four children and three enslaved African laborers, were residents of the island (Calendar of State Papers 1716:425 iv) (Figure 13). Where they lived, or how they made a living was not explained, although cotton production was the principal economic engine of the Virgin Islands through the mid-eighteenth century. Unfortunately, Patrick Conner is not mentioned again in any records from the Virgin Islands.

Figure 13. Detail of the Letter from the Governor of the Leeward Islands to the Council for Trade and Plantations (London) that lists the family of Patrick Conner as residents of Guana Island (Calendar of State Papers 1716:425 iv). This is the first known documentary evidence of any people living on Guana.
As the population of the Virgin Islands slowly grew, additional people, potentially entire families, followed the Conners to Guana, prompting the island’s formal subdivision by the 1730s. How many divisions, and how those divisions were delineated is unknown, although a register of property transfers on Guana was discovered by the late Norman Barka in a ledger book at the Land Registry (LR) office of the Government of the Virgin Islands.
in Road Town.\textsuperscript{34} The register consisted of a single page entitled “Guana Island” and included twenty-six separate entries dated between 1732 and 1801 (Figure 14).

The earliest ledger entry is a ‘feoffment’ for \( \frac{1}{2} \) of the island between Thomas Smith and David Brown dated February 24, 1732 (LR, Guana Island). In English law, a feoffment is a grant of ownership of a freehold property to someone, historically taking place on the site of the land and in the presence of witnesses. When or how Thomas Smith first acquired the parcel on Guana, or if he resided there, is unknown. A decade later, Smith was mentioned as living on Jost Van Dyke, as was Brown in the 1750s (TMM Minutes), suggesting the possibility that both men used Guana for agriculture, but did not establish residences on the island. Intriguingly, Thomas Smith was an early member of the local Quaker meeting, but was disowned in late 1746 after a series of violent outbreaks against other Quakers including “firing ashore in the Night Amongst his friends at Guana + Grossly abusing them, his assultin + Beating Wm Clandaniel a friend”(TMM Minutes).

\textsuperscript{34} According to Norman Barka, the ledger with the ‘Guana Island’ page was found either in 1999 or 2003 at which time the single page of entries was photocopied. Barka’s photocopies of the register survive, although many of the entries on the photocopy are illegible. Regrettably, attempts on two subsequent visits to the Registry Offices in 2006 and 2007 to obtain better copies of the register failed to relocate the document. The location and status of the original document is currently unknown.
A second feoffment was recorded on May 24, 1733 between David Brown and James Park for $\frac{1}{6}$ of the island (LR, Guana Island). It is possible, if not likely, that this transaction was for half of the tract Brown previously acquired from Thomas Smith. Slightly less than two years later, on April 28, 1735, Francis Phipps conveyed to James Conner “100 ft at Sandy Ground” (LR, Guana Island). Once again, it is unknown when or how Phipps acquired the land, or how he or James Conner used the land. Presumably “Sandy Ground” refers to the area known today as the alluvial ‘flats’ between the salt pond and White Bay beach on Guana’s south shore as most of the rest of Guana’s terrain is rocky and sloped. Nineteen years earlier, there was a James Conner living at Spanish Town on Virgin Gorda (Colonial Office 152/11 #6 encl. (v)), although it is unknown if he is the same James Conner, or if either one is related to Patrick Conner who was living on Guana in late 1716.

**James Park’s Estate**

James Park, less than a decade after acquiring his initial Guana Island tract, successfully consolidated several, presumably adjoining parcels into a single large estate. Evidence of his effort includes a cluster of ledger entries all made on February 6, 1740 between Peter Conner & Mary [illegible], James Conner, Joseph Conner, David Brown, and Michael Cotton to consign variously sized land parcels on Guana to James Park. On the same day, all the parties signed a bond to agree “To abide division of Guana”. Through this
series of conveyances and feoffments, in combination with his previously acquired land, James Park brought under his control just over half the land on Guana as well as the inland salt pond. A week later, on February 13, 1740, the various parties finalized the agreement for the “Division of Guana Island”, but who owned the other half of the island is not mentioned. A year after the consolidation, James Park conveyed 53-acres to John B[illegible], who turned over the same 53-acres to James Bradley on October 24, 1744 (LR, Guana Island).

James Park, in addition to being the preeminent landowner on Guana, was also a prominent member of the Tortola Meeting of the Society of Friends from 1741 to 1760 (Jenkins 1923). The births of James and Bytha Park’s children, John (b.1741) and Dorcas (b.1744), are recorded in the Monthly Meeting records, and sadly, so is their infant son’s death only eight months after he was born (Jenkins 1923:75). In June 1743, Park was appointed the Meeting’s “Treasurer for Relief of Poor friends” and he held that position until February 1749 (TMM Minutes). In 1754 James Park is listed in the minutes as “widdower of “Guanah Island”, although the precise date of Bytha Park’s death is unknown. Later that same year, the proposed marriage of James Park and Mary Vanterpool “of the Island Camanders”\(^\text{35}\) was approved by the Meeting membership and the two were granted permission “to Consumate

\(^{35}\) Probably a corruption of Camanoe Island, another out island, located to the east of Guana.
their said Intentions according to the good Orders of Friends when they shall think proper” (TMM Minutes). Finally, in 1760 when, upon an inquiry from the Tortola Meeting, Jame Park expressed “Sorrow as knowing it to be Breach of Discipline in his Daughters marriage with a man of a different persuasion” (TMM Minutes). Park was apparently disciplined by the meeting for his daughter’s unsanctioned marriage, but he was not dismissed altogether. Neither Park, nor Mary, or his daughter, are mentioned in any of the Tortola meeting records after 1760.

Evidence that Park not only owned substantial portion of the land on Guana, but also made his home there was recorded in the 1748 journal of Daniel Stanton, a Quaker visiting the Virgin Islands from Philadelphia. After spending several weeks on Tortola, Stanton journeyed to Guana and stayed at the Park’s home, writing, “and on the 8th day of the eleventh month, I went to Guana Island, with our Friends James Parke and his wife, and staid till the eleventh of the same, and after having a comfortable time in his family, I returned to Tortola” (Jenkins 1923:27). Although Park had been a property owner on Guana since 1733, Stanton’s journal entry is the first specific mention that the Parks also lived on the island. The next obvious question is where on the island was the Park’s house? Local tradition has long held that the great house ruin located on the ridge above the flats and under the present-day hotel manager’s office was the Park residence. Irma Fiske (n.d.),
a friend of Lewis and Beth Bigalow, Guana’s mid-twentieth-century owners, and frequent visitor to the Guana Island Club in the 1950s, recalled, "We assume James Parke and his family lived at the site of the present Dominica House (hotel office) because shards of dinner plates with the initials ‘JP’ were found below the present kitchen wall". Initialed or monogrammed pottery was uncommon in the mid-eighteenth century, thus casting a degree of skepticism on the discovery, although ceramic vessels were sometimes embellished with words or phrases. Unfortunately, the supposed ‘JP’ fragments noted by Ms. Fiske are not currently among the large assortment of loose finds collected over the years by visitors and island staff.\footnote{36}

The purported ridgeline location of the Park residence on Guana is also shown on an inset map of Guana (Figure 15) included on a 1948 map of Tortola produced by Geoffrey Owen (Figure 16).\footnote{37} Owen’s map is based on a map of Tortola’s plantations originally published in 1798 by Robert Wilkinson (see Figure 12). As described in Chapter 3, the Wilkinson’s map illustrates the boundaries of each plantation, notes each plantation’s principal crop (for example, sugar and cotton) and identifies each plantation owner.

\footnote{36}{An inventory of all known caches of the loose eighteenth century pottery and glass was carried out in 2004.}

\footnote{37}{Geoffrey Owen was the sailing companion of the acclaimed environmentalist Dennis Puleston. In 1931 Puleston and Owen sailed from England in a small sailing boat, across the Atlantic, and spent the next six years sailing around the world, except for a brief interlude on Tortola where they managed a coconut plantation. Puleston chronicled their adventures in \textit{Blue Water Vagabond: Six Years’ Adventure at Sea}, published in 1939. Owen subsequently moved to Tortola.}
The Wilkinson map also shows Guana’s southernmost coastline with a single structure built upon it, but does not identify the building, or the island’s owners. Owen’s Tortola map, however, published one hundred fifty years later, includes an inset featuring Guana that illustrates the locations of its great house ruins and notes the island’s owners as “Heirs of James Park and Lake family” - acknowledging the historical evidence for the Parks and Lakes on Guana provided by Jenkins pre-dates rest of the 1798 map by almost 40 years.

Figure 15. Detail of the Guana Island inset published as part of Geoffrey Owen’s 1948 map of Tortola.
Surface collections of ceramic and glass artifacts in 2007 from two locations around the hotel, however, suggest a later occupation of the ridge site than when the Park family is documented on Guana. Behind the present-day Anegada guest house, a shallow refuse midden (GN29) was located and collected. The midden assemblage included whiteware and pearlware ceramics featuring transfer-printed (post-1810) Neo-Classical and Asian designs. At least two sherds, the one with the man in the hat and the larger sherd with the temple and grape/floral border is by R. Hamilton and is called “Fishermen and Nets” and dates to ca. 1811-1826 (Barbara Heath 2018, pers.comm). Other artifacts included imported slip-glazed coarse
earthenwares; a glass tumbler; a possible French champagne bottle; and English wine bottle glass fragments with rims or bases consistent with early nineteenth-century forms (Table 4) (Figure 17).

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Table 4. Artifacts from GN29 and GN30.
Figure 17. Sample of ceramic and glass artifacts from GN29.

Figure 18. Sample of ceramic and glass artifacts from GN30.
The second location (GN30), consisting of an assemblage of glass and ceramic fragments roughly contemporary with GN29, was located along a narrow footpath immediately downslope from the hotel and represents material washing down from primary deposits likely originating from the ridge-perched great house where the hotel buildings now stand. Surface collected artifacts include early nineteenth-century blue shell-edged and transfer printed pearlware plate and bowl fragments; lead-glazed coarse earthenwares, stoneware bottle fragments, a single imported white-clay tobacco pipe stem fragment, and English wine bottle fragments with rims or bases consistent with late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century forms (see Table 4) (Figure 18). Notably absent from both assemblages are ceramics and glass characteristic of the mid eighteenth century. Both assemblages consist almost exclusively of formal food service or dining-related items rather than utilitarian objects related to food preparation and storage. A combined mean ceramic date for the two assemblages was calculated at c.1810, placing their accumulation well-after the Park’s mid-eighteenth century occupation. The early nineteenth century dates of the two refuse features doesn’t necessarily rule out the possibility of an earlier, as yet undetected, occupation of the ridge. However, prior to the arrival of large gangs of enslaved African laborers to clear the land and transport materials up the steep inclines of the ridge slope, most of the development in the Virgin Islands was concentrated along the readily accessible shoreline. A more likely location for the Park residence is the stone foundation ruin just behind the dunes along White Bay that was
the focus of archaeological investigations between 1999 and 2006 and is described in the next chapter.

James Park’s business affairs, or how he made use of the land he owned on Guana, is not directly addressed in any of the known primary documents, although an intriguing clue comes from the journal of English linen manufacturer James Backhouse, who in 1751, mentions a meeting with “James Park from Tortola” (*Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, vol. xv. (1918), p.23). Also at the meeting, according the Backhouse’s journal, was Robert Lawson from Lancaster, a noted cotton merchant and entrepreneur responsible for the development of Sunderland Point, an important eighteenth-century port for cotton ships and slave transport ships coming to and from Lancashire. The meeting place was in England, and although there is no record of the three men’s conversation, given the fact that cotton was the BVI’s leading export through the end of the 1750s, combined with the fact that Park was meeting with both a prominent cotton merchant (Lawson) and a linen manufacturer (Backhouse), it is not farfetched to conclude the purpose of the meeting involved a discussion of cotton grown on Park’s Guana Island plantation.
The Transition to Sugar

Throughout the British Caribbean, small island cotton farmers were increasingly turning to sugar cultivation through the 1750s, with sugar ultimately eclipsing cotton as the colony’s principal export in 1759 (Dookhan 1975:46; Harrigan and Varlack 1975:58). Unfortunately, the available records only indicate exports by the whole of the British Virgin Islands. Individual statistics on specific islands have not yet come to light. Nevertheless, the well-preserved ruins of a sugar factory complex (GN1) on the east bank of the island’s salt pond certainly attest that large scale production of sugar and rum was at least attempted. The factory ruins cover an area of about 700-square meters (35-meters north-south by 20-meters east-west) and consist of the masonry remains of animal-powered cane crushing mill, sugar boiling house, curing house and rum distillery and were the focus of archaeological investigations led by Edward Harris and Norman Barka from 1998 to 2003 (Figure 19). Barka and Harris (1999) were unable to determine precise construction dates for the various components of Guana’s sugar factory complex, but did note its design as compared with eighteenth century factory layouts found on other Caribbean sugar islands38.

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38 Eighteenth-century sugar factories are readily identifiable by the presence of a sugar boiling train, a masonry structure typically located inside the main factory building supporting a line of four or five heated metal pans called ‘coppers’ were the raw sugarcane juice was clarified, reduced and thickened. In most examples, a furnace heating the entire length of the train was located under the first copper, which was also usually the largest, and thus required the most intense heat. A chimney providing ventilation was located at the opposite end of the train, and in some factories, the air temperature under each copper could be controlled individually via small vent openings located along the length of the train (Righter
A 1756 report on the Virgin Island’s population and defenses at the outbreak of the Seven Years Wars between Great Britain and France is another indication that someone, possibly James Park, was now deeply involved with sugar production. The report lists Guana’s population in 1756 as: 5 men, 7 women, 10 children and 160 enslaved Africans (C.O. 152/28). It is probably safe to assume that James and Mary (formerly Vanterpool) Park were among the counted adults, and James’ daughter Dorcas (age 12) was probably young enough to be counted as one of the ten children listed in the report. But how many of other individuals, if any, were members of Park household is unknown. If not members of Park’s household, who were they, and where did they live? Of particular interest are the 160 enslaved Africans listed as living on Guana. When were they brought to the island, and under whose instruction? As described in the previous chapter, the labor-intensive nature of sugar production required an influx of labor, and sudden increases in the number of enslaved Africans on a particular farm or plantation were often closely correlated with the transitioning of plantations from cotton to sugar cultivation (Goveia 1965:104). How long before 1756 the 160 enslaved...
Africans arrived on Guana is unknown, but given the fact that large-scale sugar production for the BVI did not become dominant until the late 1750s, it is unlikely that they lived on the island too much before that time.

Figure 19. Archaeological plan map of the Guana Island Sugar Factory (GN1) (Barka and Harris 1999).

**Enslaved Sugar Plantation Labor**

Sadly, but not uncharacteristically, the names of the at least 160 enslaved Africans living and working on Guana in 1756 have been lost to history. From contemporary descriptions, we do know that sugarcane cultivation on Guana,
as in the rest of the British Caribbean, consisted of an exhausting and
dangerous year-round cycle of planting, harvesting, and processing (Mannix
Caribbean have also consistently shown that enslaved plantation workers
typically lived in village settings in the vicinity of the sugar factory complex, or
on the margins of agricultural fields (Clement 1995). The locations of Guana’s
enslaved laborer village (or villages) has not yet been identified, although a
small unmarked plantation-era burying ground was discovered in 2004 when
human skeletal remains were inadvertently unearthed in the course of utility
excavations (Figure 20).

Figure 20. Discovery of the Guana Island Burying Ground (GN25) in 2004. The flags
designate the locations of in situ coffin nails. South is oriented to the top of the photograph.
An initial forensic investigation by the Road Town (Tortola) Police led to the disinterment of two sets of human skeletal remains. Subsequently, members of the Guana Island Archaeological Project identified and recorded nine additional wood coffin burials within the burying ground. The small size of some the graves suggests the burying ground includes both juveniles and adults. Non-skeletal material recovered in association with the human remains included numerous heavily corroded iron nails and nail fragments, three bone buttons, as well as a lead musket ball. An indigenous species of cowrie shell (*Cypraea cinerea*) was also recovered along with the artifacts and skeletal remains, however it is difficult to determine its contextual association as the shell was recovered from a spoil pile rather than an undisturbed context. The intact burials were left undisturbed and were reburied; while a bioarchaeological assessment if the two sets of disinterred remains was carried out at the College of William and Mary’s Institute for Historical Biology (IHB) under the direction of Dr. Michael L. Blakey (Mahoney et al. 2005).

The resulting bioarchaeological analysis determined Burial 1 was a 48 – 66 year old man likely of African descent. This determination was later supported by mtDNA analysis that “…yielded a sequence consistent with…” African haplogroups (Lawrence 2006). Skeletal indicators suggest this individual’s
daily activity required bending, heavy lifting and extensive use of his shoulder, arm and leg muscles in a pattern consistent with cane cultivation and harvesting. Furthermore, the severity of his arthritis, vertebral pathology, hypertrophies and enthesopathies suggest that he had been working strenuously for many years prior to and up until his death. Mahoney et al. (2005) concluded that the co-occurrence of the pathologies recorded on Burial 1 could provide the basis of a biocultural model of the specific skeletal effects of sugar cane labor that could be statistically tested with analysis of a larger population sample. Burial 2, consisting of only a skull and mandible was determined to be a 22 - 25 year old woman, however, there was insufficient evidence to speculate on her population affiliation. An evaluation of skeletal indicators of daily activity was also not possible due to the unavailability of her postcranial elements for study.

Although a very small sample, the aforementioned bioarchaeological assessment is significant as skeletal populations of enslaved plantation laborers in the Caribbean have rarely been analyzed. Prominent among the few previous studies are Newton Plantation on Barbados (Handler and Lange 1978, Corruccini et al 1982, Handler and Corruccini 1983, Handler et al. 1986, Shuler 2005), the Harney site (Mann et al. 1987, Watters 1987,1994) and Galways Plantation (Pulsipher and Goodwin 2001) on Montserrat, Seville Plantation (Armstrong and Fleischmann 2003) on Jamaica, in addition to the
The Trouble with the Lake Family

While the documentary evidence of the Park family on Guana is well established from a variety of complementary sources, the local tradition of the Lake family, also members of the Tortola Society of Friends who lived alongside the Parks on the island is unsupported by any of the known sources. In particular, the Lakes are not mentioned in any of the entries on the “Guana Island” land register page found by Barka (Guana Island, LR), nor do any of the Quaker records mention the Lakes in association with Guana. The seemingly unsubstantiated link between the Lake family and Guana appears to begin with Charles Jenkins’ (1923:33) unproven statement that “the Lakes from Guana, often found it unsafe and even impossible …(to) attend the meeting at Fat Hog Bay (Tortola)”. Uncharacteristic of his research on the Tortola meeting, in this instance, Jenkins does not offer any evidence in support of his assertion. Indeed, while James, John, Jonas, Elizabeth, Ann and Sarah Lake are all mentioned in the Monthly Meeting minutes and other
Quaker proceedings, none of the surveyed records include any mention of the Lakes having any difficulties attending the Monthly Meeting, or having any association with Guana. In fact, the only time a Lake family member’s residence or location was specified in the Tortola Monthly Meeting minutes is on June 4, 1746, on Tortola, not Guana:

\textit{At a Meeting at F. H. Bay this 4\textsuperscript{th} of 6\textsuperscript{th} M\textsuperscript{b} 1746. At the Meeting the Overseers report things in General is pretty well, only that John Lake of Tortola + Tho\textsuperscript{e} Smith of Joes van Dykes had run out into great Excessivess to be lamented as their behavior has been so very unbecoming professors of Truth. The Church appoints T. Bishop + Ths Humpheries of Tortola to Trate with Jn Lake + W\textsuperscript{m} George + Edward Lettsom of JV Dykes to Trate with T. Smith + make Report thereof.}

Fifty-two years after “John Lake of Tortola” was investigated for his “unbecoming” behavior, the only other known documentary evidence associating a Lake with a particular property is the 1798 Tortola Plantations map which identifies Katherine Lake (relationship to John unknown) as the owner of a small cotton plantation located very close to the site of the mid-eighteenth century Quaker meeting house at Fat Hog’s Bay. No additional information about Katherine Lake is available, although we might surmise that she must have been a formidable person as she is but one of only three women out of one hundred and four plantation-owners on Tortola in 1798. In summary, while secondary sources (e.g. Jenkins 1923) associate the Lake family with Guana, none of the primary documents back up the claim, casting significant doubt that the Lakes ever resided on the island.
The unsubstantiated link between the Lakes and Guana became further entrenched with the publication of Geoffrey Owen’s 1948 update to the 1798 plantation map. The 1798 and 1948 versions of the map are often confused for one another, and indeed include much of the same information. The maps, however, are not identical, and only the latter 1948 map identifies the Lake family home above Guana’s Monkey Point. While the source of this association is unknown, the well-preserved Monkey Point great house ruin (GN7) is today commonly known as the Lake House. As described in Chapter 5, the ruin was archaeologically investigated in 1999 and again in 2007 with the aim of learning more about who its occupants may have been.

More recently, the Monkey Point ruin is recalled as the site from where Louis and Beth Bigelow, Guana’s owners in the 1930s, recovered the small (3-pounder) cannon that is currently mounted at the hotel overlooking the flats (Figure 21). According to Fiske (n.d.), the cannon was rolled from the ruin site to the beach, brought by row boat to the dock at the other end of White Bay, and was then taken uphill by jeep to its present location. Quaker historian Harriet Frorer Durham includes a photo of the cannon in her book *Caribbean Quakers* and identifies it as a “Quaker Cannon” (Durham 1972:73, plate 7).
Other Property Owners

As recounted in the previous chapter, Quakerism faded within a generation of its founding in the Virgin Islands, but what became of the various Quaker families is largely unknown. For Guana, land records for the middle decades of the eighteenth-century are also scarce. After 1744 there is a twenty-year gap between property transactions listed on the “Guana Island” register page. The next three entries, in 1764 for “10ac Sandy Land Property of John Brown”; in 1765 for “Property of David Bradley”; and in 1767 for “⅛ part of Island late property of [illegible] are all land purchases by Robert Johnson. Shortly thereafter, in 1768, Robert Johnson "& Wife” conveyed “Shore Land”
to Charles Garbill (Guana Island, LR). Guana’s coastline is mostly rocky or exposed and has few points where boats can easily load and unload, either people or commodities. For this reason, having access to “Shore Land”, likely referring to the wide sand beach known as White Bay along Guana’s south coast, was likely highly coveted among Guana’s planters.

