RAIDING AND TRADING ALONG THE SPANISH LAKE:

THE WOODES ROGERS EXPEDITION OF 1708-1711

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Woodes Rogers is best known for rescuing Alexander Selkirk, the castaway who formed the genesis for Robinson Crusoe and as the governor of the Bahamas who virtually extinguished piracy in the West Indies. However, Rogers first achieved fame through a 1708-1711 cruising voyage in which he circumnavigated the globe and captured a Spanish Manila galleon. His privateers and investors, and their place in the maritime world of the early eighteenth century, are the subject of this dissertation.

This study explores how the cruising voyage and its organization illustrate important commercial, legal, and social facets of the contemporary world. Its examination of the socioeconomic status of the "Syndicate" investors who financed and directed the enterprise shows that many were heavily engaged in Bristol politics and charitable organizations before the voyage.

The Syndicate obtained letters of marque licensing the two ships of the expedition to capture enemy vessels, and at the same time instructed the expedition to explore the possibilities of trade with Spanish settlers on the Pacific coasts of the Americas. The Syndicate also appointed a "Council" to govern the expedition during its voyage.

Next, the dissertation describes the expedition's circumnavigation of the globe including its raid on Guayaquil and capture of a Manila galleon, and its shift to peaceful trading as it crossed the Pacific and returned to Britain via Dutch-controlled colonies. The final chapter describes the sale of the ships and their cargoes, the payments of wages

and expenses, the calculation of the net profit of the enterprise how it was distributed, and the settlement of lawsuits brought by the East India Company and the expedition members against the Syndicate.

The conclusion traces what became of many of the investors and sailors after the voyage ended. Many Syndicate members remained in Bristol politics, and others used their profits to engage in Bristol civic life for the first time. Some officers used their profits to become ship-owners themselves while others went back to sea. Again, the work shows how the figures ended their lives as part and parcel of the contemporary maritime and economic worlds.

DEDICATION

To my family, who believed I could do this and who supported me in many ways through this long process.

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All other work for this dissertation was completed by the student independently.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Woodes Rogers, Bristol shipowner, privateer, and Royal Governor of the Bahamas, is best known as the commander of the ship that rescued Alexander Selkirk, the marooned sailor whose experiences formed the basis for Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Rogers' 1708-1711 privateering expedition circumnavigated the globe and captured a Spanish Manila galleon. The expedition and its significance in the early eighteenth century's maritime world are the subject of this dissertation. Rogers cuts an impressive figure and his voyage makes for an entertaining story, but relatively little has been done to examine the group of investors (collectively referred to as the Syndicate) who financed the voyage.

The War of the Spanish Succession was not just a European war between massive armies or gargantuan ships of the line. Nor was it a European war that happened to see fighting in the Americas and the Pacific. It involved every colony and every individual, whether ashore or at sea, who participated in global trade networks. It was impossible to avoid the conflict because every merchant who depended on the sea was at risk whether or not he engaged in wartime activity. Every sailor, willing or not, was a part of that conflict as well. The Syndicate, and the privateers it sent on a cruising voyage around the world, were active parties who stood to gain much and lose even more.

This study explores several facets of the expedition, including how a single cruising voyage, initially comprising two ships and just over three hundred officers and crew, reflected important facets of the contemporary maritime world, particularly in the commercial and social aspects. It sets the expedition in the context of the War of the Spanish Succession that engulfed Europe, North America, and the Caribbean at this time.

It also examines in greater detail the socioeconomic status of the financiers of the voyage and the network of business associates, relatives, and personal friends that reached ports throughout the Atlantic, Caribbean, and even the Pacific.

Furthermore, it demonstrates how the Syndicate sought to control the expedition by appointing two of its members to positions of command and placing an "owners' agent" onboard each ship. Those two agents and all of the more senior officers constituted a "General Council," also formed at the Syndicate's behest, which had authority to make all major decisions during the voyage. This Council is described in other works, but not the degree to which it adhered to Syndicate members' desires. All major decisions were conducted with the officers considering what was best for the Syndicate. The Council also served as a forum to mitigate rising animosities between the two senior officers. No matter how acrimonious the factions became toward each other, the Council ensured that the Syndicate's ships and companies stayed together and did not break up or descend into indiscriminate piracy as so many other privateering voyages had done.

Most other studies of the Syndicate cruising voyage mention the more prominent members of the Syndicate, but few go beyond simply stating that some were city officials and members of the Society of Merchant Venturers. More recent studies go into detail on how the financiers raised the money, but none examine the combination of charitable groups, political organizations, and local politics that the investors involved themselves in. Other works either transition directly to another cruising voyage or to Rogers' later career as governor of the Bahamas. From examining what Syndicate members did after the voyage, it is obvious that some used their newfound wealth and prestige to raise their social and political status in Bristol

More importantly, all other studies focus on the voyage as a privateering enterprise and ignore its commercial aspects. The Syndicate's explicit orders for the voyager's leaders to investigate opportunities for post-war trade and settlement on the west coast of the Americas clearly influenced the actions taken, most importantly those at Guayaquil.

ORGANIZATION

The dissertation begins by outlining some of the political and economic trends that shaped the world that privateers and merchants operated in, such as the shifting colonial markets, France's new role as Britain's main imperial and commercial rival, and Bristol's place in all those changes. These shifts created the opportunities for Bristol merchants with the necessary means and motivation to invest in privateersmen and attract the right officers and crewmen.

The next several chapters are a narrative of the circumnavigation. It emphasizes shipboard tensions, governance, and finances (e.g., division of plunder, ransoms) throughout as well as how the privateers were always bound by the Syndicate's instructions. Every capture, major disciplinary meeting, assessment of plunder, and significant purchase had to be conducted with the Syndicate in mind.

The final chapters examine the flurry of administrative activity precipitated by the expedition's arrival in the Netherlands, when Syndicate members used their political influence and family ties to prepare the way for their ships to return to Britain with as much of their prize cargo as possible. Describing how the Syndicate sold condemned prize cargo, and the parsimonious methods with which the Syndicate deducted wages from its sailors, further emphasize the measures to which the Syndicate members stretched in order to maximize revenue. There was much acrimony and ill feeling as the Syndicate members received their profits within the year while some of the sailors waited until 1717 to receive their own shares.

LITERATURE

Rogers has received relatively little attention in the academic world for a variety of reasons. The ways in which historians have described him, however, parallel the methods with which they have written about privateers and pirates. As writers' attitudes toward those characters changed, so too did their treatment of Rogers. He first appears in Captain Charles Johnson's (almost certainly a pseudonym for Daniel Defoe) *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724) as the Bahamas governor who suppressed piracy.

By 1724, piracy suppression was irrevocably stamping out the marauders in the West Indies. Those who did not acquiesce were killed outright in a series of sharp naval skirmishes. Pirates were becoming a distant memory; negative aspects of English pirates were receding and being replaced by tales of their exploits in myth and legend. Many of Defoe's accounts are pure fiction (with healthy doses of morality regarding the swift, sure, and cruel punishment that awaited most pirates), and his information had probably been gleaned from sailors' taverns in Bristol, but it was still accepted as genuine history into the twentieth century.[1]

Defoe's treatment was of Rogers the governor. The first works written about Rogers the privateer and his voyage present him as one of many English buccaneers, privateers, and explorers who made voyages into the Pacific. In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht led to a quarter century of relative peace among European maritime empires and an end to privateering. Rather than accept an end to their seizure of merchantmen, many former privateers became pirates so the following quarter-century became the "Golden Age of Piracy." When that age was brought to a violent end at mid-century, writers began to publish more balanced and accurate accounts of pirates and piracy. Charles de Brosses' *Terra Australis Cognita* (1756) is one such example that features Rogers. Very little is written on the Syndicate except a brief mention at the start, saying that some of the chief members of the Syndicate held public office. Rogers is also featured in George Berkley's *The Naval History of Britain* (1756), a nationalistic narrative that does not incorporate the economic context into the work. Berkley's coverage of the Syndicate

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[1] Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Robberies & Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates* (1724), 9.

largely parallels that of de Brosses. When Berkly does mention market forces, he does so only to show how British commerce was expanding.[2]

Rogers was not written about in any prominent way for over a century and the Syndicate all but disappeared from the literature. Towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, Rogers once again gained notice. Novels such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) and *Kidnapped* (1886) gained popularity among a readership hungry for sailing stories.[3] The late Victorians were fascinated with amateur adventurers, great white hunters, missionaries, and naturalists (especially men who engaged in combinations of these activities) who traveled to remote locations and described their experiences. As a result of the twin desires for worldly adventure stories and sailor's tales, Rogers became relevant once again although he largely overshadowed by more contemporary figures.

Robert Leslie's 1889 *Life Aboard a British Privateer in the Time of Queen Anne*, an abridged and heavily annotated version of Rogers' journal, appealed to audiences who wanted to read about successful British explorers, and particularly those explorers who spent time describing flora and fauna either through written descriptions or sketches. Rogers was not a naturalist, but he did describe unusual plants and animals he came across while his fellow officer Edward Cooke sketched them. Due to this focus, late nineteenth century authors largely ignored the Syndicate and financial matters, perhaps because the Syndicate members seemed like dreary bean-counters compared to

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[2] George Berkley, *The Naval History of Great Britain* (1756), 2.
[3] David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of the Life Among the Pirates* (1995), 170.

Rogers' swashbuckling figure; Rogers received nearly all the attention in the relevant stories while his crewmen and benefactors faded into the background.

Except for Leslie's work, the long absence of Rogers from literature continued for the next several decades. During the early twentieth century, the Progressive Era in the United States, individuals of all socioeconomic status believed that the world was gradually progressing into something better, and were dismissive of anyone – especially pirates – perceived to impede such progress. Violet Barbour's 1911 article "Privateers and Pirates of the West Indies" for *The American Historical Review* presents one such example. The privateers' socioeconomic backgrounds were seldom examined and never thoroughly researched. Rogers only appeared in broad treatments of privateers or pirates except in George Wycherley's 1928 *Buccaneers of the Pacific* which devotes an entire chapter to Rogers. The first significant examination of the Syndicate appeared in B.M.H. Rogers' "Woodes Rogers's Privateering Voyage of 1708-1711," published in *The Mariner's Mirror* (1933). The article described the finances of the voyage but only briefly discussed the individuals who provided the funds.

More recently, Rogers and his voyage have been the subject of several biographies. The most prominent work is Bryan Little's *Crusoe's Captain* (1960). Little describes Rogers' personal and family background, the voyage, Rogers' governorship of the Bahamas. Three years later Fleming MacLeish and Martin Krieger published *Fabulous Voyage* (1963), a detailed narrative of the voyage and life at sea in which Syndicate members are mentioned only briefly. In 1967 James Poling published

The Man Who Saved Robinson Crusoe. Meant largely for a younger audience. Poling presented Rogers as a hero whose strength of character brought success.

Other historians wrote about Rogers in the 1960s, but follow Wycherley's example by portraying Rogers only as one of many buccaneers, privateers, or pirates in collections of voyages. Those works are P.K. Kemp and Christopher Lloyd's *Brethren of the Coast* (1960) and Alexander Winston's *No Man Knows My Grave* (1969). Each individual receives one or two chapters as the narrative proceeds chronologically from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

Rogers then largely disappeared from literature again until very recently. During his absence, there were significant steps in research on sailors in general and especially privateers. Marcus Rediker has recently done much to flesh out sailors' and especially pirates' social backgrounds in a number of books. The tremendous agency that common sailors had and regularly utilized was usually ignored before then. Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (1987) and *The Many-Headed Hydra* (2000) explore the absolutely oppressive, squalid conditions that sailors faced in the merchant service, and why privateering (and piracy) looked like a viable alternative in the face of such hardship. More importantly, Rediker examines the economic trends that both pushed and pulled seamen far from their ports of origin. It was entirely possible for a sailor to wisely choose a specific vessel and captain for a voyage because his skills were in high demand.[4] Rediker's explains how councils and ships' articles (such as those imposed on Rogers' expedition) were devised and what they were supposed to achieve.

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[4] Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (1987), 149.

During the time that Rediker published those two works, David Starkey wrote *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (1990) that analyzes the economics of privateering and especially the trends that affected where British privateers were from, what they targeted, and how they organized themselves. The financial backers for Rogers' voyage receive brief descriptions but are overshadowed by the many other cruising voyages that Starkey examines in that same work. Glyndwyr Williams largely follows the same line in *The Great South Sea* (1997) that examines the changing ways in which English mariners were fascinated by Pacific exploration from the Elizabethan through the Georgian eras. In *Preserving the Self in the South Seas 1680-1840* (2001), Jonathan Lamb explores the philosophical, patriotic, and scientific factors that drove British exploration into the Pacific. Rogers and some of his officers frequently appear in the latter two accounts, although Lamb and Williams do not discuss the Syndicate.

Utilizing similar approaches to sailors, their means, and their motivations, others illuminated the lives of privateers and pirates. David Cordingly's *Under the Black Flag* (1995) focuses on pirates but uses Rogers' journal as a source to describe shipboard life and governance among privateers. Cordingly also uses Rogers as an example of how to fight pirates, as he suppressed pirates both in Madagascar and Nassau after the voyage. Like Rediker, Cordingly presents the sailors as active participants in defining the terms of their service rather than as passively accepting the rules set down by shipowners and officers, whether they worked for an independent merchant or the East India Company. He also dispels the other notion of privateers conducting themselves as gentlemen while

freelance pirates were scoundrels. It is this exact approach that makes it possible to examine how the Syndicate was able to attract so many crewmen when there were other opportunities that were far closer to home. Since all the privateers were free laborers and expected certain standards and accommodations, the Syndicate needed to offer potential recruits high pay, a command system that allowed for review of orders and disciplinary actions by superior officers, and decent food. Otherwise the sailors would simply look elsewhere. The high demand for sailors in any allied port also helps to explain why so many officers were needed to supervise the crewmen.

The rise of interdisciplinary studies at the turn of the century allowed for further description of sailors and privateers in general. Essays in two recent anthologies use interdisciplinary (especially legal history) studies to explore not only the realities of privateering, but also the poarts that Rogers visited in the Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch empires as well in order to highlight the roles that each port had in the greater maritime world. The first anthology, C.R. Pennell's *Bandits at Sea* (2001), contains essays examining privateers as an institutional force and also as a commercial system on the very margins of legitimate trade. David Starkey again contributes through this work with his essay "The Origins and Regulation of Eighteenth-Century British Privateering." Far from portraying privateers as either historical incarnations of Errol Flynn's rakish Captain Blood or bloodthirsty rogues, Starkey explains the series of regulatory mechanisms that were designed to keep the practice in check.[5] Those same mechanisms could also be exploited or manipulated in order to wreak further havoc upon enemy

[5] David J. Starkey, "The Origins and Regulation of Eighteenth-Century British Privateering," *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader*, ed. C.R. Pennell (2001), 69.

shipping. This dissertation emphasizes the degree to which the Syndicate had to operate within this framework.

The second anthology, *Seascapes* (2007), uses regional and global geographies to explain the workings of maritime systems. Emily Tai's article "Marking Water" demonstrates that individuals who invested in privateering sought did not seek simple profit for profit's sake but to raise their socioeconomic and political status.[6] In that way, it becomes much easier to understand why the Syndicate members invested in privateering; the profits allowed some of the more middling backers to join the philanthropic and civic groups that wealthy Bristolians were expected to participate in.

Using this recent, more thorough means of detailing sailors' lives and the worlds in which they lived, Colin Woodard, Graham Thomas and David Cordingly again all published works focusing on Rogers, although not exclusively on his role in the voyage. In *The Republic of Pirates* (2008), Colin Woodard focuses on Rogers' governorship of the Bahamas during which he waged a campaign against piracy. Although Woodard devotes some attention to Rogers' personal life and voyage and to the War of the Spanish Succession, *The Republic of Pirates* mostly deals with pirates in the Caribbean during the Golden Age of Piracy.

Thomas provides an immensely readable and entertaining account of Rogers' voyage and governorship in his *Pirate Hunter* (2009). Thomas fills his narrative with vivid descriptions of shipboard life and battles. He devotes only one chapter to

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[6] Emily Sohmer Tai, "Marking Water: Piracy and Property in the Premodern West," *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*, ed. Jerry Bentley et al (2007), 205.

describing Rogers' personal life and divides the rest of the book between recounting the voyage and Rogers' terms as governor of the Bahamas. The Syndicate is mentioned only in passing.

David Cordingly, in *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean* (2011), describes the careers of Bartholomew Roberts and Edward "Blackbeard" Teach in greater detail than that of Rogers. The most recent work on Rogers and his voyage is Tim Beattie's *British Privateering Voyages of the Early Eighteenth Century* (2015), which is based on his dissertation *The Cruising Voyages of William Dampier, Woodes Rogers and George Shelvocke and their Impact* (2013). Beattie briefly describes the privateering expeditions led by Rogers, William Dampier, and George Shelvocke, then devotes the majority of the book to assessing the political, economic, and cultural impact of the voyages on eighteenth century Britain. Beattie also authored the recent essays "Adventuring Your Estate" for the journal *The Mariner's Mirror* (2013) and "Dividing the Spoils" in the collection *Law, Labour, and Empire* (2015), which detail some of the finances involved in funding the Rogers expedition and in paying off the sailors at the end.

While each of the recent authors who have written on Rogers have made significant contributions, none of them examine the Syndicate members beyond their financial contributions or a cursory description of their political lives. This study analyzes the social status of Syndicate members, explains the methods they employed to govern the voyage, calculates the profits made by members of the Syndicate, officers, and crewmen, and describes the impact of their financial success on their later lives.

The documentary foundation for this description and assessment of the voyage rests on the published accounts of the voyage by the commanders of the *Duke* and the *Dutchess*: Rogers' memoir *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* and Cooke's journal *A Voyage to the South Sea* (both 1712). Most of the memoirs consist of the captains' logs. Both captains' goals were to make money by selling this account to merchants interested in conducting business in the Pacific regions they visited.

Archival sources from the United Kingdom's National Archives provide much information as well. Chancery 104/36, 104/37, 104/160, and 104/161 hold an array of account ledgers, private letters, and business correspondence that detail the inner workings of the expedition and especially the Syndicate members who made it possible. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury (Probate) collection also provides the wills of most investors – and some officers – involved in the voyage and details their financial status and some of their interpersonal relationships.

RESULTS

Through the use of these newer interdisciplinary approaches, it is possible to view the emerging Pacific network of exchange and its gradual transition into a global network. A new world system was emerging, and Bristol cloth merchants comfortably ensconced in Bristol enticed enough sailors to venture forth and seek out Chinese silk and Mexican silver from the far side of the world. A cruising voyage from Bristol could enter that system and, through the Council and owners' agents, indirectly bring the Syndicate into it as well.

It is also possible to understand why the Syndicate imposed rules – and regularly enforced them by proxy – that seemed to detract from the voyage's goals. These rules also continually checked the privateers by curbing violent excesses. Most buccaneers or privateers had no qualms about using torture to extract information from captives regarding hidden valuables. But the Syndicate viewed its expedition partially as a cruising voyage and also as an economic probe. Instead of focusing only profits, the Syndicate members were keen on learning what future trade could be developed after the war's end. The investors were motivated by long-term prospects, and this motivation is again clearly reflected in Rogers' journal that was marketed to them and their peers.

The thread that ties the entire voyage together, however, is the Bristol Syndicate's network that enabled Rogers to set out in the first place. Through the intricate web of obligations, relations, civic cooperation, and business partnerships, the Syndicate members selected Rogers and the other officers because the Syndicate wanted the most competent, trustworthy officers and crewmen who would see to their employers' interests. Every aspect of the voyage, from the outfitting to rules of engagement, depended on what the financiers wanted. The Syndicate's rules sometimes ran contradictory to how most privateers operated, with emphasis on the cultivating of relationships with Spanish settlers whilst simultaneously robbing Spanish merchants. Before the dissertation examines all that, however, it must first describe the maritime world as it was just before 1708.

CHAPTER II

THE SPANISH LAKE

In 1708, a group was formed in Bristol to send out two privateersmen to prey upon merchantmen from the French and Spanish enemies of Britain. The group, which shall be referred to as *the* Syndicate, appointed the Bristol mariner Woodes Rogers to lead the expedition in most practical matters. Such arrangements were not unusual, as similar associations often outfitted such expeditions, but the proposed hunting grounds made this expedition unique. Instead of the Mediterranean, waters around the British Isles, or the West Indies, the Syndicate intended to operate in Spanish American waters in the Pacific, something no Englishman had done since Thomas Cavendish over a century before.

This decision was not reached on a whim. There were many factors to consider, some of which were years or centuries in the making. What gave the merchants even a passing interest, let alone a vested interest, in funding the expedition? Why did the British crown concern itself with commissioning privateers at all? What would possess members of the Syndicate to think that raiding the remote Pacific Ocean was a good idea? To be fully understood the Rogers expedition must be examined in the context of England, a developing nation at war, and its position in the maritime world of the early eighteenth century.

By 1708, Great Britain – formed by the union of England and Scotland in 1707 during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) – was in a precarious position.

The British army, assisting the Grand Alliance in Flanders, had achieved some impressive victories but was fighting for its very existence against consistently superior enemy forces.

Centuries of conflict, England's relatively small population, and limited natural resources had led it to adopt an aggressive foreign policy. Wars are expensive; during the Nine Years' War (1688-1697) England had to raise over 100,000 soldiers and sailors and ultimately spent five and a half million pounds on the war effort. The War of the Spanish Succession required even more men, costing Britain over seven million pounds by the time that nation ended its involvement in 1713. While tax revenue was steadily increasing, it still was not growing fast enough to keep pace with expenditures.[1]

MERCANTILISM

To meet those rising costs, British leaders shaped government policy to harness both public and private resources. Like most Western Europeans of the era these leaders firmly believed in mercantilism, a theory grounded on four basic beliefs.[2] Mercantilists believed, first, that a nation's ownership of gold and silver was the true measure of its wealth, and that nations should always strive to increase their holdings of those precious metals. A nation could increase its gold and silver specie reserves, and thus its wealth, either by mining ore or through international trade. Britain did not possess known gold

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[1] John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State 1688-1783* (1988), 30.

[2] Rudolph Blitz, "Mercantilist Policies and the Pattern of World Trade, 1500-1750," *Journal of Economic History,* 27:1 (1967), 41-55

or silver deposits either at home or in its empire, so it had to depend on its commerce to increase the amount of specie and it held along with its ability to project strength.

Mercantilists believed, secondly, that the volume of world trade and wealth were finite. Merchants and treasury officials labored under the assumption that they were playing a zero-sum game, i.e., Britain's commerce, and with it the nation's wealth, could only expand if the commerce and wealth of her rivals were diminished. With that in mind, merchants sought to outperform, impede, or co-opt rivals in other nations. British traders continually infiltrated Spanish merchant houses so that ten of Cadiz's 84 commercial houses were English-owned by 1702.[3] Privateering fit into the zero-sum scenario as an integral offensive strategy. It allowed the state to wage commerce warfare while focusing the majority of its naval forces on defending home waters and engaging enemy fleets. For every privateer that raided enemy shipping, whether in the English Channel or in tropical waters thousands of miles away from home, the enemy suffered from a reduced capacity to fund its war effort. In a zero-sum scenario like that which the merchant communities perceived themselves in, every gain that British privateers achieved came at their enemies' expense.[4]

Third, mercantilists believed that, in order to maximize reserves of specie, i.e., gold and silver, all nations should strive for a positive trade balance. While manufacturing focuses on production and labor, commerce entails the perennial search for gain through the purchase, sale, and transporting of commodities along with ancillary

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[3] Thomas Benjamin, *The Atlantic World* (2009), 222.
[4] Carl Swanson, *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare* (1999), 20.

enterprises such as shipbuilding, ship chandlery, warehousing, banking, and insurance.[5] The Syndicate members, Rogers, and all their supporters all dearly held this belief. They also believed that the destruction of Spanish and French shipping would raise England's foreign trade when the war ended. Rogers began his 1712 publication exhorting English merchants to expand their markets and increase revenue through establishing trade links and colonies, especially in the Pacific. He described a virtuous cycle of increased trade leading to increased profit, which then led to increased naval power and so on. Writing after his return from the globe-circling voyage, Rogers complained "had a trade thither been promoted at the beginning of the war, we might not only have prevented the French from bringing through vast sums out of America, but have brought much greater ourselves, since we are better provided with commodities for that trade, and have a stronger naval force to carry it on."[6]

Fourth, mercantilists believed that the state should enact laws to regulate its economy to favor its own citizens and companies at the expense of those of its rivals. These laws would help the government accumulate reserves of gold and silver by fostering a positive trade balance; promote the British merchant marine, insurance, and financial sectors to avoid diverting funds to foreigners in order to pay for such services; and to develop sources within Britain and its territories of as many resources and commodities as possible.

[5] Thomas Benjamin, *The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians and Their Shared History* (2009), 65.
[6] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712), 2.

Based on mercantilist principles, England's Parliament sought to promote the nation's economy by enacting a series of Navigation Acts during the second half of the seventeenth century. The English, and later, the British government, also sought to add to specie reserves by expanding its existing overseas empire. At the time, Britain held colonies in parts of Newfoundland, Hudson's Bay, and the East Coast of the present day United States. Britain also possessed immensely valuable sugar islands in the West Indies where Jamaica was the main hub in a chain of British islands stretching in an arc from the Bahamas down to the Leeward Islands. These possessions put England into perpetual conflict with France and Spain.

France

France controlled some of the Leeward Islands and Saint-Domingue. The latter provided most of the valuable sugar and coffee consumed in metropolitan France and was sold to other nations. Thus France's West Indies colonies were always prime wartime targets. Further north, France had carved out a huge swath of colonies from Acadia on the Gulf of Saint Lawrence to Louisiana on the Gulf of Mexico, which also included parts of Hudson's Bay and modern Quebec. Throughout the Atlantic world, the British and French not only constantly competed in trade, but readily brought their colonies and indigenous allies into their conflicts. Governors of British colonies sold

letters of marque to privateers for 100 Spanish dollars apiece and sent privateers such as the notorious William Kidd to the West Indies, Red Sea, and Mozambique Channel.[7]

Spanish Settlement

Spain's Atlantic possessions north of the equator had by 1700 been reduced to Florida and the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico in the east, but still included vast territories west of the Mississippi River, in Central America, and western and southern South America. Spain's exploration of the Pacific began in 1508, when the Spanish conquistadores advanced across Central America. As Old World diseases depopulated the Americas and toppled indigenous civilizations, the Spanish expanded to fill the power vacuum. On the Pacific coast, fierce indigenous resistance finally checked the Spanish push southward into Chile. In the north, the Spanish had gradually extended their border to the Baja Peninsula and the American Southwest but the line had stabilized there by 1708. Lack of economic incentives to the north and south, coupled with a low Spanish population and surprisingly effective native resistance, precluded any further attempts to expand at the time.

THE SPANISH PACIFIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Such would not be the case in Asia where the peoples shared the same disease pool as the Europeans. Smallpox, measles, and other Old World diseases had already existed in China for millennia so the introduction of diseases would not trigger

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[7] Alexander Winston, *No Man Knows My Grave: Sir Henry Morgan, Captain William Kidd, Captain Woodes Rogers in the Great Age of Privateers and Pirates* (1969), 34.

population collapse on the mainland as it had in the Americas. Under New Spain's administration, the Spanish established and maintained settlements in the Marianas and the Philippines archipelagos.

Edward Cooke, one of the expedition's officers, described the Pacific as "that vast ocean which lies on the west of America, and between it and Asia, east and west, and extending from California in the North, to the *Terra Australis Incognita* in the South." He further classified Spain's holdings as not only entirely "beyond the Line," but possibly stretching from one "undiscovered polar region to the other."[8]

By "beyond the Line," Cooke spoke of the unpredictable, insecure state that existed in the colonial world past a certain longitude. The 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas established the western boundary through eastern Brazil and Greenland while the 1529 Treaty of Zaragoza set the opposite line just east of the Philippines and through New Guinea. The two lines effectively divided the world outside Europe between Spain and Portugal, but other nations immediately challenged those boundaries when they launched their own colonial ventures.

The oft-quoted adage "no peace beyond the Line" did not exist in any form until the French and Spanish employed the term in the 1559 Peace of Cateau-Cambresis, which mostly dealt with minor European possessions but also stated that the terms of treaties and cease-fires negotiated between nations in Europe did not necessarily apply to areas "beyond the Line." The exact location of the Line was generally vague. It was arbitrary and mostly dependent on the cartographer's opinion.

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[8] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea* (1712), 1:35-36.

Furthermore, the line itself was a nebulous concept (it had once been the Azores' longitude) although it was longitudinal, as longitude held more political significance than latitude. Other empires further confused matters when they unofficially deemed the Tropic of Cancer as the latitudinal equivalent by the seventeenth century.[9] The Spanish had used some guile in adopting the Tropic of Cancer since it protected Spain's weaker colonies north of that latitude, where the Spanish military was less able to protect its possessions. As the English writer Philip Ayres stated in his 1684 history on buccaneers, "That though we had not formally a War proclaimed against the Spanish there in the Indies, yet would not they listen to any proposals of Peace with us, beyond the Tropick, till about the year 1670." Before that year, Ayres claimed "there daily happened great Acts of Hostility and Depredations on either side, done as well by the Spaniards against us, as by the English against them. . . ."[10] By 1708, that delineation was shifting further south to the equator as rival colonial powers continued to expand and began to consider the equator as the southern border to the British Atlantic.[11]

Colonial forces, including privateers, could still fight savagely long after their mother countries had made peace in Europe as the peripheries already had a lawless reputation. The Treaty of Whitehall in 1686 attempted to establish peace between French and English colonies, even in wartime. It drew the line not latitudinally, but – like the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas – longitudinally through the Atlantic declaring that

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[9] Garrett Mattingly, "No Peace Beyond What Line?" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, Vol. 13 (1963), 155.
[10] Philip Ayres, *The Voyages and Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp and Others* (1684), Preface
[11] I.K. Steele, *The English Atlantic 1675-1740* (1986), 192.

"though the two Countries might be at war in Europe their Colonies in America should continue in peace and Neutrality."[12] That agreement did not last long as the English and French in North America quickly returned to fighting with the Nine Years' War. Rogers and Cooke, operating beyond the Line, could do the same even if the war ended while they were at sea. And there were other colonial powers that wished to see the Spanish knocked down a peg.

Portuguese and Dutch in the Pacific

Although the Syndicate's officers and sailors had incredible freedom while in the South Sea, that freedom came with uncertainty and the very real possibility that they might not return to Bristol. For British sailors, most of the Pacific was hostile territory. Japan was still in self-imposed isolation while the Chinese Qing court ignored the rest of the world. In the Central and South Pacific, the Dutch and Portuguese posed the most serious threats to Spain's hegemony. Both usurpers struggled to attain a foothold there.

The Portuguese established a presence in Timor in the East Indies. They also maintained an enclave at Macao on the Chinese mainland. The 1529 Treaty of Zaragoza, along with a hefty cash settlement from Portugal, had compelled the Spanish to renounce their claims to the Spice Islands and allow the Portuguese to stay there, but the Dutch could not be dislodged so easily.[13]

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[12] John Webster, *Acadia at the End of the Seventeenth Century: Letters, Journals and Memoirs of Joseph Robineau de Villebon, Commandant in Acadia, 1690-1700 and Other Contemporary Documents*, No. 1 (1934), 1.
[13] Robert Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam* (1995), 12.

The Dutch were vigilant in guarding their Pacific territories and fiercely resisted Spanish attempts to remove them. The Dutch had even been so bold as to go on the offensive in 1642-43 and capture several settlements in Chile, including then abandoned Valdivia, although they did not have the strength or replacement capability to hold their gains for long.

By midcentury, the Spanish realized they could not overtake the Dutch economic position in the Moluccas, and so they abandoned their one spice island, Ternate, in 1663. The Dutch also checked the Spanish advance into the East China Sea first by establishing a doomed colony on Formosa, and then by cultivating an amiable rapport with Japan's Tokugawa shogunate. The Dutch improved their relationship with the shogun, maintaining a small but exclusive presence in Japan after the Spanish trading post was driven out in 1630. So long as the Dutch remained on friendly terms with the shogun, Spain could not make headway in Japan.

The Dutch were also no more tolerant of rivals' entries into the Pacific than the Spanish were. The Dutch and Portuguese fought while establishing their Spice Islands posts, and the Dutch did not extend much courtesy to the English. When the English East India Company established a trading post at Bantam on Java in 1603, the Dutch cooperated with them for most of the century. However, Dutch fears of losing their clove monopoly won out and so they used indigenous allies to eliminate the post in 1682. The Dutch, since they were part of the Grand Alliance in the War of Spanish Succession, grudgingly allowed their British allies to operate in Dutch ports throughout

the Pacific and Indian Oceans. That tolerance had its limits, however, and the Dutch painstakingly kept tabs on every interaction with the British.

Scots

One other European power made a concerted effort to challenge Spanish hegemony in the Pacific. The Kingdom of Scotland tried to establish a colony at Darien on the Pacific coast of Panama in 1698. The relatively poor kingdom spent approximately half of its treasury equipping ships and settlers and enlisted the aid of former buccaneer Lionel Wafer in establishing the settlement.[14] It was a disastrous venture. Despite some success negotiating with indigenous tribes and escaping Spanish notice for months, the principal settlement, New Edinburgh, soon became a wretched place. Disease and malnutrition debilitated the colonists. Attempts to reinforce or at least resupply the colony met with poor weather, obstructive politics, and sheer bad luck. A Spanish blockade proved the final straw and the settlers abandoned the colony in March 1700, returning with just one of the five original ships.

Spanish Economy and Government

These rival encroachments were often accompanied by smuggling, which did just as much to challenge Spanish authority as naval expeditions. English and Dutch smugglers flagrantly disregarded Spanish regulations in order to trade with the colonists,

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[14] John Prebble, *The Darien Disaster* (1968), 56.

creating an economic environment that caused both sellers and customers to disregard Spanish authority.

Spain was just as much a mercantilist empire as her English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese counterparts. Spanish merchants and officials were rightly concerned that rival merchants or smugglers were enriching themselves at Spain's expense. To the Spanish, owning territory and receiving a monopoly on trade were a package deal although the Crown struggled so assiduously and futilely to retain the latter. Spanish American commerce to Iberia was largely limited to a highly choreographed, heavily escorted *Flota de Indias*, in which an annual treasure fleet carrying silver and colonial goods was dispatched to Seville. Despite the official stance on trade outside the *flota*, Spanish merchants cheerfully assisted smugglers. The Spanish Pacific merchants labored under similar conditions.

The many holes in Spain's economic enforcement were largely due to the prevailing trends in the maritime world; the trade networks were gradually becoming more international despite official attempts to maintain exclusive trading rights. Spain's territories in the New World were mostly incorporated into two viceroyalties: New Spain and Peru. Outside of South America's Pacific coast, all of Spain's Pacific territories were indirectly administered by New Spain. Under Spanish regulations, viceroyalties were not even permitted to trade with each other but that did not stop such transactions, and officials in both Mexico City and Buenos Aires tolerated – if not personally abetted – the illegal exchange of goods between the two polities.[15]

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[15] J.H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World* (2006), 227.

Furthermore, the monopoly hindered Spanish merchants by ensuring that only the most prosperous would survive. Spanish shipping in general had suffered during Spain's long decline. The Spanish crown was stingy with "single register" permits for independent merchantmen, making it more difficult for new merchants to succeed.[16] Ship masters eventually had to bargain for supplies and needed vast personal networks in order to survive. The Spanish navy requisitioned the best merchantmen as it became hard-pressed to defend Spain's vast dominions with ever-shrinking resources. As a result, only the most powerful merchant houses could survive. As smaller, independent merchant houses began to disappear, the surviving merchants became more powerful through consolidation and dominated licensed shipping throughout Spanish American routes. Those routes became popular hunting grounds for pirates and privateers.[17]

Privateers often operated in a gray area between legitimate commerce raiding and piracy because privateers could (and many did) flaunt the rules and attack the ships of neutral or even allied nations. The Spanish did not have the means to enforce their rule over the colonies, and lacked the political will to defend their own mercantile policies. Many privateers established illicit alliances with English, Dutch, and French governors. They even ingratiated themselves into some Spanish colonies and struck accords with Spanish officials who maintained enough local power to be *caudillos*, or the military and economic leaders in their isolated communities.[18] With the local authorities welcoming

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[16] Pablo Perez, *Spain's Men of the Sea* (1998), 9.
[17] Ibid., 95.
[18] Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas 1500-1750* (1998), 5.

them as favored business partners and even personal friends, the smugglers went about their business largely unmolested.

Spanish Manila Galleon Trade

Although there was substantial trade between the Philippines archipelago, mainland China, and some of the East Indies, the Spanish Pacific trade was best known for the Manila-Acapulco annual trade route that exchanged Chinese silk and Spanish silver across the Pacific. The system operated continuously from 1565 until the nineteenth century. Unlike the *flota*, which consisted of dozens of ships, the *nao de china* typically traveled by itself, although there were occasional exceptions.[19] Crossing the Pacific was an arduous journey, lasting four or five months. The *naos*, usually called Manila galleons by modern writers, sailed to 40 degrees latitude in order to catch the Kuro Shivo current, which took them to Upper California. From there, they followed the coastline until they reached Acapulco.[20] The return journey was just as grueling. From Central America, the galleons headed due west until they reached the Marshall Islands. From there, they continued west by northwest until stopping at Guam for resupply. It was a relatively easy leg to the Philippines after that.

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[19] A *nao*, also spelled *nau*, was a three- or four-masted ship developed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Naos* were large enough to carry sufficient provisions for long voyages. Roger Smith, *Vanguard of Empire: Ships of Exploration in the Age of Columbus* (1993), 144.

[20] Perez, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 12.

All Manila galleons had to abide by the *permiso*, which limited the volume of merchandise that could be carried. By imposing quotas on Chinese silks, the Spanish protected their own sericulture in New Spain and controlled the amount of silver the Spanish that went to China.[21] Every leg of that journey, from the mainland junks and smaller vessels gathering their cargoes at Manila, to the Manila galleon departing for Guam and on to Acapulco, involved tremendous opportunities to make profits and both viceroyalties were heavily invested in it. "The Ships that Trade hither are only 3," as Dampier described Acapulco, "two that constantly go once a year between this [Acapulco] and Manila in Luconia [Luzon] . . . and one Ship more every year to and from Lima. This from Lima commonly arrives a little before Christmas . . . here she stays till the Manila Ships arrive, and then takes in a Cargo of Spices, Silks, Callicoes, and Muslins, and other East-India Commodities, for the use of Peru, and then returns to Lima."[22]

Officials and merchants in the Philippines did not see compelling reasons to obey Spanish trade policy.[23] Like his counterparts in New Spain and Peru, with lax and inconsistent enforcement, any Philippine official worth his salt realized that it was better to serve the Spanish colonists' needs and ensure their prosperity than to try and enforce rules issued in far off Madrid. With such a small Spanish community – both *peninsulares* and *criollos* – in the archipelago, local needs trumped imperial

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[21] William Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (1959), 155.
[22] Masefield, ed., *Dampier's Voyages*, 1:261
[23] Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, 185.

bureaucracy.

Spanish Defense

Spanish rule on the west coast of the Americas and the Eastern Pacific went virtually unchallenged by other Europeans during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The rarity and failure of foreign excursions into the Pacific led the Spanish to become complacent to the degree that by 1700 their defenses on the west coasts of the Americas were virtually nonexistent except for static fortifications. Aside from the viceregal escorts and the major cities' garrisons, the Spanish defended their Pacific coastline with unreliable and shiftless militia. At sea they maintained the Armada de Mar de Sur, but it could not possibly patrol the entire coast from Mexico to Cape Horn.[24]

These limited defense forces operated with little external support. The Spanish crown permitted local governors to commission *guarda costas* in order to protect local trade. They were a staple in colonial defense by 1700 as Spain's military power continued to contract. The *guarda costas* were practically pirates as well, and used their sanctioned tasks to further their smuggling and occasional independent raiding. The governors could also gather small vessels into small flotillas called *armadillas* to temporarily defend their coasts in emergencies, and then recall them once the emergency had passed.[25] In these cases, the *armadillas* were meant specifically to stop privateers.

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[24] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain* (1960), 29-35.
[25] Little, *The Sea Rover's Practice*, 102.

Privateers and Pirates Challenge

The Spanish had fought English, Dutch, and sometimes French intruders in the Americas for over a century. The Syndicate had access to accounts of these conflicts, which was partially why it considered the Pacific as a hunting ground. The Spanish displaced other European settlers throughout Spanish America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many of whom later lived as hunter gatherers. These buccaneers, as they became known, all held a grudge against the Spaniards and were eager to attack their oppressors. Logwood cutters and Huguenots joined them in their marauding. Buccaneers were tangentially related to privateers, as the seventeenth century English, French, and Dutch governments established footholds in the Americas, exploited buccaneers' animosity towards Spain, and gave them opportunities to ravage Spanish colonies. Henry Morgan reached the highest point of Pacific buccaneer raids with his attacks on Portobello and Panama in the 1660s and '70s.

In March 1680, John Coxon and Bartholomew Sharp assembled a group of buccaneers (including Dampier) to raid the Pacific coast of Panama. This raid was important because its participants eventually became connected to Rogers himself and, by extension, further Pacific exploration. Coxon and Sharp intended to repeat Morgan's success at Panama City in 1671. They planned to disembark on the Caribbean side of Panama somewhere around Darien, and then advance overland to the Pacific side via canoe. Instead, when they landed near Panama City in April the Spanish reacted with uncharacteristic aggression. The buccaneers met determined resistance from a Spanish *armadilla* and gave up the assault. The buccaneers then descended into internecine squabbling. Dampier and Wafer broke off and led their followers overland through

Darien back to the West Indies.[26] Dampier remembered this setback and used that experience to counsel Rogers.

While Sharp's expedition foundered, Edmund Cook (not to be confused with the Edward Cooke who sailed with Rogers) took his vessel and persuaded some men to join him on his own round of South Seas raiding. Dampier eventually joined that group. Cook survived the unproductive venture by carefully sailing near the coastline where he could conceal his forces in inlets whenever superior Spanish forces appeared, and by cultivating relationships with the Cuna tribes. Those friendships saved his crew from starvation when the buccaneers' stores ran out, and they subsisted on whatever they could barter for. Cook died of an illness, leaving Edward Davis in charge. More recriminations ensued over their lack of success, with John Eaton and Ambrose Cowley splitting from Davis while Dampier remained loyal.[27]

Davis, Dampier, and the remnants of the buccaneers later joined the French buccaneer François Grogniet as he gathered hundreds of English and French buccaneers off the Pearl Islands in 1685. Grogniet's group inflicted severe damage to Peru's commerce as they attacked Spain's unprotected Pacific shipping, raided Peru's coast, and plundered its isolated settlements. Davis and a group of Englishmen chose not to leave Central America but to try to intercept the Manila galleon. When the galleon appeared, most of the crew were hunting inland and the heavily laden galleon coasted by

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[26] Kemp & Lloyd, *Brethren*, 50.
[27] Ibid., 96.

unmolested.[28] This made the already poor morale among the buccaneers worse and they eventually dispersed.

All these expeditions achieved remarkable initial successes against Spanish shipping and coastal settlements, but first few setbacks could instantly unravel any bonds buccaneers might have had with each other and the groups scattered.
Davis returned to the West Indies by rounding Cape Horn. Cowley's homeward journey was considerably longer as he circumnavigated the globe, freely trading in Guam and stopping in Canton for some time. As his crew dwindled and their ship became unseaworthy as it crossed the Indian Ocean, he and the remaining handful of English sailors signed on to a Dutch ship at the Cape of Good Hope in order to get home.[29] Cowley published his experiences, so the Syndicate was almost certainly aware that an undermanned expedition would likely meet a similar fate. As the Syndicate members prepared its own expedition, its leaders took precautions to ensure that Rogers and his crewmen would not be stranded in the Pacific or have to "hitchhike" back to Europe. The Syndicate not only gathered larger crews but also assigned more than the usual number of officers so there would always be a functioning chain of command regardless of sickness or battle casualties.

English Charts

In 1700 most of the Pacific remained uncharted. In fact, the coast of modern Chile was still largely unexplored when Charles Darwin passed through the region on his

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[28] Ibid., 114.
[29] Ibid., 104.

own voyage more than a century after Rogers. Drawing the published accounts of several English buccaneers, cartographers gradually filled in the gaps of English charts. During his 1679-82 voyage to the Pacific, Bartholomew Sharp seized Spanish sea charts from ships captured. When he returned home Sharp gave the charts to the government, an action which may have influenced his acquittal of charges that he was a pirate.[30] Dampier, who had sailed with him, would bring his knowledge to the Bristol Syndicate. Other, more above-board incursions also added to aggregate English knowledge of the South Sea and sharpened collective memory.[31]

Failed British Settlements and Trading Expeditions

As lax as the Spanish colonial system appeared to be, and despite English smugglers' successes, repeated raids into the South Sea ensured that English attempts to openly trade in the Pacific had largely met with failure. When John Narborough arrived in the region with a cargo of manufactured goods in 1669, he had been dispatched "to make a discovery both of the seas and coasts of that part of the world, and, if possible to lay the foundation of a trade there."[32] Instead, his shore party was imprisoned and Narborough returned to England in defeat.

While Narborough's expedition had failed both in the commercial and exploratory sense (he did not get north of Chile), he succeeded at least in charting the

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[30] Kemp & Lloyd, *Brethren*, 53-61.
[31] J.H. Parry, *The Discovery of the Sea* (1981), 24.
[32] Charles de Brosses, *Terra Australis Cognita: or, voyages to the Terra Australis, or Southern Hemisphere, during the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* (1766), 2:249.

Straits of Magellan. Even though it was halted and rebuffed, his expedition also showed the ineffectiveness of the Spanish lookout system. Upon returning to England, one of Narborough's officers remarked, ". . . we understood the Spanish Ambassador at Court had resented our Voyage into the South-Seas, but without any notice taken of it."[33] The Spanish arrested a shore party for smuggling and trespassing, sent the sailors to Lima where they were tortured and otherwise mistreated until the 1680s, and then the survivors were most likely executed.[34] Nevertheless the English had still freely sailed into Spanish waters and had not been spotted until they were in front of Valdivia, one of the most heavily fortified ports in the viceroyalty of Peru. Even then, the interlopers had completed some private transactions over the course of three days before colonial officials reacted.

Just over a decade later, in 1683, the former buccaneer Charles Swan had collaborated with Basil Ringrose to outfit a trading expedition into to the South Sea. Upon reaching Valdivia in southern Chile, the Spanish, instead of welcoming and trading with the Englishmen,. The group later met with *active* buccaneers, after which the crew turned unruly and the expedition gradually disintegrated, forgetting its original commercial purpose and instead began raiding Spain's holdings throughout the Pacific. The Spanish soon ambushed and killed Ringrose in New Spain. Swan eventually tried to cross the Pacific and return home, but he met a violent end in the Philippines, caught up in indigenous conflicts and with most of his crew deserted. Their commercial expedition

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[33] John Wood, "Captain Wood's Voyage Through the Streights of Magellan, &c" in *A Collection of Original Voyages*, ed. William Hacke (1699), 100
[34] Peter Bradley, *The Lure of Peru: Maritime Instrusion into the South Sea, 1598-1701* (1989), 95-98.

had failed due to not only unexpected Spanish hostility, but to the outlawry that many buccaneers were prone to.[35]

WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

The buccaneer and privateer expeditions in the South Sea, along with the trading expeditions, increased in tempo in the years leading to the War of the Spanish Succession. By the late seventeenth century, France had emerged as England's greatest imperial and commercial rival. France's Bourbon king Louis XIV had spent much of his reign thus far cajoling, threatening, and sometimes waging war against weaker Continental neighbors to gradually expand the borders of his kingdom. Each of his wars ended once the economic and diplomatic costs outweighed potential gains, although that could change.

Spain had been in gradual decline for much of the past century as its obsolete economy struggled to meet its political and military commitments, but a revitalized Spain could spell disaster to Britain. In 1700, a dynastic union between France, the dominant continental military power, and Spain with its immense overseas territories in the Americas and the Pacific, would drastically alter the balance of world power. Britain and her allies would be put at a permanent disadvantage in diplomacy, commerce, and warfare as the Bourbons would be able to use their combined resources to grind down any military or commercial rival. "The two Crowns of France and Spain being in one

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[35] Marley, *Pirates and Privateers,* 382.

Family," Rogers warned, "whose ambition for an Universal Monarchy has hitherto broke thro all Treaties, 'tis too much to be dreaded . . . ."[36]

To prevent this occurrence, a Grand Alliance of the Holy Roman Empire (which wanted its own Hapsburg representative on the Spanish throne), most German states, England, the United Provinces, and Hapsburg loyalists in Spain launched the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701 to prevent the union of France and Spain under a Bourbon monarch.

At the start of the war, British merchants' fears were confirmed when Spain opened its empire to its ally, France, by granting the Asiento, i.e., the right to sell slaves from Africa in Spanish America, to the French *Compagnie de Guinee et de l'Assiente des Royaume de la France*. That same year Spain granted another French trading company, *La Compagnie Royale de la Mer du Sud*, a license that made it the only foreign company allowed to trade with Spanish settlements on the Pacific coasts of the Americas for a period of thirty years.[37] British smugglers who had operated in Spain's Atlantic colonies for decades feared that they might lose their business to French merchants. Rogers soon lamented that "the French not only supply the South Seas, but carry all sorts of goods, with negroes, to Portobello, Vera Cruz, Cartagena, and Buenos Aires: so that they have outed us both of the public and private trade that we formerly had with the Spanish West Indies, which must necessarily stop the fountain of our bullion, and affect all the other branches of our trade through the world."[38]

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[36] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 4.
[37] Paul Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire 1713-1763* (2011), 126.
[38] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 2.

Protecting existing commerce required the ability to reliably protect sea lanes. In 1708 the naval war was not going well for Britain. The French, acutely aware they did not have the resources to meet the British in pitched battles at sea, shepherded their assets and used them only when they were guaranteed victory against vulnerable merchantmen with inadequate escorts. The Anglo-Dutch forces, on the other hand, vainly tried to draw French naval fleets out to meet in decisive battle. The allies could occasionally catch a Bourbon fleet in a vulnerable position, e.g., in 1702 when an Anglo-Dutch fleet captured or destroyed fifteen French ships-of-the-line in the harbor at Vigo Bay. Those opportunities, however, were extremely rare because the Bourbon warships spent so much time in strongly defended ports. The war's one major naval battle at sea before 1708, fought off Malaga in 1704, ended in a bloody draw. Rather than attempt to engage the British or Dutch navies in a fleet action, the French instead focused their naval effort on a *guerre de course* strategy, and soon inflicted humiliating defeats on British convoys, sometimes within sight of the British shore as at the Lizard and Beachy Head in 1707.

In addition to the French navy, French privateers from St. Malo and Dunkirk devastated British commerce. Over the course of the war, French privateers captured almost 7000 Grand Alliance vessels. Even more dangerously, the French navy, supported by Dunkirk privateers, had tried to transport a French invasion force to Scotland in 1708 in order to instigate a Jacobite rebellion.[39] The landings were aborted, but British officials could not escape the fact that French warships and privateers had

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[39] Daniel Szechi, *The Jacobites: Britain and Europe 1688-1788* (1994), 56.

threatened the British Isles and even had the gall to attempt to restore the hated Stuart monarchy.

The British retaliated by sending out privateers of their own. The British navy and privateers, combined, seized a little over 2200 prizes by war's end, less than a third of their enemies' captures.[40]

Privateering was attractive to businessmen in Bristol. There, men who would become members of the Syndicate weighed the variables involved in such an enterprise. The expenses incurred outfitting a privateer increased exponentially with the distance it operated from its home port. Given, for example, the cost of stores, financing an expedition to the Caribbean was more expensive than one that cruised in European waters, but the profits could also be much greater. Thus for most of the seventeenth century, the privateers who made the most money cruised in American waters.[41] Cooke recognized this in his journal on the Pacific voyage stating, "the immense wealth of the West Indies, is the bait that has always drawn adventurers into those parts, since the first discovery by Christopher Columbus."[42]

The cost of outfitting an expedition to the Pacific was greater than one to the Caribbean and Spanish commerce in the Pacific was only a fraction of that in the Caribbean and Atlantic. Profits from operations in the Pacific, however, were potentially greater because competition from other privateers was virtually non-existent and Spanish shipping essentially unprotected. Thus to the businessmen who formed the

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[40] Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise*, 100.
[41] Parry, *Age of Reconnaissance*, 19.
[42] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea,* 1:Introduction.