Documentary evidence relating to the Johnson and Garbill families, their businesses, or how they used Guana has not been found, with the notable exception of an 1768 mortgage between Garbill “& Wife” with Col. Richard Hetherington for 200-acres on Guana (Guana Island, LR). The transition to sugar required access to capital to pay for the needed enslaved African laborers, as well as for costly infrastructure improvements and maintenance to ensure the continued operation and timely processing of harvested sugar cane into molasses and rum. Cash-strapped planters, possibly Charles Garbill among them, were able to finance these expenses by mortgaging their estates in order make the necessary improvements to remain competitive. Many smaller planters, however, were unable to secure financing and sold out to their better capitalized neighbors. Meanwhile, many of those who did manage to get loans often had difficulties paying back their creditors and lost their estates, resulting in large tracts of land being consolidated into the hands of a small number of wealthy absentee landowners. In Charles Garbill’s case, his creditor, Col. Hetherington, was a successful merchant in
Liverpool and Lancashire, who split his time between England and the Virgin Islands. Although there is no evidence that Hetherington was ever compelled to foreclose on Garbill’s loan, others were not so fortunate, and by 1798 Hetherington managed to accumulate five sugar estates of his own on Tortola (Wilkinson 1798). The evolution in local landowning was not lost on John Fahie, President of the Virgin Islands Council, who reported in 1784 that “it is here, as it is elsewhere, the large fish swallow up the small. The estates of the poor cotton planter which were contiguous to sugar estates have been swallowed up by them (Colonial Office 152/53, cited in Goveia 1965:103).”

Following another long gap on the “Guana Island” transaction register that corresponded with an era of significant economic growth for plantation owners in the Virgin Islands, the next three transactions are recorded between 1784 and 1785, just after the end of the American Revolution. During the war, local planters had benefited from naval blockades of other larger and more agriculturally productive islands; however, with the conclusion of the hostilities, Caribbean trade opened up, and the sugar-based economy of the British Virgin Islands took a corresponding downward turn (O’Neal 2012:13). The specifics of how that turn affected Guana’s planters is unknown, although the timing of the property transactions indicated in the

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39 Later in life, Hetherington became involved in the administration of the Virgin Islands, and served as President of the Virgin Islands Council from 1811 though 1821.
register suggests the shifting economy may have been contributor. The first of the post-war transactions is a conveyance of “168 Acres of Land and [illegible] Acres” from Bathia Black to George Nibbs & William [illegible] on December 28th, 1784. That same day, John [illegible], Bathia Black, James Park [illegible] and George Nibbs signed an agreement with William Bilson for “Shore Land”. Unfortunately, the description of their agreement is indecipherable. Also unclear is if this James Park [illegible] is the same person, or somehow related, to the “James Park of Guannah Island” last mentioned in the Quaker records in 1760. A couple months later, on March 4th and 5th, 1785, John [illegible] “& Wife”, George Nibbs and William Bilson signed another agreement, unfortunately again mostly unreadable, with Mark Dyer for the “Shore Land” (Guana Island, LR).

While the motivation for these various transactions is unclear, the overall pattern of rapid decline for the Virgin Islands sugar estates is unquestionable. Properties across the Virgin Islands frequently changed hands from one owner to the next, or one creditor to another, in exchange for resolving over-extended credit. As sugar profits dropped, many Virgin Island planters switched back to cotton to take advantage of increased demand due to the recent improvements in the mechanization of cotton manufacturers in England. Simply put, there was not enough raw cotton being produced on the world market to keep the factory operations running (Beckert 2014:85).
Indeed, as an out-island with limited area of cultivable land, Guana’s relatively small sugar operation would have been particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the sugar market. A switch back to cotton likely made good sense. The global market for cotton remained very strong for approximately 20 years between 1780 and 1800, with demand often outpacing supply.

Around the turn of the century, there are two additional register entries. On December 10, 1799 William Brown “& Wife” convey 160-acres to John [Mulloon?] and on January 20th, 1801 Thomas Percival conveyed to Martha Yates “5 Acres W[illegible] B[illegible]”. Two additional entries at the bottom of the register page are almost entirely illegible. In part they include a conveyance on December 9th [year illegible] for 175-acres, and mortgage between Matthew [illegible] and [illegible] Chalwell Hill for 160-acres. The date of the mortgage, however, is completely obscured. Although the precise timing of the transition is unknown, several early nineteenth-century documentary sources indicate sugar was not among the commodities produced on the island (PP 1826-27:479, 6). The earliest evidence is a pair of published statistical tables from 1815 and 1823 that indicate a diverse range of crops were under cultivation on the island including cotton, coffee and provisioning crops, but not sugar. In addition, cattle, sheep, goats, pig and poultry were all kept on the island, as were two horses. The table also indicates that fishing was a significant part of Guana’s economic output in the
first quarter of the nineteenth century (C.O. 239/9, Statistical Table of the British Virgin Islands) (Table 5). By the time of the tables’ publication, however, the economy was already shifting. The relatively boom in cotton was in rapid decline as American cotton growers inundated the international cotton market (Beckert 2014:121).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1815</th>
<th>1823</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee Produced (lbs.)</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Cultivated (acres)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Produced (lbs.)</td>
<td>25500</td>
<td>27000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions Cultivated (acres)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture Land (acres)</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest &amp; Brush Wood (acres)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barren Land (acres)</td>
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<td>90</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>930</td>
</tr>
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<td>Fish Caught (lbs.)</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaves</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Statistical Tables for Guana Island, 1815 and 1823 (C.O. 239/9, Statistical Table of the British Virgin Islands)
The aforementioned tables also note Guana’s human population. In 1815 there were 7 white people, 12 free colored, and 105 enslaved. Ten years later, in 1823, there were 5 whites, 17 free colored, and 164 enslaved. The ‘12 free colored’ were undoubtedly the result of planter Thomas Percival’s 1811 manumission of 17 enslaved persons to which he granted roughly 170-acres of land on Guana with crops, stocks, and houses (McGlynn 1980:55). Percival was a landowner on Guana since at least 1801 when he conveyed 5-acres to Martha Yates (Guana Island, LR). On Guana, his estate abutted that of cotton planter Joseph Harrigan, who purchased some of land adjoining his estate from the people manumitted by Percival, noting they “only possess two huts” and preferred fishing over farming. Harrigan had been plantation owner in the BVI “from sixteen to twenty years in Guana Island and Spanish Town (Virgin Gorda)” before relocating to Trinidad in 1823. It is unknown if he and his family lived on Guana, in Spanish Town, or elsewhere. It is possible that Harrigan housed enslaved African workers on the island to facilitate the operation a plantation there, but he lived with his family elsewhere, like Spanish Town, which was much less isolated. When asked what induced him to move Harrigan replied, “From the barrenness of the soil, the frequent losses arising from hurricanes, and dry weather” (PP 1826-27:479, 6). Undoubtedly the memory of the 1819 hurricane that devastated the Virgin Islands was still fresh. Property damage on Guana as a result of the storm was estimated at £2,000, third highest among the out-islands surrounding Tortola (C.O. 239/5). When Harrigan departed for Trinidad, he took with him
170 enslaved Africans - possibly from Guana - to establish a new sugar plantation (PP 1826-27:479, 6).

Henry Clinton MacLean, a customs official and cotton planter, is the last known white planter to live on Guana. MacLean was first listed as a resident on Guana in 1822, the same year he married Frances Sullivan Frett, the stepdaughter of John Lettsom of Beef Island (Virgin Islands Slave Register T71/372:514-515). Interestingly, the two previously described surface middens (GN29 & GN30) of glass and ceramic fragments found in the vicinity of the current hotel on Guana, both date to the period of MacLean’s occupation of Guana. The close correspondence in their dating with MacLean’s occupation is a possible indication that the supposed great house ruin under the hotel manager’s office was MacLean’s residence. Presumably he and his wife are among the “5 whites” listed on the 1823 statistical table. In addition, MacLean owned a number of enslaved persons including 17 individuals in 1822 (VI Slave Register T71/372:514-515). The list grew to 21 people in 1825 (VI Slave Register T71/372:576), to 40 in 1828 (VI Slave Register T71/373:227) and back down to 38 in 1831 (VI Slave Register T71/374:209), up to 39 in 1834 (VI Slave Register T71/375:245)(Appendix C). Upon emancipation, MacLean was awarded compensation for 40 enslaved individuals on his Guana Island estate (Virgin Islands 37, Legacies of British Slave-ownership database [accessed 16th February 2018]). MacLean and
his family continued to live on Guana for at least the next decade. In 1845, a newspaper announcement for MacLean’s daughter Margaret Ann’s marriage to Alexander Currie indicated the wedding took place on Guana. H.C. MacLean died a few years later, in 1849; and here is no record of anyone else living on Guana, white or black, until the twentieth century. After Guana's residences were abandoned, the island continued to be used as a provisioning ground (McGlynn 1980:91), and possibly for charcoal production (D'Arcy 1971 in Lazell 2005:316). In the flats, in the bush north of the tennis courts, the ruins of a cattle or sheep dip (GN11) - a bath designed to immerse livestock in liquid pesticide or other treatment - likely also dates to this period given the uptick in livestock herding mentioned in Chapter 3 among the BVI’s smallholders after emancipation. Future archaeological investigation of this site and Guana’s other post-emancipation era sites may shed light on Guana’s poorly understood nineteenth-century history, a time period for which the documentary record is particularly quiet.

In 1935, Louis and Beth Bigelow of Massachusetts bought Guana Island from the Frett and Shirley families of Road Town on Tortola. With the help of local men the Bigelow’s built six stone cottages as a simple retreat known as the Guana Island Club for themselves and their friends (Anonymous n.d.). Since 1972, Guana has been owned by New Yorkers Henry and Gloria Jarecki. Today the island functions as a private seasonal residence for the Jarecki
family and as an upscale resort nestled within a wildlife sanctuary and nature preserve.

The documentary history revealed herein outlines Guana Island’s long history beginning with its early eighteenth-century settlement by small cotton and provision farmers, to the island’s sub-division and ownership by a small group of cotton planters, through its transition to sugar cultivation and then back to cotton, before the BVI’s plantation-based economy mid-nineteenth century collapse. Although the sequence of names and dates presented herein likely ranks high among the most detailed accountings of a single property anywhere in the BVI, there still exist very significant gaps. Moreover, James Park is arguably eighteenth-century Guana’s best documented resident and property owner, and yet he hardly appears in any of the land records. If not for his affiliation with the local Quaker Meeting, and their practice of record keeping, he we would be virtually unknown, which is exactly the case for most of the other men and women listed on the “Guana Island” land register who were not Quakers. This holds even truer for hundreds of enslaved and freed Africans who lived alongside Park and the other planters on the island. By 1756 there were also 160 enslaved Africans living on Guana according to census statistics, yet we do not know the names of any of Guana’s enslaved residents until 1822 (see Appendix B), let alone about their origins, families or their families where, or what their daily lives. Their absence from the
documentary record here is fairly typical for the Caribbean, if not for the entire African Diaspora. While historical archaeology isn’t going to reveal their names and is unlikely to reveal their origins, it can answer questions about daily life, but also questions that don’t necessarily arise from the documentary record.

The material remains related to Guana Island’s varied occupations are discussed in the next chapter including the multi-phase homesite of James Park or one of his contemporaries (GN2), a possible sugar warehouse/domestic complex (GN3), the eighteenth century Monkey Point great house ruin (GN7), as well as a pair of sites consisting of stone terrace walls or house platforms (GN29/30) set high into the hillside near the top of the Pyramid that I interpret as refuges hidden away from the view of the planters and plantation overseers as an escape from the pressures of plantation work and life.
Chapter 5: The Household Archaeology of Guana Island

Introduction

Figure 22. Aerial photograph of Guana Island showing the locations of the four household sites surveyed in this study.

Since the inception of the Guana Island Archaeological Project in 1998 thirty-one distinct archaeological sites have been identified, including evidence of the island's pre-Columbian occupation; the dwellings of eighteenth and nineteenth century planters; the agro-industrial ruins of an eighteenth century sugar factory complex; and a burying ground for enslaved African plantation
laborers (Appendix A). The present analysis focuses on four plantation-era household sites (GN2, GN3, GN7 & GN27/28) investigated over a four year period from 2004 to 2007 (Figure 22). Archaeological site GN2, dating to the mid-eighteenth century, consists of both well-preserved standing architectural remains and substantial buried midden deposits that are likely associated with a modest planter’s residence. Archaeological site GN3 consists of both well-preserved remains of a masonry ‘defensible house’ and the substantial buried midden deposits associated with another modest planter or plantation overseer dating the second half of the eighteenth century and coinciding with Guana’s development as a sugar island. Archaeological site GN7 is marked by the remains of three mortared stone foundations of a late eighteenth-century ‘creole style’ plantation great house complex nestled into the steeply-sloped hillside above Guana’s southern tip known as Monkey Point. Architectural changes suggest a gradual simplification in building form and a corresponding reduction in the overall size of the dwelling over time, indicating changes in the social or economic standing of the dwelling’s occupants at the height of the sugar boom and after its collapse. Contemporary with GN3 and GN7, archaeological site GN27/28 consists of a pair of stone terraces set high into the hillside near the top of the Pyramid in close association with a large cache of late eighteenth-century wine bottles. I interpret Guana’s Pyramid terraces as possible safe refuges, away from the view of the planters and plantation overseers, where enslaved plantation laborers engaged in alcohol consumption to temporarily escape the
pressures of plantation work and daily life. Archaeological sites GN2, GN3 and GN7 are readily distinguishable by above-ground architectural remains. On the other hand, archaeological site GN27 is known only from the surface collection of artifacts.

Cutting across wealth, status and ethnicity and illustrative of the diversity of site locations, architecture and material culture of the plantation-era Virgin Islands, these four site comprise a representative sample of the domestic spaces and enclaves that Guana’s residents called home; where they raised families, prepared and shared meals, tended their gardens, and possibly even buried their loved ones. In each instance, the examination of the site, including its architecture, spatial arrangement, artifact distribution and the artifacts and faunal materials themselves represents a fresh opportunity to explore the complexity of day to day life on the periphery of the British Empire.

Field and Laboratory Methods

The scope and intensity of the site investigations into Guana’s eighteenth- and nineteenth-century households varied from one site to the next. Archaeological sites GN2, GN3 and GN7 were among the first to be identified on the island; and in each case, preliminary plan maps of their architectural
elements were prepared under the direction of Drs. Norman Barka and Edward Harris as part of the Guana Island Archaeological Project’s initial catalogue of historic archaeological and architectural sites. Their maps served as the basis for planning subsequent below-ground archaeological investigations. Of the three, archaeological site GN2 was the most intensely investigated site, followed by GN3 and then GN7. Archaeological site GN27/28, however, has no obvious surviving above-ground architecture and was only discovered in the closing days of the 2007 field season. Unfortunately, the late date of the site’s discovery permitted only limited surface investigation of this very interesting location.

In each case, regardless of location, terrain, or time limitations, every practical effort was made to follow standard archaeological excavation and recording protocols including horizontal and vertical controls, artifact screening, standardized recording forms and detailed plan and profile maps. At each site, a local datum or reference point was established and horizontal control was tied to a grid system measured in one-meter intervals with each grid square identified by its north and east coordinates at the grid square’s northwest corner. For record keeping purposes, within every grid square, each soil layer and feature was assigned its own unique context number by which it could be identified. Vertical control consisted of stratigraphically excavating each context following its natural contours. Differentiation
between the different stratigraphic layers and features was recognized by changes in soil type, color and texture. In the field, each soil layer or feature was mapped, photographed, and described in detail on context record forms adapted from those used by archaeologists at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

All excavated soils were passed through one-quarter-inch mesh screen to ensure the systematic recovery of artifacts. At the end of each season, the artifacts were shipped to Williamsburg, Virginia for washing and cataloging. All of the recovered artifacts and faunal remains were identified and inventoried according to provenience. The artifact inventory was prepared using standard descriptive typology with all the obvious functional and morphological characteristics noted and entered into a Microsoft Access-based artifact database. These data included the artifact material, function, type, and form.

Site dating was inferred from analyses of English tobacco pipes or Euro-American ceramics, or both, recovered from each soil layer and feature. Following Harrington (1954), the pipe stem bore diameters of the English white clay tobacco pipes were measured using standard set of graduated drill bits measured in 64ths of an inch. The results were then compared to a standard ‘Harrington Histogram’ which illustrates the relative percentages of
different pipe stem diameters over five successive periods between 1620 and 1800 to estimate a date range for a particular context's accumulation. A mean occupation date was also calculated from imported tobacco pipes using Binford’s (1962) regression formula developed using Harrington’s original data set\textsuperscript{40}. Household ceramics were also be used to calculate a mean occupation date. Following South (1977), Mean Ceramic Dates (MCD) are based on the mean manufacture date of ceramics and their frequency of occurrence. The MCD were calculated based on manufacturing date ranges published in South (1977) and Colonial Williamsburg’s Department of Archaeological Research Standard Operating Procedures (CWF 2003). In addition, estimates of each site’s temporal span were estimated using South’s (1977) “visual bracketing method” for ceramics, as well as more recent, although still unrefined, statistical methods that attempt to correlate occupation span with the standard deviations (SD) of the calculated mean dates of both tobacco pipes (e.g. Schott 2012) and ceramics (e.g. Armstrong 2003).

\textsuperscript{40} Both methods rely upon Harrington’s original observation that white-clay tobacco pipe stem fragments steadily changed over time, following the basic trend of decreasing bore diameter from the 17th-century through the late 18th-century. Thus Binford’s regression formula of: \( Y = 1931.85 - 38.26X \). In this formula, \( Y \) is the mean date for the sample, 1931.85 is the theoretical date when the stem hole would disappear altogether, 38.26 is the number of years between each sixty-fourth-of-an-inch decrease, and \( X \) is the mean hole diameter for the assemblage (Binford 1962).
For the purposes of relating the artifacts with recognizable household activities, the artifacts were grouped into assemblages reflecting each artifact’s use as either household-related or architecture-related. The household assemblage was subsequently subdivided into four sub-assemblages: foodways (food and drink preparation, service and storage), personal activities (smoking, leisure, personal adornment), security (gun parts) and industry (tools, fishing equipment). The categories were modeled after similar analyses carried out by Maria Franklin (2003) at the Rich Neck Slave Quarter in Virginia and Douglas Armstrong (2003) at the East End Community on St. John (USVI). In some cases the sub-assemblage sorting involved associating artifacts that had a shared function even if they were manufactured using different materials (example: glass tumblers and ceramic mugs are both foodways-related vessels used for drinking beverages).

**Archaeological Site GN2**

Archaeological site GN2, hitherto obscured by a dense thicket of brush, cacti and several large trees, is marked by a rectangular rubble stone foundation located only a few meters behind (north) the sand dunes along the top of White Bay beach (Figures 23 & 24). In 1998 an archaeological team led by Dr. Norman Barka and Dr. Edward Harris cleared the extensive vegetation, recorded the site’s location, and prepared a preliminary plan of the site’s above-ground architectural elements (Barka et al. 1998). The foundation, with
interior dimensions of 9.8-meters by 5.2-meters (32 x 17-feet), was constructed of mortared volcanic stone and represents all that remains of small dwelling house occupied for approximately fifty-years from circa 1730 to 1780 on the coastal fringe of the ‘flats’ -- the broad alluvial plain at the base of the crescent-shaped ridge that forms Guana’s rocky spine. The occupation date range, derived from a combination of ceramics and tobacco pipe stems recovered from associated midden deposits spans the period of James Park’s consolidation of half of Guana into a single estate and transitioned its agricultural output from cotton to sugar. The range and quality of the artifacts likewise suggests a fashionable and simultaneously entrepreneurial resident or residents. It is possible that the dwelling house was the Park family’s residence, in spite of the fact that, as described previously, local tradition holds that the Parks resided in a house located on the high ridge where the present Guana Island Club now stands. Alternatively, the dwelling house could have been occupied by one of James Park’s contemporaries who owned one of the smaller parcels on the island.
Figure 23. Guana Island’s White Bay looking east toward Sugarloaf from the Pyramid in 2007. The arrow indicates GN2’s shoreline location.

Figure 24. The masonry ruin at GN2 prior to investigation in 2004. Looking west.
Following the initial site mapping, two additional seasons of fieldwork were carried out at GN2 in 2004 and 2006. In 2004 the removal of the remaining vegetation allowed for a more thorough documentation of the building’s plan and manner of construction. Additional details regarding the building’s evolution and interior finishes were revealed in a 1 x 10-meter trench excavated lengthwise through the building. Outside the building, twenty-four 1 x 1-meter test units excavated along a grid every 5-meters to the front, back and sides of the building were also excavated (Figure 25). The goal was to test for additional structures, activity areas, refuse middens, garden spaces or other landscape features relevant to the dwelling house’s occupation. To the building’s southeast, the test excavations encountered a red-clay floor, and to the building’s southwest, a limestone-paved floor. The two surfaces were buried under a dense midden of mid-eighteenth-century household refuse and ash which in turn was covered by a layer of white beach sand. An equally rich refuse midden was found covering the sandy ground to the north of the building, but no underlying paving. Out of the 538 artifacts recovered in the 2004 survey, 65% (n=352) were collected from either of the north or south refuse middens. Testing within the foundation ruin, as well as to its east and west, resulted in the recovery of significantly fewer artifacts.
Research goals for the 2006 fieldwork season included additional exploration of the building’s interior to better evaluate its internal layout, to trace the horizontal extents of the exterior clay and limestone floors, and to delineate and sample the north and south refuse middens. Excavation within the building’s interior exposed the remnants of a plaster floor in the building’s
west half interior under a thin (5-10cm) layer of topsoil. Although now heavily
damaged by tree roots, at one time the floor had extended across the whole
interior of the building. The purpose of exposing the floor was to search for
evidence of interior partitions; although ultimately, no evidence was observed.
At the same time, to the building’s south, the extents of the red-clay and
limestone paving were delineated and the midden layers covering them were
sampled via a pair of long trenches oriented east to west, and two 1 x 2-meter
trenches oriented north to south. Among the wide array of midden artifacts
were fragments of imported mid-eighteenth-century ceramics, imported
tobacco pipes, English wine bottle glass, wrought nails, and gun flints. Also
present were dietary remains including mammal, bird, and fish bones as well
as a wide array of shellfish. Meanwhile, to the building’s north, a 6 x 7-meter
block of the north refuse midden was excavated (Figure 26). A nearly
identical assemblage of imported ceramic and tobacco pipes, glass, nails,
gun flints and food remains was recovered, in addition to fishing equipment
and a small number of personal items including cuff-links, a copper-alloy
finger ring, and gaming pieces formed from tin-enamelled pottery. Detailed
descriptions of the midden artifacts are discussed later in this section.
Directly below the eighteenth-century midden, a large pre-Columbian pit
feature filled with Late Ceramic Age ceramic fragments, fish bones and
marine shells was found in association with a line of carefully placed volcanic
stones possibly representing a ball court or plaza boundary.
Initial Settlement

As described above, GN2 is located only a few feet inland from the sand dunes at White Bay along Guana’s south shore. The Virgin Islands’ rugged physical geography, as well as the low numbers of able-bodied workers to clear and work the land undoubtedly limited the settlers ability to penetrate
very far into the inland’s interior (see also Armstrong et al. 2009). The site’s beachhead location is consistent with other first-generation agricultural settlements in the Virgin Islands such as the early (c.1680-1733) component at Cinnamon Bay on St. John (USVI) (Hauser and Armstrong 2012). Armstrong et al. (2005) suggest the plantations’ beachhead locations likely reflects the continuing influence of a maritime-based culture and economy that prevailed in seventeenth century prior to that island’s formal settlement. At GN2, the recovery of fishing gear, a possible fish drying platform and significant fish remains from household middens (discussed below) likewise attests to the importance that access to maritime resources also played in Guana’s early settlement.

Another potential variable, presented here as a hypothesis to be further tested, is that the English settlers opportunistically re-occupied an abandoned Amerindian site. As described in Chapter 2, long before European planters set about transforming Guana’s landscape into agricultural estates of cotton, provision crops, and sugar, Guana was the site of an expansive Ostionoid (800-1400 A.D.) settlement. Undoubtedly, the construction and maintenance of houses, plazas, ballcourts, not to mention agricultural plots (conucos), required significant modification of Guana’s landscape by Amerindians, parts of which were partially revealed during archaeological excavations in 2004 and 2006 when Ostionoid features including a possible ball court and refuse
pit were identified directly below GN2’s eighteenth-century North Yard midden. The lack of any intervening stratigraphy between the Amerindian and English features is tempting to read as evidence that some elements of Guana’s Amerindian occupation may have been discernible when newly arrived planters like Patrick Conner and James Park started building on the island in the early eighteenth century, and that the settlers took advantage of that evidence to situate their own settlements.

On Guana, a particularly important potential benefit of re-occupying the Amerindian village site included site-specific intelligence on where to locate domestic compounds and agricultural plots within the low-lying flats along White Bay that minimized the risk of flooding. Indeed the value of that sort of local knowledge was recently demonstrated when Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 hurricane, passed directly over Guana on September 6, 2017 and caused significant remodeling of its coastline. At the northwest end of the White Bay, the combination of storm surge, wind and rain caused a channel or ghut to open between the inland salt pond and the bay, joining the two bodies of water. The area of GN2, located at the midpoint of the bay, however, did not permanently flood.

The question that remains unanswered, however, is how much of that Amerindian-triggered landscape change was legible when the first European
explorers sailed through the Virgin Islands, or when Leeward Islands
woodcutters were dispatched to the Virgin Islands to harvest its still-intact
forests, or when the first farms and plantations were established on Guana?
In Virginia, excellent archaeological and ethnohistoric evidence makes clear
that the English colonists did seek out recently abandoned Native habitation
sites and agricultural fields (Potter and Waselkov 1994; Horning 2013). But in
the Virgin Islands, keeping in mind the 300-year time lag between Amerindian
abandonment and European settlement, the answer is speculative at best.
While it is tempting to read the close stratigraphic proximity of the Late
Ceramic Age features and the eighteenth-century refuse midden as proof of
the settlers intention to situated their new homes and domestic compounds
where Amerindians had previously built their settlements, given the dense
tropical vegetation and rugged topography of the islands, the overlap of the
two components may be simply a reflection of the limited number of suitable
habitation sites that both Amerindians and Europeans faced in their
respective settlement efforts..

The Dwelling House

Built c.1730 atop the ruins of a substantial Amerindian village, the beachhead
dwelling built by James Parke or one of his contemporaries uniquely exhibits
the accumulated knowledge of vernacular building in the early eighteenth-
century Caribbean, or as summarized by Hood (1996:123), represents the
“Learned understandings of the world...created through experiencing the material world in which one grows up and carried out the mundane activities of life.” Close recording of the extant masonry foundation in tandem with the archaeological excavations indicates the GN2 dwelling represents the creolized architecture of middling European planters that evolved over the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by combining European, African, and Amerindian building traditions, skills and experience. The building includes a number of distinctive characteristics that both reflected the tentative and marginal nature of early settlements, but also a design clearly and uniquely informed by the century of experience of building in the Caribbean, including low profile, the intermixture of materials, open and ventilated space and shade. On the one hand, these adaptations reflect the region’s obvious environmental forces (e.g. heat, humidity, hurricanes), and on the other, they reveal the deepening dependence on enslaved African labor and increasing social and racial differentiation (Chapman 1995; Nelson 2016).

The archaeological excavations in 2004 and 2006 revealed that the dwelling house at GN2 consisted of at least two distinct construction phases. Phase I was built around 1730, based on ceramic and pipe stem dating of the adjacent refuse midden (see below), consisted of an earthfast or post-in-ground timber frame reinforced by an unmortared stones interspersed
between the wooden posts. It is unclear if the interspersed stones were placed within a trench or if they were laid on the ground surface.\textsuperscript{41} The wood posts were hewn into rectangular posts and placed into post holes dug into the sand. None of the wooden posts survive, although documentary sources indicate a preference for Lignum Vitae - Latin for `wood of life`, but also sometimes colloquially known as `ironwood` on account of its durability - as a framing material (Nelson 2016). The posts were spaced roughly 3 meters (approx. 10 feet) apart from one another all the way around the building’s perimeter. At the base of the each post, unmortared stones were first packed around each post base for added stability before other stones were infilled along the ground between the posts. The phase I building featured wattle and plaster walls as indicated by the recovery of plaster fragments with wattle impressions on their interior surfaces in association with the building’s phase I elements and pre-dating the phase II floor.\textsuperscript{42} Similar to lathe and plaster walls, the woven wattle branches formed a lattice substrate to which the plaster was applied to form the finished wall surface. The wattle substrate was held in place either by wooden stakes pegged into a wooden sill sitting on top of the rubble stone foundation between the vertical posts (e.g.

\textsuperscript{41} The early seventeenth-century “Stonehouse” foundation excavated by Norman Barka (1976) at Flowerdew Hundred in Virginia is very similar in its manner of construction and did include a continuous trench into which its stone foundation was seated.

\textsuperscript{42} Similar to wattle and daub construction, but with lime-based plaster substituted for the mud-based daub. The ruins of eighteenth-century lime kiln was recorded by Barka and Harris (1998) at the base of the slope abutting the west end of the flats.
‘interrupted sill’), or inserted directly into the rubble stone foundation. Keeping in mind the destructive hurricane winds that periodically ravaged the region, the building’s walls were probably low, most likely one-story tall (Mulcahy 2006). Roofs in the Virgin Islands were typically hipped, although gables were also widely used (Crain 1994:73). Surviving late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century maps and illustrations indicate both thatch and wood shingle roofs were widespread, the latter often imported from North America (Striebel MacLean 2015:207; Nelson 2016:94). Unfortunately, archaeological evidence of the style and materials used in this dwelling’s roof was not forthcoming.

As mentioned above, the GN2 dwelling represents the accumulated knowledge of vernacular building in the Caribbean, which by this point was already 100 years in the making. The known seventeenth-century descriptions of English settler’s housing often emphasize their expediency and use of readily available materials. For example, Charles de Rocheford (1666:177) described the dwellings on St.Kitts as:

They were lodg’d much after the same manner as the natural Inhabitants of the Country, in little cotts and hutts made of the wood they had fell’d upon the place as they clear’d the ground….which are sustain’d only by four or six forks planted in the ground, and instead of walls are encompass’d and palizado’d only with reeds, and cover’d with Palm or Plantane-leaves, Sugar-canes, or some such material.
Nelson (2016:74) suggests the Amerindian-derived homes described by de Rocheford probably resembled the post-structures depicted in the late sixteenth-century Francis Drake manuscript (Figure 27). Despite their ease of construction and material thrift, European planters did not hold much affection for their breezy Caribbean accommodations. Thomas Verney, a planter on Barbados, likely contrasting his under-construction island home with the familiar comforts of his home in England, described the island home he was building as a “sorry cottage”. These early structures, however, proved no match for hurricane-force winds. In September 1626, John Smith reported a hurricane “blew downe all our houses” (cited in Mulcahy 2006:119).

Figure 27. Taino Indians in 1586 preparing food in front a European-style wood frame structure illustrated in The Drake Manuscript.
As tobacco gave way to sugar in Barbados and the Leewards in the 1640s, the expedient housing built by the first generation of settlers gave way to more substantial houses that more closely resembled those of the English countryside. Rocheford (1666:177) described these as “very fair houses of Timber, Stone and Brick, built after the same manner as those in their own Countries, save that for the most part they are but one or two Stories high at the most.” Barbados planter Richard Ligon was less enchanted with his Barbadian accommodations, describing them as “timber houses, with low roofs, so low, as for the most part of them, I could hardly stand upright with my hat on, and no cellars at all (Ligon 2011[1657]:89).” The low profile, while awkward for Ligon, was intended to better withstand hurricane-force winds that “sometimes blow in those parts with extraordinary violence (Rocheford cited in Nelson 2016:73).”

Proper ventilation was another problem. Ligon (2011[1657]) indicates that not all early builders appreciated the virtues of a nice breeze when planning their buildings. Rather than opening their homes to the constant eastern breezes, some placed their windows facing west out of concern for rain blowing indoors. As a result, Ligon (2011[1657]:90) complained, “in the afternoons, when the Sun came to the West, those little low roofed rooms were like Stoves or heated Ovens.” Over the course of the seventeenth century, most builders learned how to control the temperature in a house by increasing
airflow and creating shade. Walls became more permeable and windows were louvered rather than glazed. In addition, early builders built lightly-framed sun shelters known as ‘shades’ similar to present-day canopies or awnings. Contemporary images illustrate shades as both freestanding or as appended to houses and other buildings to form a transitional space from inside to out, and in some cases the floors under the shade were also paved (Nelson 2016:71). Field investigations of period sites and buildings, however, are very rare and physical evidence of shades remains scarce.

Instead, most of what is known about the first century of British Caribbean architecture is known through documentary research. Recent analysis of archival sources make clear that most houses built and lived in by English colonists were small earthfast structures with thatch roofing (Hobson 2007; Nelson 2016:77). On Nevis, the Hermitage consisting of a hall open to the roof and a cross wing to the north stands as an exceedingly rare survival of a late seventeenth-century earthfast dwelling of the type that was once common at the turn of the eighteenth century (Leech 2006:31). Archaeological investigations on Nevis and Barbados have resulted in the identification of a handful of additional earthfast buildings from the same period (Drewitt and Bennell 2000:40; Leech 2005:156-7).
West Africans brought to the Caribbean as enslaved plantation laborers also built earthfast homes. Slave codes across the British Caribbean typically did not contain provisions for housing, thus for most of the period of slavery, the enslaved people were expected to construct their own shelters and commandeer their own materials. Accordingly, Handler and Bergman (2009) argue the resulting structures were deeply influenced by West African building practices. Physical evidence for the architectural patterns of seventeenth-century enslaved Africans is very limited, although they likely did not significantly vary from their eighteenth century counterparts (Nelson
Earthfast buildings built by enslaved Africans dating the late eighteenth century have been identified in excavations at Drax Hall and Seville plantations on Jamaica (Armstrong 1990, 2011), Adrian Estate on St. John (Kellar 2017) and Galways Plantation on Montserrat (Pulsipher and Goodwin 2001). Contemporary illustrations and descriptions further indicate the dwellings were mostly rectangular, single-story, wattle and daub buildings with packed earth or dirt floors, and a pitched roof covered with thatch (Figure 28).

The GN2 phase I structure with its earthfast frame and wattle and plaster walls clearly draws on a combination of traditions from both English and West African building practices that co-evolved within the region for over a century. Among their benefits was a greater resistance to earthquake damage relative to a new class of masonry buildings introduced into the Caribbean by wealthy English planters who wanted their homes to reflect metropolitan architectural trends and designs, and at the same time announced to their peers, as well as the enslaved, of their elite status. Middling planters, likely motivated by a combination of social aspiration as well as anxiety over the inevitable next hurricane that would blow down a wooden house also built new masonry homes. Stone construction was especially popular on Nevis in the late seventeenth century where masonry was highly regarded because of its ability to withstand hurricane damage. The strength of the masonry, however,
was still no match for an earthquake. In April 1690 an earthquake struck Nevis causing damage to many masonry buildings to “dropt a sudden from the Top to the Bottom in perfect Ruins. Those that were built of wood were no less violently shaken, but stood however; which shewed that the riveting of wodden structures are far stronger and not so easily disjoynted as the co-agmenations of cement and mortar (Anonymous 1690, cited in Leech 2006:160).”

The vulnerability of “English style” houses, both timber framed and masonry, to natural disasters was often contrasted with Jamaica’s ‘Spanish houses’ built before the English conquest of the island in 1665 (Figure 29). Edward Long (1774), noted that at least fifty preconquest buildings remained on Jamaica and wrote admiringly of their persistence:

*We find their houses excellently well contrived....as to become extremely durable. A certain number of posts of the hardest timber, generally lignum vitae, braziletto or fustick, of about eighteen feet in length, and six to eight inches diameter, being first well seasoned and hardened in smoak, we fixed at proper distances to the depth of two or three feet in the ground; then a well of brick, including those posts, was carried up with very strong mortar to the plate, which was pinned with wooden spikes to tops of the posts.*
The renovation of the original earthfast GN2 dwelling house with masonry reinforced walls (phase II) likely reflects this continual learning among early eighteenth-century builders as local innovations spread from one island to the next. In particular, the building’s second phase included the construction of a waist-high (58-cm/23-inches) masonry foundation that partially encased the building’s pre-existing timber frame that very clearly takes its cues from the Jamaican ‘Spanish Houses.’ Barka and Harris (1998:7) noted the foundation was constructed of uncut-volcanic stones mortared together with interior dimensions of 9.8-meters by 5.2-meters (32 x 17-feet), with the walls averaging about 55-cm in thickness (22-inches) (Figure 30). At the time of
the site mapping, the west half of the foundation was largely intact, while most of its eastern half was reduced to rubble to just above ground level. Where intact, the foundations have sloped tops angled at 32-degrees in order to repel rainwater away from the building’s walls. All foundation surfaces (interior, exterior and top) are covered with a layer of mortar. Ghost impressions of the partially-encased timber frame are visible on the interiors of all four walls of the masonry foundation.43

![Figure 30. Phase II masonry wall with a ghost impression of the phase I vertical timber frame. GN2, west gable interior.]

43 Barka et al. (1998:7) characterized these as ‘slots’ which is a misnomer as it implies the wood posts were inserted after the masonry was laid. Instead, as described above, the building’s initial phase of construction consisted of hole-set wooden posts which were subsequently encased within the mortared stone foundations.
Close inspection of the masonry foundations also revealed evidence indicating wattle and plaster walls above the phase II masonry foundations. The wattle lattice was held in place by wooden support stakes tied directly into the top of the foundation. Evidence of the supports included holes measuring between 2 and 4-cm in diameter and spaced 10 to 15-cm apart along the top of the foundation wall into which the wooden support stakes were fitted. Substantial chunks of thick plaster with wattle marks on their inner surfaces were excavated from both the interior and exterior of the building, indicating that both wall surfaces were covered in this manner. As before, the walls likely reached a height of one-story and the roof was either hipped or gabled, and covered with either thatch or imported wood shingles. Earthfast frames partially encased in waist-high foundations have also been found at several mid-eighteenth century sites on St. John (Norton 2013), possibly indicating a temporal component to this building type, although later iterations of similarly constructed masonry-reinforced timber frames have also been documented at Annaberg Plantation in the former Danish West Indies (USVI) (Leabo 1997:2). More recently archaeologists on Nevis have record several post-in-ground structures renovated with masonry additions to limit the building’s susceptibility to collapse during hurricanes (Leech 2005).
Evidence of three doorways, one in the south foundation wall near the southeastern corner and facing the beach, and two in the north foundation wall facing inland were also recorded as part of the building’s second phase. The presence of two entryways along the same elevation suggests the building was internally partitioned into east and west rooms, each with its own inland-facing door, but only the west room had a beach-facing door. Excavations within the building’s interior found no evidence within the building’s floor indicating an earthfast partition, thus the partition was most likely framed with wooden studs that tied into the exposed wooden framing posts in the north and south foundation walls. By attaching the partition wall to the frame would have negated the need to anchor it into the ground. Comparative evidence of masonry buildings with internal wood partitions includes several surviving early eighteenth-century stone houses on Bermuda (Chappell 2011:105). In addition, the north wall door is precisely aligned with the beach-facing south wall door effectively forming a cross passage through the building’s east end.

In plan and size, this small, probable two-room dwelling is similar to late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century hall-parlor houses of the Chesapeake (Upton 1986), and Bermuda (Chappell 2011) that evolved from

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44 In the initial mapping of the foundation, only the two eastern doors were observed and recorded (Barka et al. 1998:7). Evidence of the third door was not recognized until 2004.
sixteenth-century British vernacular buildings. In GN2, the more publically accessible east room with the cross-passage formed the hall. Through for most of the seventeenth century, the hall in England and the Chesapeake was where people ate their meals, performed odd jobs, stored equipment and entertained guests. In many households, the hall was also a space shared with servants. Meanwhile, the smaller, more private, western room was known as the parlor or chamber, which was commonly used by the planter’s family as sleeping quarters (Graham et al 2007:494). Upton (1986:317) notes how in Virginia, small hall-parlor houses served even the wealthiest segments of the population into the early eighteenth century.

Excavations carried out within the building’s interior indicate the dwelling’s original hard packed red clay floor laid directly over white beach sand. The red clay extended across the whole interior, and was packed against the masonry foundation’s interior surface indicating its installation post-dated the foundation’s construction. Subsequently the red clay was covered by a 5 to 8-cm thick white plaster floor that also extended across the whole interior of the building (Figure 31). The absence of any discernible accumulation of debris over the red clay before the plaster was laid down suggests the red clay was laid as a solid substrate for the plaster. Although heavily damaged by tree roots, several large remnants of the plaster floor remain preserved under a thin layer of topsoil.
The plaster floor is notable as it likely represents a significant outlay of time and money to finish the interior of the dwelling, although a lack of comparable data of on-the-ground buildings prohibits a conclusive assessment of just how often the expense was incurred and by whom. The inclination to floor the building’s interior, however, makes intuitive sense as natural sand is a poor choice as an indoor living surface for obvious reasons. Sand does not hold firm, even when compacted, and it is easily disturbed. When loose, it sticks to anything wet and easily gets lodged in clothing where it becomes a skin irritant. It is also unhygienic as it forms potential pathway for burrowing pests.
- mice, rats, crabs - to enter into the dwelling where they might contaminate food stores. By twice paving over the floor - first with clay and then finished with plaster - the residents were clearly working hard to ensure the building’s interior was apart from the outdoors.

**Exterior Paving**

The artifact-rich refuse middens to the dwelling’s north and south indicate the intensive use of the yard spaces just outside the dwelling’s doorways. As described above, to the north, the eighteenth-century refuse accumulated directly on the natural ground surface and sealed the Amerindian features. To the dwelling’s south, however, the refuse accumulated over a pair of paved surfaces that extended from the dwelling toward the beach (Figure 32). Immediately outside the south-facing door was a 10-cm thick layer of the same dense red clay used as flooring inside the dwelling. The red clay was again laid directly on the white beach sand and covered an area of 6 x 5-meters, extending from the dwelling’s southeastern exterior corner to just west of the midpoint of the south elevation. Outside, however, the red clay was never covered by plaster. Abutting the red clay on its western end was an area of rough-hewn limestone paving. The pavers covered a minimum area of 7 x 5-meters extending at least 2-meters west beyond the dwelling’s southwest corner. Just like the red clay, the pavers were laid directly on the white beach sand. The limestone pavers closely resemble the large flat
stones visible along the shore at North Beach on Guana, but whether this is their source is unknown. Both the clay and the limestone paving are very well preserved, although tree roots have caused a few of the individual stones to become displaced.

Figure 32. On left, the red clay paving along the southeastern exterior elevation of GN2. Note the ‘dirty’ area in front of the building entrance which consists of sand, ash and heavy trampled ceramic, glass and bone ground into the upper surface of the clay. On right, the limestone paving along the southwestern exterior elevation of GN2.

Both the red clay and the limestone were probably laid down as paving within outdoor work areas. Another possibility is that one or both surfaces were enclosed within shed additions to the main structure, although there is no evidence in the dwelling foundation that a later shed foundation was ever tied into it, or even abutted it. Likewise, there was no evidence of postholes for earthfast walls along either paving edge, leaving the possibility that if the spaces were enclosed, the frames consisted of a timber frame tenoned into ground-laid sills resting directly on the paving. Ground-laid sills were
commonly used by English and American house-wrights, but they were particularly vulnerable to decay due to their extended contact with the ground. This would have been especially true in the heat and humidity of the tropics which is notoriously unfavorable for wood preservation. From an archaeological standpoint, ground-laid sills leave almost no visible signature, unless the sill is embedded into a shallow trench, of which there was no evidence here.

In the case of the red clay, it is most likely that it was laid down as an exterior apron outside the doorway in an effort to keep the dwelling’s interior free of the loose beach sand. Indeed, as shown in Figure 32, the red clay is noticeably ‘dirty’ directly in front of the door in comparison to the surrounding clay as it included numerous small fragments of trampled eighteenth-century artifacts lodged within it. To protect the clay from eroding, it is possible that it was covered by a lightly-framed sunshade similar to an awning that hung off the building’s south elevation. As described above, eighteenth-century shades could be freestanding or were appended to houses and other buildings to form a transitional space from inside to out, and in some cases the floors under the shade were also paved (Nelson 2016:71). Figure 33 illustrates from Diderot’s *Encyclopedia* a cotton plantation laborer ginning cotton on a hand-cracked roller gin under the protection of a shade, while two others stuff a sack full of cotton inside an open-sided structure.
There is also no evidence of either masonry or post-in-ground walls in association with the limestone floor, although it is possible that ground-laid wooden sills sat on top of the floor and left no visible evidence. Placement of the wooden sills on the limestone pavers rather than directly on the often-wet ground would have significantly slowed the deterioration process. There is no access through the dwelling’s masonry foundation onto the limestone paved surface, thus if it was enclosed, entry into the space would have had to have been through an exterior door.
It is also unclear why the paving changed from clay to limestone. The change perhaps reflects a variation from one surface to the next in the activities carried out in that space. The Diderot image suggests ginning cotton as one activity that in the context of the mid-eighteenth century Virgin Islands is a good possibility, but it is unclear why a special floor would have been necessary. Another possibility is the limestone paving was a surface for drying fish. Although there is no specific documentary evidence of fish drying occurring on Guana, the recovery of fishing equipment and large quantities of locally procured fish from the north and south middens (see below) clearly attest that fishing was a large part of daily life and diet on Guana. The ability to dry fish would have enabled the residents to store the fish for longer periods of time for personal consumption, and to bring them to sell at the market in Roadtown, or as ship’s provisions.

A wide range of coastal fisherpeople around the world dehydrate fish in order to preserve them for future dietary or commercial use (Zohar and Cooke 1997). Fish drying is cheap; the work can be done by the fisherman and family, and the resulting product is easily transported to market. Fish drying can be done in a variety of ways. The most common method is on fish flakes - a type of wooden platform on which fish are spread out to dry out in the sun and air. Another method known from Newfoundland, albeit much less well known, is to lay the fish on cobble bawns - expanses of rocks on which salted
fish are spread. Air circulation, the thermal properties of the cobbles, and the
cobbles’ inability to retain moisture made bawns ideal fish drying surfaces. A
significant disadvantage, however, is the drying fish’s vulnerability to
scavengers. Both elevated flakes and cobble bawns on the ground are
known from Newfoundland in association with eighteenth-century fishing
villages (Stopp 1994), although none are reported in the ethnohistoric or
archaeological literature of the Caribbean.