Bristol Syndicate, the Pacific seemed the logical place to seek their fortunes. Their captains and officers also appreciated that the Spanish settlers in the Pacific were hungry for trade goods. Rogers possessed a copy of the French mariner (and occasional privateer) Jacques Gouin de Beauchene's account of his 1698 trading voyage to the Pacific and from it knew how weak Spanish enforcement of trade regulations was in the South Sea.[43] By 1707, Bristol businessmen began to discuss forming a group to send an expedition to the Pacific to both trade with residents along the coasts of Spanish America and to prey upon Spanish shipping in the South Sea. The officers and sailors involved in this expedition, financed, organized, and dispatched by the Bristol Syndicate, would challenge the status quo in the Pacific in three ways. First, even though the investors did not plan on it, the potential capture of possessions on the Pacific coast of Spanish America could be useful during negotiations aimed at ending the War of the Spanish Succession. Even a toehold would be a threat to Spain's power in the region. Second, the regular trade routes that Rogers envisioned emanating from a hypothetical new settlement, guarded by privateers and the Royal Navy, would support later assertions of the legitimacy of English trade in the region. Third, cataloguing the discoveries and refining the regional maps and sailors' draughts would encourage and facilitate expeditions to the area by other British traders and assist Britain in establishing additional Pacific settlements. While Rogers made no claim to Spanish territory, he appreciated the potential for British trading posts or colonies in the Pacific.

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[43] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 1.

The Bristol Syndicate was largely made up of merchants and other landsmen, not of mariners who would accompany the expedition. Syndicate members were vital to the voyage, both for their financial backing and also because they chose the men who would lead the venture and distributed power among those who sailed in the expedition.

For the Syndicate members to succeed in their endeavor, they would need to tap into the labyrinthine interpersonal networks that formed between mariners and members of the well-to-do occupations that depended on those mariners. The information, relationships, and both familial and personal obligations that traveled across those sophisticated connections were essential in maintaining a brisk local, regional, and even global trade. Bristol, ideally situated on the Gloucestershire coast, served as a suitable foundation for many such networks.

CHAPTER III

GOLDSMITHS AND GROCERS

Very few individuals could outfit a privateering expedition using only their own funds, and even those who could afford to would not. Privateering was a high-risk business, so prudent shipowners diversified their portfolios by investing in partial ownership in several privateersmen at once. In this manner, the owners would not lose everything in case the vessel was sunk or captured. Ships were expensive, and everything from the ships' guns to provisions and medical supplies required money. A mariner such as Woodes Rogers needed financial backers as well as partners to post the bond required to obtain a privateering commission. Far from being simply an adventurous explorer, Rogers needed to seek opportunities within an economic system in which he was dependent on commercial and personal networks. Privateering in waters distant from Europe, required a group effort to finance, and such groups often coalesced in a seaport such as Bristol.

BRISTOL, COMMERCE, AND PRIVATEERING

At the start of the eighteenth century, Bristol was rapidly expanding its economy and with it the wealth of its commercial class that had an interest in ensuring prosperity. "From the reign of Anne to the present period the history of Bristol is so intimately

connected with that of the British Empire at large as to present few events of any unconnected interest," wrote the nineteenth-century historian John Corry.[1]

Bristol was a hub for both merchantmen and privateers. The surrounding West Country merchants had been dependent on the Iberian wine trade and Atlantic cod fishermen before colonial markets became more prominent. That shift made Bristol merchants gradually become more involved in trans-Atlantic trade.[2] During the late seventeenth century, France replaced the Netherlands as England's chief commercial competitor. Bristol capitalized on these changes in colonial trade and economic rivalries to become, by 1700, the third-largest English city and the second-largest port. It would decline in relation to Liverpool and Manchester after the mid-eighteenth century, but at this point it was the principal commercial hub in southwest England.[3] Bristol's rise as a seaport spurred a burgeoning shipbuilding industry in the city's dockyards. By the turn of the century, Bristol developed a merchant class eager to invest in new enterprises. Most investors preferred to purchase shares in multiple companies and ventures that dealt with a variety of commodities, e.g., Irish pork, West Indian sugar, or African slaves as a way to spread their risk. The merchants not only invested in commodities, but in activities including the development of infrastructure (e.g., turnpike construction, shipyards, docks, and warehouses) and privateering. In case one venture failed, the merchants' other investments would mitigate their financial losses. Bristol was ideally

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[1] John Corry and John Evans, *The History of Bristol, Civil and Ecclesiastical*, 2 vols. (1816), 2:10.
[2] John Anderson, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation in Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader," ed. C.R. Pennell (2001), 275.
[3] Kenneth Morgan, *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (1993), 3.

situated for those who wished to engage in multiple ventures.[4] "You come first to Old Wells, and over a bridge, built on both sides like London Bridge, and as much crowded," began a contemporary description of Bristol, "with a strange mixture of seamen, women, children, loaded horses, asses, sledges with goods, dragging along all together, without posts to separate them."[5]

In 1708, Bristol was a thriving economic center due not only to its strategic location in exchange networks, but through its manufacturing capacity as well. The city's robust manufacturing economy drew laborers to Bristol and led to the expansion of its infrastructure. Writing a history of Bristol in 1816, John Corry stated that "the spirit of improvement has been diffused throughout the empire, and of this spirit Bristol has imbibed no inconsiderable a proportion."[6]

Bristol was a major manufacturing center partially because it had an extensive hinterland to draw upon for raw materials. Somerset, Gloucester, Dorset, and Poole (itself a county corporation) sent their products to the warehouses in Bristol, and from there the goods spread throughout England's overland and coastal trade networks.[7] Trade fairs provided an avenue for Bristol's economy to integrate with other industries as local manufacturers accessed materials from throughout Britain. Copper and brass were particularly important because they formed so many accoutrements to manufactured goods such as cabinets and desks, as well as industrial products such as

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[4] Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (2001), 36.
[5] Whitwell Ellen and William Courthorpe, eds., *The Works of Alexander Pope*, 10 vols. (1886). 9:326.
[6] Corry and Evans, *The History of Bristol*, 2:10.
[7] Morgan, *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade*, 96.

stills for West Indian sugar plantations. Metalworking and metallurgy in general played a role in Bristol's economy, and a Bristol Quaker named Abraham Darby leased a blast furnace in distant Shropshire, where he developed the first technique for smelting iron with coke. Thomas Goldney, who was one of the original Syndicate members, later invested in the ironworks after the voyage returned.[8]

Bristol, in addition to forming a key hub in the Atlantic trade network and in metallurgy, also developed some domestic manufacturing in the glassware and pottery sectors and would, by the end of the eighteenth century, become famous for Bristol blue glass.[9]

Because of its expanding economy, Bristol had grown markedly over the seventeenth century and boasted a still-expanding population of approximately 20,000 by 1700. Parliament tried to alleviate some of the strain on municipal infrastructure by passing an act "for cleansing, paving, and enlightening the streets of the city of Bristol" in 1699 but that did not address the crushing poverty that accompanied expansion.[10] While Bristol's population swelled as the increased industrial sectors attracted migrants, there was only so much housing to go around. Slums and shantytowns sprang up as the mostly poor migrant laborers were forced to compete for food and shelter. They could not consistently depend on churches and the associated eighteen parishes for support. The Corporation of the Poor, formed by an act of Parliament in 1696, established a

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[8] Ibid., 97, 102; P.K. Stembridge, *The Goldney Family: A British Merchant Dynasty* (1998), 2.
[9] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain: Being the Life of Woodes Rogers, Seaman, Trader, Colonial Governor* (1960), 43.
[10] Henry Chapman, *The Act for the Regulation of Municipal Corporations in England and Wales* (1835), 136.

single tax district that encompassed the entire city. Thus residents of all parts of the city, not just those in impoverished neighborhoods, shared the expense of providing for Bristol's poor.[11]

Bristol's city aldermen each had four individuals to oversee management of the Corporation of the Poor within their ward. These Guardians of the Poor appointed other officers to manage the organization's workhouse and other programs. The Corporation of the Poor ultimately consolidated their workings into one larger workhouse. Coordinating with Bristol's industry, the workhouse residents spun cotton in exchange for some basic necessities. The Corporation also depended on benefactors aside from the clergy; cooperation with the city elite and government was essential. Most members of the elite invested in privateers.

War and Privateering

The past century of conflict with Spain and France, which occurred concurrently with colonial expansion in the Americas, had given the British merchant marine and the merchants themselves the impetus to evolve. This evolution involved the scope and type of commodities. From the Middle Ages up until the sixteenth century, West Country merchants, including those in Bristol, had been dependent on wine shipments from Spain and Portugal at least until the colonization of North America, and that trade was still prominent in the eighteenth century.[12] After 1650, bulk cargoes such as wheat, timber,

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[11] Mary Fissell, *Patients, Power, and the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Bristol* (1991), 7.
[12] David Armitage and Michael Braddick, *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (2009), 275.

tobacco, and sugar from America replaced Iberian wine as the mainstay of Bristol merchants.[13]

The wars of the period (the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession) severely disrupted trade. In both wars, enemy warships and privateers captured numerous British merchantmen and these depredations drove up the cost of insurance. In response, British merchants consolidated their ships into fewer but better-escorted convoys. Still, the losses continued to mount, insurance premiums rose, and the ripple effect meant higher prices for consumers. The Nine Years' War (1688-1697) was difficult enough and Spain was allied to England during that conflict, so the English at least had support defending their American trade. The English were more focused on Jacobites in Ireland and Scotland and colonial trade was of secondary concern to William III and the government. Like most of the ruling class, William had believed Stuart sympathizers to pose a far greater threat.

William's supporters did not consider the Jacobites to be such a pressing concern during the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714). The Spanish were also not allies in that war and the English, Dutch, and Portuguese were hard pressed to defend their merchant marine as soon as they entered the war. In addition, the sheer length of the War of the Spanish Succession meant that England and by extension Bristol's merchant class had to survive with greater risk and with fewer opportunities to trade. French and to a lesser extent Spanish privateers created this unstable situation.

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[13] Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (2005) 42; Jon Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean* (2009), 22.

The French adopted a *guerre de course* strategy during the Nine Years' War. That is, instead of seeking decisive naval battles, between fleets composed of ships-of-the-line, the French used frigates and privateers to capture vulnerable English convoys. By the War of the Spanish Succession, the French privateering was not just a nuisance, but posed a real threat to England's economy that made its merchant class demand naval protection. In addition, geographical scope and duration of the War of the Spanish Succession meant that English merchants faced greater risks at a time when Bristol merchants in particular suffered after losing access to Spanish markets, the city's most important foreign trading partners.

The English and their allies were unable to bring about major engagements at sea. Instead, they vainly searched for a great naval battle while elusive French privateers slipped through the Channel and inflicted great damage on English and Dutch merchantmen. Tobacco fleets from Virginia, slave ships from Guinea, and cod fishermen returning from the Grand Banks all feared French privateers that could strike at any moment. Just one successful privateer could ruin a merchant's entire livelihood in moments, and some of the merchants who would later hire Woodes Rogers had already suffered financial losses at privateers' hands. To offset their losses, English merchants and shipowners increasingly invested in privateers of their own from Dover to Dundee.

During the Nine Years War, London shipowners, merchants, and landed gentry outfitted more than two-thirds of England's 406 privateers. By comparison, Bristol outfitted a mere seven privateersmen. During the next war, investors from other cities – including Bristol – joined those from London in privateering. Throughout the War of

the Spanish Succession, Bristol shipowners received 205 commissions for 157 privateersmen. That was out of a total of 1607 commissions for 1343 privateers commissioned in Britain and Ireland. Londoners still outfitted approximately half (814 commissions for 671 vessels) but Bristolians were gaining on them.[14]

THE BRISTOL SYNDICATE

Bristol shipowners and merchants contributed to making Bristol a major port for privateers. Understanding that diversification and shared risk were key to survival, especially during wartime, a group of like-minded investors in the city formed the nucleus of what became the Syndicate. Many Syndicate members either owned or co-owned merchant ships and invested in privateers to reduce the risks of war. Privateering would enable merchants to not only recoup some of their losses, but also to strike back at those responsible for their current economic setbacks.

Bristol's location influenced the Syndicate's plans. Channel ports from Dover to the Scilly Isles and across to the Channel Islands flooded that region with privateers ranging from small vessels that preyed on French coastal traffic to converted merchantmen that attacked enemy shipping there and abroad. In fact, there were more Channel privateers than Bristol privateers commissioned during the War of the Spanish Succession. From Kent northward, east coast ports sent privateers into the North Sea and beyond to attack enemy merchantmen and ships from neutral nations carrying

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[14] "For Letters of Marque and Reprisals," High Court of Admiralty 25/14-25; HCA 26/13-21, NAUK as listed in Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise,* 88-89.

contraband to France and Spain.[15] Competition was equally keen in the West Indies, thus the men who formed the Syndicate looked for opportunities elsewhere, and soon settled on an expedition to the Pacific where the element of surprise coupled with the lack of competition presented the opportunity of far greater profits.

Bristol, with is extensive connections to trade with Africa, the West Indies, and North America, possessed the resources – sailors, sea captains, and investors – to launch such an audacious expedition. The men the Syndicate hoped to attract to the enterprise were familiar with the logistics of such a large-scale undertaking, including initial and running costs, and so were better prepared than most to outfit a cruising voyage.[16]

Origins of the Syndicate

Origins of the enterprise are somewhat obscure. Contemporary sources disagree on whether Woodes Rogers, William Dampier, or others first developed the idea. In his journal, Rogers asserts that he approached some future Syndicate members and proposed cruise in the Pacific.[17] Cooke contends that Dampier persuaded the merchants to outfit an expedition.[18] Historians writing during the eighteenth century have mixed opinions, although at least one (Charles de Brosses) credits the Syndicate with the idea. Given Rogers' inexperience, he probably did not author the proposal. Neither did Dampier, who did not return to England from his second circumnavigation until late 1707. More likely, the Syndicate members had been discussing the possibility of organizing a

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[15] Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (1990), 247-248.
[16] Ibid., 50.
[17] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, Foreword.
[18] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea,* 1:Introduction.

cruising voyage, and Dampier's return to the city and the subsequent excitement led them to focus on the Pacific as their primary target.

In early 1707, five men – John Batchelor, Thomas Goldney, James Hollidge, Francis Rogers (no relation to Woodes Rogers), and Christopher Shuter – laid the foundation for what would become the Syndicate. Their occupations and number of shares purchased are listed in Figure 1. At the time, they only had a single officer named Alexander White on their rudimentary roster to function as a pilot and translator (he later sailed with the expedition as a subordinate). Woodes Rogers and Edward Cooke were not yet involved in the enterprise. The proto-Syndicate members calculated that they needed to raise a minimum of £3456 to purchase and outfit ships, attract officers and crewmen, and post the bonds which were supposed to guarantee that a privateer captain would adhere to the laws of war and become a pirate. Initially, the members hoped to issue 128 shares at £207 apiece, but soon concluded that it would be difficult to attract individuals willing to make such a large investment.[19] Thus they doubled the number of shares to 256, halved the price of each, and began contacting their associates in the merchant community.

Figure 1: Original Syndicate Members

Name	Shares	Occupation
John Batchelor	16	Landlord, draper, merchant, shipowner

[19] B.M.H. Rogers, "Woodes Rogers's Privateering Voyage of 1708-11," *The Mariner's Mirror*, 19:2 (1933), 205.

Figure 1 Continued

Name	Shares	Occupation
Thomas Goldney	36	Grocer, landowner, shipowner
James Hollidge	10	Merchant
Francis Rogers	20	Shipowner, merchant
Christopher Shuter	30	Grocer, merchant

Sources: Alfred Beaven, *Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous* (1899), 125-126, 276. "Articles of Co-Partnership between Christopher Shuter," BRO 13325/52/a.
"Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36-37, C 104/160-161, NAUK.
Calendar of Treasury Papers: 1556-7-1696; XXVI:340.
"Conveyance of Goldney House," DM 1911/3/1, University of Bristol.
Kenneth Morgan, "Sugar Refining in Bristol," *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism*, ed. Kristine Bruland and Patrick O'Brien (1998), 146.
PROB 11/637/109; 11/524/492.

By the end of the year the Syndicate had expanded to include fourteen additional investors. The new members came from a variety of occupations and purchased between 4 and 30 shares each, as seen in Figure 2. Edward Cooke provides a complete list of the nineteen investors who formed the Syndicate by 1708.[20]

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[20] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:Introduction.

Figure 2: Additional Syndicate Members by September 1708

Name	Shares	Occupation
Thomas Clement	4	Shipwright
John Corseley	10	Goldsmith
Stephen Courtney	≤15	Mariner
Thomas Coutes	NA	Merchant, gentleman
Thomas Dover	30	Physician
John Duckinfield	10	Merchant, shipowner
Philip Freke	20	Merchant
John Grant	20	Distiller
John Hawkins	10	Brewer, landlord
Richard Hawksworth	5	Merchant
Daniel Hickman	10	Ironmonger
John Romsey	15	Town clerk
William Saunders	NA	Merchant
Nathaniel Webb	NA	Gentleman, grocer

Sources: Alfred Beaven, *Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous* (1899), 125-126, 187, 225, 282.

"Assignment for 7 Years between Daniel Hickman," BRO 13325/83.

"Kenneth Dewhurst, *The Quicksilver Doctor* (1957), 39.

"For Letters of Marque and Reprisals," HCA 26/3/141; 26/13/57.

Kenneth Morgan, “Sugar Refining in Bristol,” *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism*, ed. Kristine Bruland and Patrick O’Brien (1998), 146.
PROB 11/563/120; 11/597/173; 11/680/65; 11/691/95.
Wendy Wilson-Fall, *Memories of Madagascar and Slavery in the Black Atlantic* (2015).

With at least nineteen members who had a stake in the voyage, Syndicate leaders had to organize and coordinate the finances. Each investor had an active role to play and could not just drop a sack of guineas into a common pot and reap the rewards later. Little is known concerning how the Syndicate functioned. No records indicate how it was structured, although it is clear that its members took their cues from Batchelor. In correspondence addressed to the Syndicate, the senders almost invariably list him first. Records suggest that every member could participate in decision-making, although they all seem to have deferred to Batchelor. In government documents such as letters of marque, he always signed first while the other Syndicate members lent their support as fellow signatories. Batchelor possessed the *gravitas* in the right circles to remain leader throughout the Syndicate’s length of service.

Additions and Structure

Membership in the Syndicate changed significantly between its formation in 1707 and 1708 and the conclusion of the voyage in 1711. All of the initial backers were from Bristol and its environs. Five investors who joined later were also from Bristol: Lawrence (or Laurence) Hollister, Lewis Casamajor, Abraham Hooke, Edward Hackett,

and Humphrey Corseley. Both Cooke and the historian Charles de Brosses mention that Edward Acton, Thomas Palmer, and "some other London gentlemen" joined the Syndicate after the expedition got underway, and the owners' orders of 1711 indicate those additional changes in Syndicate membership, and those changes are reflected in Figure 3.[21] It is unclear how much Acton, a goldsmith, or Palmer, a merchant, each invested but they were connected to wealthy and powerful individuals in London. The document that includes the names of most of the newcomers was a 1711 agreement concerning the sale of the prize cargoes and the distribution of the proceeds of the sale. At the time these procedures were agreed to, the expedition had returned to Europe from the Pacific, was waiting in the Netherlands due to unforeseen complications, and was preparing for the final short trip back to England.

Figure 3: Syndicate Members Who Joined While Expedition Was at Sea

Name	Shares	Occupation
Edward Acton	Unknown	Banker, goldsmith
Lewis Casamajor	Assignee	Merchant, shipowner
Humphrey Corseley	Assignee	Goldsmith
Edward Hackett	Assignee	Grocer
Lawrence Hollister	Assignee	Landlord, merchant, shipowner

[21] "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK; Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:Introduction; Charles de Brosses, *Terra Australis Incognita: or, voyages to the Terra Australis, or Southern Hemisphere, during the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*, 3 vols. (1766), 3:232.

Figure 3 Continued

Name	Shares	Occupation
Abraham Hooke	Assignee	Merchant
Thomas Palmer	Unknown	Merchant

Sources: Alfred Beaven, *Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous* (1899), 125.

William Betham, *The Baronetage of England; or, the History of the English Baronets, and Such Baronets of Scotland, as are of English Families* (1802), 2:14

"Stokes Croft Educational Foundation and Almshouses," BRO 30999; "Lease for 99 years – Lawrence Hollister," 8976/11.

"Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36-37, C 104/160-161, NAUK.

PROB 11/506/156; 11/581/129.

David Richardson ed., *Bristol, Africa, and the Eighteenth-Century Slave Trade to America,* 3 vols. (1986-1990), 1:17.

Occupations

Each individual Syndicate member paid for his shares from his personal funds. The investors were wealthy, to be sure, but were not landed gentry, and worked for a living. The majority of Syndicate members' occupations reflected Bristol's growing industrial economy. Sir John Hawkins, despite his knighthood, was a brewer and collected rents from a number of houses he held throughout Bristol and its environs.[22] James Hollidge, Thomas Coutes, Abraham Hooke, Lawrence Hollister, and William

[22] "Will of John Hawkins of Bristol, Gloucestershire," Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 11/691/95.

Saunders were merchants. Edward Hackett, Christopher Shuter, and Thomas Goldney were grocers (although Shuter is also listed as a merchant and Goldney was a shipowner and landlord as well). Like Goldney, John Batchelor, Francis Rogers, and most members were at least part-owners of merchantmen or privateers. Daniel Hickman earned his living as an ironmonger. John Grant earned his by refining West Indies sugar. Thomas Clement was a shipwright by trade and he possessed the connections and occupational knowledge to accurately appraise ships and naval stores. He was, however, a rather mediocre shipwright, and his shoddy work preparing the expedition's frigates for their voyage led to problems when the ships were in the middle of the Pacific. Philip Freke came from an old merchant family, and many business documents do not address him specifically, but refer to the whole Freke family as "merchants of Bristol." Several members of the Syndicate, including the latecomer Casamajor invested in ships involved in the slave trade. Francis Rogers owned parts of four "Guinea" ships just before, during, and immediately after the expedition: the *Dispatch*, *Expectation*, *Colston Gally, William* (which was captured in 1710), and *Fame Sloop*. Lawrence Hollister co-owned the *Leopard Gally* and *Africa Gally* while the expedition was at sea, and the *Sacheverell Gally*, *Attempt Gally*, and *Grayhound Gally* just after the expedition returned.[23]

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[23] David Richardson, ed., *Bristol, Africa, and the Eighteenth-Century Slave Trade to America*, 3 vols. (1986), 1:17-18, 30, 37, 46.

Privateering

War with France and Spain presented the opportunity to invest in privateering, and several Syndicate members did so. Like most who entered the high-risk business of privateering, those from Bristol took shares in multiple ships to spread the risk.

Bristol businessmen had not heavily invested in privateering prior to the War of the Spanish Succession and Syndicate members reflected that. Many of them were too young to participate in such ventures during the Nine Years War (1688-1697). The exception was Thomas Coutes who invested in the 30-gun privateer *Charles*.[24]

In the last half of 1702 – Britain declared war on France in May 1702 – several Bristol businessmen, including at least four future members of the Syndicate, sought letters of marquee in order to become licensed to engage in privateering. In 1703, 1704, and again in 1706, Batchelor and some non-Syndicate partners received letters of marque to send the 18-gun *Dorothy* on privateering voyages to the West Indies and Africa. The ship foundered just before the Syndicate's expedition set out, taking Batchelor's substantial investments with her to the bottom.[25] In March 1708, Syndicate members John Corseley, Francis Rogers, and Richard Hawksworth joined one of the Freke family and another investor to obtain a license and outfit the 10-gun *Hallafield Galley* as a privateer.[26] Except for the earlier venture by Coutes, those privateersmen that the newer investors funded were small, lightly armed, undermanned ships that cruised alone.

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[24] "For Letters of Marque and Reprisals," HCA 26/3/141, NAUK.
[25] David Richardson ed., *Bristol, Africa, and the Eighteenth-Century Slave Trade*, 1:8.
[26] "For Letters of Marque and Reprisals," HCA 26/13/57, NAUK.

Founding members of the Syndicate planned a more ambitious operation that would take more time and require greater funding. Batchelor and Goldney appear to have taken the lead in recruiting investors in 1707 and 1708. Batchelor possessed the political and civic standing to attract investors and became the *de facto* leader of the Syndicate.

Syndicate members Philip Freke, Abraham Hooke, Lewis Casamajor, Francis Rogers, Richard Hawksworth, John Corseley, and Lawrence Hollister invested in no less than six other privateersmen while the expedition was at sea. Some invested with other Bristol merchants while others partnered with fellow Syndicate members. Except for the 20-gun *Fame Galley*, the privateersmen they financed were quite small and typically possessed small crews and light broadsides; even the *Fame* carried only 50 crewmen. These vessels were most likely meant for local waters, as they were clearly unsuited for a cruising voyage off Africa or in the Caribbean or South Sea.[27]

Joint Non-Privateering Investments

Three years after the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession, Thomas Goldney became financially involved with William Dampier. He did not invest in Dampier's voyage, but the two were partners in a real estate function. He was thus indirectly connected to the voyage and culpable for some of the resultant material losses. Despite the fact that Goldney was distantly connected to Dampier, his involvement had

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[27] HCA 26/13/93; HCA 26/14/172; HCA 26/15/4; HCA 26/15/94; HCA 26/15/126; HCA 26/15/172, NAUK.

led to a lawsuit in 1704.[28] The fact that no other Syndicate members were implicated in that lawsuit suggests that Goldney was the only member of the Syndicate to have even ancillary involvement in Dampier's enterprise. Indeed, most of Dampier's backers had been landed gentry from outside Bristol.[29]

In addition to privateers, the Syndicate members also invested in business ventures on land. Owning an entire "factory" was beyond the means of most tradesmen and merchants, so they usually joined others to become co-owners of the business. Even though the investors might not have known the first thing about processing sugar or brewing ale, they acted as venture capitalists by financing such enterprises. Some Syndicate members had previously worked together. In 1704, Shuter, Francis Rogers, Freke, and Nathaniel Webb joined other local merchants to form a co-partnership that operated a "sugar house." Bristol had invested heavily in sugar processing and her merchants knew there was profit in sating Britain's sweet tooth.[30] The involvement of the four merchants may have played a role in selecting Carlton Vanbrugh, a sugar distiller and London merchant, as an owners' agent for the voyage.

Goldney had also been commercially involved with other Syndicate members, although his interactions were more unpleasant. Goldney was distantly related to Hawksworth's father, also named Richard, who had entrusted Goldney with the family estate while the younger Richard was still a boy. Some of the Hawksworth family's creditors sued Goldney for mismanagement, who denied the charges and proved his

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[28] P.K. Stembridge, *The Goldney Family: A British Merchant Dynasty* (1998), 14.
[29] B.M.H. Rogers, "Dampier's Voyage of 1703," *Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. X (1924), 366.
[30] "Articles of co-partnership between Christopher Shuter, grocer," Bristol Record Office 13325/52/a.

innocence. Goldney had also done business with John Romsey's son-in-law, the Collector of Customs, and was investigated for malfeasance in 1707 after the latter's irregular accounting led to some deeply embarrassing legal trouble. Goldney was convicted in this case and sent to debtor's prison in August 1708, just weeks after Rogers set sail. Goldney was not released until July 1710 when he posted a £2000 bond with the guarantee that he could pay off all his debts in the near future. It is unknown exactly how he got the £2000, but Richard Hawksworth acted as a guarantor.[31]

Charity Work

In the twenty-first century, state structures assume responsibility for the vast majority of social services. In the eighteenth century, however, privately managed charitable organizations carried out nearly all those services. At least four Syndicate members directly involved themselves in the work of Bristol's Corporation of the Poor, which straddled the boundary between municipal government and private volunteerism. A governor and deputy-governor ran the organization, and each city ward had an assistant and four guardians.

Every May 12, the Corporation officers and Bristol's mayor, aldermen, and honorary guardians held court to elect the Corporation's senior officers for the year. Deputy-governors were typically chosen from among the assistants but guardians were eligible for any other office. Each ward's inhabitants elected their guardians via popular

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[31] P.K. Stembridge, *The Goldney Family: A Bristol Merchant Dynasty* (1998), 15.

vote.[32] Batchelor, Goldney, Hackett, and Hollidge all appear on the member list of founding guardians in 1696.[33] Refusing to accept the office when appointed had consequences and anyone who shirked their duty was fined an amount commensurate with the office, which is what happened to William Saunders when he declined to become the group's treasurer in 1710. Batchelor served as the organization's governor from 1703 until 1704 as did Hawkins in 1706. William Saunders' kinsman Peter was a benefactor in 1701 and 1706. Hackett (1699), Batchelor (1701) and Hawkins (1706) also contributed money to the Corporation.[34]

The city workhouse expanded its activities to include healthcare. Most importantly, in 1696, the workhouse established St. Peter's Hospital, the first hospital-workhouse combination to be established outside of London. Dover served as its first physician. Despite his eagerness to increase his social standing and rub shoulders with the Bristol elite, Dover did not seem to be overly concerned with gaining immense wealth through his career as a physician since he devoted much energy and time to charitable works. If he received compensation for his time at St. Peter's, he would have only received ten pounds annually and even then only to pay his assistants. In his treatise on medicine, published towards the end of his life, Dover insisted that "every Physician be content with a Gain proportionate to the Condition of the Patient, and his own Labour."[35]

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[32] E.E. Butcher, ed., *Bristol Corporation of the Poor: Selected Records 1696-1834* (1932), 179-180.
[33] Butcher, *Bristol Corporation of the Poor*, 171-174.
[34] Alfred Beaven, *Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous* (1899), 115-116, 119, 391.
[35] Thomas Dover, *The Ancient Physician's Legacy to His Country* (1733), 236.

Syndicate members were involved in non-medical charities as well. Hollidge served as the master of St. Stephen's Ringers in 1707. Originally established as a bell-ringer's guild in the Tudor era, the Antient Society of St. Stephen's Ringers had, by the eighteenth century, lost most of its bell-ringers and became more of a social club that collected funds for any charitable act it found interesting.[36] Nathaniel Webb donated £20 to St. Thomas' Parish "to the poor, at Michaelmas [September 29], yearly, for ever."[37] Thomas Clement had also been president of the Gloucestershire Society (1699), followed by John Corseley (1706). That organization had a history stretching back to 1658 and functioned much like a guild except devoted to charity for the entire surrounding county instead of Bristol's county corporate.[38]

Politics

Many Syndicate members participated in local government. Bristol's city charter provided for a mayor, 30 councilors, and twelve aldermen. These 43 individuals formed a Common-Council. Other offices included two sheriffs, a high steward, town clerk, chamberlain (basically the treasurer), and sundry minor officials. Unless otherwise specified, the terms of office were for one year. Several members of the Syndicate

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[36] Martin Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* (1999), 116.
[37] John Cranidge, *A Mirror for the Burgesses and Commonalty of the City of Bristol* (1818), 99.
[38] Beaven, *Bristol Lists*, 160-161.

served in these positions, basically donating their time because the positions paid little in salaries.[39]

The Common-Council, Bristol's main governing body, managed the day-to-day affairs of municipal government, implemented laws, and elected most officials every year. The mayor (not to be confused with the Lord Mayor) presided over all meetings of the Common-Council. Bristol's officeholders expected him to attend functions related to the Corporation of the Poor and Society of Merchant Venturers, and encouraged him to attend every public ceremony and to preside over every major celebration. The position commanded enormous prestige. Three Syndicate members served as mayors of Bristol. Batchelor was mayor in 1699. After leaving that position he served as an alderman and maintained close friendships with other officeholders. Sir John Hawkins was mayor in 1701. William Saunders' kinsman Peter Saunders had also served as mayor in 1703; even though William had not dabbled in politics, his family's reputation enhanced his own. Five years later Hollidge was mayor when the expedition set out in 1708.

The Common-Council also elected councilors to fill most vacancies created by officials' deaths or resignations. Given elitist nature of British politics, it was not uncommon for officials to keep re-electing each other indefinitely. Thirteen Syndicate members served as councilors at some point before the voyage: Batchelor (1690-1711), Clement (1705-1722), Humphrey Corseley (1678-1684, 1688-1690), Philip Freke (1702-1729), Grant (1688), Hawkins (1690-1723), Hollidge (1696-1710), Hollister (1684-

[39] Corry and Evans, *The History of Bristol*, 2:12.

1688), Hooke (1702-1712), Francis Rogers (1700-1707), Romsey (1684-1688), Shuter (1699-1730), and Webb (1703-1709).[40]

Aldermen directly coordinated charitable activities with the Corporation of the Poor and had some further administrative duties. With the mayor, they elected one of the councilors to replace any alderman who died or otherwise vacated his office. One alderman also functioned as the council's recorder for as long as he held the office. Each alderman represented a different ward in Bristol. Three Syndicate members held the position: Humphrey Corseley (1688), Batchelor (1702-1711), and Hawkins (1702-1723).

Romsey was elected Town Clerk following the death of the previous clerk in 1676 and, aside from four years in debtor's prison (1703-1707) due in part to a family quarrel, would serve until his own death in 1721.[41]

The Syndicate was equally well-represented among non-elected city officials, many of whom held Crown-appointed offices. Five Syndicate members had been sheriff, tasked with assessing and collecting tax revenue throughout the city. Shuter in 1702, Webb in 1705, Abraham Hooke in 1706, Freke in 1708, and Clement in 1709. Hollidge served as chamberlain in 1710, while the expedition was away.[42]

The Crown appointed a Lord Lieutenant to serve as his personal representative in a shire and the lord lieutenant could, in turn appoint one or more deputies. The deputy-

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[40] Beaven, *Bristol Lists*, 207-210.

[41] There was also a brief-nine month period in his service in 1688 due to political turmoil associated with the Glorious Revolution. John Evans, *A Chronological Outline of the History of Bristol and the Stranger's Guide Through Its Streets and Neighbourhood* (1824), 231; John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* (1893), 54.

[42] Beaven, *Bristol Lists*, 252

lieutenant was a non-political and unpaid, honorific position whose holder represented the Crown-appointed Lord Lieutenant at ceremonial functions.[43] Humphrey Corseley was deputy-lieutenant of Bristol in 1694. John Romsey's son-in-law, John Sansom, Jr., served as the Crown-appointed Collector of Customs in Bristol from 1700. Despite multiple scandals (including the one that implicated Goldney), Sansom remained in office over a decade later.[44]

Merchant Venturers

Several Syndicate members were not government officials but donated to and participated in administering non-profit organizations. Such activity was a stepping stone to a higher social position. Whilst holding political office, several Syndicate members joined the Corporation of the Poor or the Merchant Venturers; Hawkins, Webb, Hooke, Hawkins, and Shuter did not become benefactors or officers in the Corporation of the Poor until years after they had left public office. Freke also did not become Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers until after serving as sheriff of Bristol. Furthermore, most of the Syndicate members engaged in charitable works concurrently with their service in the Common-Council.

The Society of Merchant Venturers was a, if not *the* preeminent social and commercial organization in Bristol. Established by royal charter in 1552, the Merchant Venturers originally functioned as a guild and demanded that all Bristol merchants were

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[43] Public Record Office, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of William and Mary, 13th Feb. 1688-1695*, 5:235; "The Lord-Lieutenant of the County & City of Bristol," accessed May 23, 2017, https://www.lordltbristol.org.uk/.
[44] John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* (1893), 54.

either Merchant Venturers or had completed a seven-year apprenticeship to a member of the organization. It ran a school for the children of mariners as early as 1595.[45] Beginning in 1694, the Society fought a long political battle against the Royal African Company and successfully ended the Company's monopoly in England's slave trade in 1698.[46] The Society would also manage Bristol's docks until 1848. The organization still functions as a club for Bristolian businessmen and industrialists who have made significant contributions to Bristol's economy. Today it manages several schools, provides scholarships, and performs community services throughout the Bristol area.

By 1708, the Society had begun granting memberships to individuals who – while not necessarily merchants – contributed to a variety of local charities and public works projects. That same year, a merchant named Edward Colston designated the Society to oversee the operations of his namesake Colston's Hospital Foundation that accommodated and educated 100 impoverished boys beginning in 1710.[47] This was the first trust the organization was asked to manage, but its portfolio steadily expanded during the eighteenth century.[48]

Although the Society was a membership by invitation group, those invitations could be obtained by donating to the group. John Hawkins donated £30 in order to gain entry. Individuals who completed a seven-year apprenticeship under a Society member

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[45] "Education," Society of Merchant Venturers, accessed April 17, 2017, http://merchantventurers.com/charitable-activities/education/.
[46] John Latimer, *The History of the Society of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol* (1903), 179.
[47] John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, 83-84.
[48] "Trusts and Charitable Grants," Society of Merchant Venturers, accessed April 16, 2017, http://merchantventurers.com/charitable-activities/trusts-and-charitable-grants/.

could basically purchase membership for a nominal fee. Even though it was rare, it was also possible to be inducted gratis if the candidate had sufficient support of the organization's more influential members.

Merchant Venturer officers were elected annually. Those officers included two wardens and a "master." The latter presided over meetings and was responsible for seeing that the wardens fulfilled their assigned duties.[49] Both master and wardens were supposed to "supporte the Affaires thereof And to oversee rule and governe the saide Misterie [mastery, or senior members and officials] and Comynaltie [commonalty, which was everyone else]."[50] In short, they were tasked with enforcing Society regulations and etiquette among all the members and apprentices at meetings. Hollidge served as master in 1700 and 1701. Batchelor followed in 1706 and 1707.

The charter stipulated that there should be no more than two wardens every year. Any warden was also expected to assume the master's duties if the latter died in office. Hollidge was the first Syndicate member to be elected warden in 1695. Several others followed him: Batchelor (1698), Hooke (1702-1703), Freke (1704), and Francis Rogers (1705).

The Merchant Venturers had some minor offices as well. They had a treasurer tasked with keeping track of dues, debts, and finances in general. William Saunders' kinsman Peter served as treasurer from 1700 to 1704. A clerk recorded all Society acts and regulations, and was required to make full reports on all the organization's activities. A beadle sent out summons for meetings, kept track of absent or tardy members,

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[49] John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, 44.
[50] Ibid., 44.

maintained order, and collected fees which he then sent to the treasurer. Finally, the Society's administration had an office of twelve assistants to do whatever the master, wardens, and treasurer asked of them. There are no records of Syndicate members or their relatives holding those other positions. Elections were held every November 10, which was the anniversary of the Society's charter. Once chosen, the officers took an oath before Bristol's mayor and aldermen.[51]

Judging from the dates in office, either in politics or within charitable and occupational organizations, it appears that some of the Syndicate members had been philanthropists before engaging in politics. Batchelor served as a warden in the Merchant Venturers the year before he was elected mayor, and he kept up his charitable donations (£50 to the Corporation in 1701) while in office.[52] When his term as mayor ended, he became the Corporation of the Poor's governor. Hollidge, Webb, and Freke followed a similar pattern by engaging in charitable acts either before or simultaneously with their political careers.

Religion

If charity marked a common characteristic for members, religion did not. The majority of investors were members of the Church of England, but anyone with capital to invest was accepted. Lewis Casamajor was a Huguenot. Abraham Hooke was an English Dissenter involved with the Lewin's Mead Society of Protestant Dissenters.[53]

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[51] John Latimer, *The History of the Society of Merchant Venturers*, 69-72.
[52] James Johnson, *Transactions of the Corporation of the Poor*, 168.
[53] "Stokes Croft Educational Foundation and Almshouses," BRO 30999.

Three of the Syndicate members: Goldney, Hackett, and Francis Rogers, appear in the Society's minutes. Goldney and Hackett held positions of authority. Goldney distributed charitable funds while Hackett served as the church's publisher and announced marriages that occurred within the Society.[54]

While Hollister is not listed in the minutes of the Society of Friends, his ancestors are described as Quakers and his relatives appear on the lists. The Quaker connection might seem unusual, but not in Bristol which boasted the highest number of Quakers per capita in England. Due to higher accountability within the Society of Friends, Quakers traded with each other within an internal network. Since there were Quaker merchants in Portugal, the West Indies, and British North America, their network prospered and that prosperity in itself bred resentment among non-Quakers.[55] Despite official documents prohibiting religious oppression, there was an inescapable *de facto* attitude that discriminated against Quakers.

There were few ways for Quakers to advance in civic life outside the Society of Friends. The Corporation of the Poor at least accepted Quaker members, but the Society of Merchant Venturers did not allow Quakers to join until 1720 unless the Society could find a loophole through personal connections.[56]

Even offering city office to Quakers may have had an ulterior motive; Quakers refused, on religious grounds, to take any oath including those required to assume office.

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[54] Russell Mortimer, ed., *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol 1686-1704* (1977), 9, 228.
[55] Frederick Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia 1682-1763* (1948), 91.
[56] Fissell, *Patients, Power, and the Poor*, 7.

Anyone who refused, for any reason, to take the oath of office could be fined. Romsey had used his office to generate revenue in that manner when Bristol's treasury was draining. He realized that Quaker norms prohibited them from taking oaths. Goldney's father, also named Thomas, was fined £200 for refusing to take the oath to join the Common-Council in 1685.[57] Since that legalized extortion was Romsey's idea, it is remarkable that he and Goldney set aside their history and collaborated in a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Londoners

The Syndicate did not limit its membership to residents of Bristol and welcomed investors from other areas. Two Londoners, Edward Acton and Thomas Palmer, became involved after the voyage set out. Edward Acton had been born to the second son of the Baronet Acton, of Aldenham in Shropshire. Due to the laws of primogeniture, Edward's father was not entitled to any of the baronial estate. Thus his father became a mercer, an occupation (a mercer bought and sold fabrics) that provided the Actons access to the merchant community. Like many of the Bristolians, Acton's father held minor administrative positions except in London instead of Bristol. Throughout his active life, he served as common councilman in Cheap Ward, was a governor of Bridewell and Bethlehem hospitals, Commissioner of the Lieutenancy for London, and steward of Bridewell. Edward himself became a goldsmith and banker on Birchin Lane. Edward's

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[57] John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (1900), 431.

younger brother John, who functioned as the Duke of Manchester's deputy collector, also worked at London's customs house.[58]

The Actons also had familial connections to the East India Company, and those relations greatly aided the Syndicate near the end of the voyage. Edward Acton relied on his family ties to feed inside information to the Syndicate from the time the expedition called at Cape Town until it returned to England. His brother Richard was an administrator in the East India Company (he later became a factor in Bombay). He also had an uncle named Roger Carter who worked for the EIC as captain of the Indiaman *Dartmouth*.[59] Acton went further during the expedition's final journey home to even provide updates on events as they occurred to Francis Rogers. Although Acton did not specify the day, he dated one of his letters "past 7 a Clock" and wrote that he was currently at East India House "under pretense of business" and eavesdropped on an EIC committee meeting. Given the personnel involved, Acton suspected the EIC officials were talking about the expedition and of legal actions to be taken against the Syndicate. Even as the meeting progressed, Acton took notes and promised the Syndicate that he would make further inquiries.[60]

Like the Bristolians, Acton possessed wealth but no noble title. Acton's characteristics: wealthy but not titled; working in industry or trade; and participation in

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[58] William Betham, *The Baronetage of England; or, the History of the English Baronets, and Such Baronets of Scotland, as are of English Families* (1802), 2:14.
[59] William Betham, *The Baronetage of England; or, the History of the English Baronets, and Such Baronets of Scotland, as are of English Families* (1802), 2:14.
[60] Loose leaf dispatch from Edward Acton to Francis Rogers. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

local politics and charities (or at least connected with those who were involved) closely resembled most Syndicate members' civic lives.

Thomas Palmer, like many other Syndicate members, was part of an occupational or industrial organization. In his case, the Company of Merchant Taylors, a London organization chartered in 1327, that possessed prestige similar to that of the Merchant Venturers.[61] The Merchant Taylors were one of the "Great Twelve" livery companies, and all Lord Mayors of London had to be chosen from one of those organizations. By 1708, none of its members worked as a tailor and it had become a mercantile, social, and charitable organization.

The two Londoners lent significant support to the project. Acton provided vital information to the Syndicate from the EIC while Palmer used his business connections to London and Amsterdam merchants in order assist the Syndicate when the expedition returned. The remaining backers, however, hailed from Bristol and participated in Bristol's institutions.

John Batchelor

Four of the Syndicate members in particular deserve some further description due to the roles they played in funding or organizing the expedition: John Batchelor, Thomas Goldney, Thomas Dover, and Stephen Courtney. All four of them reflect the Syndicate's commercial nature. Batchelor owned only sixteen shares in the Syndicate, yet he was the glue that held the enterprise together. In addition to serving as its leader,

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[61] "Will of Thomas Palmer, Merchant Tailor of London," PROB 11/761/370, NAUK.

Batchelor drew upon a network of business acquaintances when conducting Syndicate business. Other Syndicate members – ship-owners, merchants, and community leaders – were acquainted with a variety of groups, but Batchelor was involved in *every* network. Those who engaged in charity, the Society of Merchant Venturers, commerce, and local politics all would have rubbed shoulders with Batchelor. In addition, he had contacts in London through which he recruited Edward Cooke as an expedition officer and may have recruited the two London additions to the Syndicate.

Thomas Goldney

With 36 shares, Thomas Goldney was the largest investor in the Syndicate. Despite the seemingly humble occupation of grocer, Goldney had accumulated property and assets that made him a moderately wealthy landowner. He owned a valuable country home in Wiltshire, just outside Bristol's city limits and collected rents from several houses in Gloucestershire.[62] He was also a member of the Quaker community which included several other wealthy businessmen. Illustrating how capricious mercantilist wealth could be, Goldney's fortunes continually rose and fell, eventually landing him in debtor's prison. Since he invested the most in the enterprise he benefited the most upon its return.

[62] "Lease and Release for Goldney Hall," DM 1911/3/1, University of Bristol.

Thomas Dover

Though successful in commerce and politics, most Syndicate members did not have experience at sea. The exceptions were Dover and Courtney, both of whom had gone on overseas trading voyages before joining the Syndicate. Dover's primary occupation was practicing medicine, but he had made several voyages to the West Indies between 1702 and 1708 and included "captain" in his signature on some of his correspondence. His insistence on being appointed to a position of command rather than a surgeon suggests he might have led men at sea before.[63]

Dover first became involved with the Syndicate through his medical practice, but soon became a major investor in the voyage, and was one of two investors who embarked on the expedition. Born into a Cotswold farming family, Dover studied medicine at Oxford and then at Cambridge, where he received his medical degree. When his father died in 1696, Dover moved to Bristol where he had no shortage of patients. Through his practice and his residence in the Queen's Square neighborhood, the most fashionable part of the city, Dover socialized with city leaders and members of the merchant community.[64]

Dover's patients included members of Bristol's merchant community. In his medical treatise *The Ancient Physician's Legacy to his Country*, he recalled treating a Thomas Hackett for typhus. At the time of his treatment, Hackett was an apprentice

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[63] Kenneth Dewhurst and Rex Doublet, "Thomas Dover and the South Sea Company," *British Medical History*, 18/2 (April 1974), 108.
[64] R.S. Morton, "Dr. Thomas ('Quicksilver') Dover, 1660-1742: A Postscript to the Meeting of the Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases at Bristol, May 20-21, 1966," *British Journal of Venereal Diseases*, 44/342 (1966), 343.

grocer, but by the time he died in 1752 he had become a bona fide merchant. This Thomas was also related to the grocer Edward Hackett, who joined the Syndicate after the expedition put out to sea.[65] Finding a niche in the merchant community was important if one wished to advance up the social ladder regardless of profession or occupation.

Furthermore, Dover considered travel essential to a physician's experience as it presented opportunities to treat ailments and injuries that he would rarely encounter in Britain, and in variable conditions that would force him to improvise using limited resources. "Such as pursued their Studies at Home," Dover stated, "could not (allowing they have had the Advantages of an Academical Education) improve themselves equally with those that spend many Years Abroad . . . ."[66]

He proved to be an able surgeon on the cruising voyage, especially considering the finite medical supplies and cramped, poorly ventilated working conditions, but proved a mediocre leader; from Rogers' and Cooke's descriptions, Dover was a distinctly uninspiring figure prone to generating a passive aura of discontent. He never got along with Rogers and indirectly created a rift between his officers and those of other ships.[67]

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[65] "Will of Thomas Hackett, Merchant of Bristol, Gloucestershire," PROB 11/794/350, NAUK.
[66]Thomas Dover, *The Ancient Physician's Legacy*, 7.
[67] Kenneth Dewhurst, *The Quicksilver Doctor*, 54.

Stephen Courtney

Courtney was the other Syndicate member with experience at sea. There is no evidence that he had commanded a ship prior to joining the Syndicate, but he is almost invariably described as a mariner. Whatever his experience as a mariner, it was enough to secure him command of the *Dutchess*. Neither Dover nor Courtney possessed firsthand knowledge of the Pacific, however, and so the Syndicate would need to rely on William Dampier, a disgraced mariner who had just returned from a cruise in the Eastern Pacific that most observers judged to be a fiasco.

Principal Shareholders

The enterprise that the Syndicate planned would be expensive. A 1711 financial account lists expenses in fitting out ships, purchasing supplies and weapons, and obtaining requisite legal documents as totaling £26,496. The Syndicate raised that sum by selling 256 shares with the price of each share at 103 pounds, ten shillings. This was during an age when five pounds was enough to warrant mentioning in a will, and when most Britons rarely possessed a single guinea coin.[68]

The Syndicate members are listed in descending order of the number of shares owned. The principal investors were Goldney (36), Dover (30), Shuter (30), followed by Freke (20), Grant (20), and Francis Rogers (20). The intermediate contributors consisted of Batchelor (16), Romsey (15), John Corseley (10), Duckinfield (10), Hawkins (10), and Hollidge (10). The minor shareholders were Hickman (5), Hollister (5), and

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[68] "Will of Stephen Courtney," PROB 11/563, NAUK.

Clements (4). Hickman died while the expedition was away, leaving Hooke, Freke, Casamajor, and Humphrey Corseley to manage his investment on behalf of his estate. Except for Hollister, the five Bristol investors who joined the Syndicate while the ships were away either inherited their shares or purchased shares from original owners.

There are fifteen shares unaccounted for, although that may be explained by the fact that Coutes, Webb, Saunders, and Courtney are not shown possessing shares, and neither are the London backers. The first three had likely either sold or consolidated their shares with those owned by other members'. As for Courtney, he was still at sea when the list of investors was drawn up and distributed so he is not included in the 1711 owners' orders. Part of his payment came from the shares he earned as an expedition officer, and he is described as contributing "considerably to the expence of the voyage, and took a share in it, that he might see how it was managed, and be able either to prevent miscarriages, or, at least, to make a faithful report of them."[69]

By spring of 1708, the Syndicate was organized and had raised sufficient capital to pay the legal and administrative fees. Then it could start on the construction and outfitting of ships, and recruiting the officers needed to make the expedition a reality and not just a concept on paper.

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[69] de Brosses, *Terra Australis Cognita*, 3:232.

CHAPTER IV

OUTSET AND RECRUITING

By the start of 1708, the Syndicate had secured enough funds to begin assembling the vessels, men, supplies, and legal documents needed to carry out its plans.

OBTAINING AND PREPARING SHIPS FOR SEA

The first priority was purchasing or constructing ships, fitting them out with masts, rigging, and ordnance, and stocking them with naval stores and provisions ranging from salt pork to cider. The Syndicate's procurement of two ships, the *Duke* and *Dutchess*, went smoothly. The *Duke* was a new ship while the *Dutchess* was probably second-hand but in good condition. The *Duke*'s hull alone cost £1310, and the Syndicate saved money on the hull by contracting with its own Thomas Clement who was a shipwright. The smaller *Dutchess*' hull ran the Syndicate a correspondingly cheaper £850.[1] The hulls purchased, the Syndicate needed to reach into its commercial networks to fit out the ships.

Both hulls were double-sheathed with copper to ward off barnacles and shipworm. This was expensive but significantly increased the ships' durability. Indeed, both ships survived the voyage and returned to England with their hulls in reduced but

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[1] Ships Duke & Dutchess Book and Outsett, pages 1-5. "Creagh vs. Rogers," Chancery 104/36, NAUK.

functional condition.[2] In 1703, Dampier's ships, *St. George* and *Cinque Ports,* did not have as effective protection below the waterline and both became so worm-eaten that Dampier had to abandon them. He would have been remiss if he did not advise the Syndicate to invest in sheathing.

The Syndicate expedition's rigging, armament, and supplies cost still more, as did its pinnaces and other boats. It cost £8198 to complete and fit out the *Duke*; £4990, 12s for the *Dutchess*. All bills were accounted for, even for unspecified items as inexpensive as four shillings and sixpence. Financial records include the names of all creditors and vendors including those of Syndicate investors and expedition officers who provided items themselves or did so through relatives. Following the expense report in the Syndicate's account book, there are individual payment sheets for every Syndicate member listing items he supplied and who was responsible for making payment.[3] After paying these expenses, there remained an initial £12,000 reserve for both the Syndicate and expedition officers to draw from for running costs and extra supplies. Any additional expenses were carefully catalogued and that created some controversy later, when the expedition's officers spent more money refitting in Cork than the Syndicate was comfortable with.[4]

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[2] Alexander Winston, *No Man Knows My Grave: Sir Henry Morgan, Captain William Kidd, Captain Woodes Rogers in the Great Age of Privateers and Pirates: 1665-1715* (1969), 166.
[3] Tim Beattie, "Adventuring Your Estate: The Origins, Costs and Rewards of Woodes Rogers's Privateering Voyage of 1708-11," *Mariner's Mirror*, 93:2 (2007), 150; Ships Duke & Dutchess Book and Outsett, pages 9-34. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[4] B.M.H. Rogers, "Woodes Roger's Privateering Voyage," *Mariner's Mirror*, 19:2 (1933), 208; Tim Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages of the Early Eighteenth Century* (2015), 74.