**South Yard Midden**

Archaeological evidence of the South Yard Midden was first detected during
the 2004 survey. A total of 224 historic artifacts were recovered from the
three survey test units (TUs 35, 36 & 37) located immediately south of the
dwelling and had accumulated directly over top of the red clay and limestone
pavements (Figure 34). The soil was sand mixed with a significant quantity of
ash. The vast majority (99.5%) of the artifacts were eighteenth century, the
rest were twentieth-century beer and liquor glass bottle fragments most likely
discarded by inconsiderate island guests, and a single .22-caliber bullet shell.
Feral sheep and goats live on Guana and are occasionally hunted to prevent
the herd from getting too large and decimating the island’s plant life. The
spent shell most likely resulted from one of those hunts.
The midden was further sampled in 2006 with a pair of parallel trenches oriented east to west, one measuring 1 x 11-meters, and the second measuring 1 x 14-meters. These were supplemented by two 1 x 2-meter trenches oriented north to south (see Figure 26) excavated to establish the southern ends of the clay and limestone pavings. In total, 29-meter square units were excavated from which a total of 1429 artifacts (not including faunal remains) were excavated (49.3 artifacts per meter square).
A little more than half (54%) of the South Yard Midden non-faunal artifacts were household (kitchen and table) ceramic fragments (n=771); while household glass fragments, consisting of English wine bottles (n=73) case bottles (n=21), pharmaceutical bottles (n=3), and leaded table wares (n=12) represented 8% of the assemblage. Personal items, made up entirely of English white-clay tobacco pipe fragments (n=119), accounted for 8.4% of the total artifact assemblage. Fireclay crucible fragments (n=49 and pieces of lead scrap (n=2), artifacts potentially related to household economic activities, together made up 4% of the assemblage. Security-related finds, namely gun
flints (n=6), accounted for less than 1% of the assemblage. Architectural debris, primarily nails (n=315), but also some brick (n=17), made up nearly a quarter (23%) of the total assemblage. The remainder of the assemblage (2.3%) consisted of unidentified objects made of iron alloy (n=18), copper alloy (n=12) and unidentified (n=1). A more comprehensive analysis of the midden artifacts is offered later in combination with the artifacts from the North Yard Midden.

**North Yard Midden**

Discovered within just 5cm of modern grade during the 2004 survey, the North Yard Midden extended out (north) from the building’s doorways. A total of 128 historic artifacts were initially recovered from the three survey test units (TUs 22, 23, 29 and 30) within the area ultimately defined as the ‘North Yard Midden’. The vast majority (n=121) of the assemblage was eighteenth-century, the rest consisted of twentieth-century beer and liquor glass bottle fragments (n=7). The midden was further sampled in 2006 with a 42-square meter block excavation (Figures 36). The excavation resulted in the recovery of an additional 1110 artifacts for a total of 1238 artifacts from the area of North Yard Midden (29.5-artifacts per meter square). The recovery of foodways-related ceramics and glass in association with the foundations reaffirmed the building’s use as a dwelling.
Figure 36. Grass removed from overtop of the North Yard Midden. Looking south toward the GN2 dwelling.

Figure 37. Chart illustrating the relative percentages of the major artifact groups excavated from the North Yard Midden.
More than half (56%) of the North Yard Midden assemblage (n=1238) consisted of kitchen and table ceramic fragments (n=658). Household glass, including fragments of English glass wine bottles (n=69), case bottles (n=11), and leaded table wares (n=1), represented only about 7% of the North Yard Midden assemblage. Personal items, including: imported white-clay tobacco pipe fragments (n=144), items for personal adornment (n=4), ceramic gaming pieces (n=2), and a spoon (n=1) accounted for 13% of the assemblage. Also recovered were seven gun flints (n=7) accounting for less than 1% of the assemblage. Fireclay crucible fragments were also recovered (n=47) and a piece of lead scrap (n=1) in addition to four round lead fishing weights (n=4). Collectively, these Household Industry-related artifacts accounted for 4% of the North Yard Midden assemblage. Architectural debris, primarily nails (n=158), but also some brick (n=9) and plaster (n=28), made up a decidedly smaller share (16%) of the North Yard Midden than they did in the South Yard Midden. Unidentifiable iron alloy and copper alloy fragments (n=32) made up the remainder (3%) of the North Yard Midden assemblage. In general, the artifacts were concentrated near the eastern door and radiated out from there. Directly below the eighteenth-century artifact refuse layer was a large pre-Columbian midden feature consisting of both plain and incised ceramics, bone and shell. A small degree of mixing between the historic and pre-Columbian layers occurred as a result of taphonomic factors both manmade and natural including: trampling of the ground surface by its eighteenth-century inhabitants which pressed recently deposited artifacts below the
ground surface, and bioturbation caused by crab and rodent burrowing as well as tree roots. Luckily, this mixing appears to be limited to only the upper 4 or 5cm of the pre-Columbian feature.

**Site Dating**

Dating the occupation of GN2 was accomplished via the temporal analysis of both English tobacco pipes and imported Euro-American ceramics recovered from 2004 to 2006. In total, 205 fragments of English white ball clay tobacco pipe stems with measurable bore hole diameters were recovered. Following the Harrington (1954) method for dating tobacco pipes, the most abundant were pipe stems with bore diameters measuring 5/64ths, followed by 4/64ths, and finally 6/64ths of an inch. When compared to Harrington’s distributions through time, the GN2 sample most closely matches the time period of 1710 to 1750 marked by the high percentage of pipe bore diameters measuring 5/64ths of an inch. The correlation, however, is not an exact match as the distribution of Guana’s tobacco pipes is weighted more heavily toward smaller bored pipes (those more recently manufactured) suggesting that the site’s occupation was probably centered closer to the mid-century mark.\(^\text{45}\) Figure

\[^{45}\text{Deetz (1987, 1988) argued that stem-bore diameter distributions with sharp-peaks indicate short-term occupations, while flatter peaks indicate longer-term occupations. Shott’s (2012) statistical testing of the suspected relationship between distribution form and occupation span, however, found no significant correlation.}\]
38 illustrates the comparison between the Harrington Histogram phases and the sample of tobacco pipe stems excavated from Archaeological Site GN2.

Figure 38. Harrington’s five periods and their corresponding tobacco pipe stem distributions are illustrated on the left side of the chart (adapted from Harrington 1954). For comparison purposes, the distribution of tobacco pipe stems (n=205) from GN2 is illustrated on the far right hand side of the graph.

Using the Binford’s (1962) regression formula, the 205 tobacco pipe stems from Guana indicate a mean occupation date of 1750.07, a date consistent with the earlier histogram results. Following Schott (2012), the standard deviation (SD) of the mean date was calculated at .56 which corresponds with a beginning date of 1728.6, and an end date of 1771.5, for the site’s
occupation. Notably, the terminal date of 1771.5 is 3.5-years earlier than the introduction of pearlware ceramics (c.1775) which make up a small (3.4%) portion of the ceramic assemblage, thus indicating that while tobacco pipe mean dates may be valuable dating tools, their standard deviation as an indicator of length of occupation needs further refinement.

Household ceramics provide an alternate avenue for estimating a site’s occupation date. At GN2, 1,464 ceramic fragments were used to calculate mean ceramic date (MCD) based on each ceramic ware type’s mean manufacture date (after South 1977). The result was an estimated mean date of 1754.15, notably very close to Binford’s tobacco pipe mean date (Table 6). South (1977:213) suggests, however, that ceramics (e.g. tin-enamelled wares) with long manufacturing ranges may skew the MCD. Given that more than a third of the ceramic assemblage from GN2 was tin-enamelled which was produced for over 200 years, the MCD was recalculated without including the tin-enamelled wares, and resulted in a slightly later date of 1756.75. Meanwhile, an estimate of the span or date range of the site’s occupation based on South’s (1977) visual bracketing method is 1720 to 1780 (Figure 39). Alternate estimates of occupation span

---

46 1,464 household ceramic fragments out of 1526 excavated. Ceramics with unknown or ambiguous manufacturing date ranges were excluded from the dating analysis including fragments catalogued as: “unidentified coarse earthenware”, “lead-glazed coarse earthenware”, “Afro-Caribbean ware”, and “English stoneware”. 222
were determined by calculating the standard deviation of the mean ceramic date. With the tin-enamelled ceramics included, a standard deviation of 17.44 years was calculated for all midden contexts which translated to a date range of 1736.7 to 1771.6. The standard deviation of the mean ceramic date excluding tin-enamelled wares was 21.86 years, which corresponds to a longer date range of 1734.9 to 1778.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Mean Date</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
<th>MD * n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFINED EARTHENWARES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creamware (Undecorated)</td>
<td>1762-1820</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>6.23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pearlware (Underglaze Blue)</td>
<td>1775-1820</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refined Agate</td>
<td>1740-1775</td>
<td>1758</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.82%</td>
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<td><strong>COARSE EARTHENWARES:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-Glazed Redware</td>
<td>1600-1830</td>
<td>1715</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckley</td>
<td>1720-1775</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derbyshire</td>
<td>1750-1800</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Midlands Slip</td>
<td>1670-1795</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Sandy</td>
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<td>1700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-bodied Agate</td>
<td>1750-1800</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afro-Caribbean</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1715</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead-glazed</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1715</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified Coarseware</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1715</td>
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<td>1.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STONEWARES:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fulham</td>
<td>1671-1775</td>
<td>1723</td>
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<td>Westerwald</td>
<td>1650-1775</td>
<td>1713</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Salt Glazed</td>
<td>1720-1805</td>
<td>1763</td>
<td>222</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Stoneware</td>
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<td>1715</td>
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<td>0.07%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TIN-ENAMELLED:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>English delft</td>
<td>1600-1802</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>34.86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unidentified Tin-Enamelled</td>
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<td>1750</td>
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<td><strong>PORCELAIN:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1660-1860</td>
<td>1760</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Datable Ceramics Sub-Total**: 1464 95.94% 2568072  
**Non-Datable Ceramic Sub-Total**: 62 4.06%  
**Total**: 1526 100.00%

**Mean Ceramic Date (MCD)** = 1754.15  
**Standard Deviation (SD)** = 17.44

Table 6. Mean Ceramic Dating (MCD) Table for GN2
In general, site dating techniques based on tobacco pipe dating (Harrington, Binford, Schott) and ceramics dating (MCD, SD of MCD) all agree that the occupation of GN2 spanned the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century, circa 1730 to 1780 with a probable mid-point in the 1750s, although they varied on when the occupation began and when it ended. In general, the beginning date corresponds closely to when land records are first known for Guana (1732), the occupation span corresponds to the transition from cotton to sugar cultivation on the islands, while the end date matches closely with when the profitability of sugar cultivation in the Virgin Islands collapsed after the conclusion of the American Revolution. In addition, the dates closely
matches the documentary evidence for when James Parke and his family lived on Guana.

**Assemblage Based Artifact Analysis**

A total of 3050 artifacts (not including faunal remains) was recovered in the course of the 2004 and 2006 excavations at GN2, more than two-thirds of which were recovered from either the north or south yard middens. The recovered artifacts were initially catalogued by material, type, function, and form; and then, were grouped into assemblages reflecting each artifact's use as either architecture-related (18.8%) or household-related (70.3%). The remaining 11.0% could not be reliably identified as either, or were intrusive artifacts, such as 20th-century beer and liquor bottles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foodways</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ceramics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Refined Earthenwares</td>
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<td>190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coarse Earthenwares</td>
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<td>439</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonewares</td>
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<td>233</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin-Enamelled</td>
<td></td>
<td>565</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porcelain</td>
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<td>99</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glass</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Wine Bottle</td>
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<td>157</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Bottle</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Glass</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metal</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utensil</td>
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<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking Pot</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Activities</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Pipes</td>
<td></td>
<td>273</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adornment</td>
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<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicinal &amp; Hygiene</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun Flints</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Household Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td>2143</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architecture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nails</td>
<td></td>
<td>481</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaster</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architecture Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>573</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified Iron Alloy</td>
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<td>58</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified Copper Alloy</td>
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<td>0.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unidentified Glass</td>
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<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified Material</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrusive</td>
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<td>253</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
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<td><strong>Miscellaneous Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td>334</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assemblage Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3050</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Assemblage Based Artifact Table.
**Architecture Assemblage**

Architecture-related artifacts (n=573) account for 18.8% of the total artifact assemblage. The vast majority of the architectural materials are wrought iron nails. Since the building’s walls were wattle and plaster supported by masonry foundations, the use of nails would have been limited to the roof frame and possibly shingles, for board walls or partitions on the building’s interior, or for door and window shutters or louvers. The next most abundant architecturally-related artifacts were fragments of plaster (n=40). The majority of the fragments featured a smooth and sometimes white washed exterior finish on one side and wattle impressions on the opposite side. The wattle impressions were round suggesting green saplings were likely woven between the vertical support stakes to make the interior volume of the wall before the plaster was added. The third architecturally-related artifact group were bricks (n=40), all of which were red. There is no obvious need for the bricks within the dwelling suggesting the brick might have been related to second structure such as an oven (like at Monkey Point) or a furnace, or even to line a small outdoor cooking hearth. Another possibility is that the bricks were used as a paving material.
*Household Assemblage*

The household-related artifacts (n=2143) account for 70.3% of the total artifact assemblage excavated at GN2. The majority of the household assemblage includes those artifacts used in foodways related activities (80.9%) including the preparation, consumption, distribution and storage of food and beverages using a wide range of ceramic, glass and metal storage and serving vessels and utensils. The household assemblage also includes artifacts assigned to the personal activities (9.3%) subassemblage that includes leisure-related finds, and clothing related items as well as those associated with personal hygiene. Security-related artifacts (.5%) form the third sub assemblage within the household assemblage, followed by industry-related finds (3.6%).

*Household Foodways Sub Assemblage*

Foodways-related artifacts (n=1731) make up the bulk (80.9%) of GN2’s household assemblage and include the artifacts related to the preparation, consumption, distribution and storage of food and beverages (Table 7). When sorted by material, the foodways-related artifacts include: 1526 ceramic sherds, 204 glass bottle fragments, and 5 metal artifacts. Most abundant among the household ceramic fragments, and accounting for greater than a third (37%) of the household ceramics from the site, are tin-enamelled wares (n=565). Identifiable forms include plates, bowls and mugs
typically related to food consumption or service, although most fragments are too small to accurately correlate them to a specific form. Most fragments feature some element of decoration, primarily consisting of blue hand-painted designs, although a handful of purple manganese or polychrome (green, yellow and red) colored fragments were also recovered. Decorative motifs include a variety of floral and geometric patterns, as well as depictions of buildings and landscapes, including one flatware fragment depicting an open trestle-style windmill (Figure 40). In the context of the eighteenth-century Caribbean, the windmill image is an especially intriguing decorative element, perhaps signaling its owners’ aspirations, as windmills were frequently used to drive the cane crushing machinery on larger sugar estates, especially on Jamaica and Antigua. Windmills, however, represented a very significant investment. In the BVI, only Mount Healthy, a large sugar estate on Tortola, had a wind-powered mill. All other mills, including Guana’s, were animal-powered.
The next most abundant household ceramic ware type was North Midlands (aka Staffordshire-type) combed, trailed and dotted slipware (n=319) fragments which make up 21% of the household ceramic assemblage. Identifiable forms include serving chargers, small plates, bowls and handled mugs. English white salt-glazed stoneware (n=222) turned and molded plates and teawares, including several fragments of a lidded teapot, makeup 14.5% of the household ceramic assemblage; while fragments of hand painted Chinese porcelain tea and individual-sized punch bowls (n=99) account for 6.5%. Each of the above ware types was available by the 1720s,
and could have all been brought to the site when the dwelling was first built c.1730. However, beginning in the 1740s, newly developed English refined earthenware tablewares began to be incorporated into the household including: refined agateware (n=43) cups, at least one teapot, and a possible sauceboat; creamware (n=95) plates and (punch?) bowls including one bowl with the faint traces of a hand-painted ‘King’s Rose’ design; and Rococo-styled blue shell-edged pearlware plates (n=52) and a slip-marbled tankard. Accounting for 12.5% of the household ceramics, the refined earthenwares indicate the continual introduction of new ceramics into the household right up until the site’s abandonment.

The diverse tablewares, including multiple tea pots and a variety of tea bowls in various ware types, suggest that whoever was living at GN2 was relatively well-to-do, with the financial means to remain up to date on the latest metropolitan table fashions and genteel customs of hospitality. Tea drinking, in particular, was an essential component of polite domestic sociability in the mid-eighteenth century British Atlantic and is well represented in the assemblage. Equally popular, especially at male gatherings, was punch made from varying combinations of spirits (rum, brandy and arrack) or wine, fruit (limes, lemon or oranges), sugar, nutmeg and water (Goodwin 1999:131). Drawing on archaeological evidence from across the Chesapeake, Breen (2012) argues that punch was widely experienced
among various social classes, especially in the decade prior to the American Revolution. At GN2, punch drinking is indicated by the recovery of at least two small Chinese porcelain punch bowls, and possibly a third creamware one as well. Similar small bowls, used for individual consumption, were commonly termed ‘sneakers’ in the eighteenth century (Harvey 2008:207) and are common finds at geographically diverse tavern sites such as Rumney/West tavern in Maryland (Luckenbach 2002) or the Punta Salina’s tavern on the Venezuelan island of La Tortuga (Antczak 2014).

Rounding out the tablewares are Fulham stoneware mug fragments (n=7) and Westerwald stoneware fragments (n=3), the latter fragments being too small to estimate vessel forms. Altogether, tin-enamelled, earthenware, refined earthenware, and stoneware tablewares account for 92% of the excavated household ceramics. The remaining 8% consists of utilitarian coarse earthenware bowl and plate fragments - ceramic types frequently associated with food preparation and storage, and that are most often recovered from kitchen contexts. At GN2, the utilitarian vessels were made from red agate coarseware (n=44), lead glazed coarse earthenwares (n=40), Afro-Caribbean wares (n=17), Derbyshire (n=9), Buckley (n=3), Red Sandy (n=2), black-glazed redware (n=1), and four unidentified coarse earthenware ceramics.
Glass tablewares and bottles (n=204), most often associated with alcohol consumption or storage, are not a major component of the foodways assemblage, despite the fact that a rum distillery was located at the nearby sugar works and would have been in operation for at least a portion of GN2’s occupation. Glass tablewares include only 13 fragments of clear glass, with the only identifiable form being a tumbler. Tumblers were multi-purpose drinking vessels that could be used for a wide variety of beverages. Glass was often sold by weight, so although less flashy than stemware, tumblers were generally more expensive than wine glasses which tended to be not as heavy (Jones and Smith 1985:34). Bottle glass fragments, representing bottles primarily used in beverage service, include wine bottle fragments (n=157) and a small quantity of case bottle fragments (n=34). Nearly all the bottle glass shards are small, heavily fragmented pieces, suggesting that the actual number of bottles represented by the fragments was probably comparatively small. While the previously mentioned porcelain and creamware punch bowls would have limited the need for glassware, the small number of glass tablewares and bottles is nonetheless unusual among British planters in the Caribbean for whom alcohol-related glassware was often used to mark gentility and sociability. To that point, significant quantities of table and bottle glass have been excavated from planters’ residences in the Bahamas, Montserrat and Barbuda (Farnsworth 1996:17; Striebel MacLean 2015; Watters and Nicholson 1982:226). In Barbados, according to Smith (2008:85), the large quantities of alcohol-related ceramic and glass vessels
excavated from domestic sites in Bridgetown suggest that alcohol-based sociability was such an ingrained part of life that sociable drinking on that island was elevated to a “reverential level.” In the Virgin Islands, however, the temperate philosophy of the local Quaker Meeting, of which James Parke was a member, may have had a quieting effect on local alcohol-based sociability. The Tortola Meeting Minutes mention excessive drinking as a general concern, and it was the basis for at least one dismissal from the local meeting of the Society of Friends (Jenkins 1923:32). The archaeological evidence from GN2 does suggests that, while not abstaining, local resident’s alcohol consumption was significantly more moderate than elsewhere in the British Atlantic, and especially in comparison to their Barbadian counterparts. Likewise, John Chenoweth’s (2011:260-2) investigation of the Lettsome family home on Little Jost Van Dyke, a neighboring island also occupied by a Quaker family, found only a single stemware fragment and relatively few bottle glass fragments from mid-century contexts. Contexts on Little Jost Van Dyke post-dating the dissolution of the local Quaker Meeting, however, included many more bottle glass fragments, as did those associated with enslaved Africans for all time periods.

The metal foodways-related artifacts (n=5) include a copper alloy spoon bowl, a copper alloy ladle bowl, and three fragments of a footed iron cooking pot. By the eighteenth century, spoons were common tablewares even among the
poorest households (Wadley 1985:8). The drawn-out bowl shape is characteristic of the early eighteenth century and is much longer and narrower than seventeenth-century types. Narrow tongues at the base of the spoon stem that helped to support the weight of the bowl known as ‘rat-tails’ were common through 1730, after which they were replaced by a “scale-like junction ornament” (Noel Hume 1969:183). The lack of a rat-tail, further pinpoints the GN2 spoon’s manufacture to after 1730. The ladle and the iron pot would have been used to prepare stews and soups made from local vegetables, fish and shellfish. The very low numbers of artifacts that relate to food preparation or storage relative to consumption (tablewares) suggests that cooking did not occur indoors or within the immediate vicinity of the dwelling. More likely, food preparation occurred either within a detached kitchen building or an informal outdoor kitchen on the periphery of the yard. Throughout the eighteenth-century British Atlantic, except among the very poor, the heat, noise, odors and general commotion associated with food preparation were deliberately set off from the social, familial, or private sectors of the dwellings of Europeans. Within these out-of-sight places, fruits, vegetables and various meat were collected, cleaned, mixed, spiced, and ultimately cooked. Once ready, the meals were taken to the hall to be consumed (Chappell 2013:164). In addition, the removal of the cooking apparatus from the dwelling space also served an important social component. As historian John Vlach (1993:43) wrote, “the detached kitchen was an important emblem of hardening social boundaries and the evolving
society created by slaveholders that increasingly demanded clearer
definitions of status, position, and authority.” Vlach was writing about the
Chesapeake, but his observation is applicable to numerous contexts where
Europeans sought to emphasize their perceived superior status in the face of
large numbers of enslaved laborers.