Rogers, Cooke, and the Syndicate described both ships as "frigates," a term used at the time to describe a variety of ships which had a poop deck and forecastle above and separate from a gun deck that ran from stem to stern.[5] Both the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were three-masted, square-rigged ships with a dedicated gun deck, although the exact number of decks was never specified.[6]

The expedition's two frigates each carried several boats that could be used for a variety of essential tasks. Since the frigates were too large to risk sailing or anchoring close to shore, they used boats to keep them supplied with wood and fresh water, to conduct trade with locals, and to ascend rivers, as when they raided Guayaquil later.[7]

Both ships were significantly more powerful than the Bristol Channel vessels that most Syndicate members customarily funded. These ships were not converted merchantmen, but warships dedicated to seeking out and bringing down prey. The heavier weight in guns came with higher costs. The *Duke* packed a 30-gun, 180-pound broadside while the lighter *Dutchess* boasted 26 guns. Even the smaller consort outmatched Dampier's previous flagship, *St. George*, in terms of sheer firepower; the *St. George's* 22 guns were five-pounders while the Syndicate's ships both carried six-pounders.[8]

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[5] Robert Leslie, *Life Aboard a Bristol Privateer in the Time of Queen Anne: Being the Journal of Captain Woodes Rogers, Master Mariner* (1889), 6.
[6] Benerson Little, *The Sea Rover's Practice* (2005), 56.
[7] Ibid., 252.
[8] William Funnell, *A Voyage Round the World: Containing an Account of Captain Dampier's Expedition into the South-seas in the Ship St. George* (1707), 1-2; Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages*, 73.

Officer Recruitment

While work proceeded on the *Duke* and *Dutchess*, the Syndicate sought and engaged senior officers to oversee preparations for the voyage, assist in recruiting seamen, and ultimately to lead the expedition at sea. Competent ship captains were necessary for enforcing discipline and ensuring that crewmen stayed on task. Syndicate members offered potential captains attractive financial incentives that included high wages and shares in the profits of that voyage.[9]

William Dampier's previous voyages to the Pacific had contributed to the Syndicate's decision to select that region as the focus of its enterprise. Edward Cooke claimed that Dampier came up with the idea for a Pacific voyage. ". . . . Captain Dampier never gave over the project," wrote Cooke, "'till he had prevail'd with some able persons at Bristol to venture upon an undertaking, which might turn to a prodigious advantage."[10] Notwithstanding Cooke's effusive praise of Dampier, the latter probably depended on those "able persons" to have already organized a South Sea voyage of their own design.

There is little evidence aside from Cooke's statement to suggest Dampier was the mastermind. It is more likely that the Syndicate members consulted journals from South Sea buccaneers and used Dampier's old publications as yet more evidence that the Pacific was a suitable destination. It is also plausible that Cooke added the section praising Dampier after the voyage ended. The compliments may have served as a means

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[9] David Starkey, "Incentivisation of British Privateering Crews" in *Naval Leadership and Management, 1650-1950*, ed. Helen Doe and Richard Harding (2012), 135

[10] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World in the Years 1708 to 1711* (1712), 1:Introduction.

of attracting readership to Dampier's own account of the voyage if he chose to write one, and that Dampier would have heaped as much praise upon Cooke in return and encouraged readers to buy Cooke's account. It was not uncommon for authors of the period to mutually support one another in this manner. That never fully materialized between Cooke and Dampier, however, as the latter died before he could publish anything after the expedition returned.

Born into a tenant-farmer's family in Somersetshire in 1651, Dampier had escaped a life of grinding poverty when apprenticed to a Weymouth master mariner in 1669. Following a single voyage to Newfoundland, Dampier ended his apprenticeship and joined the East Indiaman *John and Martha* for a voyage around the Cape of Good Hope to Batavia and back. He next enlisted in the Royal Navy, was assigned to the *Royal Prince* as an able seaman and saw combat in the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-74) before illness led to his being invalided out of the service.[11]

Once recovered, and still in his twenties, Dampier served briefly as a clerk at a Jamaica plantation owned by his father's landlord. He did not get on well with the landlord's representative, left the plantation, and moved to Mexico where he fell in with logwood cutters and smugglers around the Bay of Campeche. Much of their activity involved stealing caches of logwood, mostly mahogany, that the Spanish had previously harvested. During this time Dampier became acquainted with buccaneers who had taken up logwood cutting so they would not starve, and who shared a resentment towards

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[11] William Dampier, *Dampier's Voyages: Consisting of a New Voyage Round the World, a Supplement to the Voyage Round the World, Two Voyages to Campeachy, a Discourse of Winds, a Voyage to New Holland, and a Vindication, in answer to the Chimerical Relation of William Funnell*, ed. John Masefield (1906), 1:1.

Spain whose colonial officials periodically attacked their logwood camps, confiscated the logwood awaiting transport, and drove off the men who had illegally harvested the timber. Damper retuned to England in 1678, married a woman (only recorded as "Judith") from the Duchess of Grafton's household, and settled on a modest Dorset estate.[12]

Dampier soon grew bored with country life so a year later set out on a Jamaica-bound merchantman in 1679. He originally intended it to be a single voyage in which he would sell tools and sundry supplies to the logwood cutters, but he soon fell in with buccaneers and embarked on a buccaneering career with John Coxon, Bartholomew Sharp, Charles Swan, and others that resulted in his first circumnavigation of the world between 1683 and 1691. Returning to England, Dampier published *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697). The book caught the public's imagination and led to his receipt of a commission in the Royal Navy and command of the frigate *Roebuck* with orders to explore the east coast of Australia.[13]

Dampier's leadership of that voyage should have served as a warning of what *not* to do in the South Sea. The 1699-1701 expedition met with nigh unmitigated disaster. The *Roebuck* wrecked off Ascension Island in 1701 and her crew waited for several months before a passing Indiaman rescued the survivors. Upon his return to England, the scientific community and readers of his *Voyage to New Holland* (1703) appreciated Dampier's collection of flora samples and descriptions of places visited. This did not

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[12] Diana Preston, *A Pirate of Exquisite Mind: The Life of William Dampier* (2004), 49.
[13] Ibid.

stop the Admiralty from charging him with a variety of offences, convicting him of one (mistreatment of an officer), and barring him from further service in the navy.[14]

Dampier was nevertheless able, in 1703, to obtain command of the privateersman *St. George*, with which he preyed on Spanish ships in the Pacific. During the voyage, Dampier again acted in a manner that should have warned against employing him in a position of authority. He lost his ship, his letter of marque, and his freedom when the Dutch captured and imprisoned him in the East Indies. When released, he and the remaining crewmen had to repeat what many South Sea buccaneers had done before and earned his passage home onboard a Dutch fluyt. By the time he reached England in June 1707, Dampier had lost or driven away all but 27 of his original crew of 185.

One of Dampier's resentful officers who had deserted, William Funnell, obtained his release from a Dutch East Indies jail, signed onboard a Dutch merchantman, and got back to Britain a year before his former commander.[15] In his account of the voyage, Funnell depicted Dampier as an ineffective leader. Funnell did not describe Dampier as cruel or vindictive, but stated he was far too passive and inconsistent. Several times in his journal, Funnell described the constant disagreements that gradually turned into acrimony and resulted in the expedition's dispersal. When he returned to England and read Funnell's account, Dampier quickly countered by publishing his own rambling

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[14] M. McCarthy, "His Majesty's Ship Roebuck (1690-1701)," *Report: Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum*, *No. 159* (March 2002), 26.
[15] Funnell, *A Voyage Round the World*, 253.

account of events in an attempt to restore his reputation (mostly by attacking his sailors' integrity).[16]

The first five Syndicate members started buying cannon in February 1707 and provided the financial and administrative foundation for their cruising voyage in March.[17] They were already drawing up plans for two ships then and Dampier did not return until June (and his *Vindication* was not published until later that year), so it is highly unlikely that he directly inspired them at all, much less convinced them to venture into the South Sea. The first mentions of the Pacific in Syndicate sources are in January 1708. Other British mariners, however, were already encouraging voyages into the Pacific throughout 1707; Dampier said as much and he contributed by providing the latest intelligence of the region. As the list of Syndicate members grew, Dampier probably realized that he could offer his services to them. Indeed, in late 1707, he ended his rebuttal of Funnell's account by stating that he was "ready to Satisfy any Committee of Merchen" who wished to learn more about the Pacific.[18]

He was in dire need of employment, too. By January 1708, Dampier had little to show for the previous three and a half years of privateering aside from looming debt. In his 1766 history of South Seas exploration, the historian Charles de Brosses suggested Dampier "might still have an opportunity of retrieving his circumstances, or, at least, of

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[16] William Dampier, *Captain Dampier's Vindication of his Voyage to the South-Seas, in the Ship St. George* (1707), 1.
[17] Loose leaf letter from Syndicate to Mr. Welch, dated February 21, 1707. "Creagh vs. Rogers," C 104/36; Bundle No. 76, Alexander White's obligation to sail. "Creagh vs. Rogers," C 104/161 Pt. 1.
[18] Dampier, *Vindication*, 8.

acquiring a tolerable subsistence. It was with this view that he addressed himself to the merchants of Bristol . . . ."[19]

Perhaps members of the Syndicate also thought that making Dampier pilot under the command of a superior officer would allow their expedition to draw on his knowledge of the South Sea, but deny him the power to repeat his past actions. If so, they miscalculated. Despite the opportunity to learn from Dampier's errors and experiences, commanders of the Syndicate expedition repeated several of them during its voyage. By mistreating some indigenous peoples, the Syndicate privateers almost made themselves pariahs in the local communities. In addition, bickering among the expedition officers, caused in part by Dampier, led to delays that cost the flotilla the element of surprise in a crucial action.

Whatever its reasoning, the Bristol Syndicate decided on January 24, 1708 to offer Dampier the position of pilot (or sailing master) and some unique payment options including one-sixteenth of the owners' shares from any net profits.[20] Dampier only knew one member of the Syndicate personally (Thomas Goldney) and had no business connections to the rest of the group. Dampier's appointment was a positive factor in the short term as it may have attracted up to an additional fourteen new investors to the enterprise. Despite his poor performance, Dampier was the only living Englishman to have completed two circumnavigations of the globe.

[19] Charles de Brosses, *Terra Australis Cognita: or, voyages to the Terra Australis, or Southern Hemisphere, during the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* (1766), 3:227.
[20] David Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean: The Adventurous Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2011), 27; Syndicate Account Book, page 14. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

It was probably fortunate for Dampier that the Syndicate expedition departed in 1708, because in that same year, another publication echoed Funnell's attacks on Dampier's character. Written by midshipman John Welbe, an eight-page diatribe countered Dampier's defense and accused him of "ungenerous, false, and barbarous Usage to his Ship's Crew."[21] Sold for one penny a copy, the low price guaranteed Welbe's account circulated throughout the maritime communities.

With Dampier signed on to serve as a pilot, the Syndicate needed to recruit a strong leader to both command the expedition and to control Dampier. That leader needed also to be an experienced mariner with enough business acumen and social standing to be acceptable to the merchant backers. Syndicate leaders thought Woodes Rogers met these criteria and, in April 1708, offered him overall command of the expedition.

Woodes Rogers came from a prominent merchant family. The Rogers family was originally from Poole, a minor Channel port in Dorset. The elder Woodes Rogers (his father) had some local influence, becoming a Freeman of the Borough of Poole and voting in at least one election. The Poll Tax lists of 1690 classified him as a "mariner," implying somebody who earned his living from the sea in a command capacity.[22] Reflecting the increasingly extensive trade networks, Rogers achieved success shipping Atlantic cod from Newfoundland to Europe. His trading networks also extended to the

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[21] John Welbe, *An Answer to Captain Dampier's Vindication of his Voyage to the South-Seas, in the Ship St. George* (1708), 1.
[22] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain: Being the Life of Woodes Rogers, Seaman, Trader, Colonial Governor* (1960), 17.

Red Sea and West Africa.[23] As Atlantic trade increased with shipping, the Rogers family moved to Bristol, where the elder Woodes took advantage of the networks he developed through years of commerce.

In 1697, the younger Woodes was apprenticed to John Yeamans, a member of an old and well-connected Bristol family.[24] Beginning as grocers in the fifteenth century, the Yeamans had become pillars of the community a century later. William Yeamans first appears in extant records as master of the Society of Merchant Venturers in 1657. His son, Robert Yeamans, held the position in 1662. Knighted by 1669, Sir Robert Yeamans served as mayor of Bristol in 1669. Ever since King William III created Bristol's Court of Conscience in 1689, a Yeamans had always served as the court's registrar and Robert held that position as the Syndicate made its preparations.[25] By 1707, he was also the Royal African Company's agent at Bristol, which was the same organization that the Society of Merchant Venturers had litigated against just several years before over control of the slave trade.[26] During the turn-of-the-century wars, the Yeamans co-owned two privateers with John Batchelor: the *Anna* (1692) and *Don Carlos* (1703). Thus the Yeamans and Rogers families possessed shared acquaintances that included members of the Syndicate.[27]

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[23] Colin Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates: Being the True and Surprising Stories of the Caribbean Pirates and the Man Who Brought Them Down* (2007), 44.
[24] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 20.
[25] Alfred B. Beaven, *Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous* (1899), 238.
[26] Kenneth Morgan, *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (1993), 138.
[27] John Latimer, *The History of the Society of Merchant Venturers of Bristol* (1903), 327-328; J.W. Damer Powell, *Bristol Privateers and Ships of War* (1930), 92-102.

Rogers' apprenticeship with Yeamans provided him entry into the commercial world. A typical apprenticeship lasted seven years. At eighteen, Rogers was already several years older than most starting apprentices, but it is likely that he had already learned some of the trade from traveling with his father.

As the Rogers family fortune increased, the senior Rogers purchased property in Queen's Square, the same neighborhood that John Batchelor, Thomas Dover, Sir John Hawkins, and Christopher Shuter also called home. The Whetstone family lived two doors down from the Rogers. Sir William Whetstone, then a captain in the Royal Navy, and his first wife Sarah had two sons and two daughters. The eldest daughter (also named Sarah) and Woodes married in January 1705, a year to the month after her father was promoted to admiral. Soon after, Whetstone's influence allowed Rogers into "liberty of the city," including the right to vote in local elections.[28]

The Rogers needed Whetstone as a patron because young Woodes lacked leadership experience. Furthermore, Whetstone's service in the navy directly advanced the Rogers' interests, particularly since Whetstone previously commanded a ship-of-the-line that escorted Poole fishermen who plied the Grand Banks for Atlantic cod.[29] The elder Rogers, however, did not enjoy his family's elevated status for long. During a winter voyage in 1705-06, he died at sea. The estate passed to the younger Woodes, who at 25 years old was the eldest of three children.[30]

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[28] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 19, 23.
[29] Graham Thomas, *Pirate Hunter: The Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2009), 10.
[30] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 23.

Rogers invested part of his inheritance in business ventures ashore. In 1706, he entered into a partnership in one of Bristol's pottery works, which brought him to the attention of other individuals, including Dampier, who sought to attract venture capital.[31]

Like many from the Syndicate, Rogers had previously invested in privateering and was undeterred by losses suffered during the War of Spanish Succession. In 1707, Rogers became co-owner of a letter of marque with two Bristol merchants and Lewis Casamajor, a Syndicate member. After arming the 130-ton *Whetstone Galley* and loading her with £1000 worth of trade goods, they sent her to West Africa to trade for slaves, ship that "human cargo" to Jamaica, and return to England with sugar; the notorious Atlantic "triangle trade." Unfortunately for the owners, the *Whetstone Galley* never reached Africa but was instead captured by French privateers.[32]

Just weeks after commissioning the *Whetstone Galley*, Rogers obtained a letter of marque for the *Eugene Prize* that he co-owned with another merchant from the *Whetstone Galley* debacle. She was a small vessel with eight guns and a crew of twenty, and was tasked with patrolling local waters. With her tiny broadside, a paltry six-barrel gunpowder supply, and just one cutlass and musket for her crew to share, she did not present an imposing threat to any enemy shipping. Rogers and his partner did not gain financially from their investment, but the *Eugene Prize* may have frightened off enemy

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[31] Alexander Winston, *No Man Knows My Grave: Sir Henry Morgan, Captain William Kidd, Captain Woodes Rogers in the Great Age of Privateers and Pirates: 1665-1715* (1969), 170; W.J. Pountney, *Old Bristol Potteries: Being an Account of the Old Potters and Potteries of Bristol and Brislington* (1920), 297.
[32] Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates*, 65.

privateers that lurked off Bristol and thereby enhanced their standing among local merchants.[33]

Rogers' apprenticeship to John Yeamans, marital connections, and investment in the pottery works and privateers provided him with contacts who could mobilize the supplies, finances, and political capital needed to get an expedition funded and under way.

In addition to his contacts, Rogers had enough experience at sea to command a cruising voyage. The Syndicate made him captain of the *Duke* and ostensible commander-in-chief of the cruising voyage. With Rogers in place, the Syndicate appointed one of its own members, Thomas Dover, "second captain," i.e., second in command. In addition to what he received in that position, Dover was promised an additional £423 per year to act as the expedition's chief medical officer.[34]

Command of the smaller *Dutchess* went to Stephen Courtney, one of only two Syndicate members – the other being Thomas Dover – to sail with the expedition. Little is known of Courtney's career except that he was a mariner. For his second in command, the Syndicate recruited Edward Cooke.

An experienced but unlucky privateer, Cooke had been captured twice during the war, resulting in financial losses that he hoped to recoup by joining this new enterprise.[35] As Cooke described it, he had first commanded the twenty-gun galley *Mead* when four Dunkirk privateers set upon her within less than a mile from Beachy Head. He was

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[33] Ibid.
[34] Christopher Lloyd, *William Dampier* (1966), 126.
[35] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 48.

wounded and lost both his ship and his freedom. The French released him after several months and he promptly returned to London, where his previous backers generously gave him command of a new Bristol galley. While cruising in the Mediterranean, two larger French warships cornered Cooke off Oran. Again, he lost his ship and cargo. The French captain who accepted Cooke's surrender allowed him to keep his personal items and privateer's commission, but that was small comfort to someone who had met with two great misfortunes in such a short time.[36]

These setbacks in European waters made the South Sea attractive to Cooke. Though presented with additional opportunities to command privateers in European waters, he elected to go to the Pacific saying, "considering the great hazards I must run, if concern'd again, the sea swarming with privateers . . . being acquainted with Alderman Batchelor, and several other gentlemen that were the owners of the *Duke* and *Dutchess*, I promis'd to go in one of those ships, and proceeded accordingly."[37]

Letter of Marque

Recruiting the captains was an essential step because a letter of marque, i.e., documents authorizing privateering, had to include the names of the vessel, its owners, and its commander. Such a license to attack enemy ships was required before sailors could be recruited. With the ships and their commanding officers arranged, the Syndicate applied for and received letters of marque for the *Duke* and *Dutchess* signed by Prince George of Denmark, Queen Anne's consort and Lord High Admiral of

[36] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:Introduction
[37] Ibid.

England. On April 28, he signed a commission for each ship, specifying that Rogers would command the *Duke* and Courtney the *Dutchess*. The privateers were commissioned "to cruise on the coasts of Peru and Mexico, in the South Seas, against her Majesty's enemies the French and Spaniards, and to act jointly, as belonging to the same owners, merchants in Bristol." This wording was designed to assure the Dutch and British East India Companies that the expedition would not violate the companies' monopolies on commerce in the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans.[38]

With the commissions signed, the Syndicate set to recruiting the other officers and men to crew its ships.

OFFICERS

Lower-ranked officers (the equivalent of wardroom officers and warrant officers) were recruited from the Syndicate's social circle. Each ship needed an agent to represent the Syndicate's collective interest in the expedition while at sea. The agents recorded all expenses incurred and trade conducted during the voyage and cataloged any valuables captured by the privateers.[39]

Carlton Vanbrugh represented the Syndicate onboard the *Duke*. The Bristol grocer William Bath served as his counterpart onboard the *Dutchess*. Syndicate members had done business with each man in the past and trusted them. Carlton Vanbrugh appears to be an odd choice, having been at least partially responsible for

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[38] "Letters of Marque," HCA 25/20, NAUK.
[39] Evan Cotton and Charles Fawcett, *East Indiamen: The East India Company's Maritime Service* (1949), 31, 89, 106; Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages*, 192.

Syndicate member Thomas Goldney's incarceration in debtor's prison, and Vanbrugh himself going bankrupt shortly before sailing with the expedition.[40]

Some of the other officers had previous experience with the Syndicate. Alexander White, the *Dutchess'* pilot and linguist, had a long association with Syndicate members. When the Syndicate first began discussing a potential cruising voyage in 1707, White was tentatively chosen to serve as a ship's captain because he had lived in La Plata (present day Buenos Aires) for several years and was not only fluent in Spanish, but in several indigenous South American languages as well. John Vigors of the *Duke*, whose title was "Dover's ensign ashore," was probably related to the Vigors who co-owned the privateer *Robert and Francis* with John Corseley and Francis Rogers in 1703. The *Duke's* purser and steward John Finch was a London-based oil wholesaler while ashore, making his position one of the few that most Syndicate appointees were qualified for.[41]

Even the lieutenants, who were supposed to command gun crews and maintain discipline onboard, were selected more for their business connections than their nautical experience. Robert Frye, chief lieutenant onboard the *Duke*, was related to a Bristol haberdasher. The *Duke's* second lieutenant Charles Pope came from a prominent family of ship-owners whose members engaged in privateering during both the Nine Years' War and the War of Spanish Succession, including ships co-owned with members of the Batchelor and Hollister families. And at least two midshipmen might help the

[40] P.K. Stembridge, *The Goldney Family: A Bristol Merchant Dynasty* (1998), 14; "Mortgage William Bath, senr. of Bristol," Bristol Record Office 6609/22.
[41] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 50; Damer Powell, *Bristol Privateers*, 100, 102.

expedition resolve or entirely avoid legal troubles as they were "young Lawyers design'd to act as Midshipmen.[42]

Some of the appointees had family as well as business ties to Syndicate members. Dover recruited his kinsman Samuel Hopkins to serve as both an assistant surgeon and his personal lieutenant, a rank the Syndicate never defined. Hopkins was an apothecary. Apothecaries provided a valuable service by filling physicians' prescriptions despite not being allowed to administer medicine themselves. Hopkins was probably connected to the Syndicate not just through Dover. Apothecaries often came from the merchant class since grocers' experiences with dry goods and herbs (used for poultices and unguents) often granted them some informal medical knowledge.[43] This close relationship indubitably contributed to the Syndicate's decision to appoint Hopkins as an officer for the voyage despite the latter's complete lack of maritime experience.[44]

Dover must have been especially persuasive because Hopkins might have earned up to £4000 a year through his practice if he remained ashore.[45] Though Rogers was not a Syndicate member, it is likely that he influenced the selection of his younger brother John as the *Dutchess'* second lieutenant. In addition, Robert Frye probably owed his appointment as chief lieutenant onboard the *Duke* to his distant relative Rogers.

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[42] "Mortgage William Bath, senr. of Bristol," BRO 6609/22; Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 5.
[43] Fissell, *Patients, Power, and the Poor*, 9.
[44] Kenneth Dewhurst, *The Quicksilver Doctor: The Life and Times of Thomas Dover Physician and Adventurer* (1957), 39.
[45] Ibid.

Finding petty officers was more difficult, as the carpenter's mates, armorers, and cooks needed specialized knowledge. While the accountants and grocers thrust into leadership roles might learn how to command at sea after several weeks, many of the petty officers' positions required technical skills that could only be learned by practicing those vocations over many years. Since most petty officers were on a lower rung of the social ladder, few were known to Syndicate members. There were some exceptions, however. Simon Hatley, appointed third mate in the *Dutchess*, came from a family of haberdashers that owned property in Oxfordshire. His apprenticeship to a pilot in his youth brought him into contact with Syndicate members who owned or co-owned merchantmen.[46]

Some other petty officers, including John Ballett, followed their officers from previous voyages. Ballett was on Dampier's last expedition and was one of the few who had stood by Dampier despite the setbacks. Ballett elected to continue with Dampier for another cruising voyage without even knowing they were going to the Pacific. The Syndicate approved of Dampier's choice and put him on the *Duke's* roster as both third mate and surgeon's mate.[47] This was not uncommon for the time period, as crewmen often formed attachments to officers they trusted, and who followed them to other ships. In order to recruit more petty officers and especially seamen, the Syndicate needed to reach beyond its personal network.

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[46] "Will of Simon Hatley," Probate 11/530/158, NAUK.
[47] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 47.

RECRUITING CREWMEN TO SERVE “BEFORE THE MAST”

With the principal officers in place and some of the lesser ranks filled by walk-ons and business associates, the Syndicate needed to fill the remaining petty officer vacancies and find enough seamen to make the ships operational. The Syndicate realized it could not exclusively rely upon Bristol for sailors. In June, it sent Courtney and some assistants to recruit in Portsmouth. It also dispatched Hatley to recruit in Ireland and, a month later, sent Humphrey French to assist him.[48] Two other recruiters are listed in the Syndicate account books without identifying with whom (Courtney or Hatley) or where each man worked. The Syndicate instructed its two principal recruiters to hire whatever crewmen they could find regardless of background or experience. The Syndicate trusted Courtney because he was a member and a mariner by trade, and Hatley because members knew him personally. The Syndicate’s recruiters had a formidable task ahead of them, as experienced seamen were in short supply and competition for their services keen.

In 1708, the Royal Navy needed to man 103 ships of the line, 63 frigates, eight sloops, and 36 miscellaneous auxiliary vessels, including bomb ketches, storeships, and yachts utilized for official duties. This vast array of ships was divided between the British Isles and its far-flung colonies. Since naval vessels required large crews to run effectively, each ship presented a substantial drain on manpower.[49]

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[48] Loose leaf letter from Syndicate to Humphrey French, dated July 8, 1708. “Creagh v. Rogers,” C 104/36, NAUK; Loose leaf Syndicate meeting minutes dated June 23, 1708. “Creagh v. Rogers,” C 104/36, NAUK.
[49] R.D. Merriman, ed., *Queen Anne’s Navy: Documents Concerning the Administration of the Navy of Queen Anne* (1961), 63.

The merchant service also needed to man its ships. Whether an Indiaman hauling Persian carpets from Bengal, a slaver transporting slaves from West Africa to America, or a lugger carrying Cheshire cheese, Whitehaven coal, or Yorkshire wheat along the English coast, a merchantman required a core of skilled sailors to keep the ship running and simultaneously provide on-the-job training to the landsmen. So far, Bourbon warships and privateers had wreaked havoc on the merchant service and removed thousands of sailors from the labor pool. Over 1300 British merchantmen were captured during the war, and each lost ship meant a lost crew.[50]

Any loss to manpower was felt, as every dead or missing British sailor was one less sailor who could serve onboard a warship, merchantman, or privateer. These losses could be staggering at times, especially when Britain was embroiled in such a prolonged war. Some events, such as a major naval defeat or natural disaster, were keenly felt. In 1703, for example, the Admiralty estimated there were approximately 65,000 qualified seamen left in the reserve manpower pool. In November of that year, a terrific storm hit England that killed, by contemporary estimates, between 10,000 to 12,000 seamen.[51] It was a catastrophic loss. Foreign sailors signed on as they always did and partially replaced those losses; indeed, ship crews tended to be multinational. Those numbers, however, did not meet the unquenchable demand for experienced sailors. Furthermore, the Navigation Act of 1660 already mandated significant quotas for crew nationalities in the merchant service; merchant crews had to contain at least three-quarters Englishmen (and an English master) although privateers and warships were exempt.

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[50] *Imperial Year Book for Dominion of Canada 1917-1918* ed. A.E. Southall (1917), 38.
[51] R.D. Merriman, *Queen Anne's Navy*, 186.

The government sought to alleviate effects of the chronic manpower shortage on the Royal Navy. On the eve of the War of Spanish Succession, Parliament passed the Piracy Act of 1700 to make it easier for British authorities to arrest and try pirates. The act also allowed some pirates to renounce their ways and join the navy.[52] Two years later, the war had begun and the navy's need for skilled crewmen was still so pressing that buccaneers and others with checkered pasts were accepted into the service and given a clean slate.[53]

The Royal Navy also tried to make up for the shortfall in personnel through impressment. Privateersmen were obliged to transfer up to one-half of their company to passing warships if required. That was one of the reasons why privateer captains sought enormous crews.[54] Any merchantman was also a valid target for a short-handed warship, and all outbound merchantmen from Britain were required to relinquish up to one-quarter of their complement if asked. In an August 1701 issue of the London *Post Boy*, the paper's correspondent in Weymouth reported "our Vessels are fearful of putting to Sea, least their Men should be impresst, for which reason no Collier comes in . . . ." Colliers and some others were eventually protected, but press gangs haunted maritime communities. A series of emergency recruiting acts in 1703, 1704, 1705, and 1708 allowed press gangs and parish officials to impress any able-bodied indigent men, or

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[52] Cotton and Fawcett, *East Indiamen*, 147.
[53] Jon Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire* (2009), 281.
[54] Robert Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates* (1986), 78.

vagabonds, to serve as landsmen and marines.[55] Also in 1708, impressment was made illegal in the colonies so the navy concentrated its press gangs in the British Isles, making a seaman's life in Bristol a risky one.[56] The Admiralty also pressured the Crown into giving it recruitment precedence over those of other services; at least one-third of privateer complements had to be unskilled landsmen. In this manner, the Crown prevented too many skilled sailors from avoiding naval service by enlisting onboard privateers.[57]

As a result, when the Syndicate sought experienced mariners in 1708 it faced stiff competition from the navy, the merchant marine, and other privateers. The earlier expedient of sailing to the West Indies with a skeleton crew and filling out their companies with experienced seamen in Jamaica was no longer possible after the 1702 reprieve given to all English buccaneers. Enough men accepted this route to respectability to create an acute manpower shortage in the Caribbean. Knowing it would be difficult to recruit sailors in the West Indian colonies, the Syndicate sought to fill its crews before leaving the British Isles.[58]

The shortage of trained seamen and competition for their services forced the Syndicate to offer greater incentives. Its members, many of whom had owned or co-owned ships, were aware of the multitude of factors that led seamen to sign onto a ship's

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[55] William Hunt and Reginald Pool ed., *The Political History of England in Twelve Volumes* (1909), 9:140, 365; *Post Boy*, August 14-16 1701, Issue 975.
[56] Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (1987), 34.
[57] Winston, *No Man Knows My Grave*, 17.
[58] John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, 281.

company. Weighing their options, sailors considered relative pay, hazards, workload, and rations before committing to join a ship's company.

Naval wages were generally lower than those in the merchant marine, and remained static between 1647 and 1797.[59] Those wages, however, were at least guaranteed and a sailor had legal recourse in case he did not receive the wages due him. Naval service also brought with it the prospects of prize money. Like privateersmen, navy men received prize money when a captured merchantman or her cargo was sold. Navy men also received prize money when their warship captured or sank an enemy warship. Those who signed onto a warship's complement during this conflict also received two months' wages as a signing bonus, and any who were wounded or killed received compensation ranging from pensions to legal counsel and quarters in the Royal Hospital for Seamen at Greenwich.[60] Dependents of those who died or were killed while in the service were also entitled to compensation.

Seamen also had to consider the kind of discipline they would face. A warship had a strict hierarchy from the captain down to the other officers and ratings. Officers swiftly meted out discipline to offenders and corporal punishment was the norm. Sailors who committed minor infractions were struck with a rope's end while thieves and brawlers were given lashes or tied to a grating, fed only bread and water, and left exposed to the elements. Punishments were painful but limited and sailors had the right to appeal to Admiralty authorities once ashore. Severe punishments such as flogging

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[59] N.A.M. Rodger, *Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (2004), 61.
[60] Merriman ed., *Queen Anne's Navy*, 171; H.D. Trail and J.S. Mann ed., *Social England: A Record of the Progress of the People* (1903), 4:756.

around the fleet and hanging were only administered after a court-martial ashore. Despite lurid tales of sadistic officers arbitrarily ordering men whipped, most penalties were comparable to what criminals received on land.[61]

In addition to discipline, seamen considered the possible shipboard conditions under which they would labor. The Royal Navy's ships usually had substantial crews that spread routine work among more individuals thereby lessening the work required of any individual seaman. Though less arduous than service in a privateer, service in the Royal Navy could be more hazardous. Privateers usually avoided fighting vessels of equal or greater strength, while Royal Navy vessels sought combat with enemy warships and kept fighting even after sustaining heavy casualties.

The Navy intended to keep its sailors in fighting shape and provided enough calories to sustain adult men with physically active lifestyles. Its rations guaranteed meat at least four times a week, which was better than what Britons of similar socioeconomic status could hope to receive on land. The food was repetitious and its sometimes variable quality inspired crude jokes, but sailors did not usually complain unless their staple foods were replaced with local substitutes (e.g., bread replaced with rice), and they never griped about the portion sizes.[62]

Prospective recruits also considered the merchant service, which offered some advantages but no guarantees. A merchant sailor had to contend with unscrupulous employers who might deny him pay. Indeed, protections for merchant sailors' fair

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[61] Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, 215.
[62] Ibid., 213.

wages were not adequately codified until 1729.[63] A sailor was more likely to receive a substantial sum at the end of the voyage because merchants offered high wages during wartime – by 1700, merchant sailors could expect 50 or 60 shillings per voyage – but all that was moot if his captain refused to pay him.[64] Wages were established for seamen serving in the Royal Navy, but those entering the merchant marine could often negotiate a more favorable wage, and a skilled haggler might live a relatively comfortable life. Again, however, that was dependent on his captain's honesty. As Richard Steele wrote, "and were not also the Wives and Dependents of our own Mariners (for Want of their dearly earn'd Pay) become an insupportable Burthen to the Parishes of St. Katharine's, Shadwell, Southward, &c."[65] Injured or killed merchantmen were not legally entitled to any compensation.

Merchant captains were notorious for excessive punishment, as they were completely unaccountable while at sea. With relatively small crews on merchantmen, captains found themselves absolute arbiters with few officers to curb their excesses. There was no legal recourse for unjustly punished sailors. It was not uncommon for exceedingly cruel merchant captains to be singled out and brutally murdered by pirates who captured merchantmen. In some cases, the captain's crew gave him up to the marauders.[66]

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[63] Richard Blakemore, "The Legal World of English Sailors, c. 1575-1729" in *Law, Labour, and Empire: Comparative Perspectives on Seafarers, c. 1500-1800*, ed. Maria Fusaro et al (2015), 117.
[64] Michael Lewis, *The Navy of Britain: A Historical Portrait* (1948), 323.
[65] Steele, *An Essay Upon Trade*, 14.
[66] David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of Life Among the Pirates* (1995), 133-134.

Compared to the other services, the working conditions onboard merchant ships were abysmal. Merchantmen tended to run with skeleton crews and their paymasters were interested in profit over their crews' welfare. As a result, merchant crews were routinely overworked. Food was another downside to joining the merchant service. Sailors commonly spread horror stories regarding food served onboard, and such tales circulated around taverns where seamen congregated.[67]

To make matters worse, merchant sailors had to contend with the possibility of impressment into the navy. An unlucky sailor, thinking he only had to endure a single voyage on a merchantman, might find himself impressed into a warship's company for the next few years. All merchant crews knew the risk of being captured by the enemy, but at least Bourbon warships tried to not damage merchantmen and their cargo.

Privateering had some advantages when compared to the Royal Navy or to the merchant service, although it was always a gamble. Service in a successful privateer with an honest captain could result in a significant "payday" at the voyage's conclusion, but an unsuccessful voyage could result in no pay at all. As a partial remedy, Parliament passed the "Act for the Management of Trade to America" (commonly referred to as the Prize Act of 1708) to regulate prize money. It ended the Crown's right to one-tenth of total profits.[68]

Exactly what an individual crewman was to receive depended on the contents of the ship's articles he agreed to when he joined the privateer. If, for example, the articles

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[67] Cotton and Fawcett, *East Indiamen*, 85.
[68] Frank Sherry, *Raiders and Rebels: The Golden Age of Piracy* (1986), 202; W.R. Meyer, "English Privateering in the War of Spanish Succession, 1702-1713," *Mariner's Mirror*, 69:4 (1983), 444.

provided for it, he could, in addition to shares in the distribution of prize money, receive compensation for grievous wounds and his family be given a lump-sum in case he died while at sea. There was also, of course, the small but plausible chance that a privateer might seize an immensely valuable ship and give each crewman a handsome profit.[69]

The articles also applied to officers serving onboard privateers. With larger crews than merchantmen, there was a need for more intermediate ranks and structure, much like onboard a warship. That created intermediaries between the crew and captain, and allowed officers to mitigate unfairly harsh sentencing. In addition to allotment of shares and compensation, the articles functioned as a sort of constitution that all officers and crewmen agreed to follow when signing on. Such rules addressed issues ranging from drunkenness and gambling to cowardice in the face of the enemy. The articles also defined punishments which could be administered for specific infractions.[70] In order to attract recruits, punishments were relatively light and their enforcement could be lax. No sailor wished to sign onto a privateer's company if the articles called for keelhauling or hanging. It was also impossible for privateer captains to inflict severe punishment for trivial infractions as the articles bound captains as well as ratings.[71]

Unlike merchantmen, privateersmen needed much more than a skeleton crew. Privateer captains needed enough crewmen to carry prizes by boarding and to sail any captured ships to port. Like sailors in the Royal Navy, privateer crewmen shared a workload among many hands. The quality of food onboard privateers varied widely

[69] Tim Beattie, "Dividing the Spoils: Research into the Privateering Voyage of the *Duke* and *Dutchess*" in *Law, Labour, and Empire*, ed. Maria Fusaro, 180.
[70] Benerson Little, *The Sea Rover's Practice*, 35.
[71] Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, 215.

depending on the type of voyage. During an extended cruising voyage, like the Syndicate planned, the quality of food often depended on immediate circumstances, ranging from fresh produce early in the voyage, to foul water and rancid biscuit when there was no opportunity to resupply later on.[72]

Like their counterparts in the merchant service, privateers always had to worry about impressment into the navy, at least in European waters. Regardless, all privateers possessed several intangible advantages that their competitors did not. Privateers seemingly made their own rules, allowed more initiative to crewmen, and promised better working conditions. They participated in the war but were only expected to target lightly armed merchantmen and not to engage warships.

Based on these factors, it would seem that service on the *Duke* and *Dutchess* would be more attractive than in either the Royal Navy or the merchant marine thereby facilitating recruitment of mariners.

The Syndicate's recruiting efforts, however, were handicapped because its recruiters were forbidden to tell potential crewmen where the expedition was headed or how long a sailor could expect to be away from Britain. The recruiters aside from Courtney might have even been ignorant of the destination themselves. The goal was to avoid letting the Spanish know that the *Duke* and *Dutchess* planned to attack their shipping in the Pacific. All the recruiters could say was that they were looking for volunteers for a cruising voyage with no specific destination. This presented a problem, as cruising voyages meant a prolonged period at sea and far away from home. Rogers

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[72] Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 258.

described such voyages as “but an indifferent Life at best.” Even though the commission specified the South Sea, the recruiters either would not or could not show it to anyone, or got creative with their instructions to recruit sailors by any possible means. Most privateersmen preferred to operate closer to home where voyages were short and fresh water and provisions more readily available. It was always difficult to recruit sailors for a voyage to Jamaica or the Slave Coast, where yellow fever might decimate European crews.[73]

Despite its handicap, the Syndicate had some advantages relative not just to the other services, but compared to the privateers with whom they were competing for seamen. Cruising voyages, unlike most privateering activity, offered some guaranteed compensation. Since they took a much longer time to complete, sponsors offered monthly wages so the sailors would not risk the possibility of returning home empty-handed so long as they did not desert. The Syndicate offered sailors a choice for payment, either entirely in shares of the profits from the voyage or in a fifty-fifty split between shares and monthly wages. The number of shares, along with the monthly wage, was dependent on the crewman’s rank. For example, the lowest landsman was offered one and a half shares of the voyage’s total proceeds, or three-quarters of a share and one pound and two shillings wages for each month. More experienced men and those with specialties such as a cooper were offered either five shares, or two and a half shares with a monthly wage of one pound and ten shillings.[74] The recruits did not know

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[73] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 7.
[74] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, Introduction.

exactly where they were going – most probably assumed to Africa or the Caribbean – but they knew they would be undertaking a lengthy voyage.

The expedition's articles were straightforward, and all recruits were required to sign them and select their payment plan. First, the owners were responsible for all costs involving the ships, guns, supplies, and ammunition. Second, all profits were to be divided so that the owners received two-thirds of the proceeds while the officers and crew divided the remaining third. Most privateers offered 25 percent of total proceeds to the crew, so this was slightly better.[75] Third, any supplies taken from prizes and consumed by the privateers (e.g., food and naval stores) were partially reimbursed with the owners paying one-third the value of the supplies into the proceeds to be distributed. Fourth, any officer or crewman killed or "so disabled, as not to get a Livelihood" was entitled to compensation for himself or for his next of kin. Fifth, a pay chart clearly defined how much each officer and crewman would receive.[76]

The Syndicate purchased enough food and liquor, including Gloucestershire redstreak cider, to last sixteen months, but experienced sailors knew extended cruises often resulted in crewmen being "oblig'd to depend upon Chance or the Enemy's Courtesy for Provisions."[77] The Syndicate knew that Dampier's last voyage quickly ran out of stores, as it had been stocked for only nine months.[78]

In addition, the Syndicate stocked extra medical supplies. Remarkably for an expedition of its size, the Syndicate hired six medical officers. The presence of certified

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[75] Starkey, "Incentivisation of British Privateering Crews," 137.
[76] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, Introduction.
[77] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 7.
[78] Funnell, *A Voyage Round the World*, 2; Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 50.

physicians and apothecaries not being assigned other duties so they could focus on preventive medical care rather than treating only wounds and other serious injuries was rare. Thus the Syndicate's crewmen could anticipate being well cared for.[79]

Once they signed on, the sailors were encouraged to stay onboard by the offer of free rations and 25 shillings per month from the time the sailors entered "Service of the said Ship, or Ships."[80] To qualify for the extra pay, the crewmen had to remain onboard one of the ships. On June 15, the Syndicate's two frigates were towed out into the Severn estuary so it was more difficult for sailors to desert.[81] The sailors also benefited from this arrangement as it would protect them from "crimping."[82] Port communities were notorious for dishonest publicans and innkeepers (the crimps) giving sailors free drinks. Once the unsuspecting seaman passed out, the establishment's owner kidnapped him and later sold him to a merchant captain looking for new crewmen. Moreover, the specific cruising voyage was exempt from impressment because it technically operated in the Americas and was protected by act of Parliament. Any press gang that took the privateers in any location at sea would have to pay a £20 fine per head.[83]

The Syndicate enjoyed some success with its recruiting efforts. Combined with the hand-picked senior officers, the two ships had a combined complement of 225 officers and men by August 1. They would receive more once they sailed to Cork and

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[79] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 47.
[80] Pre-Voyage Paybook, pages 1-39. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK; John Parker's Book, Owners' Proposals dated June 11, 1708, folio 1. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[81] Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean*, 45.
[82] Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea,* 43.
[83] John Parker's Book, Owners' Proposals dated June 11, 1708, unfoliated. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

collected Hatley's recruits. As the new hands were being sorted out, the Syndicate gradually readied its ships and put the new hires to work stepping the masts and stowing stores in the holds. With the officers and men mostly in place, the commission secured, and the ships nearing ready to put to sea, it was time for the Syndicate to issue final instructions to expedition leaders.[84]

SHIPBOARD GOVERNANCE

Most important were the Syndicate's instructions concerning governance of the expedition. First the leaders appointed officers to serve as a "General Council" and instructed the group to meet regularly to discuss policy and plan any "Attempts, Attacks, and Designs upon the Enemy, either by Sea or Land."[85] Ships' captains could deal with minor offenses, but any crewman was entitled to a review of his case by the Council. Dover was named "president" of the Council, and he never tired of using that title as a prefix in correspondence. His only unique power as president was to cast a tie-breaking double vote "in Case of an Equallity."[86] Rogers, Courtney, and Dover were each authorized to call a Council meeting. Records never indicated which of the three officers called for meetings; every account simply stated that the meeting occurred and on which ship.

In the interest of unity, records of the meetings reported only the decisions made and did not include the number of votes cast on each issue. All Council members,

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[84] B.M.H. Rogers, "Dampier's Voyage of 1703," *Mariner's Mirror*, 10:4 (1934), 369.
[85] John Parker's Book, A Copy of the Constitution, page 8. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[86] Ibid.

regardless of how they voted, signed every agreement. Since the Council was supposed to run the expedition, its members did not want to give the impression that they followed any one leader.[87]

There was another motive for creating the Council aside from making decisions or administering discipline. The Syndicate knew that weakly governed privateers had a predilection to become pirates. It was not sufficient to simply appoint charismatic and forceful officers; the officers themselves sometimes needed to be put in check. Dampier's painful experiences throughout his other voyages highlighted the necessity for a Council, and the Syndicate must have realized that concentrating too much authority in the hands of one officer – and especially an inept one – was a guarantee for disaster.

This created a complicated state of affairs in which the Council made most decisions governing the expedition while Rogers was designated "commander-in-chief" and given responsibility for directing all actions undertaken onboard or by the two ships. In the meantime, Dover was the chief administrative officer and both captains were required to act as instructed by Council.

A subcommittee consisting of Council members was appointed for each ship that would make decisions for each ship should the *Duke* and *Dutchess* become separated. The *Duke's* ten-man committee included Woodes Rogers, Dover, Dampier, and Vanbrugh. The six-member committee for the smaller *Dutchess* included Courtney, Cooke, and John Rogers. The Syndicate made sure to balance the mariners with other

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[87] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, B2.

officers, including the owners' agents (Carlton Vanbrugh from the *Duke* and William Bath from the *Duchess*).[88]

The individual ships' committees would only meet if the ships were separated. The ships were never apart for long during the voyage, thus there is no indication that the ship committees ever met.

Rogers and the rest of the General Council, regardless of station, were all expected to conduct themselves at a high standard. Officially, the Syndicate forbade the privateers from trading with allies for anything other than basic necessities and the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were to act "only as Private Men of War, and not as trading Ships."[89] But the Syndicate, or at least its officers at sea, considered the possibility of future trade with the Spanish in the South Sea. That could only happen if a British settlement were established there and if the Spanish were not brutalized or tortured, as many buccaneers had done in the past. There was nothing to be done about the settlement, but the Syndicate and Council could mandate certain behavior among the crewmen. The Syndicate's general orders for Rogers and the Council to prevent "all Animosities, Quarrells, and Mischiefs at Sea" clearly applied to external parties, as the Council (including the two Syndicate members onboard) would invariably interpret those orders in such a manner to include prisoners and local Spanish and Indian populations.[90]

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[88] Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages*, 76; Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas 1680-1840* (2001), 170.
[89] John Parker's Book, Owners' Proposals, dated June 11, 1708, page 1. "Creagh vs. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[90] John Parker's book, Orders to Rogers dated July 14, 1708, page 13. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

But the Council's effectiveness would be tried later. With the ships more or less outfitted, the officers chosen, the letters of marque signed and received, and enough crewmen to get started, all the expedition needed were orders to set sail. The Syndicate anticipated a long voyage and had prepared accordingly. Now it was time to proceed with the venture.

CHAPTER V

AND THEN AT ELEVEN IN THE FORENOON UNMOOR'D

The packet which brought orders to establish the General Counci also contained final instructions to expedition leaders.[1] Rogers' orders were to make sail for Cork on the first fair wind after the crews and ships were in sufficient condition. The orders detailed the expedition's objectives; the capture of an Acapulco galleon – the trans-Pacific galleon bound from Mexico to Manila, laden with Spanish pesos and silver bullion – was the expedition's primary target. Once the privateers captured the galleon, the Syndicate expected its two ships and the prize to retrace their outbound route and return to England via Brazil, the West Indies, and Virginia. Syndicate members had business contacts scattered around the Atlantic, and Rogers' instructions included a list of merchants in Virginia, Barbados, Jamaica, Montserrat, and Nevis to deal with should the expedition need repairs or supplies, or had prizes other than the galleon to sell.[2]

The crewmen might not have been ready to sail on July 14 because the expedition remained in Bristol for two more weeks. Or, having heard rumors of a French 46-gun warship prowling the Irish Sea, the Council may have elected to not set out alone, but to seek safety in numbers by sailing with a group of ships. Whatever the

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[1] John Parker's Book, Copy of the Orders and Instructions, dated July 14, 1718, pp. 9-19. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

[2] John Parker's Book, Copy of the Orders and Instructions, page 10. "Creagh v. Rogers," Chancery 104/36, NAUK

case, the *Duke* and *Dutchess* joined a group of ships that weighted anchor and headed to Cork on August 1, 1708.[3]

Two days later, on August 3, the convoy spied a large ship some distance away but she fled when the *Dutchess* altered course to approach her. Rogers wrote that the false alarm had "happen'd well for us, since had it been real, we should have made but an indifferent fight, for want of being better mann'd."[4] Despite the privateers' inexperience, or perhaps because of it, they actively sought an engagement with a clearly superior foe. Some of expedition's officers (nobody claimed responsibility) were already showing signs of poor judgment.

CORK

The expedition's primary reason for stopping at Cork was to take on experienced crewmen. The two ships did not possess many more than twenty veteran sailors between them when they left Bristol, while the remaining 200 or so crewmen were woefully inexperienced. The expedition lost approximately 40 men immediately after arriving in Cork, many to desertion and, others – who Rogers dubbed "Ordinary fellows" – were dismissed as unfit for service at sea or for being malcontents.[5] The fact that so many men deserted after such a short voyage did not bode well for the future when the expedition would, inevitably, reach hostile waters far from any friendly port.

[3] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World* (1712), 1:2; Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712), 9.
[4] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage,* 10.
[5] Ibid.

Fortunately for the expedition, petty officer Simon Hatley had, with the assistance of Noblett Rogers, a Cork merchant and brother to the Syndicate member Francis Rogers, recruited as many as 150 qualified seamen in the Irish port. The exact number of recruits is unclear because the account Hatley submitted to the Syndicate said only that he was owed exactly £30 as part of the expedition's "prime cost & outset." The expenses included everything from his personal lodgings and meals to payment to the sailors who enlisted. The muster sheets specified neither the date nor the port in which seamen signed on.[6]

While Syndicate members considered the current level of manning acceptable, they did order Rogers to recruit whatever additional men he could, and should the expedition lose so many men that it became shorthanded, to "make up their Deficiency by ye first Oportunity."[7] Acting on those orders, Rogers signed on additional recruits while the ships waited to join a convoy leaving Cork bound for the West Indies. During that time more sailors applied to join the expedition than it could accommodate, and Rogers ordered his recruiters to "stop the rest till we were ready, our ships being pester'd."[8] The *Duke* and *Dutchess* – which had arrived in Ireland with a combined 225

[6] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 10. Roster, loose leaf letter from Syndicate to Hatley dated July 8, 1708. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK; Roster, loose leaf letter from Syndicate to Humphrey French dated July 8, 1708. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK; Ships Duke & Dutchess Book of Cost and outset, page 7. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[7] Book, orders from Syndicate to Rogers, page 10. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[8] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 10-11.

sailors – left with 334. To make room for the large number of personnel, Rogers offloaded a portion of the naval stores and delivered them to Noblett Rogers.[9]

Rogers' orders in Bristol contained instructions on what to do in Cork, including joining a West Indies-bound convoy under the protection of the 42-gun Royal Navy frigate *Hastings*. Syndicate leaders who issued those orders did not anticipate the expedition being delayed for weeks in Cork. Nor did the members in Bristol anticipate the additional £2000 spent in Cork for various stores and maintenance. Despite the Syndicate's legitimate concerns at the delays and expenses, Rogers and the Council had done exactly as instructed. The expedition waited to sail with the *Hastings*, and Rogers followed the Syndicate's standing orders to resupply whenever possible. This was not the last time during the voyage that Syndicate members became upset at Rogers for following its standing orders.[10]

On September 2, the *Duke* and *Dutchess* finally departed Cork in a convoy that included the *Hastings* and twenty merchantmen. Joining the convoy may have also been a ruse to lead observers ashore, particularly Bourbon spies, to think that the two privateers were headed for Madeira and from there to the West Indies, the Mediterranean, or West Africa.

The convoy proceeded westward past Ireland for several days without incident. Since the green crewmen were slowing down their ships and the rest of the convoy, the

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[9] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain: Being the Life of Woodes Rogers, Seaman, Trader, Colonial Governor* (1960), 54.
[10] Bundle SE/25, loose leaf letter from Francis Rogers to Thomas Batchelor. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK, cited in Tim Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages of the Early Eighteenth Century* (2015), 74-75.

expedition was "oblig'd to break Measures" with the convoy on September 5. That same day, the expedition's officers also decided it was time "to discover to our Crew whither we were bound" and to give any of the crewmen who did not wish to go to the Pacific the opportunity to leave the expedition and join the *Hastings* or one of the merchantmen in the convoy.[11] Any man who took the opportunity to transfer to another ship would still be at sea for months, but at least he would be in familiar waters instead of isolated in the Pacific. No one, not even a sailor who complained that his wife would be obliged to pay 40 shillings because he would not be present to tithe at his parish that year, left the voyage.[12]

Later that day, expedition officers sent their last letters and dispatches to England to the *Hastings* and departed from the convoy. It would take weeks for the mail to reach Bristol by way of two Atlantic crossings, but it was better to utilize an available courier right away than to hope the expedition would happen upon a homeward bound ship that could deliver its letters in less time.

The *Duke* and *Dutchess* did not depart alone, but were joined by the *Crown Galley*, a merchantman, headed for Madeira. After several days of embarrassingly poor sailing, the expedition began to look like a proper squadron. Rogers seemed to expect this because he claimed that the initial confusion was "usual in Privateers at first setting out."[13]

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[11] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 13.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

SWEDISH SHIP

On September 9, just one week after setting out from Cork, the Council held its first official meeting at sea. All members attended and agreed to make for Madeira "to furnish our selves with Wine, Brandy, and other Necessaries wanting on board both Ships for the Men." In case the two ships somehow became separated, they were to rendezvous at the Cape Verde Islands. If they missed each other there, the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were to meet at Ilha Grande, 3000 miles to the west and approximately 60 miles from Rio de Janeiro. If, after several weeks, the expedition still did not reunify, the individual ships were to proceed to the South Sea on their own.[14]

At 6 a.m. the next morning, lookouts spied a sail and the privateers altered course to pursue the vessel. After a nine-hour chase, the *Duke* finally closed within range of what proved to be a Swedish merchantman bound for Cadiz. The *Duke* fired a warning shot that forced her to heave to. Sweden being a neutral party in the War of the Spanish Succession, its ships were immune to capture unless carrying contraband to a belligerent. When some of the Swedish sailors, having imbibed much of their ship's liquor in anticipation of the privateers confiscating it, drunkenly claimed their ship was transporting gunpowder and naval stores, Rogers organized a search for contraband. Finding no conclusive evidence of illegal cargo, Rogers gave the Swedish captain a dozen bottles of cider in exchange for cured meats, and the ships continued on their respective ways.[15]

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[14] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World* (1712), 1:8
[15] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 14.

Some of Rogers' men grumbled that he should have seized the vessel. Informed that a few of the grumblers even talked of mutiny, Rogers and the senior officers quickly armed themselves and some loyal crewmen and clapped ten of the "mutineers" in irons. In addition, one of the ringleaders was "soundly whip'd for exciting the rest to join him." Still facing a disgruntled crew who, like the mutineers, thought the Swedish ship should have been sent to England as a prize, Rogers addressed them saying that seizing such a large ship would require more crewmen to operate it than the expedition could spare. Furthermore, if a prize court ruled that the ship was not a legitimate prize, it would cause serious legal problems once the privateers returned to Britain. That explanation "pacify'd the major part" of the crewmen and the expedition proceeded onward.[16]

Two days later, some of the mutineers in irons named other ringleaders, including Rogers' boatswain, Giles Cash. Rogers immediately ordered Cash clapped in irons because Cash could be especially dangerous if he backed a mutiny. This was both because he was a petty officer, and because he was popular with the crew. Cash's insubordination presented a clear problem beyond his behavior; he was the boatswain and so was responsible for shipboard discipline. An insolent petty officer, particularly in Cash's position, might have served as a catalyst for unrest among the crew and become exponentially more dangerous after the expedition found itself alone.

When a crewman "with near half the Ship's Company or Sailors following him" approached Rogers and demanded that Cash be set free, Rogers and the other officers responded by having Cash's supporter whipped as an example. Rogers later wrote,

[16] Ibid.; David Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean: The Adventurous Life of Captian Woodes Rogers* (2011), 46.

"This Method I thought best for breaking any unlawful Friendship amongst themselves' which, with different Correction to other offenders, allay'd the Tumult; so that now they begin to submit quietly."[17]

To prevent another mutiny, the captain of the *Crown Galley* advised Rogers to completely remove Cash from the expedition. Rogers had Cash transferred to the *Crown Galley*, which would take him to Madeira in irons. The other unnamed petty officers who were complicit in the mutiny were reinstated and that quelled most of the resentment. This incident never came up again during the voyage or afterward, but it illustrated how Rogers and the other officers quickly dealt with challenging situations. They swiftly delivered punishment and removed any figure that mutinous crewmen could rally behind. In this situation, it seemed the Syndicate had chosen its officers wisely.

CANARIES

Although the expedition planned to stop in Madeira with the *Crown Galley*, the pursuit of the Swedish ship had taken the privateers off course, making it more efficient to stop at the Canaries rather than reverse course and tack against contrary winds with a green, inexperienced crew in order to get to Madeira. While the Canaries were a Spanish possession, they had a special relationship with other belligerents including Britain that allowed ships to resupply there. Headed southward, the expedition parted from the *Crown Galley* and continued toward the Canaries. After considering the liquor

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[17] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 15.

supply, the lack of warm clothing for the crew, and the prospect of journeying through cold climates, the Council decided it would be best to top off the ships' liquor casks. Rogers had previously observed that despite the lack of decent cold-weather clothes, "good liquor to sailors is preferable to clothing."[18]

On September 18, the expedition arrived in the Canaries and captured its first prize – a 15-ton barque – between the islands of Fuerteventura and Gran Canaria. When the privateers closed with the small vessel, the *San Felipe y San Diego* surrendered without a fight.[19] Her cargo included wine, rum, clothing, snuff, foodstuffs, and about £12 in Spanish currency. She also carried 30 passengers who, upon learning their captors were British and not Barbary corsairs, actually rejoiced.[20]

As the expedition dropped anchor off Tenerife the next day, the *Duke's* owners' agent Carlton Vanbrugh insisted on going ashore at La Oratava in order to negotiate ransom of the prize. The Council acquiesced to his request and, against its better judgment, allowed him to broker a deal for the release of the captured *San Felipe y San Diego*. Instead of a ransom from the owners of the prize, the privateers received a message from British merchants and a consul, informing them of an agreement with local officials allowed resident British merchants to continue trading in the islands and British ships to take on water and provisions despite the war. In return, Spanish ships

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[18] Ibid., 13.
[19] Account of the Purchase Taken by The Ships Duke and Dutchess. prize manifest, page 3."Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.
[20] Book No. D 115, prize manifest, page 1. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161, Part I, NAUK.

engaged in inter-island trade were exempt from seizure by British warships and privateers.[21]

The British traders walked a fine line, especially since they were guests in enemy territory. As the British vice-consul wrote in a hastily written letter, "we must inform you that her Majesty [Queen Anne] is graciously pleas'd to allow a Trade between her Subjects and the People of these Islands." The letter then demanded that the prize vessel be restored or else, "Mr. Vanbrugh will not be permitted to go off, and there will be extravagant reprisals made upon our estates and persons."[22]

After a day-long series of frustrating proposals and counter-proposals between the Council and Canarian businessmen, Rogers threatened to bombard La Oratava and successfully concluded negotiations. The British merchants returned Vanbrugh, purchased the prize barque, and ransomed the captives for 450 pieces of eight. Part of that sum also reimbursed the Spanish ship-owners for the cargo that the expedition kept for its own use. The expedition waited at anchor throughout the next day as the merchants discussed the particulars. It was just as well that the account was quickly settled, for the Council also wanted to leave soon; the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were already the subjects of local gossip. The Spaniards in the Canaries were curious about the expedition's ships, especially the double-sheathed hulls, and speculated that the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were following a five-ship French expedition that had passed through the Canaries a month before. They did not suspect the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were headed for

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[21] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 16.
[22] Ibid., 17.

the Pacific.[23] To speed the privateers' departure, the merchants donated five pipes of wine, a hogshead of brandy, and some delicacies. The merchants clearly desired to be rid of the privateers.[24]

The privateers threatened to disrupt the merchants' precarious position again when, as the expedition departed from the Canaries on September 22, it gave chase to another sail, again in protected waters. Their quarry got away in the night, but it seemed the expedition's leaders had learned nothing from their political gaffe with the earlier prize. Capturing such vessels might be profitable in the short-term but it had the potential to lead to financial disaster for the Bristol Syndicate. The privateersmen wanted to get prize money, but that would easily be offset if the Canarian merchants filed a lawsuit against the Syndicate. The Syndicate was guaranteed to take the costs of the lawsuit out of the final profits and would most certainly seek recompense from the expedition's officers. The expedition's officers needed to carefully consider how their actions might affect their employers at home. This would not be the last time wronged parties threatened to take their grievances directly to the Syndicate.[25]

The Council met two days later and approved all the actions taken by the ships' officers in negotiations at the Canaries. It did, however, acknowledge that Vanbrugh had been "much in ye wrong" by getting himself arrested, although it declined to specify

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[23] Ibid., 18; Book, letter from Rogers and Courtney to Canaries merchants, page 26. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.
[24] Account of the Purchase Taken by The Ships Duke and Dutchess, Orotava account, page 3. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.
[25] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:11.

what offenses Vanbrugh had actually committed.[26] To deal with situations such as these was precisely why the Syndicate insisted on forming the General Council back in July. All the senior officers from both ships were not only supposed to meet regularly, but were required to review any major events. In this case, the Council acted precisely as it was instructed. Its members met, discussed what had happened in the Canary Islands, and reprimanded Vanbrugh for some vaguely defined infraction. All Council members signed the record of the meeting thereby presenting a united front to any seamen who might criticize the release of the prize.

CAPE VERDE

On September 25, the expedition crossed the Tropic of Cancer. As per maritime tradition, the crew gathered the sailors who had never been south of that invisible line and the more seasoned crewmen "duck'd the Men in both Ships, according to Custom, who had not before pass'd the Tropick."[27] Different nations' practices varied over the centuries, but the ceremony always involved an experienced sailor dressing like Neptune, the Roman god of the seas. Each uninitiated crewman was then hoisted by a rope and lowered into the ocean. Those who wished to avoid dunking bribed Neptune either with liquor or with money. The ceremony provided a welcome diversion and fostered camaraderie as the more inexperienced sailors were accepted into the ship's company. The ties were strengthened further the next day, when the Council sold some

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[26] Meeting Book, Council meeting on September 24, 1708, page 28. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[27] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:12.

of the cargo taken from the *San Felipe* to the sailors by auction. Those who purchased some of the "loose Plunder" now had something tangible to show for their work.[28]

The expedition reached the Cape Verde Islands on September 30, anchored off Sao Vicente, and spent the next several days performing minor repairs and sending parties ashore to refill water casks. Three days into its stay, the expedition dispatched its linguist, Joseph Alexander, with a letter to the deputy-governor of the Cape Verde Islands who was on the nearby island of Santo Antao. In the letter, the Council invited the Portuguese official to come onboard the *Duke* for dinner and discussion. He accepted the invitation and islanders rowed out to the expedition to barter.[29]

Alexander was also given a list of supplies to purchase while ashore. He made the necessary purchases but did not himself return to the *Duke*. Rogers contacted the deputy-governor and sought his help in locating Alexander. The official promised to put Alexander by the waterside if he were found, but did not deliver him before the Council met on October 7 and approved leaving Cape Verde without the linguist.[30] It is likely that Alexander decided to remain on Cape Verde, where his linguistic skills would open opportunities for him that were certainly more appealing than the unappetizing food, exposure, disease, and violence he would likely face if he remained with the privateers. The expedition would later miss his work as a translator, especially when it ran into problems with the Portuguese in Brazil.

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[28] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 19-20.
[29] Meeting Book, letter from Rogers and Courtney to Governor Rodriges, page 29. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[30] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 22.

At the same October 7 meeting, the Council also revised seven rules regarding plunder. Members agreed that concealing plunder for more than 24 hours, drunkenness while in action, hiding in order to avoid fighting or work, and refusing to obey commands would be punished by forfeiture of the offender's shares. Such a penalty was common among privateers and pirates in order to foster trust among crewmen.[31]

The modifications that made all accounting public also provided for searching every sailor after seizing a prize. Any sailor who refused to be searched would forfeit his share and his captain would have the right to order additional punishment for insubordination. Each ship would contribute two officers and two sailors to search the men, in full view of the assembled companies. In order to prevent distrust between crewmen of the two ships, each agent was required to keep a public account of prize money and the officers were to update the books as soon as possible after each capture.[32]

Theft virtually always resulted in harsh penalties on any vessel from a Guernsey schooner to a Royal Navy man o'war. The articles decreed that any man who deserted his assigned post during an engagement would also forfeit his share from any prizes taken during the action. The one exception to this was if a man left his post to join a boarding party (e.g., a surgeon's mate leaving his post in sick bay to fight). Many privateer captains drew a distinct line between ship's plunder and cabin plunder, the latter of which often contained valuable items such as silver dinner services and

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[31] Meeting Book, Council meeting on October 7, 1708, pp. 30-31. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK; Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea,* 1:14-16.
[32] Ibid., 1:13-15.

paintings.[33] Officers regularly divided cabin plunder among themselves and did not share it with the crew. The Council revised the definition of "plunder" several times throughout the voyage, but its members did not create a new definition for *cabin* plunder. They did vote to give Rogers and Courtney, the two ship captains, each five percent of profits made from selling cabin plunder after which the remaining sum would be shared by the entire crew. Experienced seamen knew that underhanded dealings surrounding cabin plunder were common, so the Council helped to prevent a major cause of unrest during the voyage. The Council wanted "to make both ships' companies easy." The Council also decided that, as an incentive for alert lookouts, the sailor who first spied a "Prize of good Value, or exceeding 50 Tuns in Burden" would be rewarded with twenty pieces of eight.[34]

With the rules revised, the expedition set out across the Atlantic to Ilha Grande on October 8. Two weeks later, on October 22, long-simmering tension between Edward Cooke and his second mate William Page exploded. When Page disobeyed a command from Cooke, Cooke struck him, Page hit back, and the two brawled until some crewmen forced Page into a boat and sent him to the *Duke*, where Rogers put him into the "bilboes" (leg irons) to serve as an example. Page was fortunate to serve on a privateer and not on a Royal Navy warship, as Admiralty law severely punished petty officers who struck their superiors. Shortly afterward, Page asked permission to visit the head and relieve himself, and granted permission and released from irons, he leaped

[33] Peter Kemp and Christopher Lloyd, *Brethren of the Coast* (1960), 163.
[34] Meeting Book, Council meeting on October 7, 1708, page 31. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

overboard and tried to escape to the *Dutchess*, but the ship's boat quickly retrieved him and Rogers promptly clapped him in irons again. The crew had been without a legitimate prize since setting out from Bristol and the frustration felt by crewmen turned into unrest, which manifested itself in insubordination.[35]

On October 25, the *Dutchess*' officers dealt with more unrest as two midshipmen accused their pilot Alexander White of encouraging men to desert. Not only that, but he had also insisted on immediately dividing spoils despite the Council's accord. The case was referred to the full Council, its members decided his actions were "leading to ye Detrimnt of ye voyage," and ordered him confined in irons until the *Dutchess'* captain Courtney ordered his release.[36]

In a move designed to stop the spreading unrest, Rogers accepted William Page's apology for insubordination and ordered the well-liked petty officer released from leg irons on October 29. Four days later Rogers dealt with the first violation of the new rules governing plunder when two *Duke* crewmen were caught hiding some clothes taken out of the Canaries prize. Rogers did not order the forfeiture of their claim to any share of captured property, but instead ordered them put into leg irons until they apologized and promised to never conceal plunder again.[37]

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[35] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 25.
[36] Meeting Book, Council meeting on October 25, page 32"Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[37] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 26.

BRAZIL AND ILHA GRANDE

The expedition crossed the Atlantic without additional unrest among the officers and crewmen. On November 18 the privateers reached Ilha Grande, found a suitable anchorage, and the next day sent two work parties ashore to find a watering hole that Dampier knew the general location of from his previous visit to the island. Meanwhile, a Portuguese boat approached the *Duke* and informed Rogers that French privateers had recently passed through the area, probably en route to mainland Brazil. Fearing the arrival of Spanish or French warships, the privateers hoped to complete filling their water casks quickly and be on their way.[38]

On November 20, strong winds and heavy rain prevented the ships from sending boats to the watering hole. When one of the *Dutchess'* crewmen attempted to jump overboard and swim ashore, he was chased down and clapped in irons. Seven of his friends and mess-mates showed sympathy for him by volunteering to be put in irons alongside him. Courtney considered this tantamount to mutiny. In his view the crewmen were undermining his authority, so he ordered them put in irons for the next several days at the end of which he ordered two of the alleged "mutineers" whipped and four others released after they each apologized for his behavior. The seventh crewman remained in irons for the duration of the stay off Ilha Grande.[39]

The rain continued for two days during which the Council ordered Cooke and Lieutenant Charles Pope to go to Angra dos Reis, three leagues from the anchorage, and there to give the Portuguese governor some butter and cheese along with a letter stating

[38] Ibid., 27.
[39] Ibid.; Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 61.

the expedition's peaceful intentions and a request to turn over any deserters who might jump ship during the privateers' stay.

It was dusk when the pinnace carrying Cooke and Pope approached the town. Suspicious of the approaching vessel silhouetted against a darkening sky, the villagers fired upon it with muskets before realizing the privateers meant them no harm and ceased firing.[40] Village leaders apologized profusely explaining they had mistaken them for enemies such as the French privateers who they reported had "plunder'd them, and taken away the Plate and Ornaments, which might be the reason why their Houses were no better furnish'd; as also their not being satisfy'd [knowing], whether we were Friends or Enemies."[41] Villagers informed Cooke that the governor was absent but that he was expected back any day. The shore party returned to the anchorage, and the next day the expedition set about filling its water casks and making needed repairs.

The next few days passed without incident. The townspeople helped the privateers fill their water casks and find timber in case they had to conduct hull repairs later, while many local traders rowed out to the ships at anchor and bartered. Relations with the Portuguese were friendly and amicable until two Irish crewmen deserted the night of November 25.

At four o'clock the next morning, the *Duke's* lookouts spied a canoe a short distance away. The privateers normally would not have cared about a stray canoe, even at such an early hour, but the officers suspected the two missing crewmen were in it. When the canoe did not respond when hailed, Rogers ordered the *Duke*'s yawl and

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[40] Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean*, 51.
[41] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:24.

pinnace to intercept it. Acting on impulse and without authority, Vanbrugh seized command of the pinnace before any other officer climbed onboard, and set out in pursuit of the canoe. As the two boats closed the distance, and no one in the canoe responded to a warning shot, Vanbrugh ordered his crew to open fire with their muskets. The canoe then stopped, and the pinnace crewmen learned they had mortally wounded one of its occupants.[42]

It turned out that the canoe was carrying a Portuguese friar, several of his Indian slaves, and £200 in gold that he planned to bury in a safe place. Rogers did his best to calm the rattled clergyman and convince him that the privateers had intended no harm, but the friar resented both being fired upon and the disappearance of his gold sometime during the commotion. None of the privateers admitted having any of the gold and even the friar acknowledged that it had probably just been lost overboard. The privateers let him and his slaves go, hoping that would be the end of the incident even though the friar threatened to file a grievance with the relevant authorities in Portugal and Britain. Their attention focused elsewhere, expedition leaders delayed formal discussion of Vanbrugh's actions until the ships departed from Ilha Grande.[43]

The two deserters were found that evening near the shore, begging to be picked up after spending a terrifying night in the jungle. They had bargained with locals to carry them to mainland Brazil, but missed meeting at the designated rendezvous and had to spend the darkening hours in the jungle surrounded by strange and noisy wildlife that

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[42] Meeting Book, memorandum regarding November 26, 1708, unnumbered page. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[43] Graham Thomas, *Pirate Hunter: The Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2009), 39.

kept them from sleeping. Cooke reported that "they hail'd the ship at midnight, begging for God's sake to be brought aboard, or they should be devour'd." It would have been an amusing story for Rogers and the other officers if they were not under such terrible strain after the shooting. When the deserters returned to the *Duke*, they were put in irons until morning, then flogged and released from further punishment.[44]

Fortunately, relations did not sour with the rest of the Portuguese. The locals seemed to have understood the firing at the canoe was an unfortunate accident and not a deliberate murder. The absent governor also returned the next day and graciously extended a formal invitation to all the officers and men to visit the settlement as official guests. The privateers returned the hospitality and entertained Portuguese officials onboard the *Duke*.[45]

The privateers found the locals most willing to trade with them. At first the *Duke* and *Dutchess* stood off shore and locals came out to barter, but soon, with the governor's blessing, the Britons went ashore and visited the settlement's markets and missions. Natives residing at most missions engaged in agriculture and some industry under the direction of Roman Catholic friars, often producing a surplus they could trade. Convinced that the local Indians were lazy and irresponsible, Rogers approved of the system that made them virtual slaves.[46]

At a meeting on November 29, the Council addressed Vanbrugh's actions on the 26th. It removed Vanbrugh as the *Duke's* owners' agent for his seizing control of the

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[44] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:21.
[45] Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean*, 51.
[46] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 52.

pinnace and firing on the canoe carrying the Portuguese friar.[47] The Council drafted a memorandum stating that "the commanders and officers of the ship[s] *Duke* and *Dutchess* . . . and the rest of the companies of the said ships, protest against the unadvis'd action of the above-said agent, for proceeding without any order of the captain of the said ship, and acting contrary to what he was shipp'd for."[48]

In other words, Vanbrugh was supposed to be an accountant and not a fighter, and he was certainly not supposed to take command of a boat without orders. In another meeting the next day, the officers voted that Vanbrugh be physically removed from the *Duke* entirely because they found his very presence dangerous. He switched positions with William Bath, the owners' agent onboard the *Dutchess*. Since the two agents only traded places, Vanbrugh remained a member of the Council. While the Syndicate appointed the agents, and the agents could not be replaced unless they were dead or incapacitated, the Council was within its rights to transfer them between ships if its members saw fit.[49]

As crewmen alternated between cleaning the ship and waiting out inclement weather, several more Portuguese came onboard to sell rum, sugar, and other supplies. During the same November 29 meeting in which the Council members censured Vanbrugh, they decided to pay the Portuguese for supplies by trading some of the cargo they had previously removed from the Canaries prize. In exchange for some cloth, the Portuguese gave them livestock and corn. To reflect the expedition's arrival into more

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[47] Ibid., 32.
[48] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:23; J.W. Damer Powell, *Bristol Privateers and Ships of War* (1930), 106.
[49] Thomas, *Pirate Hunter*, 40.

exotic territories, it supplemented its cider and wine stores with cheaper and more widely available rum. The officers even bartered for several turkeys, the small number of which indicated they were almost certainly destined for the officers' mess.[50]

On December 1, a brigantine bound for Rio de Janeiro stopped at Ilha Grande. Seizing the opportunity to communicate with their backers at home, Rogers, Dover, and Courtney bartered some trinkets to the ship's master for a promise that he would carry a letter and some other dispatches to Portugal, where he would put them into the hands of someone who would convey the messages to Bristol. Rogers and his colleagues also wrote three additional copies of each document to be sent via different conveyances should any be met with an obstacle so as to guarantee the Syndicate would receive at least one copy.[51]

In their joint letter, the three officers described in detail Cash's attempted mutiny, then noted how all the other officers were "in perfect unity" and although Rogers had had doubts about his crews' quality when they left Cork, said "that we never knew ships Companys better agree, & quieter than we now are."[52]

CAPE HORN

On December 3, the expedition left Ilha Grande and headed south. During its time at Ilha Grande, the Council decided to enter the Pacific by rounding Cape Horn

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[50] Loose leaf account of barter dated November 22-29, 1708. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161, Part. II, NAUK.
[51] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 33.
[52] Loose leaf letter from Rogers to Syndicate dated November 28, 1708. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

rather than via the Straits of Magellan. Its decision was influenced by the journal published by Gouin de Beauchene who described sailing westward through the Straits in 1699 and returning to the Atlantic by rounding Cape Horn two years later. Gouin's description of weather conditions at the tip of South America reinforced the Council's decision to not sail through the Straits, as "from this place [Port Galand on the Atlantic] to the Entrance of the South-Sea there's nothing but extraordinary high Mountains on each side, from whence come very impetuous and frightful Torrents, and Scarce any place for Anchorage to be sound, of one Day without either Rain or Snow."[53]

Rogers, who owned a copy of Gouin's journal, stated that it and "other Journals convince[d] me intirely that the best way to the South-Sea is round Cape Horne, the Route we pursu'd in our Voyage."[54] Although Rogers did not identify any of the "other Journals" they probably included *Captain Wood's Voyage Through the Streights of Magellan* (1699) by John Wood, commander of a ship in John Narborough's 1669 expedition that had also passed through the Straits and survived only due to help from the indigenous Patagonians. Even then, two crewmen had died from exposure and eating bad food.[55]

Rogers also might have read the 1699 memoir *Voyage Round the Globe* in which William Cowley reported that, "We steered S.W. by W. resolving not to sail through the Magellan Streights when making the Land of Terra del Faogo, but finding great ripplings in the water near the Streights of Lemaire, and fearing some danger, we

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[53] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 67.
[54] Ibid., 68.
[55] John Wood, "Captain Wood's Voyage Through the Streights of Magellan, c." in *A Collection of Original Voyages*, ed. William Hacke (1699), 50-54.

resolved to sail about all; that is, thro the passage that Capt. Bartholomew Sharpe did discover in the Year 1681."[56]

The buccaneer Basil Ringrose mentioned Sharp's voyage in his own 1685 publication *Bucaniers of America*, which was also widely read. The passage that Sharp discovered was the route around Cape Horn, and that is what the expedition's Council elected to use. Though a longer route, it was much safer than the alternative.

The Syndicate expedition's trip south to Cape Horn was mostly uneventful except for some personnel changes. Some of the men who the Syndicate selected as officers and mates performed poorly enough to date that Rogers and other Council members thought changes were necessary. On December 7, Rogers demoted one of the boatswain's mates and replaced him with a skilled sailor who had shown that he was more suitable for the position than the man he replaced. Three days later, the two ships exchanged two other boatswain's mates; the *Dutchess* wanting to remove a mutinous crewman. On December 20, Vanbrugh came back over from the *Dutchess* as well to re-assume his previous duties as the *Duke's* owners' agent.

Gales and steady rains slowed the expedition as it sailed southward from Brazil. Rough seas also caused one of the *Dutchess'* crewmen to fall from the mizzen-top and fracture his skull when his head hit the deck. The ship's surgeon could not help him; he died and was buried at sea.[57]

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[56] William Cowley, "Voyage Round the Globe," in *A Collection of Original Voyages*, ed. William Hacke (1699), 6.
[57] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 59.

On December 23 the expedition reached the Falkland Islands but did not drop anchor there due to poor weather, though Cooke wrote that the islands "look'd very pleasant; and we saw abundance of Ducks and small Fowl, besides Shoals of Fish."[58]

The following day, the expedition experienced the first of two portentous events that almost wrecked its chances of any success in the Pacific. First, the privateers spied a sail in the evening and gave chase for nearly two full days before losing her in a squall.[59] This would have a great impact on the expedition, because its lost quarry promptly reported the expedition's presence to Spanish authorities. This did not change the Council's decision to continue, however, and life returned to normal enough for a New Year's celebration with punch.

The second event was a gale on January 5. When the storm broke, crewmen reefed sails and tried to ride it out but the *Dutchess* nearly foundered. Only the rupture of a cabin bulkhead saved her when it provided an outlet for the water she was taking on. The *Dutchess'* crew escaped with some minor injuries but every scrap of clothing in their sea chests had been soaked through. Once the storm had passed, Rogers and Dampier inspected the *Dutchess* and found her crew "in a very orderly pickle, with all their Clothes drying, the Ship and Rigging cover'd with them from the Deck to the Main-Top." But the ever-present sea spray and generally damp weather, made drying clothes virtually impossible. Two days later, crewmen began to fall ill from exposure.

This added to the toll that other illnesses were taking on the crew at this point. On January 7, one of the *Duke's* landsmen died after a two-week-long illness. A week

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[58] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:29.
[59] Ibid., 1:30.

later, one of the *Dutchess'* crewmen died of scurvy. That did not bode well because it was a sign that the privateers were starting to run out of fresh provisions with no means to obtain more. Despite leaving with sixteen months' supplies, those estimates had been calculated for 225 men and not 330. The expedition had been gone only five months and was already feeling the pinch. The limes and other produce from Ilha Grande were either gone or spoiled. The privateers needed to find more supplies, and find them quickly.[60]

Sometime, amid the sickness, cold, and damp, Rogers and company found themselves in the Pacific Ocean. Some sources estimate the expedition rounded Cape Horn on January 11, although Cooke calculated that the expedition passed Tierra del Fuego on January 17. Rogers' first indication that he was in the Pacific came on January 20, when the ships' companies saw "high Land bearing E by N- dist. About 10 Ls. Being the Land about Port St. Stephen's in the Coast or Patagonia in the South Sea."[61]

The Atlantic phase of its journey completed, the expedition was now in the South Sea. There were no more friendly Portuguese missions to trade with or British convoys to sail with for protection. The privateers were now entirely on their own in a hostile ocean.

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[60] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 62.
[61] Ibid., 70; Damer Powell, *Bristol Privateers*, 107.

CHAPTER VI

THE JUAN FERNANDEZ ISLANDS

With its entrance into the Pacific, the expedition headed north to reach waters regularly trafficked by merchantmen, their main targets. While en route, the Council took stock of the ships' supplies and discussed how to replenish them. The expedition had to balance its need to interdict shipping routes while ensuring that it stayed supplied and had attainable objectives. At the same time, the privateers could not deviate from their main objective, the Acapulco galleon. They would have to steadily move northward in time to meet the outgoing treasure ship.

CHILE

As the expedition sailed northward in January 1709, Woodes Rogers and Edward Cooke took to their journals once again to describe the new terrain they had never before encountered. Sailing along the coast of Chile, Rogers wrote that "the Proximity of the Mountains on one side, and of the Sea on the other, makes it colder than otherwise it would be; but it has Warmth enough, to make it one of the best Countries in America."[1]

Cooke had not been impressed with Patagonia, describing it as "one of the most wretched and miserable [places] on the Earth." North of Reloncavi Sound, on the other

[1] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712), 182.

hand, appealed to him and he extolled it as "being one of, if not the wealthiest and most delightful province[s] in the universe."[2]

Cooke echoed Rogers' sentiments regarding Chilean soil. Both reported that Chile's temperate climate made it possible to grow European crops and raise European livestock. In his journal, Cooke gushed that "the soil is exactly like that of the happiest part of Europe, and produces every thing in perfection of our growth." He then continued, "the Spaniards who come from other parts of America, are almost apt to think themselves in their own country."[3]

Cooke then continued with detailed descriptions of the seasons (based upon information that he later obtained from captive Spaniards), the wide variety of produce, and other items that might have been of interest to merchants. Cooke stated that hemp, for example, did not grow anywhere in the Americas except for Chile. Hemp was a vital component in naval stores since it was used to produce the ropes necessary for ships' rigging. He also commented on the "most delicious wines" that the indigenous population drank "to a prodigious excess."[4]

Like many other get-rich-quick images that persisted in American travel journals, Cooke claimed that gold lay in rivers and creeks, and anyone could extract it with no more trouble than "taking up and washing it from the mixture of earth and sand, being

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[2] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World in the Years 1708 to 1711* (1712), 1:46.
[3] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:58.
[4] Ibid.

what we call gold dust."[5] In this way, he was similar to other travelers of his time with his outlandish claims of easily accessible wealth and impossibly fertile soil.

Despite the bountiful farmland, the expedition could not benefit from any of it because the ships needed to stay away from the coast to avoid being spotted from shore. As their supplies ran short and sheer weariness began to set in, the crew suffered. The off Tierra del Fuego had weakened many of the men, particularly those in the *Dutchess*. Illness bred more work for the remaining healthy crew, and the added fatigue not only worsened health but also made shipboard accidents more likely. It was easy for tired men to lose their grip when working aloft and plummet into the sea or onto the hard wooden deck. The expedition needed to make landfall somewhere, and the ideal place for that was the Juan Fernandez Islands.

The *Duke* lost her armorer's mate on January 21. The following day, one of the *Dutchess'* crew died from illnesses related to the soaking her crew received earlier that month. On January 26, two more men from the *Dutchess* died and thirty more came down with scurvy while others were still sick from other causes.[6] This mirrored most other Pacific expeditions. The Atlantic crossing usually did not involve malnutrition because the ships' stores typically lasted until their crews reached an accessible port, such as the Canaries or Cape Verde, where ships could replenish their provisions. The Pacific, on the other hand, offered little sustenance to those unwelcome in those waters. The Syndicate ships might have eventually been lost because none of their navigation charts agreed on the Juan Fernandez Islands' precise location.

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[5] Ibid., 1:200.
[6] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 70.

Fortunately for the expedition, it was already very close to the islands and had decent navigators. The privateers did not have to wait very long to find safe harbor and put the sick ashore. Nonetheless, another *Dutchess* crewman had to be buried before the ships safely arrived and dropped anchor on February 2.[7]

JUAN FERNANDEZ

The Juan Fernandez Islands are located approximately 400 miles off the Chilean coast. At the time, its three volcanic islands were called Mas a Tierra, Santa Clara, and Mas a Fuera. With favorable winds, a ship could set out due east from the islands and reach Valparaiso in four days.[8] They were the site of an abandoned Spanish colony and a favorite haunt for buccaneers and privateers.

Bartholomew Sharp, Basil Ringrose, John Watling, Edward Davis, and William Dampier had all used the Juan Fernandez Islands as a stopping point or forward operating base. The remaining vegetables and livestock from the failed colony suited their foraging lifestyle. Sharp had described his stay in 1680 as a mostly pleasant experience until his crew accused him of hoarding and general incompetence, voted him out of command, and put him in restraints. He favorably described the islands as "a very refreshing Place" that gave his crew enough provisions to continue hunting for prizes.[9]

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[7] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:33.
[8] Dana Souhami, *Selkirk's Island: The True and Strange Adventures of the Real Robinson Crusoe* (2001), 43.
[9] Bartholomew Sharp, *Captain Sharp's Journal of His Expedition; Written by Himself* in William Hacke, ed., *A Collection of Original Voyages* (1699), 44.

The islands' location suited privateers; they were close to coastal shipping lanes, but far enough offshore that the Spanish could not mount an immediate response from the mainland. Furthermore, as other British privateers had noted, the islands might possess some of the most defensible terrain. Several bays contained safe anchorages and were suitable for landings, and the islands possessed enough high ground to give any defender a commanding view of all approaches. This defensibility was one of the factors behind previous castaways surviving for so long, and a properly equipped and maintained garrison might have constructed an unassailable fortress. "Either of these Bays may be fortified with little charge," wrote Dampier on Mas a Tierra, "there is no coming into these Bays from the West end, but with great difficulty, over the Mountains."[10]

Selkirk

The Syndicate expedition, prompted by deteriorating health conditions, quickly made a landing. Its shore party consisted of Dover, the chief lieutenant Robert Frye, and six sailors. As the party approached Mas a Tierra, it saw an unusual goatskin-clad individual curiously observing them from shore. The strange man, a Scot by the name of Alexander Selkirk, had been marooned there since 1704 and was living proof of Dampier's failures as a leader, since Selkirk had been one of Dampier's sailors and marooned indirectly due to Dampier's ineffectiveness.

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[10] William Dampier, *Dampier's Voyages: Consisting of a New Voyage Round the World* ed. John Masefield (1906), 1:119.

Selkirk had sailed with Dampier in 1703, serving as sailing master of the *Cinque Ports*. When the captain of that vessel died, Selkirk clashed with his successor, Thomas Stradling. When the ship left Juan Fernandez, Selkirk elected to remain on the island until another English expedition picked him up. He also may have stayed because the ship was not seaworthy.[11]

Unlike the literary Robinson Crusoe figure that he later inspired, Selkirk was not left with only the clothes on his back and some flotsam, but also had his sea chest and some tools. At first Selkirk subsisted on seal meat and some vegetables – cabbages and turnips – that had been planted by previous Spanish colonists and by members of Bartholomew Sharp's expedition when it visited the islands in 1680. Selkirk also had access to pimiento and pepper trees so his seasoned meat was more palatable than the salted meats that most sailors ate as staples.[12]

Perhaps the most significant difference between Selkirk and Crusoe was opportunity; Selkirk could have left the island at several points during his stay while Crusoe was isolated with no chance of escape. The Spanish had come by periodically to water and revictual, although Selkirk "resolv'd rather to converse with his goats, than be beholding to that nation for his deliverance from that prison."[13]

The Spanish, for their part, reinforced Selkirk's mistrust. The one time he had revealed himself to a Spanish shore party, the Spaniards shot at him and chased him

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[11] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 125.
[12] Ibid., 72.
[13] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:xxiii.

through the undergrowth. By that time he had conditioned himself to the rough terrain and the Spaniards gave up the chase, leaving him in a state of long-term distrust.

When she first anchored at Juan Fernandez, the *Dutchess* flew a French ensign because the privateers were worried that the Spanish had stationed a garrison there. This was a standard privateering ploy, but it had also served to further confuse Selkirk.[14]

The privateers invited him onboard, but Selkirk hesitated and inquired if a certain unspecified officer was on one of the ships. This officer had clearly not been on friendly terms with Selkirk. Upon hearing that the officer was indeed onboard, Selkirk "would rather have chosen to remain in his solitude, than come away with him, 'till inform'd that he did not command."[15]

The "certain officer" referred to was either John Ballett, the *Duke's* surgeon, who had served alongside Selkirk during Dampier's 1703 disaster or Dampier who, as the commanding officer would have had much more opportunity to abuse or annoy Selkirk.[16] As for how Dampier felt about Selkirk, he seemed to have harbored no animosity after all those years and so vouched for Selkirk's seamanship.

After years of abject loneliness, punctuated only by sheer terror when pursued by the Spanish, it took Selkirk time to adjust to the expedition's arrival and he only gradually increased contact with the new arrivals. When invited for dinner the first evening ashore, Robert Frye made the difficult climb through the rocks to reach Selkirk's isolated hideout. Over the next several days, Selkirk began interacting with

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[14] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 71.
[15] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:xx.
[16] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain: Being the Life of Woodes Rogers, Seaman, Trader, Colonial Governor* (1960), *72*.

progressively larger groups. On their part, the visitors accepted his feelings and gave him time to decompress between social events. The shore party had also invited Selkirk to visit their ships but gave him the option of returning to shore in case he felt pressured. Selkirk returned the courtesy by giving the visitors some of his domesticated goats. For men who had recently completed a grueling trip around Cape Horn, the fresh meat was a boon.

Selkirk found camaraderie in the officers' mess and grew accustomed to human interaction once again. The expedition's strategy of slowly reintegrating him into its society was prudent. Thrusting Selkirk directly from his secluded hideout and into a ship's company would have backfired. He had lived in solitude for years, and throwing him head-first into intimate and physically constraining working environments could have triggered a defensive demeanor in Selkirk. To further entice him, the expedition assured Selkirk that he would not enter the expedition as a common rating, but rather as a mate on the *Duke* and ultimately assume a position of command.

Thus reassured and given time to adjust to regular human contact, Selkirk agreed to join the expedition. After being alone with no one to talk to, Selkirk had forgotten how to speak coherently. It took him some time after he began living onboard ship to regain fluency.

LOBOS

The expedition remained on Juan Fernandez from February 2 until February 14. During the privateers' time on the island, Selkirk, eager to help his newfound shipmates,

prepared a stew of vegetables and goat meat that helped the sick to recover from scurvy. Of the approximately fifty crewmen who were ill when the expedition put in to Juan Fernandez, only two perished from the affliction during their stay. The expedition's coopers made new barrels which were filled with fresh water. This replaced the remains of the water last replenished three months ago at Ilha Grande and long since gone foul. The crewmen also hunted enough seals to produce eighty gallons of oil for lamp oil and candle wax, although the messes often used it as an alternative to butter in which they fried their rations.[17] When it came time to depart, Selkirk did not have to leave the island and join the expedition. However, given his skills as a sailing master, expedition leaders maintained their standing invitation and he felt it was time to leave his home of the past several years.

The privateers' next destination was the island group Islas Lobos de Afuera, 2000 miles to the north, off Peru's Illescas Peninsula and just a short distance south by southwest from the port of Paita. In the event of being separated, both ships were to head for Lobos independently. The first arrival was instructed to "set up two Crosses, one at the Landing-place nearest the farther end of the Starboard great Island going in, with a Glass-Bottle hid under ground 20 Yards directly North from each Cross, with Intelligence of what has happen'd since parting, and what their further Designs are."[18]

Before reaching Lobos, the Council again revised its "Affair of Plunder" on February 17. It appointed eight officers as managers of plunder, who were instructed to search everybody who returned from a prize. The only other people allowed to be

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[17] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 75.
[18] Ibid., 78.

involved in sorting plunder were the commanding officers. Being so far away from Britain, the Council members were concerned that perceived unfairness in the distribution of spoils might lead to conflict. To avoid dissention, the managers were to search every man who had a chance to hide any plunder. The last thing the Council wanted was to repeat Sharp's experience as his crew had turned on him over alleged inequity in dividing plunder.

The expedition's officers also revised their tactics to fit geographical conditions in the area. They ordered the *Duke's* pinnaces outfitted with swivel guns so they might chase small vessels into shallow waters that the frigates dared not enter. While cruising for prizes, the pinnaces could sail the shallow waters close to shore while the *Duke* and *Dutchess* cruised approximately seven leagues (about 25 miles) from the mainland to avoid detection.

The Syndicate's orders allowed Rogers and the Council substantial leeway in selecting their own objectives. Finding no vessels to attack where they were, the Council decided to cruise northward in pursuit of prizes entering or leaving the regional shipping hub of Guayaquil. The Council also decided to raid the town itself if the opportunity arose.

All the officers and men were eager to start plundering. On March 10, there was a terrible commotion as the expedition took to the boats and rowed after a collection of sails, only to find that they were chasing white rocks and sea foam. "Our Men begin to

repine," Rogers noted in his journal, "that tho come so far, we have met with no Prize in these Seas."[19]

Conditions onboard the *Duke* were tolerable at this point. The fishing was good and the weather, along with morale, had finally improved despite the lack of captures. The *Dutchess* was another story, however, and Cooke wrote that he had to put three of his crewmen in irons. They had hoarded some meat for themselves instead of sharing it among the crew. Courtney ordered two of the hoarders to be "whipp'd and pickled." That is, they were flogged and then had brine water lathered on their bloody cuts. The brine disinfected open wounds but stung smartly. The other officers intervened to prevent him from doing the same to the third offender.[20]

Noting that they had not encountered any traffic since the Falklands, expedition leaders concluded that the Spaniards were staying in port because of Lent. The officers then agreed that it made no sense to cruise for prizes when there was little chance finding any and agreed instead to attack the town of Guayaquil. To prepare for such an attack, the expedition headed for Lobos as planned, and there to construct a vessel for an amphibious attack on Guayaquil. While en route to Lobos, scurvy began to take a toll on crewmen and officers.

On March 15, the expedition's luck finally turned for the better when the small 16-ton vessel *Asuncion* mistook the frigates for French privateers and sailed straight up to the *Dutchess*. The Spanish bark was quickly captured but proved to have nothing onboard but an eight-man crew, cargo – mostly plantains – worth only £5, and £50 in

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[19] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 81.
[20] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:116.

silver for purchasing flour at Cheripe. More importantly, the crew had some valuable news. The French expedition the privateers had heard about in the Canaries had left the Pacific six months ago. As far as the Mestizo captain was concerned, no English interlopers had been in the South Sea since Dampier in 1703 and the Spanish Lake was secure.

The quarry that had eluded the expedition on Christmas Eve, off the Falklands, was commanded by the French privateer Alain Poree. The St. Malo mariner had reported the presence of the British privateers to Spanish authorities at the nearest port (probably Valdivia), but they were not particularly alarmed and did not dispatch vessels to warn officials elsewhere of the presence of the British ships. Given the languid pace of colonial communications networks, most of the Spanish coastal settlements and traffic remained completely unaware of Rogers' presence.[21]

Of personal interest to Dampier and Selkirk, the captives informed them the *Cinque Ports* from their old expedition had foundered. Stradling and the surviving handful of crewmen had been prisoners in Lima for the past four years, and in harsh living conditions. Selkirk could have felt validated at this new revelation, as Stradling had indeed brought his part of the last expedition to a bad end.[22]

The Syndicate privateers named this, their first prize, *Beginning*. She was not much of a seizure, but it was good to finally have an unmitigated success after months of frustration. There was no acrimony, no lost opportunity, no flirting with outright piracy, and no diplomatic tightrope act as at the Canaries. The Council decided to place Cooke

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[21] Peter Kemp & Christopher Lloyd, *Brethren of the Coast* (1960), 189.
[22] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 81.

in command of the *Beginning* (soon afterwards replaced by William Stretton) while the expedition put into Lobos on March 16.

The expedition immediately set about building a boat and conducting repairs on the island. It did not intend to stay there long because Lobos had no source of fresh water and lacked edible vegetation. The only wildlife consisted of seals that loitered ashore. The expedition needed to move on quickly before it ran out of supplies, so the crews quickly began replacing worn masts, careening the *Duke* and *Dutchess* and cleaned their hulls, and converted the tiny *Beginning* into a warship. After transferring guns, supplies, and crewmen, she boasted 32 crewmen and four swivel guns. The privateers did not repair all the ships at once, but rotated them so there was always an escort to act as a lookout and defend the group at a moment's notice.

Once brought ashore, the sick began to recuperate. The fishing was plentiful and the seals provided some fresh meat. However, a Spaniard in the company suddenly died of an illness contracted after eating a seal liver. Seal liver contained so much vitamin A that it could be toxic, especially to individuals in poor health. The Spaniard's already weakened condition, combined with the vitamin A toxicity, was likely too much for his body to metabolize.[23] The prisoners had warned the privateers to avoid liver and Rogers forbade anyone else from eating those organs. Nevertheless, despite this incident the expedition's health improved and scurvy began to abate.[24]

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[23] K. Rodahl and T. Moore, "The Vitamin A Content and Toxicity of Bear and Seal Liver" in *Biochem Journal* v.37:2 (July 1943), 166.
[24] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 82.

The privateers' luck improved further on March 26, when the *Dutchess* and *Beginning* returned from a local voyage with the 50-ton *Santa Josefa* in tow. The expedition renamed their second prize *Increase* and put Selkirk in command. Like the *Beginning*, the *Santa Josefa* was out of Guayaquil and carried little cargo other than timber and cocoa, the latter of which was immediately distributed among the crewmen. Cocoa, although valuable as a cash crop, was also a popular drink in those waters because it was readily available and most merchantmen out of Guayaquil carried some. Recounting the 1703 expedition, William Funnell wrote that "living near a Month upon Chocolate, it made us very fat, and we found that it kept us very well in Health. Whether, if we had lived upon it much longer, it would have done us hurt, I know not; but I venture to believe it would have increased our Fat too fast, and so have made us unhealthy."[25]

The *Increase* was converted into a hospital ship and much of her lower decks were cleared to make more room for the sick men, with the extra planks from the dismantled partitions spread around the other ships. All the sick, along with two surgeons, were transferred to the *Increase* once the expedition was ready to sail.

So far, both of their prizes had set sail from Guayaquil. Prisoners taken with their second prize, however, brought news that made the privateers shift their primary target to Paita. The late Viceroy of Peru's widow had been scheduled to leave for Acapulco in a 36-gun galleon, and would stop at Paita for resupply. While that particular ship was already too far away to chase down, the prisoners also informed their

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[25] William Funnell, *A Voyage Round the World: Containing an Account of Captain Dampier's Expedition into the South-seas in the Ship St. George* (1707), 90.

captors that another opulent prize was fitting out in Paita, and that yet another richly laden ship, bound from Panama, would be there in a few days. Paita was a common meeting place for ships engaged in trade with Lima, Panama, and the Pacific coast of Mexico. The Council met on March 29 and voted to cruise off Paita, but to keep Guayaquil as a secondary objective.

That same day, soon after the Council meeting, the expedition left Lobos for the waters off Paita, leaving three crewmen buried: two Spaniards and a Dutchman. Knowing that their success relied on stealth, the Council members published an order that forbade everyone from the captains down to the landsmen to speak with the prisoners regarding the voyage.

On April 1, the privateers saw no action but observed a red tide. As the fish congregated for spawning, they also drew predators such as swordfish. Despite the sudden influx of fish, the privateers had little luck replenishing their supplies. "For some Days we here observ'd the Sea look'd as red as Blood in several places," Cooke wrote, "and saw many large Sword-Fishes, but could take none . . . ."[26]

On April 2, the *Duke's* pinnace under Frye captured the galleon *Ascension*. Displacing 400-500 tons, she carried dry goods, livestock, timber, some wealthy passengers, and 72 slaves. Coasting in friendly territory and with well-to-do passengers who expected better meals, the *Ascension* carried fresh provisions such as mutton and cabbage, which the privateers eagerly devoured. The Council placed Frye in command of the new prize and the *Duke* had her first capture of the voyage.

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[26] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:125.

The very next day, the *Beginning* captured the 35-ton coastal merchantman *Jesus Maria y Jose* carrying timber, pitch, and candles from Guayaquil. After assessing the assortment of silver pesos and gold paper, dust, and nuggets, the managers estimated £100 in currency and specie. The prize crew also confirmed the earlier rumors that a ship was indeed carrying the Bishop of Chokeaqua with 200,000 pieces of eight. He was supposed to have sailed on the *Ascension* but she had sprung a leak in Panama. Not wanting to delay his journey, the bishop had boarded a French ship but was still bound for Paita, so the expedition might yet capture him.[27] The expedition then set out its forces to cover a wider area, with its armed ships on the alert in case the rumored fat prizes came in or out of Paita. So far the British had not lost a single man to enemy action. Their prizes, in fact, had not even put up a fight. Most struck their colors at the first warning shot.

With this latest capture, the expedition was meeting with not just middling but startling success. Most privateers averaged two or three prizes a year. The Syndicate's ships had been gone for not even a full year and had already captured four, not including the disputed prize off the Canaries. The privateers' four legitimate prizes had been taken over the span of several weeks. Now that the expedition was in enemy territory, with unsuspecting and vulnerable coastal shipping within reach, it seemed that the privateers' fortunes could only rise on success after success.

Just as morale reached a high point and the expedition enjoyed heady triumphs, the infighting that privateers were infamous for appeared. Vanbrugh, who had earlier

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[27] Ibid.

caused a commotion on Lobos by threatening one of his shipmates, landed himself in even more trouble. Shortly after leaving Lobos, he completely burned his bridges in the Council by "having lately abus'd Capt. Dover, as he said."[28] Upset at Vanbrugh's behavior, the Council met to consider disciplining him. Vanbrugh exacerbated his situation when he offered to vote with Rogers in all things in exchange for Rogers' voting for clemency, which Rogers perceived as the bribe it was. The Council also considered a pre-engaged vote to be a breach in trust, as Vanbrugh was an owner's agent and entrusted with at least part of the expedition's fate. The aggregate effect of all these infractions resulted in a Council review on April 7. Vanbrugh was not just removed from the *Duke* for a short sentence, as had happened previously, but formally expelled from the Council on April 10. The Council members were technically not allowed to do so, but they felt removing him was more important than obeying protocol. The apothecary Samuel Hopkins, Dover's lieutenant and relation, assumed Vanbrugh's responsibilities as agent. Hopkins was a wise choice because he was close to Dover and so represented the Syndicate's interests by extension.[29]

At the same Council meeting, the officers also decided to "approve of all the Proceedings and Transactions since our leaving the Island of Grande . . . and acting in all cases for the best of our intended Voyage to this time."[30] Although it might seem self-serving, this statement of approval was meant to preclude any recriminations that would

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[28] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 85.
[29] Council Book, Council meeting dated April 10, 1709, unfoliated. "Creagh v. Rogers, 1708-1728 (accounts of *Duke, Duchess and Marquess*)," Court of Chancery 104/36, NAUK.
[30] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 85.

follow should the voyage turn sour. Dampier had done no such thing in 1703, leading some of his officers to publish damning accounts. By endorsing all their decisions since Ilha Grande, Rogers, Dover, and the other officers had also agreed to not bring up those decisions with which to slander each other in the future. Such a statement approving past actions was one component in following the Syndicate's original instructions to maintain "an entire Amity Respect & Agreemt" among the officers.[31]

As the expedition steadily sailed northward, the temperatures climbed and the officers knew they were running out of fresh water. On April 12, the Council met and, after factoring in their ships' water supply and consulting the captive Spanish pilots, decided to make for the port of Guayaquil as originally intended. The Council wanted to seize the rich prizes around Paita but could not wait much longer. Despite the expedition's recent successes, dehydrated sailors were of little use and Guayaquil promised not just plunder, but sweet water and fresh food.