*Household Personal Activities Sub Assemblage*

The next sub-assemblage consists of personal activity-related artifacts which
account for 13.2% of the total household assemblage. Personal activity
includes artifacts relating to smoking tobacco, leisure activities, personal
adornment, and medicine and hygiene. Tobacco-related artifacts were the
most abundant, constituting 96.5% of the personal activities sub-assemblage.
Tobacco smoking was widespread in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic
among all social and economic classes, including among enslaved Africans.
According to early eighteenth-century documents, tobacco was occasionally
grown in the Virgin Islands, but it was not a major crop. A century later,
tobacco is not listed in either the 1815 or 1823 production charts, suggesting
that smokers by this point either relied on imports or grew very small
quantities for personal use.
Tobacco-related artifacts are common on most eighteenth-century sites (Noel Hume 1969); and at GN2, the tobacco related finds consisted entirely of inexpensive imported white-clay tobacco pipe fragments (n=273). Most of the pipe fragments are stem pieces (n=213), none of which had any distinguishing markings, and the rest are characteristically fragile bowl fragments (n=60), also unmarked. As previously described, the pipe stems are particularly useful as dating tools, and in this instance, suggest a mid-eighteenth-century occupation. Among the bowl fragments, three complete or nearly-complete tobacco pipe bowls were also recovered (Figure 41). Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, pipe bowls also underwent an easily recognizable evolution (see Noel Hume 1969:303), although because of their fragility they are infrequently found intact. All three examples found at GN2 are characteristic of the eighteenth century: two resemble Noel Hume’s Type 18 (c.1720-1820) and one is a spurred-bowel example is comparable to Noel Hume’s Type 19 (c.1690-1750).
Chenoweth (2011) reports that tobacco pipes were also recovered from the site of the Quaker Meeting House at Fat Hog’s Bay on Tortola, as well as from the Lettsom family home on Little Jost van Dyke. Quakers, as it turns out, had little argument with smoking tobacco. Interestingly, however, Chenoweth (2011) also found that at the Lettsome Estate, tobacco pipes were recovered in significantly greater quantities at the planter’s residence than in association with nearby enslaved residences, suggesting that planters may have restricted enslaved African access to tobacco. Meanwhile, on St. John in the USVI, only very small quantities of tobacco pipes were recovered from a series of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century domestic sites.
occupied by white, black and mixed race households located within St. John’s East End Community (Armstrong 2003). Rather than a religious prohibition, tobacco smoking among both planters and the enslaved in the Virgin Islands may have been moderated by a combination of household status and tobacco’s uncertain availability. While better-off households continued to smoke tobacco in the same fashion as their counterparts elsewhere in the colonies, among the enslaved, poor and economically marginal, tobacco may have been a enough of a luxury item that some elected to forgo smoking altogether.

Figure 42. Ceramic gaming pieces from GN2.

Meanwhile, the sparse archaeological evidence of leisure activities other than smoking at GN2 is limited to a pair of disc-shaped ceramic gaming pieces
measuring 12mm and 18mm in diameter (Figure 42). Skillfully fashioned from fragments of tin-enamelled pottery, both discs feature some element of painted decoration on one side and are undecorated on their reverse sides -- possibly to identify one side as the ‘heads’ or upside, and the other as ‘tails’ or down side. Throughout the Caribbean and North America, archaeologists have found that similar small round markers or tokens were used in a variety of games by British, African, Spanish and Native American people of different ages (Smith and Watson 2009:70; Panich et al. 2017; Singleton 2015; Stiebel MacLean 2015:331-4). Excavations of enslaved African quarter sites on Jamaica (Armstrong 1990:137-8; Galle 2011), Cuba (Singleton 2015:178), Barbados (Smith 2015) and Montserrat (Striebel MacLean 2015:331-4); as well as throughout eastern North America (Klingelhofer 1987; Russell 1997; Samford 1996; Chan 2007:184) have frequently resulted in the recovery of ceramic gaming pieces shaped out of broken pottery. As a result, the manufacture of gaming pieces is most often attributed to enslaved Africans, even when recovered from potentially Euro-American contexts. For example, Striebel MacLean (2015:334) suggests that seven ceramic gaming pieces recovered from a planter’s residence on Montserrat may be evidence of game playing, either clandestine or out in the open, by enslaved African domestic servants within the plantation owner’s home. That is not to say, however, that the English and other Europeans didn’t use them as well. Smith and Watson (2009:70), for example, argue the recovery of a tin-enamedeled gaming piece from a seventeenth-century context was used by low-status colonists to play
backgammon or checkers to alleviate the boredom of life on sparsely populated Barbados. At GN2, the gaming pieces could have been used by either, but perhaps most importantly, they suggest the porosity of both social and physical boundaries within the household.

Artifacts associated with personal adornment (n=2) include a linked set of octagonal copper alloy sleeve buttons and a copper alloy finger ring. Although few in number, because of their intimate nature, personal adornment artifacts are nevertheless potentially powerful indicators of status, prestige, gender, politics and religion (Loren 2010:8). Each sleeve button measures 11mm across and features a faint incised design, possibly a sunflower or daisy blossom at its center (Figure 43). Noel Hume (1961) proposed that octagonal shapes were most popular in the early eighteenth century, although Rivers Cofield’s (2012:113) recent comparative study indicates their popularity peaked in the 1760s. Sleeve buttons were generally inexpensive, and very versatile accessories that could be worn on a variety of different garments (not just sleeves) and were regularly used by men and women, adults and children, and individuals of all social classes (Rivers Cofield 2012). They were also easily transferred from one garment to another, and they were often mixed and matched to individual tastes (Takeda and Spilker 2010:17).
Finger rings, meanwhile, were worn sparingly by the English in the early part of the eighteenth century, but increased in popularity among women by mid-century, and frequently had important symbolic meaning associated with
them (White 2005:96). The copper alloy ring recovered from GN2 features a round plaque decorated with an engraved portrait of an unidentified man wearing a wig with a long queue (pony-tail) shown in profile (Figure 44). The late style of man’s wig suggests the ring is from the second half of the eighteenth century. The significance of the portrait is unclear. It could be the likeness of a deceased or close relative, or could be an admired or famous person. In the latter vein, the engraved image may be of the British monarch, King George III who ascended to the British throne in 1760, as it bears a modest resemblance to a relief profile of George III used on the 1763 3-pence coin. Finger rings are not especially common artifacts on Anglo-American sites, although so-call ‘Jesuit rings’ cast in brass are well-known from French fur trade sites in the Upper Great Lakes and Middle Mississippi Valley of North America. Used by eighteenth-century French fur traders as trade items, rings recovered from Fort Michilimackinac in northern Michigan are decorated with a variety of shapes, letters and other cast or engraved symbols (Hauser 1982), but none of the published ring illustrations matches the example from Guana.

Medicinal and hygiene related items from the personal activity sub-assemblage include just four green to blue-colored glass fragments of a

47 Over 1,600 brass Jesuit rings were also archaeologically recovered from the late seventeenth-century wreck of the La Belle in the Gulf of Mexico (Birmingham and Mason 2017).
pharmaceutical bottles or phials. The paucity of pharmaceutical glassware is notable given the frequency with which it is encountered on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century archaeological sites elsewhere (Noel Hume 1969:72). Other common medicinal-related items were similarly absent such as tin-enameled salve pots and drug canisters. Their absence may simply indicate that medicine was held in other, non-specialized vessels. Alternatively, perhaps the ready availability of professional medical care negated the need for home-based treatments. Best-known among Tortola’s eighteenth-century physicians was Dr. John Coakley Lettsom, who worked as a physician on Tortola in 1767-68, and his files indicate “a gentleman from Scotland who practised medicine in the island” was already in residence when Coakley arrived in 1767 (Abraham 1933:59). Among the enslaved, “root doctors,” “conjurers,” nurses and midwives -- relied upon roots and herbs grown in house-yard gardens and harvested on an as-needed basis and sometimes in combination with propitiatory rituals to appease and appeal to spirits to treat medical problems (Carney 2003:170). Their reliance on fresh ingredients in the preparation of treatments may have further limited the need to store drugs. Nevertheless, although many contemporary writers recognized enslaved Africans ethnomedical knowledge as “more ingenious than we [Europeans] in procuring health” (cited in Carney 2003:170), planters typically associated it with black magic, witchcraft or sorcery and were reluctant to entrust their medical care in the hands of a potentially aggrieved individual who might take the opportunity to poison or otherwise harm them. For the
most part, enslaved caregivers looked after other enslaved persons, while the white planters relied on European-trained doctors.

*Household Security Sub Assemblage*

The security sub-assemblage consists of artifacts related to maintaining a state of feeling safe, stable and free from fear or anxiety. Personal security was a distinct concern among Virgin Islands planters who lacked a local government, law enforcement or a regular military presence as late as the 1770s. As a result, Virgin Islands colonists were vulnerable to threats from the pirates and privateers who had used the many coves of the Virgin Islands as safe havens since the sixteenth century. At the same time, the Spanish, long hostile to the idea of non-Hispanic colonization of the Virgin Islands, regularly harassed Virgin Islands settlements, sometimes with deadly consequences. In the eighteenth century, sugar planters also grew progressively anxious that the ever-growing numbers of newly arrived enslaved Africans might work together to rise up against local planters as they did on St. John in 1733. As fears mounted, a colony-wide census was carried out in 1756, in part to access the readiness of the local population in the advent of an assault or uprising. The census taker noted three “small arms” on Guana, and recorded that five more were desired. No cannons were recorded on the island, although two six-pounders were requested. There are currently two probable eighteenth-century cannon on Guana, although
their dating is largely conjectural. The first is a three-pounder salvaged from the Monkey Point ruin that is currently at the hotel and is mounted on a carriage overlooking the flats (see Figure 21). The second cannon, located along the beach near the beach bar at White Bay, is much larger, measuring 5'6" from end to end.

![Figure 45. Gunspalls from GN2.](image)

Probable archaeological evidence of the small arms includes a pair of intact gunspalls (Figure 45) -- wedge-shaped gunflints that feature retouching along the sides and heel and often includes a bulb of percussion (e.g. Hamilton 1960) -- used to ignite the gunpowder in a flintlock gun. Both examples are knapped from dark grey colored flint and are morphologically consistent with common eighteenth-century forms. One of the gunspalls exhibits significant wear and was clearly retouched to enable its continued use. In addition, thirteen non-diagnostic small to medium sized flint flakes were also recovered, including both dark grey and blonde or honey-colored examples. Although irregularly formed, some of these may have been pistol flints. In
other cases, flakes with their outer cortex present suggest that new gunspalls were being produced on site from imported nodules. The only projectiles recovered were four musket balls that had been repurposed as fishing weights (discussed below). Firearm rounds were presumably a finite resource, so the fact that musket balls was being rededicated for purposes other than ammunition may be an indication that Guana’s residence had a different, or perhaps changing, notions of what were the greatest threats to the island’s settlement. Evidently, the concern for ensuring a productive catch outweighed the concern for armed readiness.

*Household Industry Sub Assemblage*

The industry sub-assemblage includes those artifacts that relate to household economic undertakings outside of plantation-based agricultural production. For Guana’s planters, diversifying household production beyond agriculture was a smart hedge against the routinely erratic agricultural harvest and fickleness of Atlantic commodities markets. Fishing was one such activity that not only fulfilled household subsistence needs, but with a good catch, had the potential to result in a marketable surplus. According to historians, however, through at least the first century of British colonization, the English ate very little local fish, despite the vast quantities in surrounding waters (Richardson 1983:15; Watts 1987:353). The English planters arriving in the Caribbean beginning in the seventeenth century had little to no prior experience with
fishing, thus regarded it as too risky. Instead, animal protein was typically imported in the form of dried fish and pork from North America. As long as imported salt fish remained inexpensive there was no incentive to develop or expand local fisheries. Inexpensive salt fish from the North Atlantic remained a staple of planter-provided provisions to enslaved Africans through the end of slavery, and continued to be imported well into the twentieth century (Adams 1992:2). However, there are always exceptions. Col. Humphrey Walrond, a prominent planter on Barbodes in the mid-seventeenth century, seems to have been one such anomaly. Richard Ligon (2011[1657]:83) recalled that “Walrond has the advantage of all the planters in the Iland; for, having a Plantation neer the Sea, he hath of his own a Saine to catch fish…. (and) bring home all sorts of such small and great fishes, as are neer the shoar.” Guests taking meals at Walrond’s home were reportedly served, “Mullets, Mackerels, Parrot fish, Snappers, red and gray, Cavallos, Terbums, Crabs, Lobsters, and Cony fish, with divers sorts more, for which have no names (Ligon 2011 [1657]:83).” Walrond’s menu indicates a focus on fish that live primarily in inshore habitats. Archaeological evidence, suggests that over time, attitudes toward fish and fishing changed. Interestingly, excavations at Brimstone Hill on St.Kitts dating from the third and fourth quarts of the eighteenth century suggest fish consumption was correlated with military rank. Enlisted men consumed relatively more fish than officers who ate more sheep and goat (Bennett 2015).
While the English, for the most part, seemed to have been disinterested in fishing, the French settlers of the Windward Islands were more amenable to both eating and catching fish. The French had the benefit of close observation of the highly experienced Island Carib fishermen living on nearby islands who provided the early French settlers with a ready supply of local fish. Price (1966) notes how seventeenth-century French observers widely admired the fishing skills of the Island Caribs which led to frequent exchanges of fishing knowledge and technology between the two.

Fishing was also likely a very attractive opportunity to enslaved Africans since it meant periodic removal from the island and even chances for escape. The French missionary Du Tertre (1667-1671 v2:243), described enslaved Africans fishing with “small pots with split reeds.” Nets were also used and likely included both small hand nets and seines, which are large nets that hang vertically in the water and are dragged ashore usually by two or more individuals. On St. Kitts and Martinique, according to Price (1966), enslaved African fishermen emerged a privileged subgroup separate from the rest of plantation laborers. To the planters, they provided a coveted resource (fish) and in return were granted liberties not afforded to others. Enslaved fishermen were also able to supplement their own food, as well as sell off a portion of their catch in the islands’ internal markets (Mintz and Hall 1960).
At GN2, clear evidence that fish was regularly consumed within the household includes an assemblage of fish remains (discussed below) alongside meat from domestic animals such as pigs and cows, while archaeological evidence of fishing by household members includes the four aforementioned musket balls repurposed as line or net weights (Figure 46). Measuring between .55 and .65-inches in diameter, the musket balls were drilled all the way through their centers permitting them to be strung on a line or within netting.\textsuperscript{48} The practice of modifying musket balls for use as net sinkers is recorded in the ethnohistorical record by Edward Long (1774) in his \textit{History of Jamaica}. In describing the events encompassing the 1760 Jamaican slave uprising known as Tacky’s War, Long described how

\textsuperscript{48} These are distinct from extraction screw marks or other types of holes described by Sivilich (2005:11) which typically did not extend all the way through the musket ball.
Coromantee (Akan) maroon rebels in need of ammunition salvaged drilled musket balls from fishing nets: “Proceeding from thence to the bay, which lies under the fort, they met with some fishing-nets, from which they cutt off the leaden sinkers, made of bullets drilled” (Long 1774:II,448). Unfortunately for the Coromantee, “The drilled bullets, then from fishing nets, described an arch in their projection, and flew over the heads of the militia (Long 1774:II,450).” That the musket balls value as a fishing weight superseded its value as ammunition is also telling about what individuals households held as priorities versus those of colonial administrators who frequently lamented the lack of adequate supplies of ammunition on the islands.

To the fish bones and net weights, we may also add a possible third piece of the fishing puzzle, the exterior limestone pavement along the south elevation of the dwelling previously suggested as a fish drying platform. In the Virgin Islands, in contrast to Barbados or Jamaica where the potential returns of sugar far outweighed all other revenue opportunities, fishing represented a niche opportunity to supply a historically undersupplied local market. Especially during the early years of cotton cultivation, the numerous coastlines of the Virgin Islands provided a number of inshore reefs swarming with all manner of fish that were readily exploitable with minimal risk. In addition, the ability to preserve fish through drying them would have allowed Guana’s residents to catch more and lose less to spoilage.
Clipping or counterfeiting coins is another household industry, albeit an illicit one, suggested through the archaeology. From contexts across the site, 100 fragments of triangle-shaped crucibles made from heat-resistant fireclay were recovered (Figure 47). The Hesse region of Germany had been the center of production for crucibles since the twelfth century, and Hessian crucibles have been identified in archaeological contexts in diverse contexts such as Norway, Britain, Portugal and Virginia ranging from the 15th to the 19th
centuries. The crucibles were used in copper metallurgy, ore assaying, coin minting, and chemical experimentation (Martinon-Torres 2011, Martinon-Torres et al 2008). In Williamsburg, Virginia, crucible fragments are occasionally archaeologically recovered on commercial sites, including approximately two dozen fragments from mid eighteenth-century archaeological contexts associated with Walthoe’s Store where a small furnace possibly used for minting counterfeit coins was also found (Garden et al. 2001).

Counterfeiting was widespread in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World, and counterfeit currency of all forms circulated widely and freely. This was especially true for the British Caribbean where the demand for coin was high regardless of its quality. As a result, according to Smoak (2017:469), in the British Caribbean a coin’s value came from its functionality as a medium of exchange rather than the amount of silver or gold it contained. In the eighteenth century, very few British-minted coins existed in the British Caribbean, hence commerce was conducted with foreign coins. With its distinctive design and consistent silver content, the Spanish dollar or Piece of Eight was the most trustworthy coin in the colonies, and was used in both domestic and external trade. Local governments periodically countermarked these coins with stamps or punches to keep them on their own islands. Small change was in especially short supply, thus to make change, or for smaller
purchases, whole silver coins were cut into eight pieces or ‘bitts.’ Enslaved and poor people also used pewter coins washed with silver known as ‘black dogs,’ or small French copper coins restamped as British known as ‘stampees’. As a result, circulating coins varied significantly in their appearance.

Figure 48. Clipped silver Oak Tree Shillings, c.1660-1667 from Massachusetts. Photo courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Smoak (2017:475) notes that counterfeit traders thrived in this wide-ranging monetary landscape. Some so-called ‘bad coins’ were out-and-out forgeries, while others were legally minted coins that were reduced through clipping, filing, or a chemical process known as ‘sweating’ that leached precious metal from coins (Figure 48). The cut-off pieces of gold and silver would then be melted into a bar and sold, or used to make counterfeit coins. Stamped coins of all metals, meanwhile, might be melted down in order to export the coins.
out of a particular colony. Clipping or shaving gold and silver coin was not without risk; if caught, a counterfeiter would be charged with high treason which was punishable by death (Scott 1957; Smoak 2017).

Given the above historical context and pervasiveness of forged coinage across the British Atlantic, and in particular for the Caribbean, the unexpected discovery of the crucibles at GN2 may point to a local incidence of counterfeiting. Visual inspection of the excavated crucibles from Guana revealed that some fragments had foreign residues in a range of colors.
adhering to their interiors. In an attempt to identify the nature of the residues, the ten fragments with the most prominent residuum were analyzed by Emily Williams using the portable X-ray Fluorescence (pXRF) spectrometer at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation’s Archaeological Conservation Laboratory. The pXRF is a non-destructive technique for measuring a substance’s chemical composition. The pXRF testing of the Guana samples revealed that most of the crucible residues have varying combinations of copper (Cu), zinc (Zn), silver (Ag), and lead (Pb) alloys, with the former three being alloys common in colonial coinage. Within the crucibles, the alloys were not very well mixed, with some sample loci showing much higher peaks for silver or zinc than others even when loci were compared within the same crucible fragment, suggesting that the crucible may have been reused to melt objects of different base metal without thoroughly cleaning out the crucible. An interesting element that also regularly showed up in the testing, although typically in very small quantities, was Bromine (Br). Bromine is naturally occurring in ocean water, and has an affinity for silver, further indicating that silver was being melted in the crucibles. Small quantities of tin (Tn) were also seen in some crucibles, but not in all (E.Williams, personal communication).

The strong silver alloy profiles were recorded in almost every sample suggesting the focus of the activity was on melting silver, likely coin clippings or shavings, to be recast into bars to be sold or recast as counterfeits.
Although no trace of a furnace for heating the crucibles was discovered archaeologically, there was likely one on the property given the large numbers of crucibles. The number of crucible fragments also suggests a large scale operation that likely benefited from Guana’s relative anonymity within an already marginal colony. Counterfeiting, in this case, probably represented another facet of the household’s diverse economic activities, one would not likely be recoverable through documentary analysis alone.

Dietary Remains

In total, 1,229 faunal specimens were recovered from GN2 contexts representing the residue of meals consumed at the site. The faunal assemblage consists of 354 vertebrate specimens recovered from both the North and South Yard Middens and 875 invertebrate specimens recovered from the South Yard Midden (Table 8).\(^49\) The vertebrate remains were analyzed by zooarcheologist Stephen Atkins at Colonial Williamsburg’s Zooarchaeology Lab while the invertebrates were identified by the author.

In general, the vertebrate remains were identified to species when possible, and quantified by NISP (number of identified specimens). The bones were

\(^{49}\) At the time of the North Yard’s excavation, the invertebrate remains were believed to be part of the earlier Amerindian occupation and were not included in the present analysis.
then weighed in order to calculate biomass which is used here to determine the relative dietary importance of different animals, since it provides an estimate of the amount of usable meat based upon bone weight (Reitz and Scarry 1985). Although there were far more wild species, especially fish, the total biomass for domestic animals was significantly higher, indicating they were more important in the diet.

Domestic species, including cattle (n=6), pig (n=6), sheep/goat (n=13), and the unidentified mammals makeup 39.6% of the vertebrate NISP, but account for 78.4% of the vertebrate biomass. Due to difficulties in distinguishing sheep (Ovis aries) from goat (Capra hircus) bones, the two are grouped together. In addition, some elements could not be identified beyond Class Mammalia (n=114), but when possible, they were differentiated between 'medium' and 'large' mammals. As there are no native 'medium' or 'large' sized mammals in the Caribbean, both of the groupings were considered with a high probability to be introduced domestic species. The 'medium' elements were likely pig, sheep or goat; while, the 'large' elements were almost certainly cattle. GN2’s inhabitants could have raised the livestock on the island, although inexpensive salted provisions such 'barrelled beef' and 'salt pork' were widely imported the British Caribbean (Parry and Sherlock 1966:159, Klippel 2001).

50 The “Large mammal” grouping could also include horses and donkeys which due to cultural taboos would have been unlikely to have been consumed. The presence of butchery marks on many of these bones, however, clearly indicates their processing for consumption.
Herds of sheep and goat, however, were frequently raised locally for both dairying and meat.

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<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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<td><strong>5.290</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>West Indian Topsnails</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Whelks)</td>
<td><em>Cittorium pica</em></td>
<td>875</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faunal Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1226</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Table 8. Faunal remains from GN2.
Wild species make up 60.4% of the vertebrate NISP and 21.2% of the vertebrate biomass and includes primarily fish, but also a small amount of marine turtle, and birds. Identifiable fish are primarily reef fish. Sea Bass (n=25), Groupers (n=24), Parrotfish (n=11), Porgys (n=8) Snappers (n=7), Wrasse (n=4), Squirrelfish (n=2) and Grunts (n=2) predominate the assemblage. The only non-reef species were needlefish (n=1) which usually live in neritic ocean waters near islands and occasionally gather in large schools, and an unidentified cartilaginous fish (n=1) (shark, skate or ray). Other wild species included marine turtle (n=1) and unidentified birds (n=5). Overall, the fish taxa recovered from the North and South Yard Middens indicate that the inhabitants of GN2 focused their fishing efforts on the exploitation of nearby inshore habitats, most likely using fish traps or variously sized nets.
The most abundant food remains were invertebrate species, the vast majority of which were West Indian topsnail (*Cittarium pica*) shells, known in the BVI as whelks (Figure 49). Whelks provided an important resource for Guana’s residents that was readily available for gathering from the rocky intertidal zone along Guana’s coast. The fact that they are commonly recovered from both Amerindian and colonial-era archaeological sites throughout the Caribbean attests to their dietary importance, as well as to their reliability as a resource.
**GN2 Summary**

GN2 provides an in-depth look household dynamics and everyday life among small planters during the mid-eighteenth century transition from cotton to sugar cultivation on the margins of the British Caribbean. Located on the coast fringes of Guana’s ‘flats’, the GN2 dwelling house occupies a slight terrace just behind the approximate midpoint of White Bay Beach. The documentary evidence of the Virgin Islands European colonization indicates that Guana’s eighteenth-century settlement was likely carried out by cotton farmers displaced from elsewhere in the Caribbean, most likely the Leeward Islands. Archaeological evidence indicates the initial phase of construction of the dwelling at GN2 was that of a very modest earthfast wattle and plaster structure that may have served as a combination residence and work space. The scant documentary record specific to Guana, points to the Park family, members of the Tortola Meeting of the Society of Friends, as GN2’s likely residents.