TARGET: GUAYAQUIL

While the expedition had taken two valuable prizes, it looked ashore for even greater plunder. Privateers often sacked coastal villages and even fair-sized port cities. With approximately 2,000 people, Guayaquil was then—after Callao and Valparaiso—the third largest port on the Pacific coast of South America. Its economy was based on processing and exporting cocoa and on serving as a regional shipping hub. Manufactured goods, olive oil, and copper all made their way through its port and

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[31] Council Book, Council meeting dated April 10, 1709, unfoliated. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

customs.[32] It also served as a trading hub between Peru and Mexico. Merchants in Mexico imported quicksilver (mercury) from Spain and sold it – with astonishingly high mark-ups – to physicians who prescribed it as a cure for syphilis and to refiners who used it to purify silver extracted from base ore. Peru also produced quicksilver and many Mexican refiners sought to clandestinely purchase the much less expensive Peruvian quicksilver. Punishment for dealing with illicit merchandise, Rogers noted, meant exile or jail time. Rogers remarked "yet notwithstanding the severity us'd against private traders, by the viceroys and corregidores, there are some that use it, who have no mercy shew'd them if caught."[33]

The Spanish viceroyalties prohibited the purchase or sale of English and Dutch goods. Ignoring the law, *rescatadores* purchased goods from merchants on mainland North America and sold them in small quantities throughout Peru. Wholesale merchants could not purchase large quantities because they needed to possess certificates from Seville indicating that their inventory came from the flotas or other galleons. These small packets of illicit merchandise often trickled through Guayaquil. Failure to produce a clean bill of goods, Rogers explained, would result in "worse punishment, unless they have a good interest in the viceroy, which costs dear to purchase, and preserve; so that the trader makes little profit, but where the chief officers have a feeling: yet tho' these mercenary viceroys are so severe on others, they themselves employ the corregidores to negotiate a trade for them by a third hand."[34]

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[32] Brian Little, *Crusoe's Captain* (1960), 87.
[33] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage,* 107.
[34] Ibid.

More honest residents also made a living by building ships, and thus the town contained valuable naval stores and other materials that Rogers' expedition desperately needed after the arduous passage into the Pacific.[35] As a matter of fact, Guayaquil possessed the only shipwrights on Peru's Pacific coast legally allowed to build ships.[36] Rogers noted that Guayaquil possessed "several sorts of good timber, which makes it the chief country of Peru for building and repairing ships; there's seldom less than 6 or 7 at a time on the stocks before the town of Guayaquil."[37]

Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians each ran an establishment in the town, including both a hospital and a convent. This collection of priests, friars, and nuns served five churches that catered to a diverse population that represented Spain's colorful and oftentimes blurry racial hierarchy. Each of these establishments also held funds obtained from donations and offerings from attendees and pilgrims.

As president of the *real audiencia*, Juan de Sosaya officially administered the region from his seat at Quito. He enjoyed running a relatively quiet region, especially compared to the constant, sustained warfare that marked Iberian coastal cities. Since Sosaya had paid 20,000 pesos for his appointment, he must have anticipated opportunity for both legitimate and illicit profit in running the region.[38] Sosaya also supervised Guayaquil's *corregidor*, Don Ieronimo Bosa y Solis y Pacheco, a native of Tenerife, who directly presided over the settlement.

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[35] O.K.W. Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (1979), 185.
[36] Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 87.

[38] Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 87.

[37] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 108.

[38] Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 88.

In order to reach Guayaquil, ships traveling from the south (as the Syndicate ships were) needed to sail north from Paita, round Cape Blanco, anchor at Punta Arena or Isla Santa Clara in the Gulf of Guayaquil, and wait until high tide enabled them to sail up the Guayas River.[39] From the mouth of the Guayas, it was 40 miles north to Guayaquil, but only when measured in a straight line. The winding estuaries practically doubled the distance.[40]

Upon reaching the river, navigators found easy sailing so long as they stayed on the main waterways. When ocean-going ships ascended the river for seven leagues they reached the island of Puna, where the river turned into an estuary and became too shallow for ships. The island's sole village rested on its extreme northwestern corner and provided a valuable service, as many of the inhabitants were skilled pilots who intimately knew the local waters. From Puna village it was seven more leagues to the older section of Guayaquil.[41] In 1709, townspeople used small boats or a half-mile long wooden bridge to link this riverside section to the newer residential portion of town that nestled in the lowlands to the south, farther away from the river. This division of Guayaquil resulted from a 1687 buccaneering raid led by François Grogniet that virtually destroyed the original settlement, and led officials to construct much of the new town inland and almost entirely avoid building on the eastern bank. The almost island-like position of the new portion of the town and its garrison of several hundred militia

[39] Ibid.
[40] David Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean: The Adventurous Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2011), 65.
[41] Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 88.

rendered Guayaquil safe from attack so long as it controlled chokepoints along the approach to the town.

Despite the defenders' advantage, Guayaquil was an attractive target for Rogers and the Council, who had learned that the previous corregidor had accumulated 300,000 pieces of eight, despite earning only 2000 annually in his salary. Rogers had also heard that the previous Viceroy of Peru, who had died in 1705, had left an immense estate worth eight million pieces of eight in cash and property to be distributed among his heirs. Spanish officials had a history of padding their salaries through kickbacks, " the seizure of property from convicted criminals, and trading privately themselves."[42] Rogers summed his view of the area up in his journal, saying "there's no country naturally more rich, nor any people more terribly oppres'd."[43]

Once Guayquil was chosen as a target, the privateers had to plan how to attack it. The planning phase illustrated not only how eager the Council was to launch an aggressive assault, but how unprepared it was for such actions.

Approach into Guayas River

The Council met on April 12 and appointed Rogers, Dover, and Courtney to lead the attack. The three officers decided to divide their forces giving each command of a party of approximately 70 raiders. Dampier and Thomas Glendale commanded the artillery pieces and 21 men that the raiders would bring ashore as an attached, non-independent force to act as a reserve. Within those units, each group of ten men was led

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[42] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 107.
[43] Ibid.

by a trustworthy sailor who answered to the senior officers. In total this resulted in between 201 (according to Rogers) and 238 (according to Cooke) officers and men assigned for the raid in seven boats. The remaining crewmen, along with most of the Council (including Cooke), were to guard the ships and prisoners.[44]

Rogers, Dover, and Courtney were given full initiative to devise their strategy on the spot.[45] None of these three officers had any experience fighting on land. At this point, their only plan was for the ships to stand to in open water, approximately 36 leagues from Guayaquil. The ships' boats were to transport the raiders up the Guayas River undetected until they reached Guayaquil itself. Once the boats were away, the rest of the expedition was to cruise in the gulf for 48 hours, at which time they were to make for Punta Arena and await further instructions from the raiding party.[46]

The Council also agreed on the handling of captured goods, stating that "all bedding and cloaths, gold rings, buttons, and buckles, liquors and provisions . . . with all sorts of arms, except great guns for ships, should be allow'd as plunder, to be equally divided to every man aboard, or ashore, according to his whole shares."[47]

In addition, it decreed that any prisoners taken should be exchanged to obtain the return any of the crewmen captured by the Spanish. Crewmen were instructed to report all precious metals, gemstones, and pearls so long as they were not part of the prisoners' personal possessions or clothing.

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[44] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:127.
[45] Council Book, Council meeting dated April 12, 1709, unfoliated. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[46] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:131.
[47] Ibid., 1:127.

At the conclusion of the raid, the expedition's accountants would inventory and appraise the value of the plunder taken and divide it into equal shares. The accountants were empowered to reward men who had displayed conspicuous skill or bravery in the action with extra shares above the number previously assigned and, likewise, to punish men who had displayed cowardice, drunkenness, or brutality towards prisoners by denying them shares. Any attempt by a crewman to conceal valuable items taken during the raid would be "look'd upon as a high misdemeanour, and severely punish'd."[48] That punishment could be as high as forfeiture of any share in the group proceeds from the raid, depending on how much was concealed.

The organization of the raid and the method of handling anticipated plunder settled, the expedition ships entered the Gulf of Guayaquil on April 14 and spent the night there. It almost lost the element of surprise the next morning when lookouts spied a French-built merchantman, the *Havre de Grace*, as she exited the Guayas River. There was little wind, so the expedition needed to improvise. It sent two boats (one from each ship) towards the quarry in an attempt to surprise her. The boat crews were so confident after a month of unbroken successes that they were scarcely prepared. Neither boat had a swivel gun and, between the two crews, only ten muskets and four pistols with a limited amount of powder.

Privateers were notorious for deceiving their quarry by flying neutral or allied colors, or simply by pretending to be harmless fellow sailors who merely wanted to hear the latest news. In this case, the privateers ran up Spanish colors and feigned friendship

[48] Ibid., 1:128.

and camaraderie as they approached the *Havre de Grace*. They intended to close the distance, with each boat settling on opposite ends of the ship. If all went to plan, the boat crews would carry her by boarding before the Spanish suspected them of being enemies.

The men on the *Duke's* boat, however, fired their musket volley far too early. With both sides caught unprepared, the privateers and Spanish fought a sharp, disjointed action. The expedition's boats had been caught out of position and undergunned while the Spanish tried to repel them with partridge shot from only six mounted guns. The *Havre de Grace* initially drove off her attackers and tried to put out to open water, but when the *Dutchess* got close enough to fire on the ship and the boat crews closed to within several hundred feet to prepare for another boarding action, the Spanish struck their colors.[49] It had been a sloppy fight lasting several hours when it should have been over in minutes. While the privateers had only suffered two dead and three wounded, Cooke noted that "one of the dead men was Mr. John Rogers, our second lieutenant, and brother to Capt. Rogers, who behav'd himself very well during the action."[50]

When the Council met later to discuss the entire encounter, Rogers and Courtney each denied having ordered the boats to launch the attack in such an unready state. The two boat commanders, Frye and Cooke, were criticized for acting so hastily but in the end the Council did not blame anyone in particular for the near failure of the operation.

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[49] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:130.
[50] Ibid., 1:129.

Yet the poor preparation and lack of coordination between the boats were signs of systemic problems which would reappear with grave consequences later.[51]

The *Havre de Grace* carried 29 passengers, 29 crew and servants, and 74 slaves.[52] The privateers had just missed a second opportunity to capture another Spanish bishop and his retinue, who had arranged for passage on the *Havre de Grace* but instead took an overland route ten days before. However, the other passengers were worth a healthy ransom. Between the passengers and captive Spanish officers, 31 of whom had the honorific "Don" in front of their names, they possessed substantial personal wealth and standing.[53] The *Havre de Grace's* cargo mostly consisted of textiles and clothing, although she had a number of pearls as well. She also provided the immediate benefit of 500 hundredweight of jerked beef and 40 bushels of corn. The Council placed Cooke onboard with a prize crew.[54]

While the privateers assessed their prize, they still remained on the lookout for more prizes. The next day, the *Duke's* boats chased down an unnamed 15-ton bark that carried a small cargo of soap, cassia, fistula, and leather, along with some flour for provisions. Not wishing to divert prize crews to such an insubstantial vessel and certainly not willing to let the bark go adrift, the privateers elected to transfer her cargo

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[51] Ibid.
[52] Book No. D 115, account of prizes, page 4. "Creagh v. Rogers," Chancery 104/161 Part I, NAUK.
[53] Spanish Invoice, loose leaf roster of prisoners. "Creagh v. Rogers," Chancery 104/160, NAUK.
[54] John Parker's book, Council meeting on August 6, 1709, page 64. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.

and crew to their own ships, and scuttle her.[55] The privateers then gathered the dead from the previous day's action, read the proper prayers, and buried them at sea. Rogers had not been able to grieve the loss of his brother John who was among the dead as he had spent the previous day assessing the prize, but now he finally had time to mourn. Recounting the burial, Rogers opened up a little more and wrote that "all our officers express'd a great concern for the loss of my brother, he being a very hopeful active young man, a little above twenty years of age."[56] With his brother's death, Rogers not only suffered a deep personal loss; he also lost an ally in the expedition's Council. As infighting increased, Rogers would miss his brother's presence and support.

Following their encounters with the last two prizes, the expedition pressed ahead to launch its attack on Guayaquil before the inhabitants were alerted to their danger.

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[55] Bundle No. 13, September 1709 prize account, "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[56] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 90.

CHAPTER VII

THE RAID ON GUAYAQUIL

With the fight against the *Havre de Grace* behind it, the expedition proceeded with its original plan to attack Guayaquil. That battle, and the subsequent actions against Spanish shipping, placed the privateers between two conflicting goals. Before the privateers left Bristol, the Syndicate instructed the expedition's general Council to exploit every opportunity that arose to make or take money. And yet, at the same time, the privateers were told to exercise enough restraint that local Spaniards would be willing to trade with British merchants, namely the Syndicate members, after the war's end. In short, the crewmen needed to successfully raid like buccaneers but without the wanton violence and cruelty, which were two of the principal weapons in the buccaneers' arsenal that made them so effective.

The privateers needed to act quickly if they were to have the element of surprise on their side. On April 17, Woodes Rogers read an "Encouragement" to the crewmen of the *Duke* and *Dutchess*. Written by Rogers, Thomas Dover, and Stephen Courtney, it impressed upon the sailors the importance of their behavior during the attack on and occupation of Guayaquil, informed them in no uncertain terms that brutality and concealing plunder would not be tolerated, and outlined why not everybody was going to participate in the attack. The Council explained that the expedition needed to maintain a rally point in case the assault failed, and that the over 300 prisoners in the expedition's

custody needed to be guarded. Most were put in restraints while eight, deemed too dangerous to be left onboard ship, would accompany the landing force.[1]

At 10:00 p.m. on the same day that Rogers addressed the crewmen, the 200 or so attackers began boarding seven of the ships' boats for Guayaquil.[2] The plan was to first slowly and carefully approach Puna Island (not to be confused with the Puna Altiplano in present day Bolivia and Peru). They planned to reach the island at 11 o'clock on the night of April 19, to rest a few hours, then send a 40-man vanguard to attack the island's only village before dawn the next morning. With surprise on their side, the landing party expected to capture the village quickly. Once that was accomplished, the attackers were to rest a few hours and then proceed upriver to Guayaquil.

The approach went as planned for the next two days until they came within sight of the village. The raid was very nearly botched when some Indian fishermen spotted them but, instead of hesitating, the privateers took initiative and overran the village without firing a shot.[3] Immediately upon occupying the village, the raiders rendered every canoe and small boat at the posts and within the town unusable. The attack surprised the Spanish and triggered a complete collapse in their morale. The Spanish did not even have the presence of mind to dispatch a messenger to Guayaquil.[4]

Unlike the old buccaneers, however, Rogers and his colleagues did not execute or torture random civilians in an attempt to find hidden caches of personal property.

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[1] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712), 90.
[2] David Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean: The Adventurous Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2011), 67.
[3] Graham Thomas, *Pirate Hunter: The Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2008), 59.
[4] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World in the Years 1708 to 1711* (1712), 1:132.

Slitting throats, especially when the village was already won, would have guaranteed the locals' hatred.[5]

As the crewmen combed through the town for loot, they found a Spanish dispatch warning Lieutenant Andres Zamora, commander of Puna's defenses, to be on the lookout for Dampier, who was suspected of accompanying a British squadron in the Pacific. Word of the Syndicate expedition's presence had finally reached the coastal settlements. This did not bode well, but at least the Spanish had overestimated the expedition's strength and thus were overly cautious.

Printed in Lima on March 20, the dispatch was distributed throughout Peru. Warned of the presence of the British privateers, Spanish officials had already mobilized their forces to defend against the privateers. The ships at the Spaniards' disposal were not poorly armed merchantmen, but frigates built to destroy privateersmen. Those ships, however, were stationed near the major shipping lanes in Callao, Pisco, and Concepcion. Confident that it would take at least 24 days for officials to organize and launch a counter-attack from Lima, the privateers expected they would have plenty of time to carry the weak defenses at Guayaquil, loot the city, and then sail safely away.[6] On a more disturbing note, the dispatch also instructed officials in Guayaquil to move their coastal population, livestock, and supplies inland. The Spanish clearly intended to starve the privateers out. With no reliable supply line, any pirates or privateers could operate in the area for only a limited time.[7]

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[5] Thomas, *Pirate Hunter*, 59; Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 91.
[6] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 91.
[7] Ibid., 92.

APPROACHING GUAYAQUIL

The privateers began losing discipline immediately after occupying the village on Puna Island. Rogers, Courtney, and Dampier gave their 40-man shore party until evening to rest, but the delays piled up. Two of the crewmen found liquor and drank so much that they became useless. The vessels that were to bring Courtney and Dampier's forces to Puna and join with Rogers' remained out in the bay. One of the barks went off on its own and simply got lost trying to find Puna. When Rogers went back down the river to Dover's group in order to gather the reinforcements, Courtney and Dampier sent some half-crewed barks ahead towards Guayaquil (they were recovered later). The two officers thought they were exercising initiative but that meant there was not enough room in the other boats for all the privateers left on the island, especially not when Rogers arrived with the rest of the party in tow. Some had to either cram into overloaded barks or be left behind as an improvised garrison once the group was ready to leave. The three leading officers and Dampier were so frustrated by the delays and miscommunication that the senior officers took one of the two drunk sailors who were still recovering from their debauchery after the attack and "had him severely whipt before the whole company as a terror to the rest."[8]

Once the shore party departed from the village, the privateers took Zamora with them and cautiously advanced towards Guayaquil that evening, again using the mangroves for concealment and stopping frequently so as not to lose stragglers. The

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[8] Ibid., 92.

groups of privateersmen did not fully unite until the morning of April 21, when they made contact with the stray boats. The privateers reached Guayaquil's outskirts at around midnight on April 21-22, with the newer half of the town in sight. The officers expected to land on Guayaquil's riverbank within a half-hour and surprise the town. They were dismayed when they spotted their target, because Guayaquil's lamps were lit and there was an enormous bonfire on a nearby hill.[9] The townspeople created a great cacophony of gunfire and ringing church bells, indistinguishable from a general alarm. The officers asked the Indian guides if there had been a saint's feast scheduled for that evening, and the guides replied that it must be an alarm.

It had actually been a feast day, the Eve of the Invention of the Holy Cross. The predominantly Protestant crew had no way of knowing, while the Catholic crewmen might not have been aware that the English and Spanish calendars differed by over a week, with the privateers operating on April 22 while the Spanish New Style calendars showed May 2.[10]

The privateers waited and kept themselves concealed. Rogers, Dover, and Courtney spent over an hour in one of the boats deliberating on the next course of action. They consulted Dampier, who had raided the waters around Guayaquil in 1684, and asked what the buccaneers he had sailed with would have done. Dampier replied that buccaneers never attacked any large settlement after it had sounded the alarm. Discussion turned into arguments and shouting matches as Rogers insisted on attacking

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[9] David Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean: The Adventurous Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2011), 68.
[10] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain: Being the Life of Woodes Rogers, Seaman, Trader, Colonial Governor* (1960), 91.

while Dover wanted to delay. Courtney, who was the deciding third vote, backed his Syndicate colleague on principle.

Since the whole Council could not be there, it had instructed the three captains to rotate command of the shore party every day. Even though the officer of the day had full power, he was still required to strive for a majority vote if not complete consensus. There was a problem with this administrative setup.

The Syndicate had required that the Council reach a consensus whenever possible. Thus far, the Council had largely behaved as a single, unified organization. But those orders proved confusing when applied to the specific landing force that had no full Council. Before launching the raiding party, the Council had loosely interpreted the Syndicate's original instructions. By giving command entirely to the three captains, the full Council avoided any responsibility for the shore party and assumed that Rogers, Dover, and Courtney would represent the Council's wishes as proxies. That disconnect became compounded by clashing personalities and the fog of war. Rogers did not help at all when he privately consulted the junior officers in the raiding force and sought their support against Dover and Courtney. This would have had no effect regardless because the junior officers had no vote. If Rogers ignored the Council's vesting himself, Dover and Courtney with the power to make decisions and, supported by the junior officers, seized command of all the forces, such an attempt would have come dangerously close to mutiny.[11]

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[11] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 93.

While the leaders debated, the tide decided for them. When it ebbed, making it impossible to approach the town via the river, the leaders ordered a withdrawal to three miles downstream where the group spent the rest of the night swatting mosquitoes and periodically firing their muskets so as to discourage ambush.[12] The expedition leaders passed the early morning hours deliberating as tempers frayed once again. Dover argued that Gauyaquil was too large for the privateers to assault. Although he admitted the Spaniards were not especially good fighters, an attack would certainly fail once the Spaniards deployed and armed the mulattos as an emergency measure. Dover still believed that the Spanish knew of the attacking force's presence and would prepare accordingly.

Instead of attacking the town, Dover suggested sending a messenger to negotiate with the town residents for supplies and trading off some cargo. Furthermore, Dover added, Rogers and those who voted for an attack would have to answer for any casualties or damages sustained. Rogers was more focused on the plunder to be gained, while Dover was more concerned with safeguarding the shares that he had invested in the voyage. Cancelling the attack would lead to some grumbling and discontent among the crew, to be sure, but a *repulsed* attack might mean a failed expedition and catastrophic material loss. Rogers also stated that Dover had "other objections not fit to recite [in Rogers' published account]."[13]

As the privateers bickered into the next day, their renewed arguing was once again rendered moot by the genuine loss of surprise. At three in the morning, a Spaniard

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[12] Ibid., 93.
[13] Ibid., 94.

who fled from Puna or one of the riverside plantations ran into the city and spread the news that the small island village had been taken.[14] Once informed of the danger, the Spanish corregidor sounded a general alarm and called up the militia. As church bells rang, the militia armed themselves and fired at shadows in a panic, while other residents gathered their belongings and fled the town.

The Attack

Now that a genuine alarm had been raised, the shore party rightly supposed it had been detected and that the Spanish had had enough time to organize a defense. Without the element of surprise any attack could result in catastrophic loss of life. With the attack aborted, there was no reason to rotate command among the three captains any longer. Thus Rogers, Dover, Courtney and the junior officers ashore formed an informal council of sorts and discussed alternatives, including ransoming the town and/or trading with the townspeople. Unlike the South Sea buccaneers who preceded them, the expedition's leaders considered the possibility of future transactions rather than simply the amount of ransom that could immediately be extorted.[15]

The improvised council decided to try trading with the town and selling goods in their possession – many of which had belonged to Guayaquil merchants and ship-owners before their capture. In order to add an element of coercion, the privateers ascended the river once more and anchored at a position equidistant from both halves of the town. Two prisoners, Lieutenant Zamora of Puna and Captain Jose de Arizabala of the *Havre*

[14] Peter Kemp and Christopher Lloyd, *Brethren of the Coast* (1960), 169.
[15] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 94.

de Grace, were sent ashore to negotiate with Spanish officials on the expedition's behalf. They were a good choice. Both had experienced combat against the expedition and would report that these privateers were not predisposed towards cruelty. The other prisoners brought ashore from the expedition ships promised not to attempt to escape and stated that if Zamora and Arizabala failed to return within an hour, they understood the privateers would attack.[16]

The privateers spent the rest of April 22 chasing down stray Spanish canoes that tried to escape upriver and shuttling their spokesmen and two prisoners back and forth to meetings with Spanish officials. These meetings took place onboard one of the expedition's barks or in Guayaquil's main plaza, and always under a flag of truce. The town's dockyards had recently launched two new but unrigged ships and five or six barks. To put additional pressure on the Spanish, the shore party seized the vessels. The bargaining continued until five o'clock that evening, when the Spanish agreed to pay 140 pieces of eight per "bale" of previously seized cargo. This generous sum almost convinced the privateers that they could profit more from trading with the Spanish than from sacking the town, and without the risk of casualties. The Spanish requested a quick recess for both parties to discuss the terms amongst themselves and promised to return at eight o'clock that night. The privateers agreed to the three hour break, but were concerned when the Spaniards did not return at eight but instead plied the privateers with food and drink, and stated that, with one of the Spanish officials absent (neither side

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[16] Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean,* 68.

specified how many Spaniards there were, or if that number even stayed constant), they could not negotiate further at the time. They would return at seven the next morning.[17]

Stalling was an effective tactic that the Spanish had used before against buccaneers. Corregidor Bosa used the opportunity send dispatches to Quito and Lima requesting aid. In the meantime, his background growing up in Tenerife (which was practically neutral) had taught him the importance of trade with British merchants. He knew that if he enticed Dover and the other officers with attractive commercial exchanges, they might leave the settlement unmolested and on their own accord.[18]

In the morning of April 23, a Spanish messenger arrived to collect the privateers' demands and relay them to his superiors. The privateers demanded the Spanish ransom their ships at the dockyard, purchase the seized cargoes and slaves from earlier captures, and immediately pay 50,000 pieces of eight in exchange for sparing the town. The Spaniards claimed it was impossible to pay such a high ransom. In the series of offers and counter-offers that followed into the next day, 50,000 pieces of eight was reduced to 40,000, then 30,000, and finally up to 32,000 to be paid within nine days. There was no mention of the slaves.[19] The Spanish were clearly playing for time. The privateers did not carry many supplies with them on the boats and dissention grew with every passing hour. Anglo-French buccaneers had successfully pillaged the settlement in 1687 with extreme brutality, but the Syndicate's forces were not willing to torture or execute prisoners in order to force the Spanish to deliver the money.

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[17] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 94-95.
[18] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 93.
[19] Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean*, 69.

By the afternoon of April 24, Rogers and the other privateer leaders tired of waiting for the Spanish to reply and ordered their interpreter Alexander White to tell the Spanish that "we were done treating, and bid the Spaniards ashore retire forthwith, and keep out of shot of us, if they design'd to save their lives."[20] Without waiting for a reply to this message, the three privateer captains ordered the flag of truce lowered and the English ensign run up in its place. Together they led the initial wave of approximately 70 men ashore.

The Spanish infantry took position in the houses facing the waterfront "within half musket-shot," that is, within 300 to 400 feet, of the landing site.[21] Since the houses in the newer part of town were arranged in a grid pattern, steady infantrymen in barricaded houses would be able to mutually support one another. If the privateers somehow made it past those buildings, they would run into the plaza and be met with fire from a four-gun battery of four-pounders. Mounted militia deployed far down the nearest parallel street to the riverbank and well away from the privateers' avenue of approach, waiting to either charge the privateers in the flank or rout the broken landing force if the infantrymen did their job. This plan relied on great overestimation of the militia's capabilities.

The expedition's landing force seized the initiative and psychologically defeated the Spanish before the battle even started. As Bosa tried to mobilize his militia earlier, he discovered that many of the militia had chosen to protect their homes and families instead by withdrawing to Old Town or even further north, into the hills. Out of at least

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[20] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 96.
[21] Ibid.

500 able-bodied men who could have answered the call to defend the city, only 70 mustered in. Furthermore, most of the militia simply did not want to fight. The Anglo-French bloodbath of a raid in 1687 was still within living memory; as many as 60 Spaniards had been killed in the fighting while many others had been brutalized or executed.[22] With these terrible memories in mind, the defenders had not even fired a shot and were already on the verge of panic before the first privateer set foot on the riverbank.[23]

When the privateers attacked, the Spanish lines evaporated. The Spanish infantry fired one half-hearted volley and some retreated to their artillery in the plaza while most ran away. The cavalry also retreated to the guns when the infantry withdrew from the houses.[24]

The privateers quickly crossed the riverbank and pursued fleeing militia through the houses and into the central plaza, where they saw the battery and a few remaining infantry. The privateers' sudden advance threw the rallying Spanish forces into a panic. The cavalry, upon seeing the first privateers approach the plaza, retreated once more and finally broke. Rogers then led an advance force to the battery that sent the Spanish reeling for good. In their haste and panic, the Spanish gun crews fired one panicked salvo that failed to kill even a single privateer.[25]

As the Spanish retreated, Rogers and some of his vanguard entered the church and captured some stragglers. They also found two ornate batons that belonged to at

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[22] David Marley, *Pirates and Privateers of the Americas* (1994), 172.
[23] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 94.
[24] Thomas, *Pirate Hunter*, 63.
[25] Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean*, 69.

least field-grade officers. The fact that the valuable batons were discarded suggested to Rogers that the Spanish officers broke and fled as quickly as their men.[26] Courtney and Dover soon arrived in the plaza with the rest of the company. Rogers immediately ordered Dampier, who had also brought his group up in support, to man and guard the captured Spanish battery to ensure that the defeated garrison did not attempt to reenter the town.

The entire operation, from the initial landing until the privateers captured the church, lasted only 30 minutes at the most.[27] The Spanish fled in confusion leaving the privateers in control of the newer part of Guayaquil. In the meantime, Dover and Courtney advanced into Old Town in order to exploit the Spanish retreat. They not only propelled the headlong Spanish rout even further, but captured Old Town. By sundown, the entire city was in privateer hands. This victory resembled that at Puna, except on a much larger scale.[28]

Not only was this action over with quickly, it was almost bloodless as well. The privateers only suffered two wounded (one mortally). The Spanish had retreated so quickly that their own casualties were light as well. Rogers estimated Spanish losses at two dead and one wounded.[29] The Spanish later reported fifteen total casualties, as many of the wounded retreated with the garrison. The militia had been so demoralized,

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[26] Thomas, *Pirate Hunter*, 64.
[27] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 97.
[28] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 95.
[29] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 98.

and their rout so disorderly, that they had quitted the battlefield before they could sustain many losses.[30]

With Guayaquil under Syndicate control, the privateers prepared to defend the town against a Spanish counter-attack. In order to do so, it was absolutely imperative that they maintain discipline and avoid pillaging. To that end, the leaders forbade the drinking of alcohol. On the whole, the privateers acted with restraint while searching Guayaquil for hidden treasures, e.g., they did not torture captives to learn the location of buried valuables. Compared to the buccaneers who had raided Guayaquil in 1687, Rogers' privateers behaved with surprising humanity. If all went according to plan after seizing the Acapulco or Manila galleon, the privateers might need to stop in Guayaquil again on their homeward journey.

The shore party was not large enough to form long defensive lines, so Rogers and Courtney split their cohorts into small groups and fortified strategic locations, e.g., two nearby churches that offered clear fields of fire down the streets or into the surrounding woods. Dover, ensconced in the older part of Guayaquil, was in a more awkward defensive position. He did not have enough men to secure the nearby heights, so he was compelled to remain in a church where his men spent much of their energy avoiding sniper fire. The Spanish also sent out a probe that promptly retreated in the face of a volley fired by the privateers in the church. Aside from those minor actions, the Spanish

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[30] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 99.

forces stayed quiet. Just because the Spanish were not attacking in force, however, did not mean they were idle.[31]

THE WAITING GAME

The Spanish had indeed organized a force to retake Guayaquil. Official dispatches from Guayaquil reached Quito and authorities there ordered all their coastal defenses from Peru to Panama to stand on the alert. They also outfitted six companies of cavalry to proceed overland while sending infantry on five ships to Guayaquil, each armed with more cannon than either the *Duke* or the *Dutchess*. Both the infantrymen and cavalrymen were professional soldiers and together they outnumbered the privateers occupying Guayaquil. If the Spanish ships captured or drove off the undermanned *Duke* and *Dutchess*, the landing force would be in an untenable position.[32]

Meanwhile, the privateers were somewhat disappointed with the loot captured. The delay in launching the attack gave the townspeople time to gather and take their valuables with them when they fled the town. The local clergy did the same with altar pieces and communion sets.[33] Many residents fled to plantations and hamlets upriver. Some of the crewmen under Alexander Selkirk's command pursued the fleeing Spaniards hoping to catch stragglers carrying valuables. Selkirk, who had transitioned nicely from a marooned castaway to an able officer, organized a thorough search of the buildings on the outskirts of town that netted some valuable items without resorting to

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[31] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 97; Thomas, *Pirate Hunter*, 64.
[32] Rogers, *Cruising Voyage*, 101.
[33] Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean*, 72.

the use of torture. Selkirk's men found a house filled with young women, many of whom had bedecked themselves with jewelry. Under Selkirk's watch, the sailors carefully removed £1000 worth of jewelry from the women without harming them.[34]

Additional groups scouted the surrounding territory looking for valuables. The first night in Guayaquil, one of the junior officers took a bark and 22 men to raid houses upriver. However, they advanced with such noise as to alert the refugees who scattered into the woods and Andean foothills. While the crewmen plundered one building, occupants of nearby dwellings quickly departed. At one hacienda, a single defender repulsed a foraging party after wounding one of the sailors. Since pressing the attack might have resulted in more casualties, the foragers withdrew.[35]

On April 25, Dover decided that his position in Old Town was untenable and, with Rogers and Courtney's permission, abandoned the entire older half of the city to the Spanish. The privateers consolidated their forces into a defense in the principal church near their original landing site. By doing so, they protected themselves but allowed the Spanish to operate freely in most of the city and throughout the surrounding environs. The privateers completely surrendered the strategic initiative, and maintaining that initiative was a traditional strength that normally allowed buccaneers and privateers to dictate the tempo of their operations and deny the Spanish a chance to regroup.[36]

The disarray that the privateers had found themselves in after the Puna action was but a taste of what eventually happened at Guayquil, where the privateers again

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[34] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 96.
[35] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:135.
[36] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 99.

struggled with disorganization and poor discipline. The Spanish exacerbated matters by continuing to probe the privateers' defenses. These actions were largely bloodless, resulting only in one wounded and one dead privateer to enemy action. But they rattled the privateers' nerves and caused nervous crewmen to shoot any approaching figure (there was one death from friendly fire) or even to shoot themselves by accident.[37] Others wandered off and found deserted taverns and inns; one of the crewmen vanished, went on a bender, and did not rejoin his comrades until they left several days later.[38]

As the privateers fitfully settled into their new positions, the Spanish sought to reopen negotiations concerning ransom and the time needed to gather funds. Again, the Spanish played for time while the privateers demanded 30,000 pieces of eight within six days and some hostages, or else they would raze Guayaquil. Both parties agreed to meet on Puna on May 3 in order to complete the transaction.[39]

The Spanish knew that the threat to burn Guayaquil to the ground was a hollow one. Putting Guayaquil to the torch would have removed any incentive for the Spanish to pay a ransom. Had the privateers truly wished to torture captives and demolish Guayaquil, they would have done so already.

Sometime during the expedition's occupation of Guayaquil, a Spanish slave named Joseph Boyce joined the privateers. He had been an English sailor in the West Indies before the Spanish captured him in the Bay of Campeche about seven years before. Enslaved since then, he had been sent from New Spain to Guayaquil on business

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[37] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:134.
[38] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 101.
[39] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 100; Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean*, 70.

when the expedition arrived. Boyce warned expedition leaders that enough Spanish militia mustered around Guayaquil that, should they get organized, they could easily evict the 200 or so privateers occupying the town.[40]

With the agreement for 30,000 pieces of eight reached and the rising danger of an attack by the Spanish looming, the privateers withdrew from Guayaquil on April 27. Rogers accompanied the rear guard and reported that he "pick'd up Pistols, Cutlasses and Pole-axes [dropped by crewmen], which shew'd that our Men were grown very careless, weak, and weary of being Soldiers, and that 'twas time to be gone from hence."[41]

DEPARTURE

The privateers reached Puna late the next day and returned to the *Duke* and *Dutchess* on the afternoon of April 29. Dover and Courtney remained on the island to await the Spanish envoys.

Back onboard, the returning men learned that two of their shipmates had died from wounds received during the capture of the *Havre de Grace*, and that it had been a harrowing twelve days for the ships' companies while they were absent. When so reduced in number, the crewmen were always anxious about the possibility of a prisoner revolt. The privateers practiced a careful routine by letting most of the prisoners on deck during the day and shutting them down below or in the forecastle in the evening.[42]

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[40] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:116.
[41] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 101.
[42] Ibid., 103.

The ships had met with some success while waiting on station near the estuary. On April 21, lookouts onboard the frigates spotted a Spanish bark approaching. One of the *Duke's* boats caught up to her and the bark's tiny crew, correctly assuming the ships were British, abandoned ship and headed to shore. The Council members who had remained at sea put Simon Hatley in charge of the prize. Despite that easy capture, the crewmen were never at ease while their forces were split.[43]

Just hours after reuniting, the lethargy, fear, and frustration that the expedition as whole had experienced evaporated. On the afternoon of April 29, the *Duke's* pinnace seized the 30-ton bark *Francisco la Salma,* carrying an enormous supply of food from Panama to Guayaquil with a tiny six-man crew and four passengers. She yielded 270 assorted bags of flour, beans, and peas, along with 30 hundredweight of sugar, four hundredweight of beef and cheese, and one ton of assorted onions, sweetmeats, and fruit. The six new prisoners reported that they had received warnings that a British squadron operated in the South Sea. But the captives expected a huge fleet instead of two frigates and assorted prizes; the Spaniards did not realize the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were British ships until it was too late to escape.[44]

Payout

Rogers met with Dover and Courtney on Puna early on May 2, the day the Spanish had promised to deliver the ransom money. The Spanish once again played for

[43] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:132.
[44] Book No. 2, An Account of Provisions and Necessaries, page 28. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Pt. II, NAUK; Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:138-139; Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 103.

time by sending Jesuits to deliver only 22,000 pieces of eight with a promise to pay more as soon as they could raise it. Recognizing this to be another ploy, the privateers demanded the full sum or else they would sail away with the hostages. When the Spanish withdrew to gather more coin, the privateers busied themselves with loading more provisions and stores from Puna. The expedition released Lieutenant Zamora and the miniscule *Francisco la Salma* prize out of gratitude for Zamora's cooperation. It also freed four aged slaves and some prisoners. This move was not out of altruism, but because those captives were old or sick; they required more supplies to stay alive.[45]

Four more days passed, and the prisoners began to fear they had been forgotten and that the ships would depart for Britain with them. Rogers noted that, "it's worse than Death, they say to be carried to Great Britain." The privateers themselves were fearful as well because they knew Spanish reinforcements were closing in. Finally, early on May 7, the Spanish delivered 3500 more pieces of eight in plate and some additional silver pesos and gold doubloons. Along with the previous payments this brought a total of 26,525 pieces of eight in ransom for the town and river vessels.[46]

The expedition could have waited for more installments – Rogers wanted to stay in the hopes of receiving more – but the Council voted to leave the area and refit at the Galapagos Islands. The next day, the expedition set sail leaving behind the *Beginning*, *Increase*, and the unnamed river vessels. Apparently the ransom was enough for the smaller prizes and there probably were not enough sailors to effectively man every prize.

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[45] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 105.
[46] Council Book, Agreement for Ransom, pages 48-49. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

The privateers also released most of their remaining prisoners except for some of the wealthier ones and the Indian pilots. This was also a pragmatic move, as many of the captive Spanish sailors were ill with syphilis. "Few of those Prisoners that fell into our hands were healthy and sound," Rogers wrote, "near half of the Spaniards discover'd publickly to our Coders their Malady, in order to get Physick from them against the French Disease, which is so common here."[47]

Unexpectedly, one of the released prisoners asked where he might meet the expedition before they left local waters, for he wished to trade with them. It was a tempting offer for the expedition, but the Council could not risk him relaying information to the Spanish navy and so declined. Rogers then continued in his journal with a glowing description of what there was to trade in Guayaquil.[48] Cooke took a more realistic view, suggesting the invitation to trade may have been yet another Spanish ploy to keep the privateers stationary and vulnerable to a Franco-Spanish counter-attack.[49]

Aside from the ransom, the privateers looted jewelry and plate worth £1200 (about 5600 pieces of eight) and carried away 150 bales of dry goods that could be resold. Furthermore, between the stores taken from the *Francisco la Salma* and those seized in Puna and Guayaquil, the privateers left the coast with enough food to last several months.[50] In addition, the expedition kept the battery of four-pounders, four

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[47] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 111.
[48] Ibid., 106-109.
[49] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:144.
[50] Account of the Purchase Taken by The Ships Duke & Dutchess, Accounts and Sundry Provisions, page 6. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.

additional swivel guns, several barrels of power, and 200 small arms captured at Guayaquil. The raid resulted in the deaths of only three men (only one due to enemy action), a modest price to pay for all the ships captured and the plunder taken. The expedition left several storehouses full of cocoa, naval stores, and liquors behind because there had not been enough time to sort through them.[51]

Rogers may have contributed to the unrest among the crew by criticizing decisions made by the Council. In his journal he reported that he had wanted to attack Guayaquil early on and repeatedly claimed that the expedition lost up to 200,000 pieces of eight by delaying that first night. He further complained that the expedition left too soon; he felt it should have plundered Guayaquil's warehouses despite the time constraints and possibly taken the unfinished ships that he estimated to have been worth a combined 375,000 pieces of eight. Cooke seemed to agree with Rogers, noting in his journal that the townspeople had escaped with another 375,000 pieces of eight on their persons but he did not harp on it like Rogers did.[52] If Rogers voiced these thoughts to non-Council members after his peers decided against remaining at Guayaquil, he was violating the Syndicate's standing orders given to him off Bristol, mandating that all officers agree with the major decisions.[53]

Rogers' grousing clearly contributed to the developing rift between Syndicate members on the expedition and non-Syndicate officers. The first signs of that division appeared on the river off Guayaquil, as the officers bickered before their landing. The

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[51] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 101.

[53] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 101.

[52] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea,* 1:139.

[53] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 101.

Council meetings were ostensibly amicable and achieved consensus, but Vanbrugh and Dover wrote privately that the disagreements became anything but amicable after Guayaquil. This remained a major sore spot for the rest of the voyage, and Dover wrote decades later that he was still in the right for delaying.[54] Thus far the missed opportunities for plunder were the only sore points and it seemed that mostly Rogers and Dover sniped at one another, but they became more disagreeable and organized into hostile factions that bickered over many issues later on.

Straining Time

Nevertheless the raid was successful. After that minor success, the Syndicate forces now faced one of the most challenging phases of the cruising voyage. Almost immediately after leaving for the Galapagos Islands, men started to fall ill with "a malignant Fever."[55] When Guayaquil had been ravaged by a fever about one month before the privateers arrived, there had been so many dead that the Spanish dug a mass grave near the church. Some of the more ghoulish privateers, thinking only of the jewelry they might loot from the corpses, dug up some of the bodies against strict orders. The privateers had slept and eaten around putrefying corpses in equatorial heat for several days and now the pathogens took their toll. By May 17, nearly half the expedition (including Courtney) was sick. The sheer volume of cases overwhelmed Dover and the medical staff. Even the Syndicate's precautions in stocking more

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[54] Glyndwr Williams, *The Great South Sea: English Voyages and Encounters 1570-1750* (1997), 151.
[55] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 112.

medicines than usual before the voyage were not adequate. The Syndicate had already grossly underestimated how much food and drink its crews would need. Now it was apparent that the Syndicate had similarly miscalculated the necessary quantity of medical supplies. Thirteen men died by the end of the month, including Dover's kinsman Samuel Hopkins. From that point until they left the Cape of Good Hope nearly two years later, the expedition's crewmen were, as a group, never truly healthy again.[56]

In the midst of sick and dying crewmen, morale began to sink. The expedition made landfall at the Galapagos on May 17 and found an acceptable anchorage the next day. Unfortunately, its leaders could not find a suitable spot to put their sick ashore. The expedition's most pressing concern was fresh water, as the sick went through the water supply at an alarming rate. Some of the vessels and ships' boats spent several days searching – with mixed success – for water, fish, and tortoises.[57]

Conditions were exacerbated when two of the vessels: the *Asenscion* and the prize bark commanded by Simon Hatley failed to arrive when expected. While the remaining ships waited for them, men dropped like flies. The *Asenscion* returned on May 22 but not Hatley's bark. The Council knew that Hatley only had water for two days and might be dead already, but it also realized that leaving might mean certain death for him and his crew if they were still alive.[58] At the same time, Council members feared the arrival of the Spanish reaction force, which seemed to become more formidable with every rumor. After ten days in the Galapagos, the Council concluded it

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[56] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 112.
[57] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:147.
[58] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 113.

would be too dangerous to remain any longer and so, on May 26, the expedition raised anchor and made sail for Isla de la Plata, almost 700 miles east of the Galapagos and just off Ecuador. Like the Juan Fernandez Islands, the Isla de la Plata was a popular rest stop for ships including pirates and privateers. Four days later, however, the Council decided to change course and make for Gorgona to the northeast, situated some eighteen miles off present day Colombia. Residents there were known to loath the Spaniards, and the Council assumed that they would be willing to barter for food and water.[59]

As the expedition was *en route* to Gorgona on June 1, there was another crisis as the prize *Asenscion's* remaining prisoners and slaves were thought to be plotting a revolt. The Spanish captives vehemently denied any such plot, but when the privateers placed lit matches between the fingers of two of the slaves both confessed that there was idle gossip regarding a possible mutiny, but that there had been no serious planning. Taking no chances, the privateers spread the captives between the other ships in order to prevent any future conspiracy.[60]

Despite the steady rise in deaths among the crewmen and fears of conspiracy, the expedition's fortunes once again changed. It seemed to be a pattern; just as morale among the privateers seriously declined, they experienced enough success to revive their flagging spirits. On June 5, the *Dutchess* took the Guayaquil-bound, 90-ton *San Tomas de Villanueva y San Demas*. Her cargo of some iron and cloth, eight bags of beans and peas, and 150 hundredweight of dry beef, was not particularly valuable. But in addition to her eleven crewmen, she carried seventeen passengers and fifteen slaves. That meant

[59] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:150.
[60] Ibid.

more captives to ransom. One of the passengers, Don Juan Cardoso, the new governor of Valdivia, could potentially bring a large ransom. Cardoso was an unfortunate fellow, for he had once been taken prisoner and ransomed by Jamaica privateers on the other side of the Isthmus.[61]

Gorgona

On June 7, the expedition put into Gorgona for fresh water. As anticipated, the privateers were welcomed by the residents who were happy to do business with them, and the island became their home for the next two months.

A week after their arrival, on the morning of June 8, lookouts spied another sail. Cooke gave chase in the *Dutchess'* pinnace and easily captured the *El Sol Doro*. Estimates of her tonnage varied, but the agents claimed she displaced 30 tons. She had come to Guayaquil to load salt and brandy and her hold was empty, but she did carry £500-600 in precious metals with which to purchase the items. More important than the money captured was news that the expedition's presence had still not reached most maritime traffic.[62]

The privateers had to decide on what to do for the next few months. They knew they had missed the window of opportunity for intercepting the Acapulco galleon, as it typically left Mexico by March in order to sail before the wind. The eastward bound

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[61] Ibid., 1:151; Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 116; Book No. 2, An Account of Provisions and Necessaries, page 29. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part 2, NAUK.
[62] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 116; Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:152; Bundle No. 13, September 1709 Account of Prizes. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

Manila galleon usually did not make landfall in North America until winter.[63] That gave the expedition several months to recuperate and refit. The ships, which had not been careened since February on the Juan Fernandez Islands, badly needed cleaning but Dover convinced the Council to postpone repairs long enough to raid the gold mines at Barbacoa. Like previous events, this attempt reeked of ill preparedness and disorganization. After four hours of planning, barking orders and belaying those same commands, the Council decided to remain at Gorgona and careen as originally intended. Cooke blamed this unproductive episode on "some differences between the Chief Officers."[64]

After that episode, the privateers settled in. Over the next six weeks, the men armed the *Havre de Grace* with twenty guns and repaired the *Duke* and *Dutchess*. The local residents were not only friendly but, as Dampier predicted, eager to barter. Throughout its stay on Gorgona, the expedition traded low-value items and nine slaves (valued at a combined £1003 or nearly 4500 pieces of eight) in exchange for fresh provisions, which kept the crews supplied and restored some of their health.[65]

These regular transactions also led to an unexpected surprise on July 15 in the form of Michael Kendall. Originally a free black from Jamaica, he had signed up with English privateers during the Nine Years' War and was captured when his crew tried to raid gold mines near Darien on the isthmus of Panama. Caught on land with few supplies, nearly the entire expedition was massacred except for those deemed fit for

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[63] William Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (1939), 279.
[64] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:153.
[65] Book No. D 115, Account of Goods Sold at Gorgonia, pages 4-5. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Pt. I, NAUK.

slavery. He had remained in a state of servitude since then. When the expedition landed at his village, his masters fled and left him behind. He grabbed a canoe and followed the expedition's boats back to Gorgona, where he offered his services and was immediately put onto the expedition's roster. Like his counterpart Boyce in Guayaquil, he was an experienced sailor and eager to strike back at his former captors.[66]

While in port the owners' agents appraised cargo seized from the most recent captures. The assortment of clothing, ornamental swords, snuff boxes, jewelry, and even buttons was valued at £743 and fifteen shillings (nearly 3500 pieces of eight), not including the actual weighed gold.[67] It was good for Rogers and the other officers that they were seen trying to divide the plunder and distribute portions of it to everybody, because that might defused unrest among some of the crew.

The next day, the *Duke's* steward reported that 60 men had already signed a "private Agreement" against their officers. The signers were concerned that the officers and agents were giving themselves too much plunder at the crew's expense, and wanted more transparency in order to ensure they were not being cheated. Rogers and his colleagues did not know how far the signers would go if their demands were not met and so, taking no chances, the officers ordered the ringleaders arrested and the author of the petition put in irons. There were far too many crewmen involved to punish, so Rogers, Dover, and Frye gathered all hands, explained the situation to them and even agreed to

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[66] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 122-123.
[67] Ibid., 127-128.

slightly reduce the size of the shares given to three officers including the two owners' agents.[68]

This concession, and the fact that the officers were keeping their accounts above board, must have convinced the crewmen that the officers were looking out for them because Rogers never brought this particular incident up again. The officers let everyone go without punishment so long as they promised to do nothing of the sort ever again. As Rogers described the sailors' mood, he again brought up Guayaquil by stating they expected to have ten times the plunder looted from the town, and implied that maybe the whole episode could have been avoided had they only attacked earlier.[69]

As the privateers attracted more traders, they worked out arrangements for ransoming some of the wealthier captives. Selkirk shuttled three Spanish captains (Juan Navarro and the brothers Juan and Jose Morel) and Cardoso between Gorgona and one of the unnamed mainland settlements and let them conduct business in order to ransom themselves and their ships. This was done over the course of the expedition's stay. Once ashore, the prisoners reached into their own networks to arrange for payment of the ransom demanded by the privateers to obtain their release. Cardoso and most of the other prisoners were eventually exchanged. Navarro and the Morel brothers were allowed to keep their ships. In exchange for the captains' assistance, the expedition transferred to them whatever excess cargoes its ships could not carry. As a testament to Peru's efficient mercantile network, Navarro was able to summon his son-in-law to

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[68] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 128.
[69] Ibid., 127.

Gorgona and place him in charge of his assets while Navarro himself stayed with the privateers.[70]

As the Council awaited payment, it placed Cooke in command of the *Havre de Grace* (renamed *Marquis*) by August 6. In case he was ever separated from the other ships, the Council also authorized him to do whatever he deemed "convenient in his Return to Bristol."[71] The Council transferred 77 men to the *Marquis* and in the reorganization following the transfers, several petty officers were promoted to wardroom officers and an equal number of seamen replaced them as petty officers.

Meeting again on August 7, the Council decided the *San Tomas* and *Asenscion* were valuable enough to ransom. The *El Sol Doro*, displacing a mere 30 tons, was just emptied of cargo and let go with her crew because the ship was worth so little that the Council did not want to bother trying to ransom her.[72] Most of the remaining prisoners were transported to the mainland on one of the expedition's barks and "parted very friendly" from the expedition.[73]

The exact amount of ransom money asked for release of the prizes is impossible to ascertain. The owners' agents listed all the precious metals and coins found on each prize vessel, and probably lumped those amounts together with whatever the expedition received in ransom for that vessel. Furthermore, that amount was divided between the three (later four) expedition ships and redistributed several times during the voyage as

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[70] Ibid., 131.
[71] Council Book, meeting minutes dated August 6, 1709, page 64. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK; J.W. Damer Powell, *Bristol Privateers and Ships of War* (1930), 116.
[72] Bundle No. 13, September 1709 Account of Prizes. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[73] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 131-132.

the ships transferred their cargoes and specie around. The gold or silver specie (wrought plate, dust, paper, jewelry, etc.) was categorized by type and not by origin.

The expedition left Gorgona and headed south towards Peru later that day. Remarkably, only one crewman died at Gorgona (from a fever). After that horrible time off the Galapagos, the expedition's health seemed to finally recover somewhat as the ships set out. The expedition's immediate goals were to resupply since the provisions from Guayaquil were all but exhausted and the provisions bartered at Gorgona were only enough to maintain rations. The privateers had also gotten bored and careless as they lingered, and several slaves took the opportunity to run away.[74]

Just two days after setting out from Gorgona, it was evident the expedition had more problems. The *Marquis*, despite her repairs and modifications, sailed like a haystack. The expedition was under orders to stay unified as much as possible, but the *Marquis* was a sluggish sailor and significantly reduced the speed of the expedition. She had originally been a French supply tender, sent on a one-way trip to the Pacific. She was already in poor condition before the expedition captured her, but now her hull leaked eight inches of water per hour. The leak was found and stopped, but leaks would remain a constant problem as her hull weakened. Rogers proposed loading her with trade goods and sending her back to Britain with stops to trade at India and Brazil. Removing her would lessen the expedition's supply problems. The rest of the Council did not consider this a good plan, preferring instead to retain the ship and her 20 guns

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[74] Account of the Purchase Taken by The Ships Duke and Dutchess, An Account of Negroes, page 3. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.

with the expedition, in effect choosing greater firepower over speed; she was the third most powerful ship in the expedition.[75]

The Council anticipated more ship-to-ship combat in the near future, and so did every hand onboard. The crew continuously underwent more training exercises to keep sharp. This training mostly went smoothly and illustrated how the crews had coalesced. Rogers also followed his instructions to recruit more crewmen when practical, as the expedition had suffered recent losses. He mustered the *Duke's* 35 slaves and offered them a deal. The Council had treated them like contraband, gave them away as presents, and handled them in such a manner that would never have been inflicted on white or mestizo Spaniards. But Rogers promised that if the slaves fought against the Spanish and French alongside the privateers, he would grant them their freedom. 32 agreed to it and began to train. Kendall, the recently liberated Jamaican, had some experience fighting the Spanish and so instructed the volunteers in the use of arms. Rogers sweetened the pot by giving each liberated slave clothes and liquor, and insisting that they think of themselves "as Englishmen, and no more as negro slaves to the Spaniards, at which they express'd themselves highly pleased."[76]

This marked a departure from the previous buccaneers. It was not unheard of pirates to recruit handfuls of slaves (Edward "Blackbeard" Teach did just that during his own forays) but most privateers strove for short-term profit that would make them comfortable until the next cruising season. As a young buccaneer in the 1680s, Dampier and his shipmates treated captured slaves as contraband and laborers. Dampier also had

[75] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 124, 134.
[76] Ibid., 135; Thomas, *Pirate Hunter*, 75.

not recruited slaves in 1703-04, when he commanded his own voyage. Rogers and the Council were more concerned with long-term cohesion and replacement capability, and so took any volunteers they encountered.[77]

On August 18, the Syndicate expedition captured the 70-ton Lima-bound *Concepcion*. She did not carry much cargo except for 24 slaves and passengers who brought news that Spanish officials were aware of the expedition's raid on Guayaquil. The authorities shut down all maritime traffic in Panama for a week, fearing it would be the next target. Like Bosa in Guayaquil, the Spanish were on the lookout for a formidable invasion fleet instead of the small expedition from Bristol.[78]

Six days later, the expedition reached Tacames, a nondescript Indian village of seven houses and a tiny chapel in present day Ecuador. The Council first sent Courtney ashore to tell the Indians that the privateers wanted to purchase provisions from them. If the natives refused Courtney was to threaten to burn their houses.[79] The boats were slow navigating the shoals and sandbars, and reached a suitable anchorage only late that night, so they postponed actually going ashore until the next morning. That night, the expedition's linguist Alexander White, acting on his own accord and without Courtney noticing, went ashore with a Spanish prisoner and triggered an ambush by the village's residents. Only White's linguistic skills and quick thinking kept him and his compatriot safe. He was not only able to wrangle his way out of a painfully violent death, but to

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[77] Hanna, Mark. *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (2015), 173.
[78] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 135. Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:297-298; Bundle No. 13, September 1709 Account of Prizes. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[79] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:299.

convince the Indians to trade without resorting to threats. The Indians bartered with the expedition for the next week.[80]

During the expedition's time at the village, the Council agreed to a plan for obtaining the 3500 pieces of eight (a little over £750) that Guayaquil still owed for its ransom. The privateers would release Navarro, the highest-ranking prisoner, if he produced an "Obligation" that acted as a promissory note to the Syndicate and agreed to help it collect the remaining sum. The Council would give Navarro iron goods and "4 Bales of Bays [baize], and one Piece of Camlet," which he was to sell in order to raise the required sum.[81] The Council wrote instructions for him to take to Puerto Bello in Panama. As in the Canaries, a group of British merchants in Puerto Bello (based out of Jamaica) had a special understanding with the viceregal authorities. The letters were addressed to four merchants, one of whom (Peter Day) came from a prominent Bristol merchant family.[82]

In its correspondence, the Council requested the Jamaica merchants to collect the 3500 pieces of eight from Navarro and transfer the sum to John Batchelor in Bristol. Even in the South Sea, the expedition found ways to contact its backers. In return for their assistance, the merchants were promised a small fee. Navarro agreed to the plan; there is a copy of Navarro's signed pledge to pay the debt in the United Kingdom's National Archives. The business with Navarro concluded, the expedition turned to more

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[80] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 138.
[81] Ibid., 139.
[82] Correspondence Book, Unfoliated and undated letters from Rogers and Courtney to Puerto Bello merchants. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

mundane matters. The privateers were pressed for time, so they let the *Concepcion* go without ransom.[83]

On August 31, the privateers set out for the Galapagos Islands once again on a supply run and a fruitless search for Hatley. They arrived on September 11, took some tortoises, and then made sail for the Tres Marias islands on September 16. This small archipelago lay north of Acapulco, and some 100 miles northwest of Puerto Vallarta. The Council hoped to cruise off the islands and then snare the Manila galleon as she made her way southeastward towards Acapulco.[84]

The expedition made landfall on Mexico's coast on October 1. Once it found the Tres Marias, its Council began planning how to take the galleon. Thanks to the refitting at Gorgona, both frigates were in good condition and capable of fighting. The crews were still suffering from malnutrition and dehydration but they were as healthy as they would ever be for the rest of the voyage; only one crewman had died at Gorgona. Some of the previous manpower losses had been mitigated by adding the 32 freed slaves that Rogers had recruited. The Council also released most of the remaining prisoners, and the expedition only had one small prize left (the *Jesus, Maria y Jose*) that was temporarily put into service as a packet boat. Thus the crews were not spread thin over a multitude of prizes that were not even suitable for combat.

The Syndicate's expedition was to face much adversity and engage in more hard fighting before it left the Pacific, but the Guayaquil raid and its aftermath showed that

[83] Bundle No. 13, September 1709 Account of Prizes. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.
[84] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 112.

the privateers were not only effective, but did not rely on brutality as the previous buccaneers had. The privateers actually behaved themselves and realized that dead or hateful townspeople would not trade in the future. In some ways the privateers were testing the market for future commerce, especially considering how Rogers and, to a lesser extent, Cooke, described many of the transactions they made.

Despite its success, there were still constant difficulties that afflicted the expedition. The Council, which had usually found some consensus in its major decisions, had begun to fracture somewhat after Guayaquil. The recriminations regarding missed opportunities and lost ransoms persisted throughout the rest of the voyage and festered even after the journey's completion. As the voyage progressed, the Council members became more querulous and fought over shares of plunder, administrative changes, and perceived slights. Furthermore, protocol within the expedition, especially during combat, made it frustratingly difficult for the privateers to coordinate their actions. These issues came to a head when the expedition faced its toughest opponent at sea.

CHAPTER VIII

EYES ON THE PRIZE: THE MANILA GALLEON

By late 1709, the expedition was at a crossroads. The problems that had harried its ships and sailors continued, and could only get worse without support from nearby Spanish settlements. With numerous crewmen still ill and distrust both among the officers and crewmen, the Council could have elected to return to Britain but it refused to. The privateers still had a Manila galleon to capture. Such a prize had been the target of the Syndicate when it sent the privateers to the Pacific in the first place.

Thus on September 23 the Council met and decided to leave the Galapagos Islands, head north towards central Mexico, and await the Manila galleon. On October 4 the expedition reached the Tres Marias islands.[1] For most of the following month, the privateers conducted repairs and searched for turtles, wood, and water. This was near the spot where Dampier had unsuccessfully attempted to capture the galleon during his previous voyage. Based on that knowledge, the Council thought it best to concentrate the privateersmen in one area and allow the galleon to come to them.

While at the islands, Dover requested to transfer to the *Dutchess* for unspecified reasons. He may have simply wanted to be closer to his Syndicate colleague Stephen Courtney, although disputes at Guayaquil may have been enough of a sore point that

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[1] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World in the Years 1708 to 1711* (1712), 1:306.

Dover did not want to even be onboard the same ship as Rogers.[2] Even though he was not on the *Duke* anymore, he was still her second captain and enjoyed the same benefits. Cooke also noted that "several hot Controversies happen'd, about this Time, among some of our chief Officers" but did not provide any details except that he was "much concern'd."[3] The crewmen and even the slaves had their own interpersonal disputes; the most serious involved a plot by seven slaves to kill the black Jamaican crewman Michael Kendall when they went ashore to cut wood. When their plan was betrayed the seven slaves ran into the woods, at which point Rogers decided it was not worth chasing after them.[4]

The Council knew it had to prepare for a challenging confrontation. None of the prizes thus far had presented a serious threat to the *Duke*, *Dutchess*, or their converted prizes. Manila galleons were different. Those sturdy, well-armed vessels carried large, motivated crews. As the expedition made its way northwest, its officers reviewed plans developed during the summer. Originally conceived in August, the crews had continuously trained according to those guidelines and seemed ready. Edward Cooke described the expedition's five-part combat doctrine.

First, the expedition's commanders were instructed to expend every effort to obtain the weather-gage before attacking an enemy ship. Being upwind from the opponent would give the privateers tactical flexibility in selecting the best time and angle to attack the Manila ship.

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[2] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712), 144-145.
[3] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World in the Years 1708 to 1711* (1712), 1:310.
[4] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 146.

Second, the ships were ordered to keep their pinnaces and other boats ready to launch in case the *Duke* or *Dutchess* became disabled and needed to be towed to safety.

Thirdly, should the expedition encounter two or three ships simultaneously, both frigates should converge on the strongest enemy ship and blast her rigging with double-shotted guns. Once her mast and rigging were disabled, the captains were instructed to bypass her and converge on the weaker enemy ship or ships. Since a flotilla or squadron's commander most likely appropriated the largest ship as his flagship, such a maneuver, if successful, might seriously impede the enemy commander's ability to coordinate any action against the privateers.

The fourth instruction applied to situations in which one of the expedition's ships was disabled. Disabled in this case was described as the "losing of masts, or springing of leaks."[5] In the event that the enemy disabled either frigate, the stricken ship should immediately disengage while the other covered her withdrawal. If possible the damage should be repaired and both ships resume their attack on the enemy. If the stricken ship was beyond repair, the undamaged frigate was instructed to take the damaged ship's crew onboard and salvage what items they could before scuttling the crippled vessel. There was no contingency for a scenario in which a ship was too badly damaged to fight but not so badly that it was sinking. It was likely that the Council had assumed in such a situation, the captains would improvise.

The fifth and final instruction encapsulated a typical privateer's strategy. When engaging, the frigates were to close to point-blank range in order to quickly demoralize

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[5] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:156-157.

the enemy and hopefully induce the ship to surrender. If the quarry did not immediately strike her colors, the privateers should sweep her deck with small arms fire from the rigging and follow up, if necessary, by boarding the vessel. Only if the intended victim maneuvered to avoid close combat should the attacker fire her main guns and risk rendering the prize unseaworthy or destroying her cargo. Should the quarry put up stubborn resistance or overwhelm the frigates, the privateers were to "endeavour to outsail them; but always the best sailor to stay for the heaviest."[6] In short, they were to outgun what they could not outrun, and outrun whatever ships they could not outgun.

On October 24, after about three weeks in the Tres Maria islands, the Council decided to move northward to the Baja Peninsula and try to intercept the *nao de la China* (as the Spanish called the Manila ship) bound to Acapulco. The Council decided to cruise off Cabo San Lucas, on the southern end of the Baja Peninsula, and attack the Manila galleon when it approached.[7]

CABO SAN LUCAS

Modern Cabo San Lucas is a scenic resort city on Baja California Sur's southern tip. It sits alongside the Los Cabos Corridor, and passing yachts and cruise ships frequent the area. In 1709, however, that corridor saw important and lucrative traffic in the form of fabled Asian cargoes. Manila ships, after months at sea, usually made landfall somewhere off California or Baja and turned to head south by southeast. Cabo

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[6] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:156-157.

[7] Council Book, meeting minutes dated October 24, 1709, unfoliated. "Creagh v. Rogers, 1708-1722 (accounts of *Duke, Duchess* and *Marquess*)," Chancery 104/36, NAUK.

San Lucas was the most prominent landmark in the region and presented the first sure sign that central Mexico was not far off. Once the galleons rounded the cape and headed eastward, they continued until they reached Mazatlan or Puerto Vallarta. From there, they sailed southward once again, keeping land in sight, until reaching their final destination Acapulco. Expedition commanders knew this, ands well as they knew the galleon was likely to be found off the cape at some point. The privateers also needed to seize their prize well before she reached Acapulco.

Like Santa Marta and Rio de la Hacha, Acapulco was an inhospitable place that the Spanish favored due to its natural harbor and strategic location rather than climate. Most of the town sank into a slumber between annual visits by the Manila ship.[8] Cooke disdainfully described Acapulco as a miserable place that was barely more than a village of mud huts and "very unhealthy from November, 'till the End of May, because then there falls no Rain, and therefore is hotter in January, than Italy in the Dog-Days."[9]

Small as it was, Acapulco was one of the most heavily defended Spanish settlements on the Pacific coast. After Dutch privateers led by Joris van Spilbergen looted the town in 1615, the Spanish strengthened Acapulco's defenses. Nearly a century later, Rogers estimated that the harbor mouth was defended by 42 heavy fortress guns. These were supported by a fort garrisoned by regular troops who were better trained and more experienced than the militia protecting Guayaquil. While not a nearly

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[8] William Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (1939), 376.
[9] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:378.

as fortified as Havana or Vera Cruz, Acapulco's fort was more than adequate to repel some 300 malnourished and sick privateers.[10]

The Council members knew of these defenses so did not even consider a cutting-out operation in which boat crews would infiltrate Acapulco and steal the galleon at anchor. There was also no chance of the privateers making an amphibious landing and assaulting the trade fair that always sprang up whenever a galleon approached or departed. There were no mangrove swamps or inland waterways to hide the privateers as at Guayaquil, and approaching from the interior meant crossing the Sierra Madre del Sur mountain range in late autumn or winter. Acapulco was just too well guarded and inaccessible.

Between Acapulco and Cabo San Lucas, however, the Spanish maintained a minimal and infrequent naval presence. In his 1703 voyage, Dampier had operated freely in that area and missed the galleon through terrible leadership and atrociously bad luck. Both he and the remaining Spanish captives seemed to agree that was the most likely spot to find a Manila galleon and not risk encounters with Spanish *armadillas*, which were coastal defense vessels that could spoil the privateers' chance at surprise if not defeat them outright.[11]

The cape was easy to spot since it was capped by bare hills and surrounded by partially submerged rocks that Cooke thought resembled the Needles at the Isle of

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[10] James Tracy, *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective* (2000), 125.
[11] Council Book, meeting minutes dated October 24, 1709, unfoliated. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

Wight.[12] Arriving there on November 1, the Council met and established a system of cruising stations. It ordered the *Marquis* to cruise between six and nine leagues from the cape, no further than three leagues from the *Dutchess* (the two later switched positions), which patrolled deeper waters. The *Duke* was the outermost ship, and was to go no further than three leagues from the *Dutchess*. Rogers estimated the ships covered any movement within twenty leagues of the shore on a fifteen-league stretch of coastline. The privateers maintained communication through signal guns and employed the *Jesus, Maria y Jose* (commanded by Selkirk) as a courier vessel.

As the ships sailed back and forth crewmen became restless and petty arguments led to unrest. Rogers and his officers were kept busy enforcing discipline onboard the *Duke*. Some of the crewmen, disgruntled at not being included among those selected to go ashore at Guayaquil, threatened petty officers out of sheer frustration. One crewman even declared that he wished he was on a pirate ship, leading to his swift punishment.[13] Both officers and crew were anxious waiting for a prize they knew might never appear.

The Council was not insensitive to the tense atmosphere and took steps to make the crewmen focus on what they might loot when they finally captured the galleon. Anticipating a rich haul from the Manila ship, the Council met on November 11 and decreed that any crewman hiding any contraband worth more than half a peso would be fined twenty times the value of whatever he attempted to conceal. The agreement was signed by the ships' companies, with every officer, seaman, and landsman also promising to give an exact account of any clothes or goods that they received after their

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[12] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:317.
[13] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 151.

stay in Gorgona. If a crewman proved that one of his shipmates concealed plunder, then the informer was entitled to half its value as a reward. This was meant to keep the crew vigilant and provide an incentive to ferret out any hoarders. At the same meeting the Council forbade gambling, as any sore loser might accuse a lucky or dishonest gambler of hoarding. Furthermore, the men were forbidden to borrow or lend money from that point on in the voyage because of the ill feeling it might cause.[14]

Supply Problems

By November, the expedition desperately needed another prize if only to replenish its stock of food. The provisions it acquired off Guayaquil and from its subsequent visits to the Galapagos and Gorgona were largely exhausted. The Galapagos tortoises and their eggs were gone. The remaining original stores from Bristol, especially the salted meats, were almost inedible after more than a year in the ships' storerooms and now only provided housing for vermin. There was no flour or pease left, which meant no fresh bread or anti-scorbutics as the crews subsisted on stale biscuits and whatever portions of meat or cheese that were not completely rancid.[15] Throughout November and December, the ships ran short on many other essential supplies. By November 25, the *Dutchess* was almost completely out of fresh water.

Thievery also manifested itself again due to the lean circumstances. On November 28, the *Duke* had some biscuit and sugar pilfered in the dead of night. The

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[14] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 153.

[15] Bundle No. 80, loose leaf Captain Stretton's Account of Provisions found onboard the *Bacheler*, "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161, Part I, NAUK.

thieves were quite delicate in their operation because the steward, who slept in front of the storeroom door, had tied the key around his “Privy parts” and not been awakened by the removal of it by a light-fingered thief. The thief and his consorts would have remained undetected but neglected to put the key back where they had found it. Instead they were caught although one escaped severe punishment due to having unnamed but influential friends in Bristol. The personal connections between merchants and mariners still mattered even on the far side of the world. Rogers spared him but had the ringleader flogged and put the others in irons.[16]

After nearly two months of cruising off Cabo San Lucas, the Council met on December 19 and compared inventories of the ships’ food stocks. The officers estimated that they needed to spend at least nine days careening and repairing their ships, after which it would take at least 50 days to sail to Guam. If their estimates were correct, they would reach Guam with a mere eleven days’ rations left. Should the expedition be unable to resupply at Guam, it would press on to the East Indies. Rogers observed that when the officers signed the report at the end of the meeting, the entire Council “looked very melancholy and dispirited.”[17]

FIRST GALLEON

The Council met again on December 20 and decided to “gett a Harbr as soon as posible, and there Recruit [prepare] with the utmost Dispatch for ye Isle of Guam, or any

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[16] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 155.
[17] Ibid., 156; “Creagh v. Rogers,” C 104/36, NAUK.

other place where we design further to Consult of our next proceedings."[18] The *Marquis* put into the harbor at Puerto Seguro on an island approximately one league east of Cabo San Lucas.[19]

The next morning, the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were making their way into Puerto Seguro when the *Duke's* lookout spied a sail. The two frigates headed on an intercept course and ran up a French naval ensign. The crewmen, sensing a stiff fight might be in store, tried to ease the tension by making wagers despite the standing ban while their officers ignored it. None of the privateers knew if the sail was indeed the Manila galleon, the *Marquis*, which had been out of touch for a day, or some other vessel. As the *Duke* and *Dutchess* drew closer, however, it became clear that the ship was the long-awaited Spanish galleon.

After a night spent closing on the galleon, the two privateersmen cleared their decks for action. A little before eight o'clock the next morning, Rogers ordered a tub of hot chocolate to be heated for his crew. Maritime tradition called for grog or some other kind of hard liquor, but the *Duke* had nearly run out of alcohol. The crew then assembled for prayer before the Spaniard fired the opening shots.[20]

The *Duke* set upon the galleon quickly, with the *Dutchess* lumbering up behind. After several broadsides, the *Duke* crossed the galleon's bow and raked her. The accompanying *Dutchess* struggled against a headwind but still managed to join in the battle's final stage. The Spanish fought back but were so exhausted after crossing the

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[18] Council Book, minutes from December 20, 1709, page 92. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[19] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:325.
[20] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 158.

Pacific that they quickly struck their colors. Of 193 crewmen on the galleon, nine were killed and ten wounded.[21] Their resistance had been brief and of limited effect. One of the galleon's shots disabled the *Duke's* mizzenmast, sending wooden splinters flying and lightly wounding one sailor in the buttocks. Rogers was the only other casualty. In the final moments of combat, a musket ball pierced his left cheek, plowed through several molars, and lodged in his throat. Despite the excruciating pain, Rogers wrote down instructions for his junior officers to pass down to the crew. The whole action, from the opening salvo until the galleon struck her colors, lasted less than a half hour.

The privateers boarded and examined their prize. Upon interrogating the prisoners, the privateers discovered they had seized the *Nuestra Senora de la Encarnacion Disengaño*. She displaced 400 tons and carried twenty cannon along with a like number of swivel guns. She was technically a frigate-built merchantman instead of a galleon, but a Manila ship nonetheless.[22] After the mid-seventeenth century, the Manila-Acapulco route generally ran one galleon at a time. That was the assumption the Syndicate operated under when it issued its orders. The privateers happened to pounce on the galleons on a rare year when two ran simultaneously.[23]

The prisoners told their captors that the other ship, the larger *Nuestra Senora de Begoña*, carried a cargo worth two million pieces of eight, that the *Disengaño* and *Begoña* had separated after leaving Guam – they had been out of contact with each other for three months – but planned to rendezvous off Cabo San Lucas and sail to Acapulco

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[21] J.W. Damer Powell, *Bristol Privateers and Ships of War* (1930), 118.
[22] Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean*, 80.
[23] Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, 193.

together. The *Begoña* was supposed to reach the rally point several weeks ahead of its slower companion but myriad factors had delayed her.[24]

The expedition brought its new prize into Puerto Seguro on December 23. Dover and William Stretton immediately took a prize crew onboard with some surgeons and treated the wounded from both sides. This was a necessary step but it removed the two officers from combat, which had consequences in the near future.[25] The expedition posted sentries on the nearby hills and ordered them to signal if they spied another sail. The *Duke* was ordered into harbor and forbidden to leave unless the larger galleon was sighted; the other crews were jealous of the *Duke's* success and suspected Rogers' crew of hoarding plunder. Rogers was in no condition to argue. His wound bled so much that he nearly choked on his own blood whilst sleeping later that night with his "Throat and Head being very much swell'd."[26]

Dover, the *Duke's* second captain, removed himself from the discussion on how to attack the *Begoña* and insisted on assessing the new prize, sending a subordinate onboard the *Duke* to act as second captain in his stead. In the meantime, Rogers was in unendurable pain, could not eat, and could barely drink due to his injury. He really needed to stay ashore where Dover, a competent physician – despite his other faults – could at least make him more comfortable.[27] Despite Rogers' incapacitation, he refused to relinquish command of the *Duke*.

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[24] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain: Being the Life of Woodes Rogers, Seaman, Trader, Colonial Governor* (1960), 120.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., 158.
[27] Graham Thomas, *Pirate Hunter: The Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2009), 85.

With crew morale climbing again, the Council met on Christmas Eve and decided they had captured enough stores with the *Disengaño* to allow them to delay their departure to Guam for another eight days. Rogers proposed that they increase the *Duke* and *Dutchess'* complements by stripping the *Marquis* of most of her crew. He suggested that while the *Marquis* and her skeleton crew assessed the *Disengaño's* cargo and seaworthiness and sent prisoners ashore for ransom, the larger frigates attack the *Begoña* and hopefully carry her by boarding.[28] The Council members rejected his proposals and decided instead that "Capt. Courtney in the *Dutchess* and Capt. Cook in the *Marquis* do forthwith go out on a cruise."[29]

The decision was a politically sound move – given the jealousy that the *Dutchess* and *Marquis'* crewmen felt towards the *Duke's* crewmen – but strategically inept as the privateers excluded their heaviest ship with the heaviest broadside. Perhaps the Council would have realized this had its members had more time to analyze the situation, but they did not. Within several hours of the decision, lookouts onboard the *Marquis* spotted the second galleon.

SECOND GALLEON

The *Marquis* was approximately two leagues off Cabo San Lucas when she spotted the larger galleon seven leagues off, bearing southwest.[30] The *Marquis* flagged the *Dutchess* and the ships once again cleared for action and pursued the newly arrived

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Council Book, minutes from Council meeting on December 24, 1709, page 93. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[30] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:329.

galleon for most of the day. However, they did not advance together as an organized force but raced each other instead. Although Cooke claimed the *Dutchess* caught up with the galleon around midnight and engaged in a short nighttime skirmish that nearly dismasted the frigate before she veered off, no other sources confirm Cooke's assertion. Both the *Dutchess* and *Marquis* caught up to the galleon by daybreak the next day.[31]

Meanwhile, the *Duke's* officers negotiated a prisoner release. Dover, Stretton, and Rogers decided to ransom or simply release the prisoners taken with the *Disengaño* and the remaining Guayaquil hostages at a time to be determined later. The officers turned to the *Disengaño's* captain Jean Pichberty, a man of means and connections (he was related to the French admiral Jean du Casse), to ransom the prisoners. Pichberty traded five bills of exchange, totaling 6000 pieces of eight, for the release of himself and the Guayaquil hostages. That sum was actually higher than what the privateers demanded, so they promised to turn the *Jesus Maria y Jose* over to Pichberty so he could transport the ransomed Spaniards to the mainland in her. Pichberty and the hostages all submitted certificates showing that they agreed with arrangement. This was done partly to keep all transactions above board, and partly to protect Pichberty against any charges of cowardice or treachery and ease the disbursement process when his bills of exchange were processed for the Syndicate in London.[32]

At this critical moment there was a serious breakdown in communication among the expedition's ships. The *Duke* and the sailors ashore were not even aware that a galleon had been spotted until that afternoon and did not leave Puerto Seguro until 7

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[31] Ibid., 1:330.
[32] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 159.

o'clock that night. When the *Duke* departed, she left Dover at Puerto Seguro with just 22 hands to refit the prize. The 170 or so captives and a handful of guards were kept onboard the *Jesus, Maria y Jose*, which the privateers intentionally stripped of rigging, sails, and rudder so she was just a floating hulk.[33]

The Engagement

The next two days involved much more frustration and suffering as the privateers received the worst of the engagement. The *Dutchess* took the lead on the first day and thus suffered the most damage. Her foremast was shot away and she was holed at the waterline. She also took a shot to the powder room that somehow did not detonate the magazine. The *Marquis* avoided most return fire but simply could not dent the *Begoña's* hull with her motley collection of four- and six-pounders. The privateers were severely handled from sunrise to sunset, and their punishment only stopped when darkness came.

The *Duke*, thanks to her late start and uncooperative winds, could only observe from the far horizon as her two consorts were pounded. Rogers was unaware of their damage until his ship joined them in the pre-dawn hours on December 27. His arrival seemed to spark some enthusiasm and the ship captains agreed to attack together once it became light enough.

Thus the *Duke* entered the fight a few hours later but even the combined three privateersmen could not defeat the *Begoña*. Rogers was wounded in the foot by a musketball and rendered temporarily crippled in addition to being mute, leaving the

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[33] Ibid., 160.

Duke without an effective commander. During a break in the fighting, Rogers, the officers, and senior petty officers gathered to assess the situation. The improvised 15-man subcommittee included Rogers, Cooke, Courtney, Dampier, and Selkirk.

Although some of the officers desired to renew the attack on the *Begoña*, the carpenters argued that the ships were too damaged to continue the fight. The *Duke* had a disabled mainmast in addition to her severely damaged mizzenmast from earlier. She could not effectively maneuver and eleven of her crewmen were wounded. The *Dutchess* was in even worse shape, having suffered more severe damage to her rigging and taken over 30 casualties. The *Marquis* remained relatively untouched with no casualties but her four-pounders were virtually useless in combat with the much larger and more sturdily built galleon.

The *Begoña* had sustained only moderate damage to her rigging and negligible damage to her hull.[34] Statements by the prisoners taken with the *Disengaño* that even 500 men could not carry the *Begoña* by boarding appeared to be true, especially when most of the privateers were weak from malnutrition and dehydration or had contracted food poisoning from eating bad fish. The entire action throughout December 27 was a costly failure that was exacerbated when the privateersmen vainly continued their attack.

The subcommittee met again that evening after the ships limped away and the galleon ran out yet more cannon (she was pierced for 60 guns). The officers took stock of the situation and decided the *Begoña* was impossible to capture with their available numbers and resources. The doctrine the expedition had operated under dictated what

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[34] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 162.

they should do in case one ship was crippled, but they did not want to sail with all three ships damaged. Therefore, the group decided it would be best "to do our endeavours to secure the Prize we have already took, which will be much more for the Honour and Interest of OUR selves and Country."[35] The full official Council that usually met, some of whose members were not present at the battle, would have to accept the subcommittee's decision if its members wished to follow the standing orders to maintain consensus.

Rogers was keenly aware that Dampier had been pilloried in the press after the latter's failed attempt to capture a galleon. One of the most damning chapters in William Funnell's work involved Dampier's perceived ineptitude and cowardice as he hunkered behind a barricade while his crew fought. Rogers made sure the officers present signed a document stating their agreement with the decision to abandon the attack in order to "prevent false reflections hereafter."[36] During the night of December 27-28, the privateers abandoned their attack on the *Begoña* which made its way to Acapulco without further harassment. The privateersmen returned to Puerto Seguro on December 29 to care for the wounded, repair what battle damage they could, and ransom the prisoners captured earlier.

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[35] Council Book, minutes from meeting on December 27, 1709, page 94. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[36] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 162.

Escape of the *Begoña*

Despite their failure to capture the *Begoña*, the voyage thus far was a moderate success for the privateers. They had seized a rich prize, which was what the recruiters had advertised back in early 1708. That seizure was also exactly what the Syndicate had tasked the privateers with. It was a mitigated victory, however, and there were reasons – beyond what the smaller Council had already discussed – why the privateers failed to bring in the second galleon.

The prisoners taken with the *Disengaño* informed their captors that word of the expedition's presence in the South Sea had reached even the Philippines. Before the galleons departed the Philippines (Manila ships usually departed in June in order to take advantage of the southwesterlies), word of the privateers reached Manila via British settlements in India. Although the Spanish Philippines and British India were officially at war, the information disseminated through India, Siam, southeastern China, the East Indies, and the Philippines.[37] The Spanish authorities in Manila thus operated under more accurate information than their counterparts in Peru who believed that they would face a naval fleet instead of several small privateers and prize vessels. The *Begoña* in particular had taken precautions to carry extra weapons and she had additional incentive to do so; insurers reduced freight costs if galleons carried weapons.[38] The galleons, however, had expected to rendezvous at Cabo San Lucas and not meet the privateers until at least reaching Cabo Corrientes, several hundred miles to the southeast.[39]

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[37] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 163.
[38] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:336.
[39] Ibid., 1:329.

As a result, the privateers caught the *Disengaño* by surprise. The *Begoña*, carrying a more valuable cargo, was better prepared to defend against attacks and her officers and crew more vigilant.[40] The privateers had lost one of their traditional advantages; without surprise, they hurled themselves against a heavily armed opponent. The expedition's previous encounters usually involved them fighting opponents who were either unsuspecting or too weak to put up a sufficient defense. Even when the privateers were divided, such as at Guayaquil, the Spanish were too demoralized and disorganized to coordinate a static defense much less to launch a counter-attack. The *Begoña*'s crew was not caught flat-footed. With better morale and more able leaders than the *Disengaño*, the crewmen did not suffer a debilitating psychological shock that privateers depended on to weaken their opponents. The Spanish then relied on superior hull strength and greater to repel the privateers.

Rogers had taken to his journal on December 28 and adamantly contended that the privateers could have carried the *Begoña* by boarding if all three ships had attacked when first encountering her, and before her crew put netting over her decks thus preventing a boarding action.[41] He suggested that if the Council had followed his plan from the start, with the *Duke* in the lead and the *Dutchess* providing support, it would have been an easy capture. By doing this, he absolved himself of culpability and placed the blame on Courtney and the remaining Council members. Rogers may have been delirious from the pain because he was suggesting a nearly impossible operation.

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[40] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 163; Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 120.
[41] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 163.

Privateer captains typically tried to avoid heavily armed ships, and especially those that were prepared for an engagement.

The five-point doctrine that the privateers drilled under for months worked perfectly against the *Disengaño* but did not meet similar success against the *Begoña* because the privateers either could not or would not follow the agreed-upon tactics until it was too late. First, the privateers did not seek the weather-gage and were taken aback by the wind, thus relinquishing mobility and giving the *Begoña* time to react. The second and third rules did not apply, as the privateers did not face multiple enemy ships at once. The fourth rule, regarding damaged or disabled privateersmen, was only partially adhered to. The privateersmen remained engaged even when heavily damaged and only broke off the attack when darkness fell. The privateers did not obey the fifth rule and made no coordinated attack until December 27, by which time it was much too late to take the *Begoña*, if it were even possible in the first place.

The attack on the *Begoña* demonstrated telling weaknesses in the expedition's leadership and command structure. No single individual was in overall command of the expedition. Instead, the Syndicate required its officers to defer to the Council's decisions even in combat. The Syndicate's measures regarding fiscal affairs were sound and necessary, but its rules of engagement were a liability in the chaos of ship-to-ship combat as they removed officer initiative. When combined with privateers' typical eagerness to attack for profit and without prudence in mind, the expedition's leadership was in a state of paralysis.

The Syndicate's top-heavy officers' list was a liability in this situation with the crew uncertain which officers they should follow. The full Council had already laid down its doctrine months before but the ships in action were governed by a small *ad hoc* organization of fifteen men, most of whom did not have command roles, who had to strike a balance between following the full Council's orders and improvising strategy on the spot. Rogers was the commander-in-chief, and most of the sailors looked up to him, but he was physically unfit to lead and was still bound to abide by the Council's decisions. In effect Rogers was not an executive officer, but rather an agent of the Council's will. Dover was the president of the Council (his signature is usually at the top in the meetings' minutes) but was similarly bound to follow Council decisions and was not present during the battle because he had remained with the *Disengaño*. Thus Courtney was the only Syndicate member onboard either of the ships that initiated the attack on the *Begoña*. But Courtney did not have Rogers' charisma, and Courtney always had to consider what Dover might have wanted because the Syndicate members represented each other's interests. Cooke was preoccupied with running *Marquis* while the remaining lieutenants and mates present were qualitatively inexperienced and did not possess the confidence to influence a proverbial twelve angry men even if either the Council's or the smaller subcommittee's strategy was unsound. To make matters worse, there was no way to change tactics except in another Council meeting. This weakness is clearly illustrated during the engagement with the *Begoña*.

Prior to the start of the battle, the Council had already split its forces by keeping the *Duke* at anchor. Rogers, whose strategy to fight as a single unit was sound, was

completely incapacitated but refused to relinquish his command of the *Duke*. When the *Duke* did finally enter the fray, Rogers insisted on continuing the fight even though the doctrine laid down several months back specifically called for a withdrawal if the frigates received potentially fatal damage. As a result, his ship operated with conflicting orders to both take the galleon as the primary objective and to withdraw if the day turned against the privateers. Finally, the privateers were so self-assured and impetuous that they jumped at the chance for a new capture without assessing the situation beforehand. This is exactly what led to problems with the Swedish frigate at the beginning of the voyage, the illegal Spanish prize taken off the Canaries, and the poorly conceived fight against the *Havre de Grace* outside Guayaquil. Despite Rogers' previous remarks on buccaneers' rashness, the privateers were almost as poorly disciplined.

Aftermath

The battle lost, the ships withdrew to Puerto Seguro and prepared to set out for Guam. After dealing with immediate problems, the privateers turned to inventorying everything captured with the *Disengaño*. They estimated the value of cargo, the personal effects belonging to the crewmen and passengers, and the ship's stores. The cargo's true value could not be quantified until they were properly condemned and auctioned off more than two years later, in London.[42]

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[42] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*; 2:vii-ix. The privateers captured the cargo manifest and it is available in the NAUK, although much of it is illegible due to sloppy handwriting and corrosion. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

Raw silk made up the largest single item on the manifest, weighing in at over fourteen tons. It was valuable on its own and was destined for Mexican weavers, as Mexico possessed an established sericulture that predated the galleon trade.[43] Refined silk possessed exponentially higher value, as the auctions after the expedition's return proved. Nearly six tons of thrown silk (that had been reeled and cleaned) and substantial quantities of other weaves were accounted for. Finished silk clothing also promised a lucrative payout at the end of the voyage. Since the agents were involved with cloth merchants in the Syndicate before the voyage (that was partially why the Syndicate chose them for the expedition), they had a practiced eye for such subtle differences in thread count and style. The Syndicate's agents were so meticulous regarding equitable distribution that they kept track of the different kinds of clothing, including the exact number of handkerchiefs.[44] In addition to prodigious amounts of clothing and silk, the galleon held literally tons of East Indian spices including high-value cloves. There were also "Several Parcels of odd things" that the agents did not think worthy of cataloging.[45]

In addition to the cargo listed on the galleon's manifest, the privateers found many other items not listed on the manifest. These included bulk items hidden in plain sight – but not listed on the manifest as well as extra items hidden between decks and in every nook and cranny. In fact, the prize crew would continue to find concealed items including even entire bales of cloth over the next several months.

[43] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:345-346; Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, 365.
[44] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:345-346, 2:vii-ix.
[45] Ibid.

Manila customs agents uncritically accepted statements from merchants without bothering to inspect the goods themselves. Few Philippines agents were willing to snoop around for undocumented cargo; doing so interfered with clandestine deals that intertwined both sides of the Spanish Pacific and the agents themselves probably received some kickbacks. Many powerful, influential parties had vested interests in under the table dealings that started just off Manila.[46]

The privateers also seized the navigator's *derrotero*, which contained navigational readings from throughout the galleon's course. In addition to that, the privateers collected a number of charts depicting parts of the South Sea.[47] To privateers and pirates, the maps often functioned as a ticket to wealth and status or could be used to "buy" their way out of legal entanglements if the occasion called for it. As it happened, the Syndicate's voyagers never got into *that* much trouble but maps were a wise insurance policy. The buccaneer Bartholomew Sharp had used captured charts as bargaining chips to avoid being charged with piracy not once, but three times. Another buccaneer Charles Swan had also seized charts from his prizes. As Dampier (who had sailed with Swan) described that voyage, "now our Pilots being at a loss on these less frequented Coasts, we supply'd that defect out of the Spanish Pilot-books, which we took in their ships."[48]

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[46] Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, 380.
[47] Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas: 1500-1750* (1998), 141.
[48] William Dampier, *Dampier's Voyages: Consisting of a New Voyage Round the World, a Supplement to the Voyage Round the World, Two Voyages to Campeachy, a Discourse of Winds, a Voyage to New Holland, and a Vindication, in answer to the Chimerical Relation of William Funnell*, ed. John Masefield (1906), 1:185.

While some agents inspected the cargo, others focused on the possessions of the captured crewmen. In addition to their wages (up to 350 pieces of eight for a round-trip), crewmen were usually allowed space to take along items to trade on their own account in Mexico – items that were not placed with other cargo and did not appear in the ship's records.[49]

Many Spanish sailors also packed extra silk items into their sea chests when they left Manila, claiming the expensive clothing formed part of their personal wardrobe. Profits from reselling the clandestinely packed silks gave the sailors an even greater profit, up to 100 pieces of eight, which was all done while avoiding the relevant taxes and fees. The Spanish crown found this form of tax evasion so pervasive and difficult to prosecute (it was impossible for authorities to prove that the clothing was *not* intended for personal use) that it stopped enforcing those regulations by 1709.[50]

The Spanish officers presented a likely source of plunder not just through their private cargo, but through solid coin and personal items in their private quarters. Galleons had a top-heavy roster, with many officers and several pilots. Since the Philippines contained few competent naval officers, and the galleons' captains received their appointment through personal acquaintanceships within the viceroy of New Spain and experience in land wars, they usually chose their junior officers from among their friends who were just as wealthy.[51] Two of the galleon officers, the accountant and overseer, were solely responsible for the cargo and kept detailed manifests. They played

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[49] Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, 210.
[50] Ibid., 177.
[51] Ibid., 201.

such an important role that both were paid 2000 pieces of eight for every voyage. Such sums were greater than any other officers' salary except for the captains'.[52] Naturally, most officers traveled with luxuries and creature comforts that could be sold later on.

Passengers also tended to be well heeled. The galleons often carried civilians hoping to return home to New Spain, Peru, or even Spain itself. Like the English *nabobs* in India, Spanish colonists in the Philippines could make a good living and return home to easy lives. Passage fees from Manila to Acapulco ranged from 2000 to 4000 pieces of eight, indicating that only wealthy Spaniards could afford the trip.[53] There were ten passengers onboard the Manila ship and they carried numerous personal items, many crafted in gold or silver, that were promptly catalogued.[54]

The privateers also requisitioned the *Disengaño's* stores. Just before clearing the Philippines, Manila galleons restocked their storerooms and were supposed to carry enough food for six months' sailing. Once the Manila ship closed its hatches, any Crown or viceregal regulations ceased and private traders swarmed aboard to cram extra cargo into the already bursting hold. In the interest of making as high profits as possible, the officers and crew freed up space by jettisoning stores such as food and water to make room for personal trading goods. The eastward voyage from Manila to Acapulco usually took six months, although it sometimes stretched to eight depending on the wind. Such practices sometimes led to a tragic end as the crews starved or died of thirst.[55]

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[52] Ibid., 209.
[53] Ibid., 252.
[54] Bundle No. 11, ransom letters dated January 1710. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[55] Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, 185.

The British privateers hoped to add to their depleted supply of food from the captured galleon but discovered that the *Disengaño* was nearly as short on food as they were. She was nearing the end of her Pacific voyage and, aside from a brief stop in Guam, had not stopped anywhere to revictual. The galleon's storerooms contained 3700 pounds of bread, 6400 pounds of beef, 2600 pounds of pork, a miniscule 200 pounds of pease, 500 pounds of flour, and 3400 pounds of rice. To supplement his sailors' diet, Pichberty had been generous enough to allow for some salt, hams, and olive oil.[56] The sheer numbers might seem like a decent quantity, but many provisions were already inedible due to the galleon spending months at sea. That food also had to be distributed to the entire expedition of over 300 crewmen and any remaining prisoners and slaves. At full rations, there was not enough bread to feed the privateers for more than two weeks. The prize crew also discovered some confectionary that had likely been reserved for passengers and officers, but not enough to alleviate the supply situation and candy had low nutritional value regardless.[57] Finally, agents thoroughly searched the surgeon's medical stores as well. The *Disengaño* held a little more than £30's worth of medical supplies in her sick bay. Any medicines were welcome considering the expedition had already run out, but none of the requisitioned unguents were effective against scurvy, which was the primary health concern at this point.[58]

[56] Book No. 2, account of provisions and necessaries, pages 29-30. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161, Part II, NAUK.
[57] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 190.
[58] Bundle No. 49, loose leaf ccount of medicines. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

The privateers' supply problems remained after their actions against the Spanish galleons. With dwindling resources, the expedition had no choice but to get its affairs in order and leave.

Before departing for Guam, the expedition needed to deal with the prisoners it still held. First the Council ordered Pichberty and the higher-ranking prisoners to sign a document stating that they had been "very civilly treated; and whatsoever we have transacted or done, has been by our voluntary Will and Consent."[59] Pichberty's letter echoes what the privateers instructed him to state, including that the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were indeed the privateersmen that had sacked Guayaquil and that the Englishmen had treated him and the other captives well.[60]

On New Year's Day, the privateers packed most of the prisoners into the *Jesus, Maria y Jose* and sent them to Acapulco. The privateers also settled their financial account with Pichberty. The French captain gave them the bills of exchange, intended for an unnamed French merchant based in London. The owners' agents made sure the bills not only paid for the ransoms and the *Jesus, Maria y Jose*, but for every bit of cargo left onboard including items worth only several shillings.[61]

As Pichberty left, the Council gave him some correspondence written by the senior officers and addressed to the Syndicate in Bristol. The officers edited the letters to avoid divulging information to the enemy (they were careful to not mention Guam)

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[59] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:337.
[60] Bundle No. 35, loose leaf undated letter from Pichberty. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160 NAUK.
[61] Council Book, meeting minutes from December 26, 1709, page 96. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

and Pichberty promised to somehow send them to Bristol.[62] In his letter to the Syndicate, Rogers stated that the privateers' had achieved their primary goal. He briefly summarized the expedition's engagements with the galleons. The smaller galleon, he informed his backers, had put up a "stout Resistance." He noted that he had been wounded during the engagement but did not tell them the severity of his injuries. He informed the Syndicate that during combat with the second galleon, the larger ship had inflicted so much damage that the privateers were repelled and "forc'd [to withdraw and] to be Content with [their capture of] the first." He closed by saying that the expedition was homeward bound.[63]

Cooke and Courtney sent a similar letter with that dispatch. They did not go into any detail but informed the Syndicate that, though damaged, the privateers were headed to the East Indies. They did not tell the Syndicate exactly how much the galleon was worth, but bragged "we don't doubt but all will prosper well, as we thank God itt hath hitherto."[64] Neither letter told the Syndicate just how poor a condition both the ships and men were in. Pichberty made good on his promise to forward the dispatches. The Syndicate did not record when it received the dispatches, but it would have been months before the letters arrived in Bristol.[65]

Not all the galleon crewmen went to the mainland with Pichberty. The privateers kept 36 Filipino sailors to help the prize crew sail the galleon. The Filipinos were not

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[62] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 164.
[63] Loose leaf letter from Derecken to the Council, dated December 31, 1709. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 127; Bundle No. 6, letters from Rogers, Courtney, and Cooke to Syndicate dated December 31, 1709. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

signed on as crewmen, but as a combination of prisoners and paid help.[66] The *Disengaño's* pilot was also forced to accompany the expedition because the Council members thought that his experience in the Pacific would be useful if he recovered from being shot in the throat. Retaining as prisoners individuals with specialized skills such as pilotage, carpentry, or even cooking, was a common practice among pirates and privateers.[67] The expedition thus received more skilled hands regardless if they came willingly or not.

Shifting their focus to the prize herself, the privateers finished repairs and renamed her *Batchelor*, after their benefactor John Batchelor from the Syndicate.[68] Crewing a new ship presented an opportunity for more petty officers to advance in rank and pay, although selecting the right men for each position created a great deal of acrimony that festered for the rest of the voyage.[69] Privateers often squabbled over who received which position and the Syndicate's officers were no exception. The other prizes they had captured thus far were mostly small barks and so not worth arguing about. Even the *Marquis*, which was substantially heavier than the other prizes, did not cause any controversy when Cooke was put in command. The *Disengaño*, however, held what was by far the most valuable cargo. Commanding her seemed to hold a good

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[66] Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, 277.
[67] Bartholomew Sharpe, *Captain Sharp's Journal of His Expedition: Written by Himself* in *A Collection of Original Voyages* ed. William Hacke (1699), 49.
[68] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:2.
[69] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 167.

deal of prestige for the officers and so the Council descended into acrimony and jealousy.[70]

Rogers did not think Dover would want to command the *Batchelor*. As chief medical officer and second captain, being put in charge of the prize seemed beneath him. But the sheer wealth in the prize's cargo must have been too tempting for Dover, and he refused to sign the Council decision and called a meeting of the *Dutchess* and *Marquis* officers on January 9 to challenge the decision. Dover and members of the informal gathering "brought a paper which impower'd him to be sole commander without the least restraint, of not molesting those that should navigate the ship, but to order every thing as he should think fit."[71] Since Dover's cohort outnumbered Rogers', Dover claimed to have the majority in his favor. Despite his other responsibilities, Dover insisted he was the most suitable officer to take command of the *Batchelor* although he conceded allowing Frye or Stretton to serve as second captain under him.

Rogers and the *Duke's* officers expressed their opposition to Dover's appointment that same day. They stated that to maintain peace within the expedition they would allow Dover to remain in command even though he was incompetent. The signed statement was worded as insultingly as possible without actually crossing the line into insubordination.[72]

Rogers added a personal note stating that he accepted opposition to Dover's appointment only because the Syndicate had entrusted him to lead the expedition and

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[70] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:338.
[71] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 164.
[72] Ibid., 166.

keeping peace among its members was necessary.[73] Rogers' argument might have been more effective if Dover was not a Syndicate member himself. Most of the officers had accepted the Council's previous decisions. Even at Guayaquil, Rogers had acquiesced to Dover and Courtney's decision to abandon the "siege" and kept his complaints private. Now various officers were no longer accepting majority decisions without protesting. The *Duke* officers claimed that the *Batchelor* was "under an uncapable Command," an insult that would have been unfathomable just a year before.[74]

Both Rogers and Dover used their station to gather support against the other. Again, Rogers was the "commander-in-chief" of the expedition but was subject to Council rulings so he did not wield absolute power. Dover was the president of the Council but had no real power except for a tie-breaking vote in meetings. What the two captains did have was influence, and they used that to gather supporters. In the angry letters that were sent between the *Duke* and *Marquis* and presented at Council meetings, it is clear from the signatures there was a stark divide between the ships' companies. Dover's faction contained officers only from the *Dutchess* and *Marquis* (the *Batchelor* officially did not have a crew yet) whereas Rogers only had *Duke* officers supporting him. Both factions threatened that the other would be "liable to us for all Damages that may happen" and would owe "full Satisfaction and Reparation of all Losses and Damages whatsoever that may happen to the said Ship, during her Voyage to Great Britain."[75]

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[73] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:338.
[74] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 166.
[75] Ibid.; Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:340.

The disputes at Guayaquil had not only been less vicious but seemed to mostly be between Dover and Rogers and of a personal nature. The arguments over the *Batchelor* displayed an obvious rift between officers of different ships. This was not an uncommon occurrence in other privateering voyages and had in fact happened in Dampier's last voyage on three occasions, which resulted in unhappy officers sailing away in a ship.

Discussion continued for the next two days at which point the Council met on January 10 and agreed that the *Duke's* chief lieutenant Frye and the *Dutchess'* chief lieutenant Stretton "shall both act in Equall Posts in the sole navigating sailing & Engaging if occasion should be under Capt. Thomas Dover on Board the Batchelor Frigatt."[76] Through this decision the Council seemed to tacitly side with Rogers by reducing Dover's power but sparing his pride. An unsigned majority of Council members also sent an undated letter to Frye and Stretton, instructing them to ensure that the crew obeyed them and not Dover, and that the ship was "wholly Left to [their] Care and good Management."[77] With Frye and Stretton effectively commanding the crew, Dover was left with only a nominal command and each of the two frigates could claim to have a representative onboard.

The same agreement that placed Frye and Stretton in command also assigned other officers to the *Batchelor*. The Council appointed Alexander Selkirk sailing master. Selkirk was the obvious choice, given his extensive maritime experience and the

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[76] Council Book, meeting minutes on January 10, 1710, page 100. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[77] Council Book, letter to Frye and Stretton, page 101. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

leadership he had displayed during the raid on Guayaquil. By having Selkirk in place as the *Batchelor's* master, Rogers was in a good position to undermine Dover. First, Rogers had another experienced sailor onboard the prize; if Dover did not know how to react to the winds and currents, Selkirk certainly did. Second, Selkirk could coordinate with other sailors who were transferred to the *Batchelor* in order to frustrate Dover should he threaten the expedition's integrity. Frye and Stretton could not do so without violating the Syndicate's instructions to support fellow Council members, but Selkirk was not on the Council and not subject to those same rules. Selkirk was loyal to Rogers, as were most of the *Duke's* crew (35 of whom were transferred to the *Batchelor* versus 25 from the *Dutchess* and 13 from the *Marquis*).[78] Rogers knew that spreading out loyal crewmen among different ships was key to maintaining cohesion within the expedition. Although the worst tension was diffused, there was still tension between officers of the different ships.

There was another vacancy to be filled as well. William Bath, the owners' agent onboard the *Duthcess*, had died just before New Year's. He was replaced by James Goodall on January 9. The previous year had not been kind to the original members of the Council. Carlton Vanbrugh had been dismissed in April and Samuel Hopkins took over his place on the Council, but Hopkins died during the time spent in the Galapagos.[79] Hopkins' replacement (Lancelot Appleby of the *Duke*) and that of John Rogers who was killed off Guayaquil (Robert Knowlman of the *Dutchess*) had been selected in June and

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[78] P.K. Kemp and Christopher Lloyd, *Brethren of the Coast: Buccaneers of the South Sea* (1960), 179.
[79] Council Book, meeting minutes on April 10, 1709, page 40. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

were unsure of themselves, being former mates newly promoted from the main deck. Goodall was in an even more precarious situation. Having been appointed while the various officers argued over the *Batchelor's* roster, his appointment might be cited as an example of a mistake if he did not perform well and the officers accused each other of poor decision-making. During this time, the replacements must have either stayed out of the bickering or aligned themselves with their captain. Either way, they were pawns in this new round of infighting.[80] Since Bath had been an owners' agent, there was also indubitably the sneaking suspicion among the crewmen that the *Dutchess* officers had manipulated the inventory and plunder amounts in favor of one ship or another in the week or so between his death and replacement. The crewmen were already wary of each other even with officers accounting for the plunder; the absence of an owners' agent, even for a week, would have led to greater suspicion.