As the Parks grew more established on Guana, they made changes to their home, their household, and their way of earning a living. By the end of the 1750s, agricultural production on Guana switched from cotton to sugar cultivation. The handful of enslaved laborers that cleared the land were most likely housed near the recently built sugar mill on the banks of Guana’s salt pond. Before long, they were joined by many more people recently enslaved.
and transported across the Atlantic from West Africa, whose lives for the most part remain undiscovered. The house at GN2 was substantially upgraded as well. The original earthfast posts were encased in a stone foundation that provided added stability to the structure, while on the inside, a plaster floor formalized the small dwelling’s interior. On the dwelling’s beach-facing exterior, a possible shade offered a measure of respite from the tropical sun for those working the south yard.

The excavation of the two houseyard middens, north and south of the dwelling, meanwhile revealed an artifact assemblage that spoke to the Park’s aspirations to remain current with metropolitan trends. Their ceramic assemblage, in particular, reflects the continuous introduction of new plates, bowls, tea cups and teapots from Staffordshire potters into the household. At the same time, glass bottles and tablewares are uncharacteristically absent from the assemblage relative to contemporary sites in the regions. Like their peers elsewhere, the Parkes did enjoy a few vices, but in moderation, possibly a reflection of their Quaker faith. For alcohol, drinking bowls suggest a preference for rum punch over wine and beer, while the numerous tobacco pipe fragments indicate no aversion to tobacco. The linked sleeve buttons and a finger ring are also accessories that underscore both an interest in fashion, and more importantly, the ability to introduce the latest trends into the household.
The household’s upwardly mobile lifestyle was undoubtedly a result of their ability to recognize opportunities in both the global and local markets and aggressively act upon them. In the context of the British Caribbean, that assertiveness was characteristically dependent upon the brutality of enslaved African labor to keep the sugar fields cultivated and the sugar factories producing sugar and rum. As already mentioned, Guana’s enslaved population increased from just a handful of people in the 1730s to 160 by 1756. Other pursuits may have included fishing the local reef for both subsistence, but also for selling at the market. Illicit gains may have also added the household’s coffers by clipping or counterfeiting coins.

**Archaeological Site GN7**

Archaeological site GN7, known since the mid-twentieth century as the Lake House, is marked by the remains of three mortared stone foundations nestled into the steeply-sloped hillside above Monkey Point on Guana Island’s southern tip (Figure 22). The foundations include those of bake oven, possible kitchen structure, and an Anglo version of a creole-style dwelling house. According to Edwards (1994:157), this is a building with a “European derived rectangular core that is partially or fully surrounded by peripheral spaces that are always more narrow than the central areas and that includes at least one full-length front gallery or open loggia.”
The 1948 Tortola Plantations map identifies the site as the residential compound belonging the heirs of the Lake family, although as described in Chapter 4, documentary evidence to substantiate the claim has not yet been found. Quaker historian Charles Jenkins (1923) identifies the Lakes as members of the Tortola Meeting of the Society of Friends, and according to his accounting, the Lake’s owned a portion of Guana Island in the mid-eighteenth century. More recently, the site is remembered as the location where Louis and Beth Bigelow, Guana’s owners from 1935 to 1972, stumbled upon a small cannon that they later transported by rowboat and jeep to the present-day Guana Island Club (Dominica House) and mounted it on a rock overlooking the flats (Fiske, n.d.). In addition to 1998 mapping, archaeological fieldwork at the site included a significant revision to the original plan drawings and limited subsurface investigations within the yard space west of the dwelling house. The goal was to sample the nature and extent of the Lake House site’s subsurface archaeological deposits and assess their potential for future excavation.

Construction of the slope-side residential complex at GN7 likely dates to the mid-eighteenth century or slightly later (see below). As Virgin Islands planters transitioned from cotton to sugar cultivation in the mid eighteenth century, there was a corresponding reorganization of the Virgin Islands’ built
environment and landscape. As already mentioned, the most obvious aspect of this transformation was the construction of sugar works, and across Tortola dozens of sugar works were built in the second half of the eighteenth century. Guana’s sugar works, archaeologically investigated between 1998 and 2003, cover an area of about 700-square meters and consist of a crushing mill, a combination boiling/curing/storage facility, and a rum distillery (Barka et al. 1999). Construction labor for the factory complex on Guana was undoubtedly made up of enslaved Africans. At the same time, the newly arrived enslaved Africans were set to work on building their own housing, usually organized into villages, the location of which was typically determined by the planters’ instruction to minimize the distance between laborer dwellings and the factory complex (Bates 2015, Clement 1995).

Guana’s planters also upgraded their own residences, with the actual construction work undoubtedly carried out by the enslaved. As discussed, the residents of GN2 in the flats encased their home’s earthfast walls within a masonry foundation and added a finished plaster floor. Others built new homes altogether, possibly including GN7. These next-generation homes were often sited on hillsides, and sometimes overlooked agricultural fields. After decades of clearing forest and brush to expand agricultural lands, initially for cotton, and later for sugar cane, planters and their builders were able to reach the islands’ higher elevations for the first time (Figure 50).
contrast to the beachhead locations of the first generation of settlers that were modeled upon Amerindian settlement patterns, the new slope-side dwellings were designed to reflect the planters ascendancy in the social hierarchy from small cotton farmers to proto-industrial sugar planters, but as argued herein, to take advantage of cooling breezes and also to maintain the inhabitants visual contact with distant neighbors (per Delle 2002).

Figure 51. 1790 image of an unnamed sugar plantation on St. John in the Danish Virgin Islands. The lowest elevations are almost all cleared of native vegetation and are now planted in sugar cane. At the center of the photo a windmill and sugar factory stand at the base of the hill. To the right of the factory is an enslaved laborer village. Approximately halfway up slope is the planter’s residence overlooking the village, factory and fields.

Landscape studies of plantations by historical geographers and archaeologists alike have examined how planters and other elites organized
landscapes to establish, maintain, and reinforce their status and power over non-elites and especially the enslaved (Hall 2000; Isaac 1982; Kelso and Most 1990; Leone 1988; Vlach 1983; Yentsch 1994). One approach has been to emphasize how planters organized plantations into compact and centralized settlements that focused on division of labor, minimizing movement, and maximizing work time in the service of the planter's dual interests of economic efficiency and surveillance of labor (Higman 1987; Lewis 1985; Orser and Nekola 1985). In response, enslaved people creatively carved out their own spaces beyond the gaze of planters (Singleton 2016; Smith and Bassett 2016).

James Delle (1998, 1999, 2000), for example has focused on panoptic notions of how landowners organized plantations. On the Jamaican coffee plantation at Clydesdale, Delle argues the overseer's house was deliberately situated in order to afford him several positions from which he could surveil the activities of the enslaved. From the entrance to the house, the overseer was able to observe activities within a nearby village and their morning procession to the fields or mill; and from the balcony, the overseer was able to see the coffeeworks. Plantation activities could also be viewed from several windows within the main house. Collectively, these positions produced a panoptic form of surveillance which would encourage the enslaved toward prescribed behaviors. Subsequently, Delle (2002) expanded
the scale of his analysis to include all the plantations within Jamaica’s Negro valley. Here, Delle argues, plantation owners not only organized their plantations to facilitate surveillance of the enslaved, but also to maintain visual contact between plantations out of a concern for security during periods of political and social upheaval on Jamaica. Lynsey Bates (2007, 2015), however, argues that the surveillance model doesn’t hold up when analyzed using view-shed and cost-surface analysis. At Steward Castle, also on Jamaica, and Jesups on Nevis, her analysis concluded that direct surveillance was secondary to minimizing time travel between the village, sugar factory and agricultural fields.

On Guana, like Stewart Castle and Jesups, the dwelling house is poorly situated for surveilling Guana’s agricultural plan, the sugar factory, or the expected location of the enslaved laborer village. In fact, none of those locations are visible from the site. The apparent disconnect suggest two possibilities. First, the residents of GN7 had nothing to do with the agricultural production taking place on Guana. This is very plausible given the evidence of continuous occupation of sites in the flats that are likely planter-related and are contemporary with sugar and cotton production on the island. GN7’s inhabitants could have been maritime traders, or they owned a plantation elsewhere in the BVI, which was very common. That being said, surveillance may still have been the goal, but the target was more distant, perhaps
Tortola’s north coast, or the shipping straits between Tortola and Guana. Yet a third possibility is the house situated to take advantage of the cooling effects from the tropical breezes blowing between the two islands. In the flats, the combination of stillness, humidity and swarming nats make the evenings very uncomfortable. Breezes not only cool, but also offer the added benefit of keeping the bugs away.

The Dwelling House

The set of three structural ruins at GN7 were cleared of vegetation and mapped in October 1998 by Norman Barka and Edward Harris (Figures 52 & 53). Quoting from Barka and Harris’ 1998 report, the dwelling house ruins at the Lake House site (GN7) are described as:

Oriented north-south (N 9 degrees east), this house has overall interior dimensions of c.16-meters (north-south) by c.8.6-meters (east-west). The basic plan of the house is as follows: two rooms flanked on three sides (north, west and south) by a veranda; a hilly slope is present on the east side of the house. Room A (the north room) has overall measurements of approximately 5.4-meters long by c.5-meters wide; it was seemingly divided into two smaller units, as portions of an east-west wall are present in the room. Room B (the south room) has no interior wall divisions and measures c.7-meters in length and c.5-meters in width; its south wall has a door opening. Rooms A and B share a common inner wall 48-cm in width. The west wall of both rooms slopes 34-degrees outward and presently stands c.70-cm in maximum height; the wall is wider at Room B (87 cm) than at Room A (47cm).

A veranda, 3-meters wide, parallels the walls of Rooms A and B. This open space or porch is defined on the west side of the
building by a flat wall some 58-cm in width and 50-cm in interior height. A doorway, 1.26-meters in width, is present some 9-meters from the northwest interior wall; a stairway descends from the veranda floor to the ground level below. The west wall of the main house is up to 2-meters height, as the house was constructed on a hill slope (Barka et al. 1998).

Figure 52. Barka & Harris’s (1998) plan map of the building foundations at GN7.

The descriptive report, intended as a condition assessment of the site’s architectural elements, does not elaborate on method of construction, or occupation dates, other than to repeat the frequently repeated assumption
that the ruins are associated with the eighteenth-century Lake family. Barka and Harris never followed-up on the curious partitioning of Room A (north room), nor did they explain why its west wall is narrower than Room B’s (south room) west wall (87cm vs. 47cm). In addition, there are several inconsistencies between the 1998 plan drawings and the field notes. For example, on the plan map the north and south ‘rooms’ are labeled Room 2 and Room 1 respectively. The quoted report text, however, identifies the northern room as Room A and the southern one as Room B. For unknown reasons the variation in the wall thickness discussed in the written text was not recorded on the site plan. In addition, the site-plan incorrectly illustrates the two rooms as equally sized, in contrast to the report text which clearly indicates the north room was smaller, measuring 27-square meters while the larger south room measuring 35-square meters.
Located adjacent to the great house ruin is a second foundation ruin that Barka and Harris identified as a possible kitchen. The low walled structure is located about 2-meters west of the main house and measures approximately 5-meters square on the inside, with sloping stone wall some 50-cm high and 44-cm wide; the surface of the wall slopes to a steeper angle (58-degrees) than the dwelling’s walls. The building is oriented more to the east (N 30-degrees east) than the dwelling, which possibly has some dating or functional significance. A subsequent brief investigation by John Chenoweth (2014) established a likely eighteenth-century construction date and recovered small quantity of artifacts in association with the structure consistent with its use as
a kitchen. A third structure, measuring 2 x 1.8-meters and tentatively identified as a bake oven was noted 12-meters west of the main house, but unfortunately was not included on the site plan (Barka et al. 1998).

In 2007 the GN7 dwelling house was remapped in an effort to resolve the inconsistencies between 1998 site plan, Barka’s handwritten field notes, and the surviving ruin. As originally mapped, the dwelling house foundations were read as belonging to a single phase of construction. Upon reanalysis, however, three distinct construction phases were identified: Phase I relates to the construction of the original building; Phase II relates to a repair or rebuilding of the building's north wall; while Phase III relates to the construction of an entirely new structure built atop the ruins of the earlier structures.
Phase I includes a cut-stone dwelling house foundation set into the hillside and surrounded by a veranda (or gallery) on three sides (north, west and south) encircled by a masonry kneewall (Figure 54). The kneewall defined the veranda as a semi-enclosed space transitional between the outdoors and the more private spaces indoors. Facing southwest, the building was oriented to take advantage of the coastal breezes that gust through the channel between Guana and Tortola. At the time of construction, the veranda’s kneewalls were probably laid first and its interior filled with rubble to form a level platform for the main house. Reflecting the site’s steeply sloped topography, the veranda
foundation measures 2-meters tall on the west (front) whereas the wall’s top is nearly even with the ground to the east (back). A stairway providing access from the ground level to the veranda floor is located to the right of center along the 58-cm thick west wall. The veranda measures approximately 3-meters wide (deep) along the west side, but is narrower around the north and south ends. No intact floor finish (wood, stone, tile, plaster) was observed, although the floor level may be inferred from drain holes in the veranda’s west foundation wall that were designed to prevent pooling rainwater (Figure 55). The veranda kneewalls are flat topped, and do not include any evidence for posts supporting a roof or overhang. Alternatively, wooden posts could have been set into wooden sills that ran along the kneewall’s top surface.
The Phase I main house measures 12.6 meters (41’) north-south and approximately 5 meters (16.5’) east-west. The surviving walls are 50-cm thick and 70cm tall with sloped tops designed to repel rainwater. The dwelling’s wooden frame sat on top of the foundation, although it remains unclear if it was anchored to it. The primary entry from the veranda into the house was via a 1-meter wide doorway in the west wall. Ancillary entry doors are found at the house’s north and south gable ends. Barka and Harris previously identified wall remnants they interpreted as partitions, however upon reexamination in 2007, these are now interpreted to be exterior wall remnants of two later phases of the building (see below). That is not to say
the building wasn’t partitioned. English-built houses of the mid-eighteenth century Caribbean tended to be divided into two or three rooms. Han Sloane (1707:xxi) described a typical Jamaican house as “one story high have a porch, a parlor, and at each end a bedroom with small rooms behind for closets.” The building’s length and gable end doors suggest a tripartite room plan with the doors as likely entrances into gable-end bedchambers and separated by a hall that was entered through the main entrance. The interior partitions most likely were wood louvered walls that might have had doors allowing passage between the rooms, or access was entirely via the veranda-oriented doorways.

At GN7, while there is little doubt that the phase I building was wood framed, evidence of the framing was not present. In addition, no evidence for the wall’s surface finish has been recovered. The walls may have been wattle and daub like GN2; or covered with wooden boards or shingles. Of these options, wooden boards or shingles are a more likely finishes as wattle and daub would have necessitated a way to secure secondary framing elements to the foundation. As for the roof, most Virgin Islands dwelling houses of this size and from this time period were a single story tall with a hipped or gabled roof.
The veranda on GN2 is likely an elaboration of several earlier architectural mechanisms for sheltering people from the scorching Caribbean sun including the aforementioned shades but also Jamaican piazzas and covered galleries that derived from a combination of Iberian and West African architectural innovations (Edwards 1994:176). By the eighteenth century, the usefulness of having a protected outdoor space in the Caribbean was widely acknowledged by visitors and residents alike. Among them was Charles Leslie who noted that eighteenth century planters’ homes on Jamaica have porches “to which you ascend by several Steps, and serves for a Screen against the heat, and likewise is a way of enjoying the Benefit of any Coolness in the Air (1740:30)” As a result, front verandas functioned as a meeting place for families and friends in the evening before dining (Edwards 1994:179).
Figure 56. Phase II building foundations at GN7. The dwelling’s original north is now shown as rubble and is replaced a new north wall located 2 meters south of the original.

The building’s second phase relates to the reduction of the house’s length and a corruption of its original “creole” plan (Figure 56). When and why the north wall was moved and the building size reduced is currently unknown. A plausible explanation is that the Phase II north wall was built in response to the original wall’s accidental collapse during a heavy storm or earthquake. The shortening of building would have also allowed for an economizing of scarce building materials such as plaster, boards or nails; and may reflect the
short supply of materials in the wake of natural disasters, or maybe, the reduced financial resources of the GN7’s residents in the latter periods of the site’s occupation. In phase 2, the north wall was repositioned 2-meters to the south which decreased the length of the building from 12.6 meters to 10.6 meters. What effect this had on the interior arrangement of rooms is unknown. The presumed north-end bedchamber could have been reduced, or eliminated to facilitate the expansion of the hall.

One additional detail of the Phase II occupation noticed in 2007 was the use of wattle and plaster/mortar to finish the house’s interior wall surfaces (Figure 57). It remains unknown, however, if the wattle and plaster/mortar covered only the masonry along the wall’s bottom or if it was carried the full height of
the wall. What survives are wattle (woven branch) impressions pressed into the mortar of the east foundation wall immediately south of the Phase II building’s northeast corner. The impressions have only been observed on the wall’s interior surface, and there is no evidence one way or another that speaks to the wall’s exterior finish.

Figure 58. Phase III building foundations at GN7. The north third of the building has been eliminated while the foundations at the southern two-thirds have been reinforced. The main door has been relocated from the west elevation to the south gable end.
The third and final phase of building represents a complete rebuilding of the dwelling house during which its length was reduced to 9-meters, the main entrance into the house was reoriented from the west to the south, the number of exterior doors was reduced from three to one, the old foundation walls were significantly reinforced, and a new wooden framework was constructed (Figure 58). The scope of these changes indicate that rather than a simple renovation or repair of the existing building, Phase III represents the construction of an entirely new structure that incorporated limited portions of the Phase I/II foundation. Although still located on the veranda platform, the phase III building’s relocated entrance and significantly reduced size indicates the cover over the veranda was not rebuilt.

Figure 59. GN7 phase III wall detail showing the original (phase I) sloped topped foundation wall (on right) with the later sister wall (on left). Near the top of the photo, a void for a phase III posthole is visible. The gap between the two walls has been exaggerated by modern tree roots that are actively pulling apart the two wall sections.
The phase III building consisted of a masonry-encased wood frame building. The new frame’s vertical wooden posts were placed against the interiors of the extant east, west and south foundation walls, and then a new 30-cm thick mortared-stone sister wall was built against the old walls’ interiors to hold the wooden timbers in place (Figure 59). Voids in the Phase III foundation walls left by the rotted or removed posts, and spaced between 1 and 2.25-meters apart, are visible in the top surfaces of the west, south and east walls. In the course of reinforcing the old foundation walls, the original main entry through the west foundation wall was infilled with mortared stone (Figure 60). As in Phase II, the house’s Phase III north end was defined by an entirely new wall located approximately 1.5-meters south of its previous location that matched the height of the adjoining east and west foundation walls. Unlike in previous generations of the north wall, the north doorway was not retained in the rebuilding, leaving the south doorway as the only entrance into the Phase III building.
Another distinguishing feature of the Phase III structure was the use of “interrupted sills” fitted between the major structural posts to which the lower ends of wall studs and braces were secured. Unlike a conventional sill which consists of a horizontal wooden beam at the bottom of a wall that extends the length of the wall in one piece, an interrupted sill is composed of a series of smaller pieces that run between the main posts and are tenoned into the posts which continue down into the ground or foundation. In the phase III dwelling, each segment of the dwelling’s interrupted sill was seated within a 10-cm wide trough running the length of each wall along the foundation’s top. Although the wooden beams have long since been removed or rotted away,
the troughs are still clearly visible in the masonry. In earlier phases, secondary framing elements were not necessarily secured to the foundation.

*House Yard Midden*

Archaeological testing (2 1-meter squares) of the yard spaces around the GN7 dwelling in combination with surfaces finds has yielded a small sample of household refuse (n=83) related to the house’s occupation. In general, both the excavated and surface collected material at the site is thin and widely dispersed around the building ruins. In addition, ongoing erosion of the slope has likely carried away the vast majority of the artifacts originally deposited. Chenoweth’s investigations, however, indicate that in some areas of the site small artifact caches appear to have been preserved abutting the extant masonry such as within the adjacent kitchen building (Chenoweth 2014). An analysis of the midden artifacts is discussed below.

*Site Dating*

Tobacco pipes are characteristically useful indicators of a site’s temporal boundaries, however at GN7, only a single pipe bowl fragment was recovered. Instead, the site dating is inferred from the larger, but still small sample (n=63) of ceramics recovered during surface collections from 1998 to 2007 and the limited subsurface testing of the site in 2007. Following South
(1977), a Mean Ceramic Date (MCD) of 1761.3 was calculated based on the mean manufacture date of recovered ceramics and their frequency of occurrence (Table 9). Additionally, one standard deviation (19.3) of the Mean Ceramic Date was used as an estimate of the occupation’s date range of 1742 to 1783. Although broadly used as a dating technique, a notable critique of the MCD method is that it returns an overly conservative estimate of a site’s date of occupation. For example, several of the pearlware ceramic fragments included decorative motifs that were not available prior to the 1780s. More than likely, GN7 was occupied beyond the 1783 terminal date provided by MCD method, while the absence of early nineteenth-century ceramic ware types does indicate the occupation did not extend beyond 1800-1810. It is also worth pointing out the above analysis is based upon a very small and statistically insignificant sample. Additional excavations and surface collection should provide a more robust sample of artifacts from which to better estimate the site’s date and length of occupation.
Assemblage Based Artifact Analysis

Although few in number, the excavated and surface collected artifacts at GN7 provide some useful insights into the lives of GN7’s inhabitants. As with GN2, the various finds have been divided into architecturally related and household related assemblages (Table 10).
Table 10. Assemblage Based Artifact Table for GN7.

**Architecture Assemblage**

The architecturally related artifacts include a small fragment of coarse earthenware tentatively identified as a drain pipe, two mortar or plaster fragments with wattle impressions, and a single window glass fragment. The earthenware pipe could have been from a clay drain or gutter that carried water off the roof and into a cistern or other water catchment. Another, albeit less likely possibility is that the small fragment was a clay roofing tile. The
latter, however, are unusual for the eighteenth-century Virgin Islands and would have represented a significant expense to buy, transport and install, especially in such a remote slopeside location. The mortar/plaster fragment is a remnant of an interior wall treatment, although which building is unknown. The single small window glass fragment is also unusual as windows in the Virgin Islands were typically louvered rather than glazed. It is more likely that the glass was part of a lantern or mirror rather than an a building window.