By the time the expedition left the coast of Central America, the original orders, which had stressed consensus and harmony in all things, no longer functioned outside the crewmen's sight. Ill feeling among Council members flared up into angry recriminations that festered. The arguments were kept private, however, since the Council members continued to project an image of unity to the petty officers and ratings in order to maintain unit cohesion. The officers privately undermined each other but always seemed to put their differences aside when it came to unruly or mutinous crewmen. As far as Rogers' faction was concerned, monitoring Dover onboard the *Batchelor* was for the good of the expedition. Actively setting the different ships' crews

[80] Council Book, meeting minutes on June 13, 1709, page 50. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

against one another would have helped no one if it caused the expedition to disperse. With the officers putting up a friendly façade, they decided to conclude the unpleasant arguments with a toast to a safe journey home.[81]

DEPARTURE

Despite all this infighting, the expedition remained intact. Nobody asked to be marooned as Selkirk had. There were and would continue to be desertions, but not enough to affect the expedition's capabilities. There was no violence between the officers. Even though some of them were impulsive and prone to outbursts, at this point in the voyage the original Council members were focused on preparations to set sail for home.

None of the officers or crewmen knew it at the time, but they had fired their last shots in anger for the duration of the voyage. With the capture of the *Disengaño*, the expedition had accomplished its primary objective. Most buccaneers would have kept raiding, facing diminishing returns, until their force dispersed as the crews went their separate ways. In fact, that was exactly what Dampier had experienced on multiple voyages. Many other privateers had done the same as their forces eventually disintegrated or turned pirate. But this expedition was better run and more organized. Since the Syndicate ran the expedition like a business, there was no point in sticking around Puerto Seguro. It was time to bring the prize back home and extract as much profit as possible. The Council at least agreed on that, since they were all employees

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[81] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 167.

and there were two Syndicate representatives onboard to remind them of who they all worked for.

The privateers left Puerto Seguro at midnight on January 10-11, just after the heated meeting of the Council ended. They headed north by northwest along the Baja coast. The *Batchelor* was soon discovered to be a slow sailer, and so the Council instructed all senior officers to carefully regulate distribution of their ships' stores in order to make them last longer. In response commanders reduced rations, giving each five-man mess one and a half pounds of flour and one small piece of meat daily. Doubting they would be able to obtain food or fresh water anywhere in the Central Pacific, leaders hoped that these meager rations would be enough to get the expedition to Guam. With such limited food stocks and potable water dwindling, any navigational error was potentially fatal. Dampier and the other pilots faced a daunting task to find Guam based on memory, the stars, unreliable charts, and dead reckoning.

CHAPTER IX

HOMEWARD BOUND

By January 1709 the expedition was in a precarious position. Following the abortive attempt on the *Begoña*, Council members knew that it was time to return to Europe. They also knew that Spanish forces in Peru, the West Indies, and the Atlantic would be on alert, making that route home untenable. Thus Council members decided to return via the Pacific and Indian Oceans despite the fact that this route ran through areas controlled by Spain and the Netherlands and claimed by the East India Company.

As the expedition struck out across the Pacific, its officers and crewmen were privateers no more. When in Spanish waters, with few opportunities to revictual, they had to behave like traders. And nearly all the Pacific was Spanish. When in Dutch waters, members of the expedition had to observe restrictions placed on trade by the Dutch East India Company. This entire time, there was also an undercurrent of vestigial tension from Guayaquil as some officers took every opportunity to undermine Rogers' standing with the Syndicate at home.

Upon leaving Puerto Seguro, the expedition elected to follow the route typically used by galleons from Acapulco to Guam. As the privateers headed west, the winds were favorable but nothing else seemed to be conducive to success of the 6000-mile journey. Two weeks after departing, the expedition's water supply began to foul. The crew tried to supplement their victuals by fishing but only caught a single albacore tuna

in the entire month of January.[1] At one point, Cooke suspected the expedition passed some lumps of valuable ambergris floating nearby but both officers and ratings were too hungry and thirsty to care about the potential wealth; they just wanted to get to Guam as quickly as possible.[2]

On January 28, the *Duke's* steward reported that some salt pork was missing from the storeroom. The culprits were swiftly apprehended and punished. All the thieves were tied to main jeers where the entire watch flogged them. The jeers were the ropes that suspended the lower sails, so the culprits were entirely exposed to the elements. Since the thieves' messmates benefited from the stolen food and did not report the theft, they were given lesser sentences and placed in irons.[3] This incident was another sign of growing unrest among the crews as hunger made them desperate.

As the voyage to Guam continued, the Council stretched out the already meager five-man rations to every group of six slaves, which at least kept the healthy ones alive.[4] Without a trace of irony, Rogers nonchalantly mentioned cutting the slaves' rations while the recently emancipated slaves who agreed to fight with the expedition were treated as part of the crew. The expedition's officers treated black crewmen without prejudice while simultaneously parceling out slaves as trade goods and reward items.

Over the next two months, the fishing did not improve much and more crewmen died from disease or from wounds sustained in the fight with the *Begoña*. Burial

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[1] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712), 191.
[2] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World in the Years 1708 to 1711* (1712), 2:4.
[3] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 190.
[4] Ibid., 191.

ceremonies became a weekly routine. To make matters worse, the Spanish pilot captured with the *Disengaño* was among those who perished, taking his knowledge of the Pacific with him. Rogers still suffered from his injuries sustained in the fight with the *Begoña*; his throat swelled and he spat out a piece of jawbone that had somehow lodged in his throat. Anyone is his condition would have struggled to eat and drink, and dehydration compounded his already poor health and mental state.[5]

The ships were in deplorable condition. The *Duke's* leaky hull required continuous pumping so that one pump was always in operation. Each watch rotated two men to turn the pumps every hour.[6] The *Marquis* also sprung a leak that was so large it not be plugged, and Cooke had to bring her top-gallants down in order to ease pressure on her hull and keel.[7] This spared the ship's hull but further slowed the expedition. On February 11, in a desperate attempt to boost morale, Courtney proposed that the Council increase the daily flour ration by another half-pound per man and the motion carried. Rogers wanted to increase the meat ration as well but was voted down because, if the expedition missed Guam, all hands would quickly run out of the only animal protein source they had left.

Things finally began to look up on March 8, when the privateers spotted some seabirds so knew they were close to land.[8] Two days later, the expedition made landfall in the northern Mariana Islands, turned southward, and reached Guam the next day.

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[5] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 190-191.
[6] Ibid., 191.
[7] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea and round the World in the Years 1708 to 1711* (1712), 2:4.
[8] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:5.

Knowing they desperately needed more supplies, the privateers hoisted Spanish colors as they approached the harbor. Since Guam was a Spanish possession, the privateers had to assume its inhabitants would be hostile and so relied on deception like privateers often did. Native watercraft, *praus*, came out to greet them. The Council discussed whether the privateers should entice some of the natives to come aboard and then take them hostage, but that discussion was rendered moot when the first *prau* approached the *Duke*. It contained two Spaniards who asked where the expedition was from and what it was doing there. The privateers answered in Spanish and declared they were friends from New Spain, then invited the Spaniards onboard. The two unsuspecting visitors climbed onboard to find themselves surrounded by distinctly non-Spanish privateers who detained them. The Spaniards were soon followed by a dispatch from their governor demanding to know the expedition's business.

GUAM

Keeping one of the Spaniards as a hostage, the Council gave the other man a letter addressed to the governor and sent him ashore with the linguist Alexander White and a captive Irish crewman taken from the *Disengaño*.[9] In the letter the privateers said that they wanted to purchase supplies and promised not to harm anyone on the island. But if their request was denied, then the Spaniards should "immediately expect such

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[9] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 192; Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:12; Council Book, letter from Council to Pimentel, dated March 11/22, 1710, page 102. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

Military Treatment, as we are with ease able to give you."[10] The next day, the *Dutchess* collected White and the Irishman who reported that had been well treated. The two men brought with them a message from the governor in which he promised to supply the privateers with whatever they needed.

The privateers' threat was unnecessary. Few ships came to Guam so Governor Juan Antonia Pimentel and his subjects, like those at Gorgona, welcomed the opportunity to trade with the expedition. The privateers purchased the usual foodstuffs including livestock, corn, yams, and 4000 coconuts which were extremely useful because of their versatility.[11] They paid for these items with obsolete matchlocks captured from Guayaquil, slaves, and other items. Cooke described the exchanges as mutually beneficial and to the Spaniards' "extraordinary Satisfaction." When their purchases were complete, the Council presented two black boys to the governor as a gift.[12]

Pimentel also took most of the remaining Spanish prisoners (and presumably the Filipinos) from the expedition, excepting those deemed necessary for sailing the Manila galleon and condemning it as a legitimate prize. This act eased Rogers' supply problems and eliminated any chance for a prisoner revolt. One of the prisoners in particular, Antonio Gomez Figueroa, was released either through compassion or pragmatism. Poor

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[10] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 192.
[11] Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, *National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 27*, Basic Report: 12119, Bundle No. 49, loose leaf Guam creditor. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[12] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:9-10; Account of the Purchase Taken by The Ships Duke and Dutchess, inventory of slaves, folio 3. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.

Figueroa was in declining health and the expedition's surgeons did not expect he would last much longer at sea, and certainly not long enough to survive the return trip to Britain.[13] Before the privateers left, they either allowed or coerced him to write a letter stating that he had been captured on March 15, 1709 (he was on the *Asuncion*), had witnessed the inventorying of everything captured with the prize ships, and that he had not seen the privateers attack anything else. This was likely meant for use in any legal proceedings should the expedition be accused of piracy or any other violations of the law. The Council officers signed his statement as witnesses.[14]

After nine days in Guam, the expedition left the island and continued its westward journey. The time in Guam was crucial for the men's health, as they had spent months short on food and especially fresh produce. On March 20, the Council met on the *Marquis* and decided to transfer portions of the expedition's plunder to the *Dutchess* and the *Marquis*. This would prevent a total loss of the plunder should the *Duke* or *Batchelor* be taken captive or founder en route to Britain. Spreading the plunder among the other ships would also alleviate some of the suspicions that crews had towards each other.[15] More importantly, the Council elected to steer southwest toward Batavia. The expedition set sail from Guam on March 21. It was fortunate that the privateers departed when they did because more hardship soon struck Guam. Just months later, a typhoon

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[13] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:12; Council Book, declaration from surgeons dated March 21, 1709, page 105. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[14] Meeting Book, declaration from Figueroa dated March 21, 1709, page 104. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[15] Meeting Book, Council meeting dated March 20, 1710, unnumbered page. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

caused catastrophic damage to the island that surely would have wrecked the expedition's ships.

EAST INDIES

The next two months' entries in Rogers and Cooke's journals mostly contain mundane topics but do illustrate the expedition's fragile state as it continued southwardly. The men were healthier but the ships continued to deteriorate. The *Duke* began to leak so much that every watch had to detach four men to continuously man the pumps instead of only two.[16] High winds also split the ships' rotted sails and the crews took efforts to avoid water spouts that would have only damaged the rigging further.[17]

The expedition skirted the Spanish Philippines (ultimately deciding to avoid Mindanao) but its pilots did not know exactly how to reach any safe havens; Dampier's memory was hazy while the others had never been in the region. On April 29, the Council decided that if the expedition did not find Ternate or Celebes, they would have no choice but to reverse course and stop at Mindanao. That was a risky proposition considering the Spanish in the Philippines were well aware that the expedition was in the Pacific. Dampier also advised the Council to immediately reject New Guinea as an alternative since there were no known settlements to trade with. The Council decided to cruise for ten to twelve more days in the hope that its pilots might recognize an island or landmark. The Council met again on May 8 but could not agree on anything except to

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[16] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 196.
[17] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:26.

test the winds and currents for several more days as everyone was very much lost. Every time a lookout spotted land, nobody was quite sure what island it might be.

Tempers frayed during this time as the famished crews began to suspect the other ships of hoarding supplies. On May 15 an inspection of the *Batchelor* found enough rice to supply the expedition for another three weeks. Discovery of rice convinced some crewmen that the rumors of hoarding were accurate. Distrust between officers spread to the crewmen as well, as Rogers mentioned everyone "being jealous of each other, who had the most Provisions."[18]

On May 22 Rogers described the expedition's worsening state thus, "we begin to be in the utmost want of all manner of Refreshments and Necessaries, and doubtful where to harbour or refit."[19] One week later the privateers reached the island of Buton southeast of Celebes, which held the first allied settlement they encountered since Ilha Grande.[20] As the privateers visited the principal town on Buton, the townspeople were open to trade. Cooke recorded that the privateers traded clothes and metal utensils for produce, but the expedition's official account ledger lists the privateers trading serge, baize, and calico cloth that must have been captured from Spanish coastal shipping.[21] It is likely that the small items Cooke described were part of an informal trade that the agents did not see fit to record.

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[18] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 198.
[19] Ibid..
[20] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:42; Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 201
[21] Account of the Purchase Taken by The Ships Duke and Dutchess, page 10. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.

The Dutch East Indies were a convergence point for South Asian, Southeast Asian, Islamic, and European markets, and the privateers were in the middle of this blend of ancient and modern forces. The king's bodyguards were armed with scimitars and European matchlocks. The ancient stone wall that surrounded Buton had been modified to accommodate cannon. The settlement had a daily herb market for local traders but also accepted Dutch and Spanish coins.[22]

Batavia

With the immediate supply problems rectified, some of the crewmen found time to plot a mutiny. Even more disturbing was the fact that they were led by some unnamed officers. The expedition's senior officers discovered the cabal on June 3 or 4, put the ringleaders in irons, and decided to "break the Knot" by spreading the group of malcontents to different ships.[23] The expedition left Buton on June 7, and not a moment too soon. A separate group of *Dutchess* crewmen were on the verge of mutiny because they had not seen a penny of their shares. They were still frustrated at taking the brunt of damage in the engagement with the *Begoña* and wanted to know what they had earned for their troubles. Rogers and the Council made no mention of the incident but Cooke did. The Council transferred the troublemakers to the *Marquis* and *Duke*. The *Marquis* was the least seaworthy ship and there was no point in the mutineers seizing control of a vessel that might not make it home. The *Duke's* crewmen were loyal to Rogers, so no mutiny could gain traction there.

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[22] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea.*, 2:44
[23] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 201.

The expedition next stopped at Batavia, the Asian headquarters of the *Vereeniade Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), which the British called the Dutch East India Company.[24] In 1602 the Netherlands granted the company a monopoly on the spice trade. A century later the VOC controlled most of the trade between East Asia and Europe, making it the largest corporation in the world. From Batavia Dutch merchmantmen fanned out to ports in China, Japan, Ceylon, and the East Indies. Based on what the Council members knew from the journals of William Dampier, Charles Swan, and William Funnell, they understood that should they challenge the VOC's monopoly on regional trade, they risked subjecting their ships and cargoes to seizure by Dutch officials.

When the expedition arrived and anchored at the Batavia roads on June 21 its leaders knew they would have to readjust their behavior. Their situation was different from that at Guayaquil, Guam, or even Buton. In Batavia there were no permissive government officials who would allow them to engage in trade like those in Buton or the Spanish officials in Guam and the Americas. The expedition leaders explained their presence to the Dutch authorities and sent a list of supplies they wished to purchase. The ships were ordered to remain where they were and only a few of the officers were allowed to go ashore and explore what Cooke called the "metropolis of the Dutch Dominions in India."[25] More importantly for Rogers, he found a surgeon to both remove the musketball that had been lodged inside his face for months and repair his foot. Throughout the expedition's stay, the Dutch only tolerated its presence.

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[24] Bernard Vlekke, *The Story of the Dutch East Indies* (1945), 54.
[25] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:427.

When port authorities let the sailors ashore, all the boats were "severely searched" to assure that they carried nothing to trade for profit.[26] The Council and its accountants had to produce a manifest listing exactly what cargo – down to the last box of thread – was onboard each ship had when it arrived at Batavia. This inventory could be compared to another taken shortly before their departure and anything not accounted for would be assumed to have been sold or traded illegally at Batavia.[27] The Batavia inventory could be compared to one taken at the Cape of Good Hope later in order to determine whether the expedition had done any trading during its crossing of the Indian Ocean where the EIC enjoyed a monopoly in British trade similar to that of the VOC.

Upon learning that the expedition's cargo included nearly 1200 pounds of cloves and 9700 pounds of cinnamon, Dutch officials immediately became suspicious. The VOC did not allow anyone else to trade spices and placed strict quotas on the cultivation of cloves on plantations not owned by the VOC, even on those which were Dutch-owned. The privateers' explanation that the spices had been captured with the *Disengaño* made little difference to VOC officials. The mere ownership of such large quantities of cloves and cinnamon by foreigners posed a threat to Dutch control of the spice trade.[28] With Dover and Courtney onboard, any smuggling on the expedition's part was a reflection upon the Syndicate. To remind all the crewmen of the absolute

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[26] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 209.
[27] Book No. D 115, pages 82-92. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161, Part I, NAUK.
[28] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:ix.

embargo on private trade, the Council also agreed to post notices detailing the restrictions on each ship's mast from that day forward.[29]

For its part, the expedition made an effort to avoid trading for anything but necessary supplies. At a meeting on June 30, the Council agreed to give the sailors more and better food and so Courtney, Rogers, and Charles Pope were tasked with ensuring that the expedition received "not above nor under 350 Pounds [of food] every other Day" and that it included as many vegetables and eggs as possible. In addition, each mess on every ship was entitled to a daily quart of arrack and sugar.[30]

Administrative changes planned by the Council since the expedition's departure from Puerto Seguro were finally implemented. Vanbrugh was officially reinstated as the *Duke's* owners' agent. James Gooddall was made the *Dutchess*' agent while John Vigors and Thomas Glendale became agents for the *Batchelor* and *Marquis* respectively. These men cooperated with the Council in taking stock of all plunder and completing mundane transactions with the Dutch in Batavia.

The expedition needed to keep its books in order, otherwise the VOC could accuse it (and the Syndicate by extension) of anything from short-changing those the expedition traded with to smuggling. Of further importance was the Council's decision to allow each ship's crew to appoint a representative who would work with the agents.

[29] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 206.
[30] Ibid., 2:57; Council Book, minutes for June 30, 1710, folio 110. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

This helped allay the crewmen's fears that expedition leaders were not conducting business honestly.[31]

The Council agreed to advance 10,000 pieces of eight to the ship captains so they could "provide themselves with Necessaries in our long Passage to Europe." Aside from this allotment and the purchase of essential items, the Council decreed "all trading be prohibited by any of us with the inhabitants of this city of Batavia, or this island of Java, or any part of India."[32] To help pay for the supplies, the agents bartered cloth from their previous captures but left the Manila galleon's cargo largely untouched.[33]

Immediately after calculating how to pay the Dutch for needed supplies, the Council had to deal with individuals who spread dissension. First, the Council tried midshipman Henry Duck of the *Dutchess* and found him "Guilty of Notoryous falsitys & Mutinys." Duck's behavior was odd, given the fact that Duck was one of the midshipmen who had criticized Alexander White for similar behavior earlier in the voyage. To punish Duck, and to make an example of him, the Council ordered that he be locked in leg-irons on the *Batchelor's* poop deck for the duration of the expedition's stay at Batavia or until they released him. The Council allowed one concession by keeping him under an awning so he would not die of heat stroke.[34]

The next day, the Council tried Charles May, the *Duke'*s surgeon's mate, for various infractions including going ashore without leave and spreading lies to fellow

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[31] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 206.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Account of the Purchase Taken by The Ships Duke and Dutchess, Folio 12. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.
[34] Council Minutes Book, disciplinary meeting on July 1, 1710. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

Englishmen, in this case officers of the EIC. The Council's record of the trial did not go into any details but its members feared that May's behavior might land the expedition and Syndicate in legal trouble. It was one thing to lie to the Spanish. Deception (e.g., flying false flags) was a common behavior for privateersmen when dealing with an enemy, but not when interacting with allies. The Council decided that May's actions proved he was not responsible enough to care for the sick and so it demoted him and made him join the unfortunate Duck on the *Batchelor's* poop deck to serve an identical sentence.[35] These were harsh punishments, but the two were given at a proper hearing so the crewmen accepted their sentences.

At the same meeting in which the Council tried May, it returned to logistics and gave an additional 6070 pieces of eight to the senior officers in order to purchase additional supplies.[36] Unlike most other privateers and South Sea buccaneers, this expedition ran itself like a business rather than a roving band of freebooters. As always since the beginning, every captain kept a record of all purchases for his ship and regularly compared notes with the agents so there were no discrepancies.[37]

With disciplinary issues and expenses settled for the time being, the expedition desperately needed to repair its ships. The expedition had been in the Dutch East Indies since June 10 but Dutch officials did not agree to assist in getting the ships repaired until June 22, and even then the Dutch were deliberately vague as to when workers and

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[35] Council Minutes Book, disciplinary meeting on July 2, 1710. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[36] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 206; Council Book, meeting dated July 2, 1710,
[37] Bundle No. 75, loose leaf accounts and disbursement papers. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part I, NAUK

folio 116. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

[37] Bundle No. 75, loose leaf accounts and disbursement papers. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part I, NAUK

equipment would arrive from Batavia.[38] Rogers had already sent a letter to Governor-General Abraham van Riebeck telling him that "delays are very prejudicial to our ships, that have been long without the benefit of a friend's port. Which we earnestly request, you'll please to consider." Those pleas fell on deaf ears.[39]

The *sabadar*, who served as the chief customs officer for foreigners, refused to even introduce the officers to the governor. Rogers and Courtney lost patience on July 20 and resorted to bribery. The VOC paid outrageously low wages to its middle management and employees beneath them.[40] In Rogers' expense report, he recorded a sum for six pounds and four shillings (nearly 70 guilders) for "bribing the Guards when Capt Courtney and I waited on ye Generall."[41] The guards quickly waved the captains through to see Riebeck. When he realized he could no longer avoid the meeting with Courtney and Rogers, the governor ordered a VOC vessel to help careen the expedition's ships, along with some Malay caulkers to repair the most severe leaks. The privateers were also allowed to move to an anchorage off Horn Island, which was nearer to the center of Batavia than their previous anchorage.

On July 30, the owners' agents calculated the value of a portion of the currency and precious metals captured to date, determined that each full share in the enterprise was due approximately 26 shillings, and allotted that amount of prize money to each of the crewmen who had elected to be paid fully in shares or 13 shillings to those on the

[38] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 204.
[39] Ibid., 208.
[40] Jean Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: Europeans and Eurasians in Colonial Indonesia* (2009), 33.
[41] Bundle No. 75, loose leaf accounts and disbursement papers. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161, Part I, NAUK

partial share/partial wage plan. While at Gorgona, agents had assessed the value of the plunder taken at Guayaquil but did not authorize paying shareholders anything. Finally, at Batavia, each officer and rating saw an estimate of his earnings from the *Begoña*. That money was still in the ships' holds but at least the privateers had an idea of what their labors had earned them.

While the expedition remained in Batavia, several British Indiamen came and went. On August 21 Rogers sent a letter to the Syndicate via the Indiaman *Nathanael* bound for Britain. In the letter he informed the Syndicate that the expedition had arrived in Batavia more or less intact.[42]

On September 7, the Council instructed Vanbrugh to take 1305 pieces of eight ashore and exchange that amount for Dutch money.[43] Just a little over two weeks later, on September 23, the Council met again and instructed some officers to divide 1341 pieces of eight between the ships' companies as plunder on the spot. The Council assessed a single box filled with gold and silver paper (metal dust that was glued onto a sheet of paper), jewelry, ceremonial swords, amber, and coral. The assessors determined the items' value and instructed the owners' agents to distribute an equivalent amount in Dutch coins (about 3200 guilders) to the members of the crew. This was the first time the crewmen received any solid coin.[44]

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[42] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 209-210.
[43] "List of money disbursed at Batavia," Bundle No. 99, loose paper fragment from Dover to Vanbrugh dated September 7, 1710. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part 1, NAUK.
[44] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:61; Bundle No. 51, cash disbursements at Batavia, unfoliated. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part II, NAUK.

As the season for sailing westward to the Cape of Good Hope then northward to Europe approached, leaders assessed the condition of each of the expedition's ships. The *Marquis* in particular suffered from shipworm and simple wear and tear, which the warm waters exacerbated. An old ship, she was in poor condition when the privateers captured her outside Guayaquil. Crossing the Pacific made her condition worse. The caulkers who examined her determined "that she had but a single bottom, eat to a honeycomb by the worms, they judg'd her altogether unfit to go to Europe."[45] Dutch regulations prevented getting the *Marquis* repaired at Horn Island so the decision was made to sell her and divide her crewmen among the other three ships.

Dutch officials closely regulated the sale of ships to benefit local buyers.[46] The VOC *sabadar* who arranged the auction also informed Rogers that the governor instituted a policy decreeing that anyone who purchased the ship would have to break her up or burn her. Thus the ship would have to be sold as salvage. Dutch policy also forbade the sale of ships to non-Dutch buyers, although that rule was ignored in some cases, as it was now when an EIC captain named John Opie was allowed to participate in the auction for undisclosed reasons.[47] His 575 Dutch guilders (worth just over 240 pieces of eight) was the highest bid on the ship. Vanbrugh strenuously objected to the deal and was not shy about voicing his opinion, while Opie sarcastically offered to sell the ship back to Vanbrugh for ten pieces of eight. Opie already commanded the EIC

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[45] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 207.
[46] William Funnell, *A Voyage Round the World: Containing an Account of Captain Dampier's Expedition into the South-seas in the Ship St. George* (1707), 253.
[47] David Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean: The Adventurous Life of Captian Woodes Rogers* (2011), 91.

frigate *Oley* and did not need the *Marquis*, so he resold her to Chinese merchants, making a profit on the transaction.[48]

The owners' agents made the sale and resale possible by lending Opie £500 (at 50 percent interest). A bill of exchange recorded the transaction and called for repayment of the loan once Opie's Indiaman returned to England. This was a transaction purely between British mariners, and which the VOC had no right to interfere in.[49]

As the days dragged on, some of the English crewmen ran out of patience waiting to return home, deserted, and signed onto EIC ships bound for Britain. Others decided to stay in Batavia and blended in with the local population. These desertions exasperated Rogers, who thought the hardest phase of their journey ended. Furthermore, the deserters forfeited their shares and wages. He described the deserters as "straggling fellows that cant leave their old trade of deferring, tho' now they have a good sum due to each of them, so that their shares are by contract due to those that continu'd."[50]

The original crewmen had been at sea for two years by this point and were aware that they were heading home soon. The sailors also knew there was still a good chance of dying at sea before they finally received payment for their shares. Some probably figured that they might have more lucrative options deserting and signing onto a VOC or EIC ship.[51] Many others knew that disease could still claim them, and at least four men,

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[48] Bundle No. 3, loose leaf letter from Opie to Vanbrugh. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK; Diana Souhami, *Selkirk's Island: The True and Strange Adventures of the Real Robinson Crusoe* (2001), 161.
[49] Paybook, Council statement dated October 14, 1710, page 122. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[50] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 215.
[51] Graham Thomas, *Pirate Hunter: The Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2009), 94.

including the *Duke's* master John Bridge and the *Dutchess'* gunner Francis Weeks, did indeed succumb to fevers during their stay in Batavia. Losing Bridge and Weeks to disease meant losing two specialists who possessed irreplaceable skills.[52] Rogers reported that bloody fluxes (most likely dysentery) incapacitated many more of his crew, mostly from drinking the brackish water at Horn Island. Even healthier crewmen were not immune to hazards, as one of the *Dutchess'* sailors was bitten in half by a shark whilst swimming.[53]

In order to make up for the dead and deserted crewmen, the Council hired on approximately 40 sailors. Most were Dutchmen eager to return to the Netherlands and knew they would be better treated on British privateersmen than on a VOC Indiaman. The fresh crewmen were necessary not only to ease the workload for the remaining hands, but to fulfill the Syndicate's standing orders that all ships were to be fully manned. Since the privateering phase was well and truly over, the new hires only received wages instead of shares. Allowing them shares from plunder taken – which the new hires did not play any part in capturing – would have incensed the old hands who originally departed from Bristol or Cork in 1708.

Departure

On October 14, the expedition left Batavia for the Cape of Good Hope. Its leaders knew they had worn out their welcome in Batavia. Plus, they knew that they had to leave soon or they would be too late to join a convoy leaving the Cape of Good Hope

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[52] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 208.
[53] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:56.

for Europe. VOC convoys were subject to seasonal weather patterns as much as the West Indies and Philippines trade routes were. Furthermore, VOC officers were often Dutch naval officers and so convoy timetables were state matters that could not be modified on a whim. The privateers were already running out of time to take advantage of fair winds. Dampier had previously written about Batavia that "the fair Weather begins in April or May, and continues to October, then the Tornadoes begin to come, but no violent bad Weather till the middle of December."[54]

Several British ships accompanied the expedition when it set out from Batavia, but left the group once it reached the open waters of the Indian Ocean. Vanbrugh sent a letter to the Syndicate via one of the passing merchantmen, summarizing the stay at Batavia and assuring the Syndicate that the crews were "in [every] good Circumstances."[55]

It was fortunate for the privateers that they did not travel from Batavia with a VOC convoy. Despite the safety in numbers, the privateers would have been forced to travel at an even more sluggish pace. The VOC relied on heavy ships with three masts and double oaken hulls. Since they were built with optimal cargo capacity in mind, the Indiamen crawled along at a steady but lethargic two and a half knots. The voyage from the Batavia to the Netherlands measured approximately 15,000 nautical miles. It was a well-established route, honed through decades of trial and error which cost many sailors their lives.

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[54] Dampier, *A Voyage to New Holland*, 84

[55] Bundle No. 3, loose leaf letter from Vanbrugh to Syndicate, dated October 14, 1710. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

Since the Dutch merchants and guilds knew that timely deliveries mattered in setting market value for spices, they designated the Cape of Good Hope as the single rest stop on the route. Ships that did not tack at the right moment risked wandering aimlessly until the westerlies pushed them back and ran them aground in western Australia. All these factors made the Batavia-Texel route perilous, resulting in one out of twenty ships that sailed from Java never reaching Texel. The Syndicate privateers ran those same risks as they sailed practically the same route.[56]

The expedition held course for over two months before finally reaching the Cape of Good Hope. This part of the voyage passed without much incident, although it was abundantly clear by now that both ships and men were still in poor shape. With little opportunity to resupply between the East Indies and the Cape, fresh water began to run out and the expedition implemented water rationing once again.[57] The *Duke's* chief surgeon Jacobus Wasse died, taking his professional education and "study of physick" with him. Shortly afterward a sailor named Joseph Long, either through exhaustion or carelessness, fell overboard whilst stowing an anchor and drowned before the *Duke'*s crew reached him. Rogers spent the first few weeks laid up in his cabin, not quite recovered from the surgeries on his foot and mouth.[58] The expedition also needed to travel at a painfully slow pace because the hasty repairs at Batavia were not as thorough as previously hoped; the *Duke* sprung another leak and the *Dutchess* was not in much

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[56] Simon Leys, *The Wreck of the Batavia: A True Story*, 4.
[57] Letter from Edward Acton to John Batchelor dated May 29, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[58] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 215.

better condition. The *Batchelor's* construction made her seaworthy but she had not been built for speed.

CAPE TOWN

Despite the very real threat of losing its bearings, the expedition reached the Cape on December 30. With the instantly recognizable Table Mountain in view, the privateers and the Dutch garrison exchanged salutes. The British Indiaman *Donegal* also joined in the ceremony, representing the British mercantile presence on Africa's far southern point; the *Donegal* was homeward bound on her own long voyage from Mocha.

Cape Town might not have generated as much commerce as the burgeoning entrepot in the Dutch East Indies, but it filled the need for a way station on the route between Batavia and the Netherlands and served as a vital crossroads between the Indian and Atlantic networks.[59] Just west of the Cape, Table Bay provided an anchorage for ships sailing between Atlantic European ports and Indian Ocean ports in the East Indies and India. Between 1700 and 1714, Table Bay provided safe harbor to over 1000 ships. Of those, approximately two-thirds flew Dutch colors but hundreds of British and Portuguese vessels also stopped there.[60] Britain's alliance with the Dutch allowed the

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[59] Kerry Ward, *"Tavern of the Seas"? The Cape of Good Hope as an Oceanic Crossroads during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* in *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*, ed. by Jeremy Bentley (2007), 138.
[60] Ibid., 143.

privateers to resupply and refresh themselves just as they had at Batavia. The expedition also put sixteen sick men ashore and paid for their treatment at the local hospital.[61]

While awaiting an opportunity to depart with a convoy, the expedition ships filled their water casks and began taking on supplies. On January 18, 1711, the Council authorized Rogers and Courtney to use some of the expedition's unwrought gold and silver as well as to sell or trade six slaves to pay for the needed provisions and stores. Since both the Syndicate's agents and expedition crewmen were loathe to part with precious metals, bartering with slaves and cloth was preferable.[62] The expedition's agents catalogued every item they sold or traded, even a length of crape that was worth only six stuivers (about sixpence).[63] The expedition's ships were soon reprovisioned and the crewmen ready to sail for home.

Much to their unhappiness, no suitable Europe bound convoy arrived for them to join until early April. Rogers and Cooke spent time on their journals while they were otherwise idle. Rogers especially wrote about the potential trade that the British had in India if only they had established colonies on the Cape that might facilitate that commerce. He also spoke with Dover and Courtney and proposed foregoing the convoy altogether and just taking the expedition or one frigate to Brazil where they could trade

[61] Bundle No. 64, loose leaf account of money paid for the sick. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Pt. II, NAUK.
[62] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 216.
[63] Account of the Purchase Taken by The Ships Duke and Dutchess, an account of sundry goods sold. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.

away their cloth at an immense profit. The other two captains firmly rejected Roger's proposal and so the ships remained together.[64]

As the expedition waited, its numbers dwindled further. Carlton Vanbrugh, who persistently annoyed both officers and crewmen during the expedition, and who had caused diplomatic incidents in the Canaries and in Brazil, succumbed to disease. The wounds he sustained during the engagement with the *Begoña* probably included third-degree burns that compromised his immune system. Three other members of the expedition (including one officer) died and four deserted and melted into the Cape population before the expedition finally set sail.[65]

While waiting, the Council sent a letter to the Syndicate, assuring the owners that the expedition was doing well and informing them that it was refitting at the Cape of Good Hope. The Council also reported that all the ships were sufficiently manned and supplied, and that all the officers hoped to be on their way to Britain by the end of March.[66] The Council sent the original letter to Bristol with Opie, who had followed them to the Cape and left for Britain before they did. Several days later, the officers gave a copy of the letter to a Danish ship that was headed in the same direction. When he reached London Opie reported what he knew about the expedition to his EIC employers thereby alerting them to the possible infringement of the company's monopoly on trade in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The EIC would prepare accordingly.

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[64] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 216.
[65] Ibid., 218.
[66] Bundle No. 8, letter from Council to Syndicate dated February 7, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

Unbeknownst to Rogers, Dover also sent a letter to the Syndicate. Signed by seven Council members including Cooke, Courtney, and Dampier, it accused Rogers of gross incompetence and hoarding plunder. All of the assignees were from the *Dutchess* and *Batchelor*, signifying that the rift had deepened between officers of different ships. Dampier, hoping to end the voyage with powerful friends, had evidently figured Dover's faction was going to come out ahead. In addition to incompetence, Dover added charges that Rogers was a secret Catholic, and that he was plotting to take the *Duke* to Brazil and Newfoundland not for the expedition's profit but for his own private gain. Dover assured the Syndicate that neither he nor the others who signed the letter would go along with such a plan and that Rogers' faction would be responsible for "all Damages whatsoever that may happen or Ensue from such Proceedings and Neglect."[67] By denigrating Rogers, who was the commander of the expedition, the signees came close to violating the orders to achieve consensus. Technically, they did not make their disapproval public and so they had followed the letter of the law if not the spirit.

Despite the official consensus in other matters, the Council was all but fractured with Rogers and Dover effectively not on speaking terms outside the meetings. Dover's complaints, combined with his influence with other officers, caused much frustration for Rogers during the voyage. The aggregate effects of Dover's irate letters home may have compelled the Syndicate to cut Rogers out of the post-voyage administration. Council members had started to bicker more after Guayaquil and the breaking point came after the fight against the *Begoña*. The long-simmering tension had gotten progressively

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[67] Meeting Book, letter from Thomas Dover to Syndicate, pages 126-127. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

worse until the expedition's arrival at Batavia. With starvation and shipwreck averted, the officers no longer needed to work together simply to survive. With little to keep them occupied while awaiting the opportunity to join a convoy, they turned on one another and brought up issues that had been smoldering for months. The main disputes were over missed opportunities at Guayaquil and perceived unfairness in dividing the spoils. The situation was exacerbated by the irascible personalities of those – Rogers and Dover – who led the two main factions. Dover's group of about seven members was small, but included both of the Syndicate members that accompanied the expedition. As a result, the rest of the Syndicate paid more attention to their views when it received the dispatches. At this moment, however, Rogers was blissfully unaware of the note.

Finally during early April, a suitable convoy began to coalesce at the Cape.[68] Twelve ships in a VOC convoy arrived first. Four ships from Ceylon arrived shortly afterward. While these vessels repaired damage inflicted by a cyclone off Madagascar that sank two of their convoy, additional ships arrived until, on April 7, the *Duke*, *Dutchess*, and *Batchelor* weighed anchor and joined a Texel-bound convoy of sixteen Dutch and six other British ships.[69]

The privateers were headed back to Europe after months of operating on the edges of maritime law. The officers and crewmen had functioned first as privateers and smugglers, then as merchants, and struggled to transition between these roles. Their ability to continue to work together would soon be tested even more vigorously when the

[68] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:430.
[69] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 219.

expedition reached Europe and its leaders had to defend their rights to plunder from external parties. After that, the owners and sailors struggled to divide said plunder.

CHAPTER X

JOURNEY HOME

After departing the Cape settlement, the expedition reentered the Syndicate's Atlantic network. The same web of economic and familial relationshps that had assisted the Syndicate in organizing the expedition in 1708 affected the expedition once again in 1711. The Syndicate members used their business and personal connections in Bristol, London, and elsewhere to assist in ensuring that the three ships reached home safely, and the London investors utilized theirs in the EIC and in the Netherlands when they learned that the expedition would stop there en route to Britain. Their efforts were necessary because the expedition was still in an extremely vulnerable position in which competitors could accuse it of any number of misdeeds.

The voyage from the Cape to Texel proved to be uneventful. Before putting to sea on April 6, Dutch admiral Peter De Vos ordered the captains of all the ships of the convoy to remain together for protection. This would prove unnecessary because the journey passed without spotting a single Spanish or French vessel. The expedition's last shots fired in anger had been discharged off Cabo San Lucas, and since that time the expedition encountered no hostile ships. If they had sailed alone, the expedition might have gone first to the Slave Coast, Madeira or the Azores and then directly to the British Isles. A massive convoy such as the one the expedition ships sailed in, however, needed to stick to better patrolled lanes where the ships could stop at more accommodating seaports in case of emergency. The convoy passed the British-owned St. Helena on April 30 and Ascension a week later. During this final leg of the journey, the Dutch

naval officers were far more courteous than the VOC colonial administrators and provided regular entertainment for the officers during the voyage.

While the expedition officers relaxed and enjoyed the hospitality that the Dutch naval officers provided, crewmen became more agitated with the speed of the convoy that was dictated by the slow, lumbering Indiamen. Although Rogers and the Council made no mention of it, Cooke writes that two more Dutch sailors were flogged and put in irons on the *Dutchess* on June 8 for "Mutiny and Quarrelling."[1]

French privateers out of St. Malo and Dunkirk posed such a threat to British and Dutch ships passing through the English Channel, that Admiral De Vos chose to avoid that direct route and instead sailed west of Ireland then to the Shetland Islands north of Scotland. On July 14, convoy officers learned from a Dublin-bound Danish convoy that the War of the Spanish Succession still raged on. Rogers gave the Danes a copy of his Cape dispatch to take to Dublin and from there forward it to Bristol. The next day, the allied convoy reached the Shetland Islands where it paused to await the arrival of Dutch warships that would escort the convoy on its final leg of the voyage. The Dutch naval escort arrived on the same day, and on July 16 Rogers forwarded yet another copy of his Cape dispatch to the Syndicate via a Shetland fishing boat.[2] The Syndicate received both of Rogers' letters, although its recorders did not specify when the correspondence arrived except to say "a little before [Rogers'] arrival July 1711."[3]

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[1] Edward Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea* (1712), 2:95.
[2] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 222.
[3] Bundle No. 18, loose leaf letter from Rogers to John Batchelor and Company. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

In the letters Rogers repeated his previous warning that "no Doubt the English East India Company will procure a convoy to meet us." In the latest dispatch from the Shetlands he asked the Syndicate to use its contacts in the Admiralty to prevent any of the crewmen from being impressed upon their arrival in British waters. For the sailors to endure more than three years at sea, in strange waters, then to return home only to be snatched by a press gang struck him as cruelly unfair.[4]

Despite the opportunity to purchase fresh provisions from the locals, more sailors became ill – many from exposure and/or sheer exhaustion – before their two-day stay ended. By that point there were more than 40 sick on the *Dutchess* alone.[5]

There were disagreements amongst the officers, Rogers reported in his letter, but they were not nearly as internecine as the initial infighting when they set out in August 1708. Unknown to Rogers, however, Dover had also sent a letter (signed by six of the *Dutchess* officers) to the Syndicate on July 16. It had been sitting in his sea chest for a month and now he finally had an opportunity to send it without being noticed. In the letter Dover again complained about Rogers and suggested that the *Duke's* officers were responsible for "any Loss by Sea or Embeslement."[6] Dover seems to have been the only active antagonist to Rogers during the voyage's final stage, with his faction passively

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[4] Bundle No. 18, letter from Rogers to Owners, dated July 16, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," NAUK; Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 222.
[5] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712), 222; Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:98.
[6] Dover to the Syndicate, dated July 1717, as quoted in Tim Beattie, *The Cruising Voyages of William Dampier, Woodes Rogers, and George Shelvocke and Their Impact* (2013), 105; John Parker's Book, page 133. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

cosigning Dover's letters. Stephen Courtney also sent a private dispatch to Bristol at this time but only described the mundane day-to-day affairs and did not attack Rogers.[7]

On July 17, the convoy sailed southward. Four days later, one of the warships left the convoy, sailed to Texel, and spread word that the convoy would reach the port shortly. Rogers sent more correspondence via that ship, hoping that it would reach any Syndicate members awaiting the expedition's arrival in the Netherlands. The expedition's dispatches from the Cape of Good Hope had suggested the ships might stop at the Netherlands, and the Shetlands dispatches confirmed that Texel was the destination and so the Syndicate focused its efforts there. The convoy reached Texel late on July 23.[8]

TEXEL

The Syndicate had been preparing for the arrival of the expedition from as far back as June. Thomas Palmer, one of the Syndicate members from London, wrote to John Romsey in Bristol and enclosed a letter of introduction to his friend Robert Jackson, a British merchant who partnered with a Dutch merchant in Amsterdam who was willing to assist in dealing with legal complications that might arise with Dutch authorities once the expedition arrived in the Netherlands.[9]

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[7] Letter from Stephen Courtney to James Hollidge and Company, July 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[8] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 222; Graham Thomas, *Pirate Hunter: The Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2009), 96.
[9] Letter from Thomas Palmer to John Romsey, dated June 23, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

Edward Acton, another London member who joined the Syndicate after the expedition left Bristol, had relatives who worked for the EIC. They passed Acton everything they heard at the office about the Syndicate and its expedition. Acton also did some investigative work himself. When visiting the EIC's headquarters for business purposes, but surreptitiously eavesdropped on meetings that might mention the Syndicate. Acton's relations clearly took their kinship with him seriously, as their actions would surely have meant dismissal from the EIC if they were caught. Perhaps the most important information came from Acton's uncle who told him – and Acton warned the Syndicate – that, "the Comp would certainly seize, our ships all their effects and that of right they did belong to them as having been in their seas."[10]

Weeks before the expedition reached the Netherlands, Peter de Wolff and Daniel Crellius offered to assist the Syndicate in its dealings with officials in Amsterdam. The two men were either prominent merchants (they refer to each other as partners) or, more likely, government officials given their statement in a letter that they could arrange calling a meeting of the legislature, if desirable. They also said that they could meet with "one of the chiefest officers" in the Dutch Admiralty to discuss what to do with the expedition when it arrived. Beginning on June 12, the two Dutchmen sent a series of letters to Batchelor in Bristol proposing a reciprocal arrangement in which they would block the VOC and the EIC from interfering with the expedition in return for which the Syndicate would allow the Dutch to purchase all the expedition's cargo. The Dutchmen urged the Syndicate to "take in consideration to lett the cargoes of your sayd South Sea

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[10] Loose leaf letter from Edward Acton to John Batchelor, August 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

Ships be sold here… being the sayd goods in no place will yield better prices than here." Doubting they would get as much from selling to the Dutch as they could by selling their cargo at auction in Britain, the Syndicate ignored the offer.[11] The Dutchmen repeated that offer in letters dated June 26 and June 29, and again there is no record of any reply from the Syndicate.[12]

On July 24, the day after the expedition dropped anchor in Texel, Rogers "went up to Amsterdam" where he found correspondence waiting for him. It was from the Syndicate and it warned Rogers and the Council to stay at anchor and to not leave for Britain under any circumstances.

Three days later, on July 27, expedition leaders received a message from the Syndicate dated June 6 informing them that the Syndicate's members were preparing for the expedition's arrival.[13] First, they stated that they were glad the expedition had made it safely to Europe (the writers had assumed the expedition had reached Europe). Second, they reported that they had been corresponding with friends and associates in London to develop a legal strategy to deal with the EIC whose leaders were using their considerable political clout to find some legal grounds on which to sue the Syndicate. The letter stated that Syndicate members were confident the expedition had not broken any laws while in the Pacific, but that they were concerned about what its sailors might

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[11] Loose leaf letter from Peter de Wolff and Daniel Crellius to John Batchlor and Company, dated June 12, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[12] Loose leaf letter from Peter de Wolff and Daniel Crellius to John Batchelor and Company, dated June 26, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK; Bundle No.2, letter from Peter de Wolff and Daniel Crellius to John Batchelor and Company, dated June 29, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[13] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:100.

do while in the Netherlands. Any infraction – such as trading silk – that could be interpreted as violating the monopolies of the VOC or EIC could have dire ramifications. Since the Syndicate wanted to make sure the Council received the letter, it had mailed copies to Rotterdam, Galway, and Harwich in case the expedition put into any of those ports before reaching Texel. Rogers was annoyed at the general tone of the letter and its lack of any specific instructions.

More importantly, he was distressed by letters he received from his wife and mother informing him that his family's finances had deteriorated while he was away and that the Syndicate had done nothing to help the Rogerses. Creditors had no doubt been hounding that family. Rogers furiously scribbled a letter to the Syndicate complaining that he had expected better treatment of his family and pleaded "for Christ's sake don't lett me be torn to pieces at home [by creditors] after I have been so rack'd abroad."[14]

Rogers was not the only unhappy soul in the expedition. Crewmen were angered when officers refused to allow them to go ashore for fear that they might carry with them something that could be used as evidence that the expedition had infringed upon the VOC's monopoly on trade with the East Indies. As at Batavia, trading even a single handful of cloves could be enough to bring the VOC raining lawsuits down on the expedition. Worried that their ships might be seized and condemned by overzealous Dutch officials, the Council ordered that no Dutchmen be allowed to come onboard any of the expedition's three ships.[15] This also had the unintended effect of causing some

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[14] Loose leaf letter from Woodes Rogers to John Batchelor, Thomas Goldney, and Christopher Shuter dated July 27, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[15] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:102.

Dutch sailors who had joined the expedition in Batavia to threaten to desert if they were not paid the wages due them and be permitted to go ashore. On July 28, Cooke made an exception when he let some of his Dutch crewmen go ashore on a 24-hour pass so they could see their families in Amsterdam. Those crewmen who went ashore signed a note stating that they would pay 100 pieces of eight from their wages if they returned late, and forfeit all their wages if they did not return at all.[16] Cooke also wrote to unnamed authorities in Amsterdam, requesting permission to discharge the Batavia sailors early but some had already run out of patience. On August 1, Cooke reported that eighteen of the Batavia contingent deserted by sneaking onto a passing Dutch boat. They had only signed on to get home and decided that was more important than getting paid.[17]

At around this time, Syndicate members got word of the expedition's arrival in the Netherlands and James Hollidge and Edward Acton traveled to Texel, arriving there on August 10. They were later joined by Philip Freke and John Duckinfield.[18] Rogers, Dover, and Courtney were largely powerless to influence Dutch officials, but the four Syndicate members had contacts among the business and government leaders in the Netherlands. On August 11, the Dutch customs officials sent a dispatch to the expedition, reassuring its leaders that the EIC could not seize their ships in Texel. Dutch law held that no two ships belonging to the same country could seize each other's cargoes in Dutch territorial waters. Any breach of that law would be "a very

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[16] Loose leaf sworn statement dated July 20, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part II, NAUK.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Book of Objecon, For special Rept. dated August 12/25, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

unwarrantable undertaking" that the Dutch would neither permit nor condone.[19] Expedition officers welcomed the news because it temporarily removed any threat from the EIC thus giving them more time to prepare their response to lawsuits they expected the EIC to file against them.

It had been years since the expedition officers had spoken directly to any Syndicate member aside from Dover or Courtney. The presence of more Syndicate members reassured the crews that they would be heading home soon. In an effort to curb desertions, the Council decided to distribute some payment for the crewmen "to recruit themselves ashore." On August 12, the Council met and gave Hollidge £1800 in gold and "other Treasure" to distribute among the crew. Every able seaman received twenty Dutch guilders, and every landsman ten. This disbursement contented the crewmen as they impatiently awaited their next orders. The officers received larger sums proportionate to their rank. They were also given funds to purchase necessary supplies for their ships.[20]

Two days later, some officers drafted a short account of the expedition's activities during the entire voyage, including the seizure of prizes, the Guayaquil raid, and the expedition's visits to Guam and Batavia. The account rather emphatically insisted that no one had traded anything in the East Indies except to purchase essential supplies. Perhaps most importantly, the account also asserted that each of the ships had a letter of marque, a license making it a legal privateering enterprise, and that the *Duke*

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[19] Loose leaf letter dated July 31/August 11, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[20] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:103.

and *Dutchess* had originally set out as privateersmen and not as merchantmen who had seized enemy shipping without a letter of marque.[21]

Every officer and all but three of the ratings signed the account and gave it to the Syndicate members in Amsterdam who, along with the expedition's senior officers met Texel's chief magistrate, presented the signed oaths, and swore that the account of the voyage was true.[22] Whatever the Dutch suspicions were, the sworn statements allayed those doubts and allowed the expedition to prepare for departure. Between August 17 and 29, the expedition paid the Batavia crewmen any wages due them and discharged them from the expedition.[23] The Syndicate and Council wished them gone so the accountants could begin calculating the number and value of shares without fear that the crewmen who joined the expedition in Batavia might suddenly claim they were entitled to shares and perhaps bring suit to claim them.