**Household Assemblage**

The household-related artifacts (n=79) account for 95.2% of the total artifact assemblage excavated at GN7. The majority of the household assemblage includes those artifacts used in food and beverage service and consumption comprised of a range of ceramic, glass and metal vessels and utensils. The household assemblage also includes artifacts assigned to the personal activities sub-assemblage which includes leisure-related finds.

**Household Foodways Sub-Assemblage**

Household-related artifacts include imported ceramic (n=62) and glass (n=13) tableware fragments and a single pewter spoon. The ceramic tablewares are a combination of English delftware (n=33), English white salt glazed stoneware (n=13), pearlware (n=10), creamware (n=3), and Chinese
porcelain (n=3) plates, small bowls, and cups related to food service and consumption rather than large utilitarian bowls used for food preparation. The glass tablewares include fragments of English wine bottle glass (n=12) and single wine glass fragment. A pewter alloy teaspoon was also recovered. Its small size suggests it was also used as part of a table place setting rather than in a food preparation context.

*Personal Activities Sub-Assemblage*

As previously described, tobacco-related artifacts are common on most eighteenth-century sites (Noel Hume 1969); but at GN7, the tobacco related finds are limited to a single unmarked white-clay tobacco pipe bowl and a small fragment of a black glass bottle identified as a snuff bottle - a specific form for storing powdered tobacco. By the eighteenth century, snuff tobacco had become the tobacco of choice among English elites (Porter 1997:39). The bottle’s recovery is thus a possible hint with regard to the inhabitant’s affluence. Alternatively, the black glass fragment might be a bottle of blacking for waterproofing boots. Snuff and blacking bottles are very similar to one another, and the fragment from GN7 is too small for a reliable identification. Either way, the bottle represents activities - snuff and boot waterproofing - more typically associated with the expression and maintenance of elite status.
The only other artifact related to personal activities was single disc-shaped ceramic gaming piece fashioned from a fragment of tin-enameded pottery. Interestingly, Chenoweth (2014:35) also recovered a gaming piece during his 2014 surface collection of the site. As previously discussed, gaming pieces are known from throughout the Caribbean and North America which were used in a variety of games by British, African, Spanish and Native American people of different ages (Smith and Watson 2009:70; Panich et al. 2017; Singleton 2015; Stiebel MacLean 2015:331-4). At GN7, the gaming pieces could have been used by either English colonists or enslaved Africans, but perhaps most importantly, as at GN2, they suggest the porosity of both social and physical boundaries within the household.

**GN7 Summary**

GN7 provides another in-depth look household dynamics and everyday life among Guana’s small planters. In this case, the site’s occupation begins with the onset of the BVI’s third quarter sugar boom. The Anglo-Creole style dwelling house features a relatively spacious three room plan with a large front side veranda spanning the full length of the elevation. This style of house was characteristic of country houses built by successful planters and merchants throughout the British Caribbean (Edwards 1994). The remote location of the complex, however, is at variance with prevailing surveillance models of plantation spatial organization proposed by Delle (2000) and
others, suggesting the complex was unrelated to Guana’s eighteenth-century sugar works. Alternate factors that may have taken precedence in siting the house include climate and maintaining visual contact with Tortola.

Analysis of the houseyard midden likewise revealed an artifact assemblage consistent with a middling planter or merchant including a variety of fine imported ceramic and glass tablewares. The careful analysis of the extant architectural remains, however, points to the frequent rebuilding of the dwelling house. With each rebuilding episode, the dwelling house was reduced in both size and symbolic power. What prompted each rebuilding phase is unclear, but is hypothesized to reflect the dwindling status and financial resources of the inhabitants, either by a loss of wealth or change in ownership as the plantation economy of the Virgin Islands declined toward the end of the eighteenth century.

**Archaeological Site GN3**

Located near the southeastern corner of the flats, archaeological site GN3 is marked by a pair of building ruins (Structures A and B), one tall and one short, situated only a few meters behind the sand dunes along the top of White Bay beach (Figure 60). Initial recording of the site was carried out by Barka and Harris (1998:8) as part of their 1998 reconnaissance visit to
Guana. In 2007 a survey of the yard spaces around the two buildings documented the presence of late eighteenth-century sheet middens overlaying a packed-sand surface to the west of the two buildings.

The present analysis focuses on Structure A which consists of the ruins of rectangular building oriented north-south with thick masonry walls preserved to an approximate height of 2 meters, and its environs (Figure 61). The inclusion of wooden posts within the masonry walls mirrors the design of the famously durable Spanish-built houses on pre-1655 Jamaica. Their inclusion on Guana suggests the builder of Structure A’s concern with resisting
both hurricanes and earthquakes. At the same time, the presence of gun loops rather than windows suggests the structure was designed as a ‘defensible house’ in the face of threats from plundering privateers and especially mutinying enslaved Africans.

Since the earliest days of slavery, African and Afro-Caribbean resistance was widespread throughout the Caribbean. The resistance took a variety of forms, from individual acts of sabotage, poor work, feigning illness, to committing crimes like arson and poisoning, to escaping altogether (Price 1973). In the Virgin Islands, maritime marronage - escaping by boat - was especially widespread (Hall 1992:127). In other instances, as on the French colony of
St. Domingue in 1791 (Haitian Revolution), the enslaved acted collectively and rebelled against their captors through direct action. By the end of the seventeenth-century, there had been major rebellions on the islands of St Kitts, Barbados, Guadeloupe and Jamaica. In 1733, the 8-month long St. John rebellion significantly reshaped relations between planters in the neighboring Danish West Indies (Norton 2013). Enslaved-led rebellions continued into the eighteenth century, and intensified in the early nineteenth century as the enslaved heard rumors about the approaching end of slavery.

In the British Virgin Islands, a revolt led by the enslaved from the Tortolan estates of Isaac Pickering broke out in 1790. Historian Isaac Dookhan (1975:83) asserts the revolt was sparked by the rumor that freedom had been granted to slaves in England, but that the planters were withholding knowledge of it. The Pickering revolt was quickly put down, and the colonial government responded with harsh punishments for its organizers, perhaps remembering the Danish government struggles to retake St. John. Accordingly, as a deterrent to would-be rebels, two of the Pickering revolt leaders were executed, and three others were transported to estates elsewhere in the Caribbean.

51 In the USVI, the St. John Rebellion is sometimes remembered as the “first successful slave rebellion” on account of the fact that enslaved Africans managed to hold much of the island for nearly eight months (Norton 2013:2).
In the wake of the Pickering revolt, the 1796 Wilkinson/King map of Tortola (Figure 12) is a remarkable document that bears witness to local planters anxieties about the potential of future rebellions. The map was commissioned for unknown purposes by Isaac Pickering of Fox Lease, an absentee planter living in Hampshire, England. Sugar cultivation had brought the Pickering family tremendous wealth, and by the end of the eighteenth century, they owned sugar estates across Tortola, including Josiah’s Bay on Tortola’s north side which was located directly across the channel from Guana Island. Enslaved Africans at Josiah’s Bay were among those who participated in the 1790 revolt.

As described in Chapter 3, the Wilkinson/King map illustrates the locations and boundaries of Tortola’s 104 agricultural estates overlaid on the island’s uneven topography. In addition to noting landowners and the current disposition of the estate land (for example cotton, sugar, and pasture), the map also records the island’s built environment, including: the development of two rows of residences and commercial buildings at Road Town, plantation

52 In most contemporary documents he is referred to as being ‘of Fox Lease’ to distinguish him from his cousin of the same name, Isaac Pickering ‘of Tortola’. The former Isaac Pickering was born on Tortola, the son of lieutenant governor John Pickering, and grandson of the BVI’s original Quaker, Abednego Pickering. It is unknown when he relocated to England.
houses, and sugar works, as well as the network of military fortifications encircling Road Harbor (Forts Burt, Charlotte, George and Shirley) and smaller batteries along Tortola’s south shore. The surrounding cays, Little Thatch, Frenchman’s, Wickhams, and Buck are shown, as are the near portions of Beef and Guana Islands. While the map does not identify Guana’s owners, or other residents, it does depict a four-walled square structure that appears open at its center, possibly unroofed, at the southeastern corner of White Bay, in approximately the same location as GN3: Structure A (Figure 63).

Figure 63. Detail of the 1796 Wilkinson/King Map that shows the location of Guana Island’s defensible house.
Beyond marking the building’s location, the map gives no indication of its significance, but the ‘open square’ icon is repeated on two other locations on Tortola, on a point of land (#97) at the eastern end of the island that was owned by the “Heirs of B.Hodge” according to the map index. The second location (#7) is along a strip of Tortola’s southwestern coastline parallel to Frenchman’s Cay owned by “Rev.d Mr. Wynne, late Brown”. The use of a unique icon suggests that whatever these three buildings were, the map’s makers, Robert Wilkinson and George King thought it was important to distinguish them from structures represented by other icons such as a filled rectangle for houses, a sugar mill pictogram for sugar estates, and thick angular lines for forts. I argue, based on an assessment of GN3’s extant architecture (see below), the map icons indicate the locations of British ‘defensible houses’ built for the planter’s protection in the event of another insurrection by the enslaved. It is unknown if the knowledge of these house sites was important to or requested by Pickering, or if their locations were simply included as a matter of practice by the map makers. Either way, the building and the map disclosing their locations to other planters suggests that the threat of uprisings was an important concern among white Virgin Islanders (see also Chenoweth 2017:15-120). Following Tarlow (2012:175) the map represents a unique artifact that documents how fears and anxieties have spatial articulations that can be read as evidence of a mindset. Furthermore, the clear delineation of ‘defensible houses’ challenges the prevailing historical narrative that enslaved African insurrections, once
curbed, had no lasting impacts on the planters. Clearly they did. Even if the insurrections did not achieve their ultimate goal of freedom from enslavement, they definitely communicated to the planters that whatever 'natural order' they perceived about the institution of slavery, the enslaved would challenge it.

**Guana’s Defensible House**

Structure A is oriented north-south with 60-cm thick rubble masonry walls built from a combination of field stone, limestone and brain coral. The building has exterior dimensions of 8.3 x 5.6-meters (27 ft. 2 in. x 18 ft. 4 in.), and interior measurements of 7.2 x 4.4-meters (23 ft. 7 in. x 14 ft. 5 in.). The standing walls include 12 masonry courses measuring approximately 2-meters tall (6 ft. 6in.). The exterior surfaces of the walls were left bare, while their interiors are covered with a smooth mortar parging. Access into the building was via an oversized doorway that faced west. The doorways large size may indicate that the building’s was at least partially used for storage as warehouses typically had larger doors for better access than dwellings. The building has no window openings, but consistent with Jamaican ‘defensible house’ designs, oblong gun loops are present in the structures east and west walls (Figure 64). Each gun loop is 32cm tall and widest on the interior (32cm) and narrowest on the exterior (24cm). The lines of sight through the gun loops is parallel with the coastline, suggesting the anticipated attackers were approaching from the land rather than the water, reinforcing that the
perceived threat was more likely from enslaved Africans already on Guana
rather than Spanish pirates landing on the nearby beach. In contrast to the
argument presented herein, Barka et al. (1998:9) suggested the slots were
used for ventilation of a windowless storage area. The two interpretations are,
however, not mutually exclusive. Nelson (2016:41) notes that defensive
loopholes often doubled as ventilation holes in the masonry basements of
Jamaican estate houses.

Figure 64. Exterior aspect of a gunloop in the west facing wall of Structure A.

Fortified, or defensible houses, are a type of elite building routinely
categorized as the successor to the medieval tower-house in the latter half of
the sixteenth century in Ireland and Scotland (Ronnes 2006:27). A small
number of fortified houses are also known from North America such as the seventeenth-century Hallowes site, an earthfast house with bastions built into each gable end on Virginia’s Northern Neck (Hatch et al. 2014). While relatively uncommon in North America, defensive domestic structures were pervasive across eighteenth-century Jamaica, especially after 1760 (Nelson 2016:39). The signature feature of Jamaican defensive houses was the inclusion of splayed loopholes embedded in thick masonry walls, not unlike those in the walls of Structure A.\textsuperscript{53} Some Jamaican examples become extremely elaborate and incorporate other martial features such as corner towers and even moats. These latter buildings were built as much for defense as they were symbolic gestures of English claims to authority over the land (Nelson 2016:63).

The perceived need for defense is evident in the correspondence of Jamaican planter Edward Long. Writing in the 1760s, Long reported that in response to harassment by Spanish privateers, planters along Jamaica’s north coast had installed loopholes in their house walls. In preparing against the Spanish enemies, Long (1774:100) wrote, the planters “are fortified also against internal ones,” undoubtedly a reference to threats from Jamaica’s very large enslaved African population. John Steward (1808:185), another

\textsuperscript{53} Chenoweth (2017:116) also notes loopholes in the foundations of greathouses on Great Camanoe and Norman Islands in the BVI.
Jamaican planter, described the houses of Jamaica’s nineteenth-century planters as outfitted “with loop holes for muskets, as a defense in case of a sudden insurrection of the slaves, a danger of which the white inhabitants were formerly in perpetual apprehension.”

The ‘perpetual apprehension’ of white Jamaicans is a recurring theme in planters’ correspondence. Their anxiety was often expressed in term of the unfamiliarity of the Jamaican landscape in comparison to England, or the large number of enslaved Africans relative to the English. For example, John Oldmixon (1741:131) wrote “every Plantation look like a little African City,” and for James Knight, Jamaica’s large enslaved population generated “great uneasiness and vexation” (cited in Nelson 2016:43). Jamaican planters were especially concerned about guerilla attacks from the island’s growing maroon communities (Nelson 2016:45). It is likely that variations of these same fears were shared by white planters throughout the British Caribbean.
Figure 65. South elevation of Structure A with an intact wooden post encased at the wall’s midpoint.

The inclusion of wooden posts within Structure A’s masonry walls suggests the building was also built to withstand hurricane winds in addition to providing a safe haven from marauding pirates and rebelling enslaved Africans (Figure 65). Barka et al. (1998) recorded intact wooden posts in the building’s north and south gable ends, although voids where other posts were once encased were subsequently observed in the building’s east wall suggesting that wooden posts were integrated in each of the walls, not just the gables. As mentioned previously, Spanish-built houses on pre-1655 Jamaica often included wooden posts embedded in masonry walls that extended down from the roof plate and tied into the ground, sometimes as
much as three feet below grade (see Figure 29). These early Jamaican buildings were widely admired by British colonists in Jamaica for their resilience to both hurricanes and earthquakes (Nelson 2016:88).

Barka et al. (1998:9) also noted evidence for an upper story, citing vertical beam slots in the wall interiors. Measuring less than 4 to 6-cm across and approximately 1-meter in length from the top of the wall, the ‘beam slots’ are visible on the interiors of all four walls. Indeed, they likely supported wooden wall studs for a lightly framed second story sheathed with either boards or wattle and plaster. No evidence of the building’s roof form or materials used was recovered. How access to the second story was resolved is also unknown, but both interior and exterior staircases were common in the period.

**Houseyard Midden**

Archaeological testing of the yard space to the west (3 1x1-meter test units) and south (2 1x1-meter test units) of GN3’s Structure A identified a consistent layer of household refuse that accumulated over a hard packed lens of medium to dark grey sand and ash that likely represents an eighteenth-century living surface. To the immediate west of Structure A, excavation of

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54 A sixth meter-square test unit was attempted to the east of Structure A. The stratigraphy in this unit
the packed sand lens gave way to sterile white beach sand predating the site’s eighteenth-century occupation. To the structure’s south, the packed sand lens sealed a slightly earlier living surface consisting of an even denser lens of reddish grey sand that then gave way to the white beach sand (Figure 66). Mid to late eighteenth century-household related artifacts (n=301) were recovered from all three layers. In terms of artifact density, the GN3 midden is less rich than either the North or South Yard Middens at GN2, but is richer than the sparsely scattered artifacts at GN7.

Figure 66. North wall profile, test unit 4, at GN3 showing the sandy topsoil over the hard-packed grey sand living surface, over the reddish grey sand living surface, over sterile white beach sand.

was very different than the other tests and included a large number of sheep or goat bones. It was ultimately determined that the test unit was placed directly over a modern sheep/goat burial. Feral herds on the island are annual culled to prevent overgrazing.
Site Dating

Dating the occupation of GN3 was accomplished via the temporal analysis of imported Euro-American ceramics (n=127) with known production ranges recovered in 2007. Because only seven pipe stem fragments were recovered, the analysis of the site’s length of occupation was estimated only from the ceramic data. Following South (1977), the Mean Ceramic Date (MCD) was based on a sample of 125 ceramic fragments and calculated to be 1780.41. Meanwhile, an estimate of the site’s occupation span or date range (blue box) using South’s (1977) visual bracketing method is very broad, 1700 to 1805 (Figure 68).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refined Earthenwares:</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Mean Date</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
<th>MD * n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creamware (Undecorated)</td>
<td>1762-1820</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.12%</td>
<td>28656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearlware (Underglaze Blue)</td>
<td>1775-1820</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>46.97%</td>
<td>111476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified Refined Earthenware</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coarse Earthenwares:</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Mean Date</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
<th>MD * n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Midlands Slip</td>
<td>1670-1795</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>19063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-bodied Agate</td>
<td>1750-1800</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>7100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afco-Caribbean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stoneware:</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Mean Date</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
<th>MD * n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Salt Glazed</td>
<td>1720-1805</td>
<td>1763</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>21156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tin-Enamelled:</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Mean Date</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
<th>MD * n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified Tin-Enamelled</td>
<td>1600-1802</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.58%</td>
<td>17500</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Porcelain:</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Mean Date</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
<th>MD * n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1660-1860</td>
<td>1760</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.58%</td>
<td>17600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Dateable Ceramics Sub-Total | Dateable Ceramics Sub-Total | 125 | 94.70% | 222551 |
| Non-Dateable Ceramics Sub-Total | Non-Dateable Ceramics Sub-Total | 7   | 5.30%  |        |
| Total             | Total             | 132 | 100.00%|        |

**Mean Ceramic Date = 1780.41**

Table 11. Mean Ceramic Date (MCD) Table for GN3.
The site dating based on ceramics dating fails to give a consistent indication of the site's date or range of occupation. In general, the dating evidence points to the occupation of the site post-dating the transition to sugar, and likely continuing through the end of the the century. The absence of whiteware ceramics (TPQ=1810) characteristic of the early nineteenth century suggests the occupation did no extend into, or deep into, the next century.
Assemblage Based Artifact Analysis

The modest sample of artifacts excavated at GN3 also provides some useful insights into the lives of GN3’s inhabitants. As with the assemblages for GN2 and GN7, the recovered artifacts from GN3 were initially catalogued by material, type, function, and form; and then, were grouped into architecture-related (42.1%) or household-related (57.9%) assemblages. The household assemblage was subsequently subdivided into four sub-assemblages: foodways, personal activities, security and industry (Table 12).

Architecture Assemblage

At GN3, the architecture-related artifacts (n=130), including wrought iron nails and wall plaster, account for highest percentage (42.1%) of the artifacts of any of the site’s investigated on Guana. Wrought nails make up the bulk of the materials (n=120), and most of those (n=75) were recovered from a single test unit just outside of Structure A’s entranceway. The concentration may be the result of the collapse of Structure A’s wooden door, or perhaps a collapsed portion of its wooden second story. Nails would have also been used in roof frame, for attaching shingles, for indoor partitions, or for door and window shutters or louvers. The remaining nails were evenly distributed among the other five test units. Plaster fragments (n=10) with wattle impressions were also recovered from across the site in no particular concentration.
Table 12. Assemblage Based Artifact Table for GN3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Artifact Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foodways</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceramics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refined Earthenwares</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coarse Earthenwares</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonewares</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin-Enamelled</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porcelain</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glass</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Wine Bottle</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champagne</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Glass</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Pipes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>179</strong></td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architecture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nails</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaster</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architecture Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assemblage Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>309</strong></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Household Assemblage*

The household-related artifacts (n=179) account for 57.9% of the total artifact assemblage excavated at GN7, the vast majority of which are related to food...
service and consumption. The household assemblage also includes artifacts assigned to the industry sub-assemblage.

**Household Foodways Sub-Assemblage**

Household foodways related artifacts include imported ceramic (n=132) and glass (n=37) tableware fragments. The most common type of ceramics were pearlware (n=62) refined earthenware plates or serving platters and at least a couple of tea bowls featuring molded and painted rims (e.g. blue shell edge), as well as, a combination of hand-painted and transfer printed designs. Following pearlware, fragments of creamware (n=16) plates and a teapot, and white salt glazed stoneware (n=12) bowls were the next most abundant. Coarse earthenware slipwares included 11 fragments of North Midlands slipware cups, and especially intriguingly, a single slip-decorated, buff-colored earthenware fragment that resembles pottery produced by Moravian potters in both Germany and North America (Figure 69). The distinctive yellow and green trail-slipped decoration is recovered regularly from archaeological sites along the Mid-Atlantic seaboard in North America, and has recently been identified archaeologically at several sites on nearby St. John where Moravians had established missions in the late eighteenth century (Lenik and

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55 Moravian pottery expert Brenda Hornsby-Heindl (personal communication) suggests that the fragment’s buff-colored body and the lack of a footring are two prominent features that more consistent with German-made than North American-made (Pennsylvania or North Carolina are the two main production centers) pottery.
Armstrong 2010). The Moravians did not establish any missions in the British Virgin Islands, thus the pottery’s discovery on Guana potentially points to the direction of local trade networks and how imported goods were distributed across the many islands. Other coarse earthenwares included red bodied agatewares (n=4) and a single sherd of probably locally produced Afro-Caribbean pottery. The latter was widely produced across the Caribbean (Hauser and DeCorse 2003), but thus far, has only been found in very small quantities in the household assemblages from Guana, suggesting possibly a lack of local manufacture within the BVI, or that more distantly produced wares were not being sold in local markets.

Figure 68. Possible Moravian slipware dish fragment from GN3.
Household glass included fragments of English wine bottles (n=16), possible French champagne bottles (n=11), clear glass tumblers (n=7), and three unidentifiable clear glass containers. As previously mentioned, glass tablewares and bottles are most often associated with alcohol consumption or storage, and in the context of the British Caribbean were often used by planters to mark gentility and sociability (Smith 2008:85), although both GN2 on Guana and the Lettsome estate on Little Jost Van Dyke included relatively few bottle table glass fragments relative to contemporary sites in the region. On GN3, alcohol consumption, as measured the relative quantity of glass bottles and tablewares is still low, but looks to have been greater than at GN2.

*Household Industry Sub Assemblage*

Archaeological evidence of self-provisioning and income earning undertakings outside of plantation-based agricultural production again includes evidence of the exploitation of marine resources. Identical to previously excavated examples, a lead alloy fishing weight fashioned from an eighteenth-century musket ball with drilled hole for threading it onto a line or net was recovered. Fishing did not only fulfilled household subsistence needs, although as previously chronicled, fresh fish was not characteristically
part of British planter’s culinary repertoire. Instead the fish may have been to provisioned to enslaved household members or sold at the local market.56

**GN3 Summary**

Structure A’s unique combination of ‘defensible’ architectural features (e.g. loopholes) with Spanish-settler inspired disaster resistant construction (masonry encased earthfast posts) illustrates the range of concerns (and responses) Guana’s late eighteenth-century residents were taking into consideration as they worked to establish themselves in the Virgin Islands. Notable are the parallels to Jamaican concerns, despite the latter being a much larger and more prosperous colony. Meanwhile, the analysis of the houseyard midden revealed an artifact assemblage similar other household assemblage on Guana that included the regular injection of newly imported ceramic and glass tablewares from Europe, but also from local markets. The recovery of fishing-related gear also highlights how local households diversified out of an economic necessity due to the marginal nature of the colony’s plantation agriculture by developing informal industries that ‘flew under the radar’ by taking advantage of colonial administrators’ disinterest.

56 Only a very small quantity of faunal material was recovered (n=58). As result, no assessment of diet was attempted, although the recovery of both fish and domestic mammal bone indicates a mixed subsistence strategy that included a combination of land and sea-based animal protein.
Archaeological Sites GN27/GN28

Archaeological sites GN27 and GN28 are both marked by sets of unmortared stacked stone walls, between one and three stones tall, set into east face of Guana’s Pyramid -- the second tallest peak on the island. From the water’s edge, the sites are situated approximately two-thirds of the way up the the Pyramid’s steeply inclined terrain and overlook Guana’s principal anchorage at White Bay (Figure 69). In 2007 I was shown to these sites by Dr. Lianna Jarecki, coordinator of Guana’s Marine Science program, at which time I had a chance to briefly record their locations, make notes of major features, and collect surface artifacts. The two sets of stacked stone walls likely represent retaining walls built by enslaved and free Africans for provision garden terraces. Artifacts recovered from the terrace ground surfaces indicate their use in the first quarter of the nineteenth century when Guana’s population consisted of both free and enslaved Africans, numbering between 100 and 200, some of whom owned their own land on the island (see Chapter 4).

Although not contiguous to residential compounds, across the Caribbean provision gardens and grounds like these were used by enslaved African households since the seventeenth century as instruments for achieving social and economic independence (Mintz and Hall 1960). Early nineteenth-century land use statistics for Guana indicate that 56 acres were used to farm provisions in 1813, increasing to 64 acres in 1823 (C.O. 239/9). Surface
collected artifacts from the sites, meanwhile, suggest that in addition to growing provision crops, enslaved and free Africans used the Pyramid a temporary retreat from the rigors of daily plantation life.

Figure 69. White Bay at Guana Island looking West toward the Pyramid (on left)- the second tallest peak on the island. Archaeological sites GN27 and GN28 are located adjacent to one another approximately two-thirds of the way up the Pyramid’s east facing slope overlooking the bay.

**Private Landscapes**

A major focus of Caribbean historical archaeology has been to understand how plantation landscapes were created and how those landscapes actively shaped human behavior. For many, as James Delle (2016:111) notes, “the
landscapes of the plantation system were planned and developed to create and maintain a structure, order, and discipline that maximized the ability of the planter class to extract wealth at as low a monetary cost as possible.” Dell Upton (1984) has characterized these features as the plantation’s “white landscape,” and contrasts them with the plantation’s “black landscape” which included the homes and villages of the enslaved, but also liminal “private landscapes” on the peripheries of plantations that were generally beyond the surveillance of planters and overseers. Archaeological investigations of the enslaved homes and villages have helped to shed light on many of the day-to-day activities and material conditions of enslaved Africans, while investigations of the so-called “private landscapes” have been less frequent, due in large part to their remote locations and ephemeral archaeological signatures. Among the first of the latter was Lydia Pulsipher’s (1990) study of the mountain plot gardens cultivated by enslaved Africans at Galways Plantation on Montserrat that closely resembled the terraces on Guana’s Pyramid. Located on steep mountain or ravine slopes, Montserrat’s mountain plot gardens included as many as forty different species of plants that were grown in contour banked terraces designed to control erosion. The gardens produced food for both the household, and a surplus for sale the weekly Sunday market, but also physically and emotionally tied enslaved Montserratians to a portion of the island’s landscape that white’s rarely entered (see also Knight 2010:51). Similar provisioning gardens managed by enslaved Africans were common on mountainous islands throughout the
British Caribbean (Heath and Bennett 2000:38). On some Jamaican coffee plantations, the remotely situated provision gardens sometimes also included spaces for field houses - small, expedient shelters indicating that not all enslaved Africans were sheltered within the planter organized slave villages (Delle 2016).

Private landscapes were also critical sites of enslaved African community formation and resistance against the plantocracy. For example, Frederick Smith and Hayden Bassett (2016) have recently explored the role of caves and gullies as points within a matrix of “private landscapes” that crisscrossed plantation boundaries. Smith and Bassett assert that caves and gullies were central to the creation of community networks among the enslaved on Barbados, and served as conduits for information traveling from one plantation to the next. In addition, caves were also often used as meeting places where enslaved people from different plantations could gather and socialize away from the planters’ and overseers’ prying eyes. At Mapps Cave, Barbados, archaeological evidence further indicates these gatherings frequently included alcohol to ease social pressures. Smith (2008:135) links the consumption of alcohol in the cave as nurturing the revolutionary ideals that led to the outbreak of the 1816 revolt on Barbados.
Remotely situated on the periphery of Guana’s agriculturally-productive land, the Pyramid terrace sites are likewise interpreted as components of early nineteenth-century enslaved and free Africans’ “private landscape” on Guana. The Pyramid land was granted or appropriated by either enslaved or free Africans, who used it to establish provisioning gardens. But the cultivation of food and market crops was only part of the story. The gardens were also places to congregate and socialize away from planter-controlled spaces.

**Pyramid Terraces 1 & 2**

In 2007 the Pyramid terraces were accessed by following a modern footpath that runs southwest from behind the Anagada Guest House and encircles the Pyramid’s upper third. Pyramid Terrace 1 (GN27) consists of three intact sections of a low stone retaining wall comprised of one to three stone courses (Figure 70) oriented perpendicular to the slope. Designed to stop erosion, the ground to the wall’s right (west) was relatively flat while to its left (east) the ground was significantly sloped. At the time of the site visit, the area was completely covered with dense scrub vegetation that significantly hampered visibility. Nevertheless, on the terrace surface, five English wine bottle bases and two large conch (*Strombus gigas*) shells were collected. The glass bottle forms indicate a probable post-1800 date of manufacture for the bottles, thus indicating their deposition on site did not occur until sometime after.
Pyramid Terrace 2 (GN28) is located a little further southwest along the same footpath and also consists of a low stone retaining wall, although this wall was more difficult to recognize than at the previous site. Due to the limited nature of the reconnaissance, it was not clear if this was due to variation in construction or preservation factors. As before, a dense overlay of understory vegetation made travel and observations to, and within, the site very difficult. The ground surface of GN28 was also differentiated by a very large patch of aloe (*Aloe barbadensis*) (Figure 71) - a succulent plant species with
distinctive serrated leaves with a 6000 year history in the Old World of cultivation for agricultural, medical and cosmetic uses (Sung 2006). Laying amongst the aloe plants was a light scatter of English wine bottle glass (n=55) as well as a thin light green bottle glass fragment possibly from a broken French champagne bottle. As before, the bottle forms and finish styles indicate their manufacture in the early nineteenth century, and thus their accumulation on site at some point after.

Figure 71. Aloe garden patch at GN28.
Aloe Cultivation

The patch of aloe (*Aloe barbadensis*) observed at the second Pyramid Terrace was likely introduced on Guana in the eighteenth century as a provision crop, and was actively cultivated into the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Native to Africa, aloe was first imported to the Caribbean by Jesuit priests in 1494, and spread rapidly through the islands where it was grown primarily for its medical uses (Sung 2006). Planter Richard Ligon (1657:67) records aloes use on mid-seventeenth century Barbados, where it was mixed and boiled “with some other ingredients…[and] is the best medicine in the world for a burn or a scald.” At the same time, it was also used as a laxative and abortifacient (Sung 2006:7, Morgan 2004:114). Griffith Hughes (1750:153-4) in his *Natural History of Barbados in Ten Books* also described how to plant and care for aloe, and also how to prepare it as a medicine, but cautioned “Aloe is much made use of in Purges, and justly esteemed of great Service in many Cases. However, Dr. James in his Medical Dictionary, say it ought not be given to Women and Child, nor to persons subject to the Piles; for it rarefies in Blood too much, and causes Hemorrhoids.” In 1756, Dr. Patrick Browne published *A Civil and Natural History of Jamaica* which likewise provides a lengthy description of aloe’s medical benefits, but also highlighted a lesser known use of aloe as a wood preservative in ships:

*This commodity has also lately put to some mechanical uses, and tried, with great success, in those mixtures with which...*
they cover the bottom of ships trading to the East and West-Indies, where the water-insects are observed to burrow through all the planks that lie below the surface, in every vessel that anchors for any time in the harbours of those seas; and it will probably be the means of saving many thousands a year, both in the merchants, and the crown, when it is more universally known and employed (Browne 1756:198).

Aloe was also an established medicine within West African and Afro-Caribbeans plant-based pharmacopoeia as a multipurpose treatment. Aloe could be ingested as a laxative, or used topically as an anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial ointment (Hander and Jacoby 1993:76-77). As aloes’ medical benefits were well recognized among both Europeans and Africans, enslaved Africans grew aloe both for their own use as well as a cash crop (Hughes 1750:145; Ligon 1657:98-99). On sugar plantations such as Guana, aloe would have been particularly useful in the treatment of burns suffered in the sugar boiling house, for cuts from errant machete swipes in the cane fields, and more generally, for the various cuts, scrapes and scratches from stinging nettles people undoubtedly encountered climbing and descending the islands’ steep and rocky slopes. It may have also been used to treat a widely reported condition known as “dry belly ache” that is today recognized as likely being lead poisoning arising from drinking rum from stills that contained lead pipes and fixtures (Kiple 1984:100).
On Guana, the patch of aloe observed in 2007 was probably much larger than the area that was actually cultivated during the plantation era. Guana’s arid climate and loose soil is the perfect environment for aloe, and in spite of being untended for the last 150 years, the aloe was able to self-propagate by sending out root offsets from the mother plant which grew into a new plants. Undoubtedly, Guana’s aloe plants were grown in the Pyramid’s banked garden beds in tandem with a range of other crops, some produced for consumption within the household, and others for sale in the market. The resulting garden was a mixture of African, European and native plant species that grew in stark contrast to the monocultural emphasis of European plantations. Among the varied garden plants characteristically grown in provisioning gardens were yams, okra, dasheen, pigeon peas, guinea corn, bananas, ginger, maize, peppers, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, cassava, beans, arrowroot, pineapple, cabbage, carrots, onions, thyme, rosemary and shallots (Pulsipher 1990:11).

**The Evidence for Alcohol Use**

As elsewhere in the Caribbean, Guana’s provisioning gardens were also used by enslaved Africans as places where they could avoid the attention of planters and overseers. At both Pyramid sites, the recovery of dip-molded black glass bottle fragments (Figure 72) suggests the possibility that outside of gardening, drinking alcohol was one of the primary activities that occurred
on the Pyramid slopes. Originally manufactured to hold and transport wine, the bottles were frequently repurposed in the Caribbean for holding a variety of other beverages, especially locally produced rum. On some plantations, planters directly supplied a predetermined rum ration to the enslaved. But in other instances, enslaved Africans acquired alcohol through informal networks or illegally (Bergad 1990:238). Meanwhile, drawing on various West African cultural traditions, alcohol was used as a refreshment, as an enabler of sociability among the culturally diverse enslaved Africans, and as a medium to the spiritual world. Regardless, alcohol offered an opportunity to transcend the brutal labor regimens and the general anxieties of life on sugar estates (Smith 2005). Although ethnohistorical accounts of alcohol consumption by enslaved Africans in the BVI remains to be found and analyzed, it is probable that the local enslaved people consumed and used rum and other alcoholic beverages in ways that were broadly comparable to known uses by enslaved people in the British Caribbean.

At the Pyramid terraces, the archaeological evidence of alcohol consumption includes five glass fragments that were recovered from the first terrace, and fifty-five fragments that were recovered from the second terrace, along with a fragment of a possible French champagne bottle. Altogether, the bottles represent 91% of the total number of artifacts recovered from the two Pyramid sites -- a significantly larger percentage than any of the other
household sites on Guana. The only non-bottle artifacts recovered from the terraces were two conch shells and three refined earthenware fragments. Although the broken and discarded bottles could have been used to carry water or other beverages, and alcohol could have also been carried and stored in organic containers such as coconuts and gourds, the frequency with which glass bottles are associated with rum in the ethnohistoric record is a strong indication that the bottles discarded in the garden terraces were very likely used to store and carry rum. Following the ethnohistoric evidence, previous archaeological studies have similarly linked the presence of wine bottles with alcohol consumption. Notable examples include Armstrong’s (1990:135) suggestion that the large number of wine bottle fragments at a single enslaved dwelling within the ‘Old Village” at Drax Hall, Jamaica is evidence of the building’s use as a combination bar and residence; and Smith’s (2008:117) aforementioned claim that an accumulation of broken wine bottle fragments at Mapp’s Cave, Barbados is evidence of the cave’s use by enslaved Africans as a meeting place to temporarily escape from the plantation, to socialize with rum and other alcoholic beverages, and potentially to plot rebellion.
The high percentage of glass bottle fragments in the terrace gardens likewise suggests that enslaved Africans on Guana were taking advantage of their remote location away from the core activity areas of the plantation to meet and imbibe without concern for how it would be perceived by planters and overseers. Unknown is to what degree was the terrace drinking was also intended to hide consumption from enslaved co-residents, especially if it was not communally or ritually sanctioned. As chronicled by Smith (2008), the altered consciousness made possible by intoxication undoubtedly facilitated social relations between unfamiliar groups, lowered social inhibitions that enabled known individuals to develop new bonds, and helped enslaved
Africans to momentarily forget their status as bondsmen. At other times, however, intoxication likely wrought significant negative consequences including mental and physical abuse, the escalation of simmering tensions between rivals, and over the long term, reduced health that potentially placed the burden of care on other household members. Alcohol was pervasive in the British Caribbean and its consumption was never simply an issue of either refreshment or intoxication, although its place and impact among enslaved Africans remains, for the most part, an understudied component of everyday life.

**GN27/GN28 Summary**

Plantation studies have long relied on the analysis of household dwelling spaces for information about the day to day activities and material conditions of enslaved African plantation laborers. Enslaved Africans throughout the British Caribbean, however, were also deeply engaged in more distant “private landscapes” where some measure of seclusion and secrecy was available (Upton 1985:367). On Guana, the enslaved African-managed provision gardens or grounds tucked into the slopes of the Pyramid overlooking White Bay were just such a place. I argue here, that Guana’s Pyramid terraces functioned as extensions of a household’s residential core in which a variety of crops, including aloe, were grown for both use at home and for sale at the weekly Sunday market.
The gardens, however, were more than a food or economic resource. Because of their remote location and relative invisibility to the planters and overseers, the gardens were probably among the very few places where enslaved Africans on Guana could temporarily escape their ordeal as plantation slaves. Meanwhile, artifacts from the Pyramid gardens indicate that enslaved Africans drank rum from glass bottles to help them in their forgetting. While Smith (2005) emphasizes the undeniable social component of drinking alcohol, and the possibilities of collective action that occasionally come out of alcohol-fueled sociability, Guana’s insularity from the rest of the BVI suggests the drinking taking place in the Pyramid gardens was not likely a large social or collective activity, but instead was carried out by a small gathering, or even a single individual.
Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

The focus of this dissertation was an attempt to understand the material and spatial aspects of everyday life on the social, geographic and economic margins of the British Empire. Drawing upon archaeological, archival, and architectural evidence, the present study of Guana Island reveals a long-term occupation of the island spanning approximately 128 years (1717-1845), during which the strategies and tactics of everyday life on the island underwent substantial transformations in response to the expansion, contraction, and variation of the Virgin Islands' plantation-based economy. Following deCerteau (1984), the aim of this dissertation is to understand the various ways of making do that peopled employ in their everyday lives and their archaeological expressions. On Guana, those everyday strategies and tactics are measured in diachronic changes in settlement patterns, household composition, the built environment, and household industry that were unique to the local circumstances of the Virgin Islands. At the local scale, the archaeological evidence illustrates how everyday life structures are frequently tied to the economic use of the land; but at the regional scale, the archaeological evidence adds to an emerging body of scholarship that highlights how strategies and tactics varied within the British Caribbean. Beyond its theoretical contribution, the evidence presented here also complicates long-held assumption that Guana’s colonial history was limited to
the island's occupation by Quakers. Indeed, Guana's eighteenth-century settlement occurred earlier, lasted longer, and included a greater number, and wider variety, of people than previously understood.

Historians have frequently characterized the landscapes of the contact period Caribbean as a *tabula rasa* -- a blank slate upon which European colonizers could impose their imprint as they wished (e.g. Lewis 1983:4). As evidence they often cite the journals of Christopher Columbus (1493), George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland (1597) and George Percy (1607), all of whom indicate that the northern Virgin Islands were unpopulated. The archaeological evidence, however, points to a more complicated picture. Intact tropical forests and a small work force limited how deep into the islands’ interiors first generation planters could venture, thus limiting early settlements to the shoreline. Accordingly the first generation of settlers often found themselves overlapping with the places and spaces previously carved out by Amerindians prior to contact with Europeans. Although uninhabited since the mid fifteenth century, elements of Guana’s Amerindian residents may have been readily visible to the European colonists and their enslaved African laborers. Although the two societies were vastly different, they both sought out the same places out of their shared interest in developing the coastal high ground. At the same time, GN2’s shoreline location enabled easy access to Guana's marine resources. Archaeological, and possibly architectural,
evidence points to fishing and shellfish gathering as not only important subsistence, but potentially commercial-scale activities at both GN2 and at the neighboring, and slightly later, site of GN3. Maritime-based settlements are likewise known from the earliest period of European settlement on the nearby Danish Virgin Islands (Armstrong et al. 2005). The archaeological evidence from Guana further indicates that even at the height of the local sugar boom, marine resources provided a useful economic supplement.

In the mid-eighteenth century, as Virgin Islands planters transitioned from cotton to sugar cultivation, many built new homes overlooking the agricultural fields or sugar factories as a strategy to reify their position at the top of the Guana’s social hierarchy. The large dwelling house at GN7 (Monkey Point), however, does not look out over any part of Guana. The dwelling’s out-facing orientation may indicate its residents had nothing to with the agricultural production taking place on Guana suggesting an alternative strategy. Instead, the house may have been intentionally oriented toward Tortola in order to maintain visual contact with the estates located on that island out of concern for security during periods of political and social upheaval.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Guana’s African-descended people likewise found themselves increasingly climbing Guana’s steep and rugged slopes. As the numbers of enslaved African laborers grew exponentially in the
second and third quarters of the eighteenth century, the residential and work spaces within the plantation became increasingly segregated, and at the same time, scrutinized. Throughout the Caribbean, including Guana, enslaved Africans tactically sought out places at the margins of plantations where they could temporarily escape. Guana’s terrace gardens built into the Pyramid slopes provided one such a place with a measure of seclusion and security away from the near-constant watch of the island’s owners or plantation overseers. Here, Guana’s enslaved grew crops for both household consumption and for market, but also, to temporarily escape their trauma as plantation slaves.

Archaeological evidence of how the building technology of planters changed over time is particularly strong from the Guana Island sample and is presented as the basis for a regional model for architectural change. The earliest buildings were simple earthfast, or post-in-ground, timber framed structures with wattle and plaster wall finishes, probably with a thatch or wooden shingle roof, and dirt or clay floors (e.g. GN2/Phase 1). In many ways, these early structures had much in common with the well-documented tradition of earthfast construction in the seventeenth and eighteenth Chesapeake region (e.g. Carson et al. 1981). In time, the earthfast frames were partially encased within thick waist-high stone masonry foundations with sloped top surfaces to repel rainwater. This form represents the second ‘type’
of construction distinct within the Virgin Islands. From the outside, the foundations appear continuous, but on their interior, the vertical wooden posts are left visible (e.g. GN2/Phase II). Walls are wattle and plaster with the stakes for the wattles embedded directly into the top surface of the masonry rather than into a sill. The integration of the timber frame into the masonry made the building’s particularly resilient to hurricane and earthquake damage. In some cases, the masonry was carried all the way up to the building’s wall plate such as in the gable walls of the defensible house at GN3. The third building type, seen primarily in buildings thought to date to the late eighteenth century, includes buildings with shorter foundations featuring both flat or sloped masonry tops that fully encase vertical wooden posts on all sides. In between the posts, is a trench for an sill (e.g. GN7/Phase III).

Future research will lead to a better understand the timing of the changes seen on Guana, as well as, their geographic reach.

Household economic undertakings outside of plantation-based agricultural production included fishing, counterfeiting and provision farming. For Guana’s planters, diversifying household production beyond agriculture was a smart tactical hedge against the routinely erratic agricultural harvest and fickleness of Atlantic commodities markets. For the island’s enslaved, meanwhile, provision ground and fishing surpluses taken to the local Sunday market could be exchanged for other commodities or sold for cash (Mintz and Hall...
1960). On Guana, banked provision grounds have been located along the slopes of the Pyramid.

Fishing was an activity that both planters and enslaved may have benefitted from, although according to historians, the English, for the most part, were disinterested in it. Enslaved Africans, on the other hand, likely found it a very attractive opportunity since it meant periodic removal from the island and even chances for escape. On St.Kitts and Martinique, according to Price (1966), enslaved African fishermen emerged a privileged subgroup separate from the rest plantation laborers. To the planters, they provided a coveted resource (fish) and in return were granted liberties not afforded to others. Enslaved fishermen were also able to supplement their own food, as well as sell off a portion of their catch in the islands’ internal markets (Mintz and Hall 1960).

Counterfeiting was widespread in the eighteenth century Atlantic World, especially within the British Caribbean where there was a shortage of coin. On Guana, the unexpected discovery of the crucibles at GN2 may point to a local incidence of counterfeiting, a hypothesis tentatively supported by the identification of silver residues adhering to the crucibles interiors. Given Guana’s relative anonymity within an already marginal colony, counterfeiting probably represented another facet of the household’s diverse economic
activities, one would not likely be recoverable through documentary analysis alone.

*On the Margins of Empire* is a study of a 'gap' in the historical archaeology of the British Caribbean that builds from a detailed household-level examinations of small sites, on a small island, within a small colony. As hypothesized in the introductory chapter, life in the Virgin Islands, for both free and enslaved, was likely very different than that experienced in larger and wealthier Caribbean sugar colonies. As such, this study represents a unique baseline study in an archaeologically understudied corner of the British Empire against which subsequent investigations may be compared.
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## Appendix A: Site List

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<tr>
<th>SITE NO:</th>
<th>SITE NAME (YEAR IDENTIFIED):</th>
<th>AREA:</th>
<th>YEARS EXCAVATED</th>
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### APPENDIX C: GUANA ISLAND SLAVE REGISTERS

Slave Register for Henry Clinton MacLean of Guana Island, Virgin Islands, 1818-1834

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
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** Red indicates the first appearance of an individual on H.C. MacLean’s register.