As the Batavia crewmen were discharged, the expedition waited at anchor in Texel Road and ran up expenses. Throughout August and September, the expedition's captains gave receipts for their time in Texel to Hollidge, who combined them with his own expenses and presented a bill for over 9700 guilders to the rest of the Syndicate. The items on the bill included pilot fees, insuring the *Batchelor* while she lay at anchor, and even eight guilders and twelve stuivers for postage fees (about fifteen shillings and

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[21] Ibid., 2:107.
[22] John Parker's Meeting Book entry dated August 14/25, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/136, NAUK; Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 1:432, 2:107-108.
[23] James Goodal Book for Ships No. E, loose leaf debit account dated August 17, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Pt. I, NAUK.

sixpence).[24] All these accounts were tabulated while the expedition awaited authorization to depart. The British Admiralty, which was in contact with the Syndicate, also took it upon itself to suggest that the expedition pay off and discharge as many crewmen as possible in order to avoid costs. Since most of the crewmen were paid in shares, however, that was impossible without sparking a mutiny.[25]

On August 19, four British warships dropped anchor in Texel Road (neither the officers nor the Syndicate members knew exactly why) but all hands hoped that the warships would escort them on the final leg of the journey home. The crewmen had already been kept onboard for weeks and the officers "had much ado to keep the Companies aboard till now."[26]

The VOC and Dutch government officials had not been the only threat to the expedition. The EIC believed its monopoly on trade in the Pacific and Indian Oceans entitled it at least a portion of the proceeds from the sale of those goods captured in the *Disengaño* that originated in China and the East Indies. Among other British merchants, there also must have been the fear that Dutch consumer goods might be clandestinely mixed into the expedition's cargo, which grated with British merchants. Writing in 1714, the British essayist Richard Steele vehemently excoriated the VOC. "The prohibited Manufactures of China and India often find their Way back [to England] from Holland," Steele ranted, "by clandestine Reimportations [either by the EIC and

[24] James Goodal Book for Ships, loose leaf expense report to Messr James Hollidge & Comp. dated April 11, 1716. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Pt. I, NAUK.
[25] Copy of a Letter from the Admiralty Office, dated August 29, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[26] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, 224.

smugglers], by which the fair Trader is greatly damnify'd."[27] It was ironic that the Syndicate's expedition, which had been intended to benefit and increase British commerce, was being attacked by the same parties who might benefit from the voyage's after effects. As the Syndicate cautioned the Council, "we lye liable both to the English and the Dutch East-India Company upon any Mismanagement, and they are resol'd to give us all possible disturbance."[28]

The flurry of correspondence between Syndicate members in Bristol and their colleagues in the Netherlands continued unabated and several Syndicate members, including John Batchelor, John Romsey, Francis Rogers, and Christopher Shuter, temporarily moved to London in an attempt to speed up communication and to seek government support. They were later joined by Thomas Clement, Thomas Coutes, Thomas Goldney, John Hawkins, and Lawrence Hollister. With Acton and Palmer already in London, approximately half the Syndicate members went to London at one point during the time the expedition ships were in the Netherlands.[29]

It is difficult to determine exactly who was in London at any one time because most of the correspondence is addressed to "John Batchelor and Company" or simply "Sirs." In a letter dated August 23, the investors in London informed their colleagues in Amsterdam that steps were being taken to "procure One or Two Men of War" to escort the three ships across the North Sea. This was probably a reference to John Romsey and

[27] Richard Steele, *An Essay upon trade, and publick credit; shewing that advantages of the East-India prohibition, bankrupts affidavits, &c.* (1714), 9.
[28] Cooke, *A Voyage to the South Sea*, 2:101.
[29] Letter from John Batchelor and Company to Peter de Woolf, dated August 3, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

Thomas Palmer who had been trying to persuade Lord Treasurer Robert Harley to get the Admiralty to send warships to the Netherlands in order to protect the expedition from enemy warships and privateers as well as from interference by the EIC. Palmer was soon added to the list of managers for his efforts; the Syndicate had added some personnel who were not shareholders but who were paid for performing administrative tasks.[30] Harley was particularly amenable to helping the expedition because he was enraptured with the idea of South Sea trade. In fact, just as the War of the Spanish Succession ended, Harley became a key contributor to the South Sea economic bubble. On August 29 the lobbying in Whitehall finally bore fruit, when the Admiralty promised that a squadron under Thomas Hardy would soon be "ordered to convoy the [expedition] to England."[31]

Meanwhile, the Syndicate and its friends in Amsterdam were worried about EIC agents intercepting correspondence. On September 13, Hollidge personally delivered dispatches to his colleagues in Britain instead of sending them by courier. In order to escape notice by EIC agents, Hollidge did not sail directly from Amsterdam but instead traveled overland to The Hague and Rotterdam, and from there crossed the North Sea.[32]

Dutch officials cleared the expedition to depart on September 19, escorted by Kerrill Roffey's (not Hardy's) squadron of four ships that arrived that same day. Once the weather permitted, they left Texel on September 25. To ensure that the warships

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[30] Loose leaf "Copy of Letter to Msrs. Hollidge Freek, Duckinfield" dated August 28, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[31] Loose leaf copy of letter from Admiralty to John Romsey, dated August 29, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[32] Loose leaf letter from Peter de Wolff and Crelius to John Batchelor and Company, September 18, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

protected their three ships, expedition leaders entertained senior naval officers lavishly and presented them with “gifts” that included fine wines, tea sets, and lace. In all the Syndicate spent 1210 guilders (almost £109) ingratiating themselves with their escort.[33]

BRITAIN

Once word of the expedition’s presence in Texel spread to Britain, smaller businessmen ranging in size from the Guild of Porters to small subcontractors who advertised their “judgment and dispatch in business” offered to help unload goods. It is likely that the subcontractors would be discreet enough to not ask too many questions about the origins of the cargo.[34]

The expedition reached the Downs on October 2, but was prevented by the weather from moving upriver for nearly a fortnight. On October 14, the ships moored at Erith and began unloading. After more than three years of stormy weather, near-mutinies, scurvy, and fighting the Spanish and French, the expedition was back in England. Its arrival in Britain brought its arduous voyage to an end but a new phase was just beginning.

The very next day, the EIC claimed ownership of all the privateersmen and their cargoes. An EIC agent and some aides rowed out to each ship and nailed a legal notice stating such to the hulls of all three ships. This was exactly what the Syndicate had feared, and what it had prepared for over the past several months. As a precaution, the

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[33] Bundle No. 99, “Owners of the Duke Dutches & c. to Thomas Dover.” “Creagh v. Rogers,” C 104/161, Pt. I, NAUK.
[34] Loose leaf letter from Samuel Proctor, undated. “Creagh v. Rogers,” C 104/160, NAUK.

Syndicate had already sent an attorney named John Ward to represent it in the Court of the Exchequer. Ward was clearly on retainer and his task was to fight any lawsuit against the expedition or Syndicate. It cannot be exactly known when he was hired since much of his correspondence is not dated. The earliest date on any in the archives is October 30, 1711, but it is clear that by then he had represented the Syndicate for some time.[35] There is a bill from Ward in the National Archives for everything from his fee to tavern expenses, amounting to over £116.[36]

In the midst of the ensuing excitement, Rogers was worried. He had tried on multiple occasions to get instructions from the Syndicate regarding the unloading of cargo. He also wanted to know how exactly the Syndicate planned to reimburse the expedition for naval stores and provisions that the Council had bought, as per the 1708 articles. Dover and the late Vanbrugh's letters home had indubitably influenced Syndicate members' view of Rogers. As a result, the Syndicate appears to have cut Rogers out of post-voyage administration.

In a November 3 letter to the Syndicate, Rogers wrote that he had hoped for a workable plan from it to unload cargo and deal with demobilized crewmen, but instead had received "nothing butt delays & disappointments." Among many other points, Rogers stated that he would not allow the *Batchelor* to be unloaded until the Syndicate assured him that the EIC would not seize her cargo. He closed with a warning that the expedition's articles were "very doubtfully worded & it is very justly to be feared that

[35] Loose leaf letter to "Mr. Fran. Rogers Atty. Golden key in Grace Church." "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[36] Bundle No. 34, loose leaf "Creagh v. Rogers, C 104/160, NAUK; Schedule Book, page 65. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

both Officers and Seamen [and the Syndicate members too] will be perplex'd with many Law Suits."[37]

Rogers' prediction proved accurate; there were numerous suits brought against the Syndicate. The EIC's lawsuit involved the most money and took the longest time to deal with. The Syndicate first bribed customs officials with £149 for unstated reasons, although that was likely to ensure that they would not side with the EIC. Through a succession of conferences, lavish dinners, endless rounds of beer and wine, and bribes to EIC officials, the Syndicate managed to strike an accord with the company. In early 1712, the two organizations reached a £6161 settlement to satisfy all claims by the EIC against the expedition. Some Syndicate members opposed the settlement, but others considered it better than wasting thousands more pounds in protracted legal disputes.[38]

The Company of Silk Throwers or Throwsters also sued over a possible infringement of its own monopoly, hoping to gain some of the proceeds from the cargo sales, but was unsuccessful and the suit was thrown out of court.[39]

In January 1712, an individual named Stephen Creagh convinced 209 crewmen to sign a statement declaring him their agent in exchange for five percent of their wages. Creagh filed multiple suits against Rogers, Courtney, and the Syndicate members in the Court of Chancery charging all the owners and captains with cheating the crewmen and Rogers specifically with cheating the Syndicate.

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[37] Loose leaf "Captain Woodes Rogers demand of the Owners" dated November 3, 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[38] Bryan Little, *Crusoe's Captain: Being the Life of Woodes Rogesr, Seaman, Trader, Colonial Governor* (1960), 149.
[39] B.M.H. Rogers, "Woodes Rogers's Privateering Voyage of 1708-1711," *Mariner's Mirror* 19:2, (1933), 200.

Every Council meeting report, every purchase made during the voyage, and copies of all correspondence between the Council and the Syndicate were compiled into ledgers and presented at court. The case went up to the Court of Chancery, the highest court in England and Wales, where Lord Chancellor Simon Harcourt ruled that the ships' articles regarding plunder would stand as written and assigned the master John Meller to settle all specific grievances that the Syndicate members and crewmen may have had.[40]

While Harcourt's rulings were basically in favor of the Syndicate, they did serve to prevent the Syndicate taking advantage of the sailors in any new ways thereafter. In one instance, the Syndicate it demanded £2700 from the crews' shares (which included Rogers') because the owners decided the Council had spent too long waiting to join a convoy at Batavia. The Syndicate insisted on having nine months' wages (the £2700) deducted from the officer and crewmen's accounts. This was another case in which the Syndicate tried to penalize Rogers and the Council for adhering to the Syndicate's own orders to operate as the officers thought necessary to insure the safety of the expedition. Meller ruled the owners had no grounds to take money from the crewmen and so protected their wages.[41]

Responding to the suits incurred expensive legal fees and wasted so much time that payment to the shareholders and crew were delayed for nearly two years. The disputes also had a ripple effect by confusing the accountants so that some of the

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[40] Tim Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages of the Early Eighteenth Century* (2015), 92-93.
[41] Schedule Book, page 61. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

crewmen were not fully paid off until July 1714. The paybook was not even finalized as late as 1717 due in part to the owners and crewmen claiming more money.[42]

SALES AND EXPENSES

With the claims of the EIC settled, sales of the ships and their cargoes began and the resultant profits were added to income from other sources. Neither of the original owners' agents had survived the voyage so the Syndicate members and their managers, with Meller overseeing the proceeds, began compiling a list of money and shares due to officers and crewmen of the expedition.

The *Duke* and *Dutchess* were sold quickly. They had been worn out even by the time they reached Cabo San Lucas, and would require extensive repairs or have to be broken up to salvage reusable materials. Together the frigates sold for a combined sum of £935 while the *Batchelor* was sold for £895. The gold and silver plate, paper, and dust were also easily exchanged for over £10,100. Sale of the rest of the cargo would be far more complicated.[43] Unloading it took months as Syndicate agents examined every container and bale to make sure that it matched an entry on the manifest.

The prize goods were sold in London's Marine Coffee House on Birchin Lane. The first of nine sales was held on February 27, 1712 and the last sometime in May 1713. The sales were held approximately two months apart to avoid saturating the market and driving down prices. The combined sales brought in nearly £127,000, a

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[42] Account of the Purchase Taken by the Ships Duke and Dutchess, last page. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.
[43] Schedule Book, pages 52-53. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

figure that dwarfed that derived from the sale of the ships, the tribute paid by Guayaquil to prevent its destruction, the ransoms paid by Spanish ship-owners for the return of those vessels seized by the expedition, Pichberty's bills of exchange, the smaller ransoms paid by individual prisoners taken on said prizes, the gold and silver plate and specie, slaves, and "sundries" received over the course of the voyage.[44] The gross profits from the voyage, including the aforementioned items, amounted to £147,975, twelve shillings, and four pence.[45]

Expenses

From the nearly £148,000 gross profits, £42,159 was deducted to pay for customs fees, William Dampier's pay (his was a special case), and "storm money." This left a balance of approximately £105,816.

As per the 1708 agreement, the Syndicate claimed two-thirds these profits. By purchasing shares originally assigned to expedition members (explained below), the Syndicate raised its two-thirds portion enough that the sum increased to £87,293, from which £49,584 was deducted to pay costs that were the Syndicate's responsibility. These included expenses incurred in preparing the expedition for its departure (£13,188), sailors' wages (£12,262), provisions bought by the Council during the voyage (£11,295), the settlement with the EIC (£6161), the privateering commission (£2689), fees for managers who assisted the Syndicate (£2400), and smaller amounts for bribes, enough to

[44] Ship Duke Debtor No. 2, page 23. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part II, NAUK.
[45] Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 149.

reduce the Syndicate's share to just under £38,000.[46] That amount was later increased once the unspent funds remaining in the Syndicate treasury were returned.

Since the expedition was entitled to the remaining one-third of the profits, the officers and crew should have divided up £49,325 but that amount was also reduced by deductions from the general account.

The Syndicate's portion was then by 256, the number of shares the investors purchased before the voyage had set out. Investors had paid £103 and ten shillings for each share, and when all the goods were sold and calculations completed, those same shares were valued at £189, twelve shillings, and three pence according to B.M.H. Rogers' calculations (which are the most accurate).[47] The Syndicate members were paid off relatively quickly, once the prize cargoes were sold. They did not have to wait for the expedition shares to be calculated and could easily access the funds.

Wages to the Men

Calculating the amount due to officers and crewmen was more complicated than paying the investors. The Syndicate approved some bonuses to sailors' individual accounts. Every crewman who participated in the capture of the *Havre de Grace* was given an extra guinea. Most of the crewmen were also entitled to "storm money" for their part in attacking Guayaquil. The amount received depended on the crewman's rank. Each landsman received ten pounds while captains and second captains received

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[46] Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages*, 93.

[47] B.M.H. Rogers, "Woodes Rogers's Privateering Voyage of 1708-1711," *Mariner's Mirror* 19:2, (1933), 205.

£100.[48] This bonus initially went only to individuals who participated in the landing and occupation of the town. Sailors who had remained onboard the *Duke* and the *Dutchess* and thus would not receive the bonus protested so vigorously that Meller decided in April 1714 that all men who had been in the ships' companies before April 1709 would receive storm money. However, the amount each man received in storm money would not be increased any further because, since the time at Guayaquil, they had done "no more than was their Duty."[49]

All the crewmen who had helped ready the privateersmen for sailing in 1708 had their wages supplemented by varying amounts dependent on how long they had worked, as did the men who remained with the ships to help unload cargo after the expedition's return.[50]

Finally, there was also "smart money" for crewmen killed or wounded in action with the enemy. Each of them received 30 to 40 pounds, which was a substantial bonus.[51] The vast majority of deaths during the voyage were due to disease, and there was no compensation for that. As far as the Syndicate members were concerned, scurvy and shipboard accidents were just normal risks that any sailor ran, and so they were not entitled to anything more for doing their job.

Conversely, there were also many reductions to the expedition members' accounts. Some crewmen were not paid for some of their time unloading cargo at the

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[48] Index for Payment of Storm Money. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[49] Schedule Book, pages 30-33. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[50] Bundle No. 56, loose leaf statements dated November 1711. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161, Pt. 1, NAUK.
[51] Bundle "Saturday April the 2nd 1715," folio 2. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.

end of the voyage, and appealing met with mixed results.[52] The Syndicate also reduced the amounts paid to individual crewmen who had been convicted of concealing plunder in violation of the voyage's articles. The rest of the crew welcomed such a decision because thieves were unwelcome and it would leave more money to be divided amongst the remaining hands. The Syndicate also docked pay for items legitimately purchased during the voyage, whether from the ships' pursers or from prize cargoes. The payout books list a multitude of small expenditures for pipe tobacco, shoes, and bits of cloth taken from prizes. Most of the latter were damaged and probably unfit for sale, but the Syndicate charged the crewmen regardless. Officers were not exempt from this parsimonious accounting either; the deceased Lance Appleby's account had the price of a coffin deducted from it.[53]

These deductions, a total of £596, four shillings, and seven pence, spread among all members of the expedition, resulted in significant reductions in the amount of money paid to many of the crewmen.[54] Dover and Courtney did not care about losing several shillings here or there (or even hundreds of pounds), since they were independently wealthy. For the common sailors, however, those small amounts hit their coin purses hard.

There was another tax that had to be paid "at the Sixpenny Office for the Chest at Chatham." The tax was taken from every officer and crewman's wages after he received his pay. The proceeds from this tax went into a fund to assist indigent or invalid Royal

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[52] Loose leaf letter from John Romsey, John Duckinfield, and James Hollidge to John Corsley dated October 10, 1712, "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part II, NAUK.
[53] Debit Book No. B, folio 132. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.
[54] Duke and Dutchess paybooks, "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.

Navy personnel. The tax, which was not discussed in the voyage's articles, caused most expedition members to have nearly one pound deducted from their final payouts.[55]

Wages were relatively easy to calculate; determining the value of shares was more difficult. The expedition's portion of profits was divided into shares according to the articles, and it took two years to determine even the number of expedition shares. The amount of shares each officer and crewman got varied, depending on their rank and which payment option (full share or part share/part wage) they had selected at the beginning of the voyage. Deserters forfeited their shares, leaving more money for their shipmates to split. Promotions, demotions, and the handful of new recruits such as Alexander Selkirk and Michael Kendall all affected exactly how many shares there were.

There were disagreements on how many shares some of the officers were owed. For example, Cooke, who had originally been assigned as the *Dutchess'* second captain, commanded the *Marquis* from the time she was refitted at Gorgona until the expedition auctioned her off in Batavia. He had originally been promised twenty shares with no wages. Since he had had a command position, Cooke requested that his allotment be changed to 24 shares, which is what Rogers and Courtney received as captains. The Syndicate decided that only officers or sailors who were promoted in order to fill vacancies were entitled to more shares. Since all the *Marquis'* company (including Cooke) was just assigned as a prize crew, and not as replacements, they were paid

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[55] Duke Paybook, "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.

according to their original station. The *Batchelor's* crew was also subject to the same regulation.[56]

It was also possible to exchange shares for wages. After some negotiations, Cooke exchanged ten of his twenty shares for wages. He was still trying to recover from his terrible run of misfortune before joining the Syndicate expedition and probably could not afford to wait completion of all the sales to receive the money due him for his shares. After some more off-the-books deals, he negotiated a settlement that increased the number of shares due him from ten to fourteen and nearly £154 in wages.[57] There were many more off the books dealings that saw crewmen trading their shares in that manner.[58]

In another move that almost certainly irked Rogers, the Syndicate reduced the number of shares that crewmen were entitled to if they died early in the voyage. When Rogers' younger brother John joined the expedition he elected to be paid in ten shares with no wages. At the time of his death – during the engagement with the *Havre de Grace* off Guayaquil – the expedition members had taken only one-fifth of their total prizes. Based on this, the Syndicate leaders calculated that John deserved only two instead of ten shares.

In August 1713, the accountants and agents determined that the ships' companies possessed a combined 833 and two-fifths shares. Each expedition share was worth £42

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[56] Tim Beattie, "Dividing the Spoils: Research into the Paybook and Other Documents relating to the Privateering Voyage of the Duke and Dutchess, 1711," *Law, Labour, and Empire,* ed. Maria Fusaro (2015), 188.
[57] Book No. 11 D, page 2. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[58] Shares and Storm Money Book, page 15. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

and six shillings.[59] Calculating that value into that number of shares indicates that the crewmen had over £35,200 to divide, although the number of expedition shares fluctuated slightly as the Syndicate and crew litigated and appealed. One year later, after some extra sales were conducted and funds shifted, this amount increased to £42 and eighteen shillings.[60]

The Syndicate initially paid its sailors in a staggered order from July 12 until August 21, 1713, with small groups coming to London at appointed times (alphabetized according to surname) to collect what was due them in wages and shares. There was also a short list of sailors who, for various reasons, were not entitled to any pay or shares.[61]

Some sailors had to visit multiple times as further calculations were made, and they were continually fleeced by innkeepers and publicans who overcharged them for food and lodging.[62] Many of the officers and crewmen could not wait for the Syndicate to sort out its finances. They needed to join other ships' companies and find other employment.

To accommodate these individuals the Syndicate gave men who had to depart remittance letters stating the number of shares they possessed. Their next of kin or an appointed solicitor collected payment once the sailor's account was settled. This

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[59] Shares and Storm Money Book, page 15. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK; Glyndwr Williams, *The Great South Sea: English Voyages and Encounters 1570-1750* (1997), 159.
[60] Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages*, 93-94; Duke G Book. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[61] Schedule Book, page 38. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[62] Beattie, "Dividing the Spoils," 184.

courtesy was also extended to the foreign crewmen.[63] Remittance letters were also sent to the families of deceased and missing sailors. If an individual appeared with one of the letters and proved that he or she was the next of kin to the sailor named in the letter, that individual would be paid what was due the sailor. For example, Simon Hatley's sister collected the money due him while he languished in a Lima prison.[64]

RESULTS

Several Syndicate members used the money they received to purchase items auctioned off at the cargo sales. Many of those who made purchases were cloth merchants and knew exactly how much each bolt of cloth was worth based on its style, color, and thread count. Syndicate members John Corseley, Richard Hawksworth, John Duckinfield, and Philip Freke all purchased cloth. If the members themselves did not make purchases some of their relatives certainly did. The names of Giles Batchelor, John Batchelor's son, appears often in the records of sales. In addition, the names Goldney, Hollidge, Hawkins, and Saunders appear on the list, but the scribe recorded few first names (the names mentioned above were exceptions) but jotted down surnames only, thereby making it impossible to determine whether the purchaser was a Syndicate member himself or one of his relatives.[65]

One of the non-Syndicate officers, or at least his family, also became involved. The name Hatley appears several times. Simon Hatley did not return to Britain until

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[63] Remittance letter regarding a Portuguese sailors, Bundle No. 11, "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part I, NAUK.
[64] Bundle No. 55. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/161 Part I, NAUK.
[65] Allotments Book, unfoliated. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

after the war, but his family had a haberdashery business. A Richard Hatley purchased an assortment of colored cloth for use in the hats he manufactured. There is also a Cooke listed, although that is most likely not Edward Cooke or anyone related to him. Edward was a mariner and made no mention of any family connections related to the cloth trade.

Furthermore, the sales demonstrate the strong connections between Bristol's maritime merchants and its mercantile elite. The lists of individuals making purchases at the sales form a veritable who's who in Bristol politics, the Society of Merchant Venturers, and the Corporation of the Poor. The purchasers operated in the same economic circles (and presumably social circles) as the Syndicate members. Of particular interest are the Day, Dyer, and Yeamans families. Days served as mayors in 1694 and 1705, and would provide the city with several more mayors and aldermen over the next couple decades.[66] Members of the Dyer family were active in Bristol politics from 1621 until the present; in 2016 a Tony Dyer ran for mayor.[67] Yeamans' importance to Bristol's economy and their indirect involvement with the Syndicate expedition is described in Chapter 3.

Those who purchased shares nearly doubled the return on their investment at 83 percent. The Syndicate members, who were generally comfortable, either enjoyed a moderate increase in their fortunes or became fabulously wealthy depending on how much they invested in the enterprise. Either way, few could have engaged in as many

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[66] Alfred Beaven, *Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous* (1899), 116, 125, 225-226.
[67] "Tony Dyer for Bristol South." Accessed 3/21/17. http://www.bristolgreenparty.org.uk/tony-dyer-for-bristol-south.

activities after the war without the profits they received from the cruising voyage. As a result, the Syndicate members further elevated their status in Bristol society.

Thomas Goldney, whose 36 shares made him the largest investor, also acquired the deceased Vanbrugh's crew shares due to some pre-voyage dealings and received £7210 in total.[68] It was enough to restore his fortune. Dover, who served as Rogers' sometimes physician and sometimes antagonist while at sea, profited immensely. With 30 owners' shares, he did not invest as much as Goldney but still made an enormous profit with over £6000 from his owner's shares alone. He also received a portion of the money paid to expedition officers. With his 20 expedition shares as second captain and storm money he earned an additional £1129 before other miscellaneous bonuses and deductions.[69] Combined with the separate wages the Syndicate paid him as a physician, he earned a total of approximately £7600.[70] That amount was life-changing money that firmly placed him in Bristol's economic elite.

There is no concrete information regarding what Stephen Courtney earned as an investor because the exact number of shares he purchased is unknown. He possessed *up to* fifteen owners' shares. Assuming he owned fifteen (which is extremely unlikely as there were other investors with undetermined shares), he would have earned £1552 and 10 shillings from his investment alone. In addition, the expedition's accounts show that he was entitled to 24 of the expedition shares worth about £1020 before any bonuses and deductions were applied.

[68] Tim Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages of the Early Eighteenth Century* (2015), 94.
[69]Book "Duke No. G, page 162. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[70] Thomas, *Pirate Hunter*, 97.

Finally, the leader of the whole endeavor, John Batchelor, did not live to see his payout of just over £3033 (from sixteen shares). During the last phases of the voyage, he took ill and died, and his son Giles assumed his administrative role and, it can be assumed, inherited his shares as well.[71]

With the exceptions of Dover and Courtney, who were both investors and senior expedition officers, the other officers did not do as well. Rogers, who earned a little over £1500 during the voyage, calculated that he could have earned nearly as much money in three voyages to Newfoundland in the same amount of time that his cruising voyage had required.

William Dampier went bankrupt while waiting payment for his shares. Unlike his previous voyages, Dampier did not write an account. He may have planned to publish a book, but circumstances did not permit him to do so. He died in genteel poverty in early 1715. As per the agreement he had made with the Syndicate before the voyage, Dampier received "one-sixteenth part of two-thirds of the clear Proffitts of the Voyage."[72] With bonuses and other disbursements factored in, his brother received a little more than £1050 for Dampier's shares as an officer in March 1715 while Dampier's widow received between £2000 and £3560 from his one-sixteenth portion and an additional £500 for another deal that he had brokered.[73]

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[71] Loose leaf letter from Giles Batchelor to Francis Rogers, undated. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK.
[72] Schedule Book, pages 14-15. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[73] David Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter of the Caribbean: The Adventurous Life of Captain Woodes Rogers* (2011), 101; Tim Beattie, "Adventuring Your Estate: The Origins, Costs and Rewards of Woodes Rogers's Privateering Voyage of 1708-1711," *Mariner's*

The two other captains had to return to work because they did not have a financial cushion like their Syndicate counterparts. There is little known about Cooke after he received close to £800 for his services. Since he was not embroiled in disputes with the Syndicate, Cooke had more time than Rogers to devote to writing, and his *A Voyage to the South Sea* was published several months ahead of Rogers' account. Whatever Cooke did with his life after that is unrecorded. He drowned in an unknown location sometime prior to 1732. The fact that he died at sea suggests he did not earn enough from the voyage to retire.[74]

The officers met with mixed success, but what of the crewmen from the main deck? The petty officers and able seamen who participated in storming Guayaquil (which eventually included nearly all of them) earned at least £120 when combined with their wages and shares. From that figure, it is obvious why the entire crew wanted to raid the town and not sit out in the gulf. Even if the sailors had found berths on a Royal Navy warship or even a merchantman and spent 38 months working without a break in employment, they would not have earned as much as they did with the Syndicate. An able seaman in the navy would have earned (assuming no prize money) £45 and twelve shillings while a merchant sailor would have earned £66 and ten shillings before deductions.[75] But like many other aspects of the voyage, many crewmen groused about what they *could* have had if their cargo was more valuable, if they had taken Guayaquil just a little more quickly, or if they had just captured that second Manila ship. The

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Mirror 93:2 (2013), 150; Schedule Book, page 21. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.

[74] *Gentleman's Magazine* (September 1732), 979,

[75] Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages*, 95.

constant "what if" scenarios that dogged the officers and crewmen throughout the voyage continued to do so after their return.

Post-Voyage Activities

For many Syndicate members, the cruising voyage was just another investment. A risky gamble, but nevertheless an investment that operated on the same principles as investing in a brewery or glassworks. Some of the members used at least a portion of their earnings to enhance their status in Bristol society by donating to Bristol's charities.

In the political realm, Christopher Shuter became mayor in 1711 as he climbed the political ladder. Thomas Clement was the most senior magistrate in 1718 when the incumbent mayor died and Clement assumed office and served as mayor from June until September. Afterwards he became alderman of the St. Michael ward from 1719 until 1722. Shuter also became an alderman for the St. Michael (1715-16) and St. Thomas (1716-1730) wards.[76]

Syndicate members who went into politics seemed content with remaining in Bristol. They had sought *local* prestige and appear to have had little interest in anything beyond that. Only one of the members, Philip Freke, entered national politics. He ran as a Tory MP candidate in the controversial, vitriolic 1715 election. Although he received a majority of votes, the irregularities in that year's election nullified his victory and he never sat in Parliament.[77]

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[76] Beaven, *Bristol Lists*, 116, 188.
[77] William Williams, *The Parliamentary History of the County of Gloucester, Including the Cities of Bristol and Gloucester, and the Boroughs of Cheltenham, Cirencester,*

Syndicate members added to their status in Bristol society when they joined the Merchant Venturers. Abraham Hooke and Philip Freke became “masters” in 1712 and 1713 respectively.[78] Louis Casamajor and John Duckinfield were the first members of their families to be admitted into the Merchant Venturers, and their entry paved the way for their descendants to enter the society as well.[79] Other Syndicate investors, Hawkins and Casamajor, did the same thing; they made contributions that “purchased” membership in the elite organization.

Those who were already in the Corporation of the Poor remained active, while others joined the group. For some, their profits from the cruising voyage allowed their advancement in the organization, as the Corporation did not pay anything and even required payments of regular dues. Nathaniel Webb became treasurer of the charity (1716-17) and Christopher Shuter its governor (1718-19).[80]

Other Syndicate members became involved with other charities. Abraham Hooke partially funded construction of the Traitor’s Bridge over the River Frome in 1711.[81] A decade later, in 1722, he founded the Stoke’s Croft School and Almshouse, a charity that was operated by Lewin’s Mead Society of Protestant Dissenters, which was a local English Dissenter organization that he had previously worked with.[82]

Stroud, and Tewkesbury, From the Earliest Times to the Present Day, 1213-1898 (1898), 124.

[78] Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol*, 2:537.

[79] John Latimer, *The History of the Society of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol* (1903), 329.

[80] Beaven, *Bristol Lists*, 116, 119.

[81] John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* (1893), 92.

[82] “Stokes Croft Educational Foundation and Almshouses,” BRO 30999.

Syndicate members also invested their earnings in their existing businesses. John Duckinfield earned enough to own or co-own at least four ships that traded for slaves in Madagascar.[83] The voyage's success gave Thomas Goldney the capital to invest in Abraham Darby's ironworks mentioned in Chapter 2. The Goldney family ultimately came to own a controlling interest in the establishment.[84] In large part due to Goldney's investment in the expedition, his family was able to experiment with other ventures and become early manufacturers. Their wealth and influence increased steadily enough through the next two centuries that they were granted a baronetcy in 1880. Most of John Duckinfield's descendants stayed in Bristol, but his son moved to the West Indies where he became a wealthy Jamaican sugar planter, presumably supported by family money when establishing himself there.[85]

Several Syndicate members invested in additional enterprises together. Shuter and Casamajor formed a ship-owning partnership with other Bristol merchants in 1723.[86] The following year the two became co-owners of the slave ship *Peniel Gally* from 1724 to 1728.[87] Hollister and Hooke did the same in 1728 as they invested in the *Joseph and Anna* merchantman, which traded with Guinea, Jamaica, and Boston.[88]

While the Syndicate members gained experience and contacts through privateering ventures, co-owning establishments, charity, and religious institutions, their

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[83] Richardson ed., *Bristol, Africa, and the Eighhteenth-Century Slave Trade,* 1:75.
[84] "Mary Darby's agreement with Thomas Goldney," CRO 473/156(-9), Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office.
[85] Madge Dreser, *Slavery Obscured: The Social History of the Slave Trade in an English Provincial Port* (2016), 73.
[86] "Becher v. Barry," C 11/1136/4, NAUK.
[87] David Richardson ed., *Bristol, Africa, and the Eighteenth-Century Slave Trade*, 1:124
[88] Richardson ed., *Bristol, Africa, and the Eighhteenth-Century Slave Trade,* 1:75.

networks also came to include personal friendships. In his 1720 will Edward Hackett named his "good friend" James Hollidge an executor.[89] When Romsey, the town clerk, passed away, he left the entirety of his estate to a small group of people including Hollidge; he entrusted Hollidge with part of his Monmouth holdings. Hollidge must have possessed some sharp acumen, or perhaps he was simply a well-liked gentleman, but he was the recipient of considerable sums.[90] Batchelor also left some of his estate to other Syndicate members upon his death, listing Romsey, Coutes, and John Corseley as good friends.[91]

Some of those relationships went beyond friendship to marriages between families. Shuter's daughter Elizabeth married Freke's kinsman (also named Philip, so he was probably the elder Philip's son) after her father's death. Shuter left all but £500 to the younger Philip and the rest of his estate to his wife and only daughter.[92] Stephen Courtney also became brother-in-law to Hollidge's kinsman John.[93]

The experience Dover gained during the voyage led the South Sea Company to offer him a post in Buenos Aires, which he took after settling his account with the Syndicate. Dover did not hold the position long before he was dismissed from it in 1716. That, combined with the bubble finally bursting in 1720, bankrupted him and

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[89] "Will of Thomas Hackett, Grocer of Bristol, Gloucestershire," PROB 11/581/129, NAUK.
[90] "Will of John Romsey," PROB 11/579/173, NAUK.
[91] "Will of John Bacheler, Merchant of Bristol, Gloucestershire," PROB 11/524/492, NAUK.
[92] "Will of Christopher Shuter, Merchant of Bristol, Gloucestershire," PROB 11/637/109, NAUK.
[93] "Will of Stephen Courtney, Gentleman of Clifton, Gloucestershire," PROB 11/563/120, NAUK.

forced him to return to the practice of medicine.[94] Dover proved more successful as a physician than a businessman and wrote his treatise on medicine in 1732, wherein he continually defended all his actions and decisions during the voyage of 1708-1711. His longest lasting legacy was Dover's Powder, a medicine he invented to treat colds and fevers. It was produced until the mid-twentieth century when narcotics legislation outlawed it because it contained opium.[95]

Little is known about the later life of Stephen Courtney. Syndicate account ledgers show that he used £473 of his earnings to purchase seventeen slaves from the expedition. Those were far too many to be used as domestic staff in a Bristol townhouse so most were probably resold.[96] Courtney's name appears in a newspaper notice in 1715, asking anyone knowing the whereabouts of his runaway slave Scipio to contact him. The slave was 20 years old, and so was the right age to be one of the enslaved boys seized from Spanish ships.[97]

Several of the petty officers and ratings who served under Rogers and Courtney had their lives transformed after the voyage. In 1719, Duckinfield invested in the slaver *Prince Eugene* with William Stretton and James Goodall, who had served on the *Dutchess* respectively as chief lieutenant and owner's agent.[98] There is nothing else known about Goodall, but Stretton had risen in the world. He became a property owner

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[94] "Dr. Thomas Dover," *Bristol Post* (Bristol), Oct. 6, 2009.
[95] R.S. Morton, "Dr. Thomas "Quicksilver" Dover, 1660-1742: A Postscript to the Meeting of the Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases at Bristol, May 20-21, 1966," *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* 44 (1968), 342.
[96] Meeting Book, First Schedule, page 53. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[97] Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (1984), 62.
[98] Richardson ed., *Bristol, Africa, and the Eighhteenth-Century Slave Trade,* 1:75.

in Bristol in 1712 and purchased a ship. He was clearly trying to reach a higher socioeconomic rung so that he might one day have the same stature as his Syndicate employers.[99]

Alexander Selkirk returned to Largo for a time where he bought a house. He also earned enough to co-own in the *Grayhound Gally* slave ship in 1713.[100] More importantly, he told his tale to eager audiences including a Daniel Defoe. His story became embellished and transformed into *Robinson Crusoe*; his contribution to English literature is fully explored by Tim Beattie and David Cordingly. Unlike Stretton, Selkirk never quite settled down and continually ran afoul of the law. Eventually, he signed onto Royal Navy warships, first *Enterprise* and then *Weymouth* as a master's mate. He was on the *Weymouth* as she cruised for pirates off the Gold Coast. There he contracted a combination of yellow fever and dysentery, died, and was buried at sea in December 1721.[101]

Perhaps Simon Hatley's case best illustrates the Syndicate's influence and the benefits that came to officers who were tangentially associated with them. Hatley, who had been left behind and captured after the Guayaquil raid, had not died of thirst and exposure as feared. Instead he was captured with most of his crew and sent to a Lima prison, where he met with Selkirk's old captain Thomas Stradling and some of the surviving crew from the *Cinque Ports*. Hatley wrote to the Syndicate in November 1709, informing its members of his condition and asking them to do what they could to

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[99] Patrick McGrath ed., *A Bristol Miscellany* (1985), 15.
[100] Richardson ed., *Bristol, Africa, and the Eighteenth-Century Slave*, 1:37.
[101] Diana Souhami, *Selkirk's Island: The True and Strange Adventures of the Real Robinson Crusoe* (2001), 199-205.

get him released. The Syndicate received the letter in the spring of 1711 and petitioned Whitehall, which forwarded it to Queen Anne herself in order to arrange some sort of prisoner exchange. Nothing came of it, however, and Hatley was not released until the close of hostilities.[102]

Hatley had been a recruiter in Ireland and so was entitled to some extra money. Through his sister, the Syndicate paid him wages for 38 months and thirteen days, minus some miscellaneous expenses he had incurred. When his shares and storm money were calculated, he had a tidy sum. He returned to England to find his family safeguarding approximately £220 that the Syndicate had transferred to them. It was not life-changing money for someone of middling wealth like Hatley, but it was enough to advance his career.[103]

Hatley had spent more than three years of his life in the Syndicate's service and endured severe hardship, so his employers repaid him a fair amount. The Syndicate's members could have just tossed his letter aside and let him rot. It would not have been the first time that shipowners and merchants left one of their sailors behind in order to save money on wages. The Syndicate had nothing to gain from petitioning for his release but he had played a role, through recruiting and serving onboard, that had enabled its members to enhance their stations within Bristol society. The members probably felt obligated to compensate him for his efforts as much as they felt obliged to donate to Bristol's workhouse or a cathedral.

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[102] "Grants and Warrants," CO 324/32, NAUK.
[103] Debit Book, unmarked page. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, Pt. 2, NAUK; Account of the Purchase Taken by the Ships *Duke* and *Dutchess*, page 95. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/37, NAUK.

Rogers

Rogers, like Dampier, found himself in tight financial circumstances, even after receiving the money due him for his shares. While he was at sea, his wife must not have been able to maintain the family's residence in Queen Square, so she took the children and moved back with her father (the Rogerses still owned the property, however). The Rogers family went deep into debt with no income.

Upon his return to Bristol, Rogers quickly published his *Cruising Voyage Round the World*, just months after Cooke's *A Voyage to the South Sea* appeared in print. Rogers was desperate to counter any negative press about the voyage and to show that, although the expedition did not earn as much as it could have, none of its setbacks were not his fault.[104] Indeed, he asserted that the expedition would have made much more had the Council acted on his proposals at Guayaquil or allowed him to trade with settlements in Brazil. When the war ended, bringing an end to privateering, many privateers such as Edward Teach became pirates when they continued to attack merchantmen. Rogers rejected that option, though he could not find immediate employment, and soon went bankrupt and separated from his wife.

He eventually received the £1530 due him for his shares and additional bonuses, although too late to prevent the bankruptcy. There was also the matter of John Rogers' account. With £50 in smart money for being a killed in action, a little more than one pound for harbor pay attending the ships pre-voyage, and an extra guinea awarded for

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[104] Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, Preface.

attacking the *Havre de Grace*, John's final portion amounted to just less than £140. Woodes probably received the money due John, but it seemed such a paltry recompense for his brother's life.[105]

The cruise and his book made Rogers famous but did not immediately lead to suitable employment. The only notable work Rogers had between the end of the voyage and 1718 was another voyage to the Indian Ocean. In 1713, with the help of the EIC, Rogers gathered enough investors to purchase the merchantman *Delicia*. He procured a contract from the EIC to travel to Madagascar, purchase slaves, and sell them in Sumatra. The business venture was a success.[106] He also had a secondary objective, the establishment of a British colony on Madagascar itself. Rogers had referred to the island several times in his book as a sanctuary for castaways, pirates, and aging buccaneers. With the war over, the Crown offered a general amnesty to all pirates and Rogers remained in Madagascar for a time to inform the isolated sea rovers of their options.[107] Rogers was convincing enough that the pirates circulated a petition to Queen Anne, asking for clemency. When it became clear that Madagascar was not a viable site for a colony, Rogers shifted his attention to the Bahamas.

Rogers petitioned for and, based on his modest success in Madagascar, was appointed governor of the Bahamas, which had descended into anarchy as pirates had virtually taken control of the islands. Rogers sailed to the Bahamas in the summer of

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[105] Dutchess Paybook, folio 4. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/36, NAUK.
[106] Cordingly, *Pirate Hunter*, 115.
[107] Little, *Crusoe's Captain*, 172.

1718 and began another chapter of his life. He served as governor of the islands for two separate terms and never returned from his second tenure, dying in Nassau in 1732.

During his time in Nassau, Rogers directed a campaign against piracy. A key component of his campaign involved his issuing commissions similar to letters of marquee granting their holders the right to track down and capture pirates. Within a few short years his campaign succeeded in ridding the Bahamas and much of the Caribbean of the scourge of piracy. At last Rogers received the respect and fame he so dearly yearned for.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSIONS

The expedition's return to Britain coincided with a time of great popular interest in the Pacific Ocean, an interest that manifested itself most prominently in formation of the South Sea Company. Founded in 1711 – the year the expedition returned from circumnavigating the globe – the company's investors included a number of current and future statesmen, merchants, and upper-class sponsors. It became an immensely profitable company in 1713 when Britain and its Bourbon antagonists signed the Treaty of Utrecht. As one of the terms in the treaty, Britain received the *asiento* for the next 30 years. That gave the British the lucrative monopoly on the annual importation of 4800 slaves to colonial markets in New Spain and Peru. The British government turned the *asiento* over to the young South Sea Company and its investors' pockets swelled with coin and stock options.[1]

Several Syndicate members, officers, and crewmen who had sailed in the expedition were connected to the South Sea Company, either directly or indirectly. Some members of the expedition, such as Simon Hatley, actively participated in further South Sea voyages to expand British influence in the Spanish Pacific. Others, such as Louis Casamajor and Alexander Selkirk, invested in slave ships that fed Spanish America's voracious appetite for slaves. Thomas Dover became part of the South Sea Company's administrative machinery.

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[1] *The Asiento; or Contract for Allowing to the Subjects of Great Britain the Liberty of Importing Negroes into the Spanish America*. London, 1713.

The company was short-lived. In 1720 it imploded, triggering a financial panic similar to that which accompanied the end of Tulipomania in the mid-seventeenth century or the dot-com crash of the early twenty-first century. The dreams of British colonists settling in the Spanish Pacific as they had done previously in the West Indies ended, at least for the next several generations.[2] There would be no prosperous British settlement on Juan Fernandez to undercut Spanish commerce. This setback did not remove that idea from the British imagination, however. Rogers and Cooke's accounts practically became required reading for British naval, merchant, and privateer captains operating in the Pacific.

Relative to the other Bristol privateering ventures of the War of the Spanish Succession, that of the *Duke* and *Dutchess* was remarkably successful. The two frigates, eventually with the aid of the converted prize *Marquis*, took 20 prizes during their voyage and captured and ransomed a large town. In contrast, altogether Bristol privateersmen took 85 prizes during the entire conflict. In just over three years of cruising, the Syndicate's Pacific expedition accounted for nearly one-quarter of Bristol's captures throughout the entire war (1702-13).[3]

Furthermore, the expedition's captures were more valuable since it seized ships that carried high-value cargoes and passengers. Auctioning the *Disengaño's* silks and spices accounted for most of the expedition's profits, although the other captured merchantmen provided cloth of their own, jewelry, and wrought gold and silver plate. In

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[2] Helen Julia Paul, *The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of its Origins and Consequences* (London, 2010); Harvard Business School. "South Sea Bubble Short History." https://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/ssb/history.html (accessed February 9, 2017).
[3] David Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (1990), 85.

contrast, the prolific Channel Island privateersmen in contrast took 530 prizes during the war but most of their captures were fishing boats and other small vessels with far less valuable cargoes. As a result, the Syndicate privateers brought in around £148,000 in three years from 20 prizes and Guayaquil, whilst the Channel Islanders earned no more than £350,000 from 25 times the number of prizes taken in over a decade of privateering. The sale of silk and ransoming of captured officials brought in much more revenue than the sale of herring and ransoming of captured fishermen.[4]

The cruising voyage brought its investors an approximately 83% return on their investment after three years. The Syndicate members had made a wise choice compared with other ventures that were available to them. Had they decided to be more cautious and dealt exclusively with finances, the investors could have privately loaned out money but regulations forbid interest rates over six percent.[5] Similarly, the Syndicate members could have invested in government bonds that paid approximately four percent interest per annum. Both loans and bonds guaranteed a profit albeit an unimpressive one especially compared to what a cruising voyage might bring.

Investing in a slave ship might have given ship-owners up to a 100% return upon completion of the voyage, but it was dangerous. Syndicate members knew merchants who had lost slave ships, and might have even lost ships themselves. The investors were probably eager to strike back and accepted a lower profit if it meant going on the

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[4] David Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (1990), 107.
[5] John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (1988), 201.

offensive. In this case personal gratification weighed heavier than profit.[6] The Syndicate's voyage had done better than Dampier's, which incurred a total loss. The Syndicate had even done better compared to the next South Sea cruising voyage. From 1719 to 1722, the privateers John Clipperton and George Shelvocke tried to imitate some aspects of the Council's organization and incorporated some of Rogers' suggestions, but could not duplicate the Syndicate's success. Clipperton and Shelvocke brought back a similar amount of plunder that initially provided 1000 percent and 200 percent returns on investment for their respective ships, but much of that vanished due to fraud and both captains had suffered catastrophic material and manpower losses.[7]

The Syndicate, despite being ill-prepared for some difficulties the expedition faced, nevertheless funded a successful voyage with relatively few losses. The Syndicate achieved success due to four reasons. First, the Syndicate members provided for regular maintenance of their ships and for the care of the crewmen who served onboard. The result was the return of both frigates more or less intact, with a prize in tow. Precautions taken before the ships sailed (namely the installation of double-sheathed hulls) and constant maintenance performed during that cruise increased the ships' durability. Material losses were at a minimum and even the personnel losses were relatively few. Prior to setting sail, the ships were stocked especially well with more food stores and medical supplies than normal for similar ships. Even with the extra

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[6] Port Cities Bristol, "Profits," accessed June 19, 2017, http://www.discoveringbristol.org.uk/slavery/routes/america-to-bristol/return-to-bristol/profits/.
[7] Tim Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages of the Early Eighteenth Century*, 134.

supplies, the expedition ran out of food on several occasions and disease took its toll, but the crews never actually starved.

By the time the expedition returned to England, it had lost between 70 and 100 men from the combined 333 who set out from Cork in the *Duke* and *Dutchess*.[8] The losses resulted mostly from a combination of desertion, disease, and accidents. Relatively few crewmen were killed in action or died of wounds. The personnel roster was kept in such a fashion that it is impossible to determine exactly how many died. The 40 or so sailors who ran off at Cork are not included in this tally as they were never officially entered on the expedition's roster. More importantly, most of the Syndicate's manpower losses were made good through the Council's resourcefulness. Rogers followed the Syndicate orders to sign on as many hands as he deemed necessary. He and the other officers, throughout the cruising voyage, displayed a willingness to accept recruits whenever and wherever they appeared. Recruiting was easy enough in an open entrepot like Batavia, and there were also two cases where former British sailors, enslaved by the Spanish, literally walked into the expedition's forces. When crewmen were needed, slaves taken captive from their Spanish owners were invited to join the ships' companies. Other British expeditions into the Pacific did not resort to such methods and their effectiveness suffered.

Second, the Syndicate took steps to ensure that the men would not mutiny. There were deserters, of course, and there was even a murder plot but that was broken up before it could be carried out. At least part of the reason that crewmen never mutinied

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[8] Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages*, 195.

was due to the Syndicate's provision of the right to appeal to the Council should any crewman felt that he was being mistreated or unfairly punished. Crewmen were permitted to choose one representative from each ship to observe the handling of all plunder. By allowing minor concessions to the crew, the Council kept the sailors content.

Third, establishment of the Council provided a forum for senior officers and the Syndicate's representatives to discuss contentious issues, reach consensus, and present a united front to the crewmen. Factions formed within the governing Council but that division did not prevent members of those factions from cooperating to achieve the goals established for the expedition before it left Bristol. There was administrative backstabbing, to be sure, but that was done through private correspondence and not public outbursts in front of the crew. There were indeed instances during the voyage in which the expedition *might* have broken up, such as the acrimony when Dover wanted to command the *Batchelor*, but those divisions were never serious enough to render the Council dysfunctional. Those situations were defused either through Council meetings (during and sometimes after every major decision was made) or under the table agreements (such as when Rogers told Frye and Stretton to ignore Dover's instructions). The presence of two Syndicate members and Syndicate-appointed owners' agents also enforced Syndicate authority. Personal animosities outside the Council meetings aside, the officers were usually willing to collaborate with each other because, at the end of the day, they all understood the importance of presenting a unified image to members of the crew.

Fourth, the voyage accomplished its objectives. As authorized in their letter of marquee the privateers captured enemy shipping, including the Manila ship that the Syndicate specified as their primary objective. Unlike British privateers operating in the Atlantic, and even others who had cruised the Pacific, Syndicate members looked forward to the end of the war and instructed their captains to explore and report on the prospects of developing trade with settlements on the Pacific coast of Spanish America. In their published accounts of the voyage both Cooke and Rogers included assessments of prospects for establishing trade in the region, something previous English visitors to the Pacific had not done. Moving beyond simply describing prospects for trade, the expedition set an example by making some remarkably successful commercial exchanges, the records of which constituted a virtual guide to which settlements were willing to purchase what types of goods from non-Spanish traders, and what people in those areas could offer in exchange. The return of the expedition to England coincided with – and contributed to – a spike of public interest in Pacific commerce. The Syndicate did not create that interest in South Sea trade; such a concept was already a popular topic in British coffee houses and boardrooms. What the Syndicate did was prove that trade in the Pacific was possible.

POSTSCRIPT AND SUMMARY

This dissertation places the 1708-1711 cruising voyage led by Woodes Rogers firmly in the context of the maritime world of the early eighteenth century. At the same time that the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713) disrupted peacetime patterns of

international trade and commerce, the conflict also presented new opportunities for investment, especially in privateering. In late 1707 investors in Bristol, the second busiest port in England, formed a "syndicate" with the dual goals of attacking French and Spanish commerce and exploring opportunities for trade with Spanish colonies. Privateering, always a high-risk/high-reward proposition, was made riskier by the Syndicate's decision to send their ships to the west coasts of Central and South America. It was a bold venture and its success altered the lives of several Syndicate members and the men who survived the voyage.

Many Syndicate members were among Bristol's civic elite, and others aspired to join them there. Every Syndicate investor certainly hoped to profit financially from his investment, to be sure, but a portion of the investors may have hoped that the return on their investment would be great enough to raise their social as well as their economic status in the community. Whether a conscious or unconscious goal, several did just that. Their status is reflected in the number of Syndicate members who were invited to become members of the prestigious Society of Merchant Venturers and the Corporation of the Poor, and who held public office after investing in the expedition.

Participation in the voyage promised an avenue for middling ship-owners' sons (e.g., John Vigors) and merchants' younger sons (e.g., the eighth-born son Carlton Vanbrugh) to earn enough money to establish careers ashore. Some of those junior officers and even petty officers such as Selkirk rose in station to become ship-owners and merchants after the voyage. This comparison of the socioeconomic status of

Syndicate and expedition leaders before and after the 1708-1711 voyage provides a unique lens through which to view the maritime world of the early eighteenth century.

The War of the Spanish Succession created a manpower shortage that forced privateers, merchants, and the Royal Navy compete against one another when manning their ships. To attract crewmen to the *Duke* and the *Dutchess* the Syndicate offered recruits a choice of two competitive payment plans, an observer in the inventorying of cargo from prize ships, and a system of shipboard governance that included a procedure by which any individual could appeal to the Council any punishment he believed to be unjust. Knowing these incentives would probably not be attractive enough to fill the crews for their ships with experienced sailors, Syndicate recruiters accepted any man willing to enlist. As a result, the *Duke* and the *Dutchess* set sail with a full but motley crew of landsmen, unskilled laborers, and adventure-seeking boys who gathered round a small core of several dozen able seamen.

The voyage's success was based in part on the instructions given to its leaders by the Syndicate, in part on the decisions made by those leaders regularly meeting as a Council, and finally on the skill and leadership qualities of Rogers and Courtney, the men chosen to command the *Duke* and *Dutchess*. The Syndicate instructed the expedition leaders to both attack enemy ships and settlements and to establish trading relations with settlements in enemy territory. To achieve both of these goals the privateersmen had to balance their use of violence. Few privateers and buccaneers had any scruples regarding violence. Indeed, most buccaneers seem have been entirely too eager to torture their captives in order to gain information regarding hidden valuables.

The Syndicate's privateers, however, resorted to no more than threats. At Guayaquil, the expedition threatened to destroy the town and to take the prisoners back to England if the Spanish did not pay sufficient ransom, but did neither. At Guam, again, expedition leaders *threatened* to destroy the settlement if its residents refused to sell provisions to them. Their goal was to avoiding angering the Spanish to such a degree that they would not trade with any British merchants in the future. Examination of the privateers' treatment of captives and townspeople also adds to the body of work published on the Rogers voyage by adding this new element.

As the commander-in-chief, Rogers had to ensure that the expedition adhered to the laws that regulated privateering and deal with unruly crewmen who preferred to ignore them. Much to the unhappiness of expedition crewmen, the first prize, taken off the Canaries, had to be given up because of local commercial relationships. In the Pacific, the Council had to consider the best way to gingerly avoid infringing on EIC or VOC monopolies, as instructed by the Syndicate.

Disputes between the Council members were first pronounced outside Guayaquil and became more heated after the fights with the Manila ships. Personal relationships were strained but the administrative machinery stayed operational. What would have most certainly broken up a group of buccaneers just caused angry letters and uncooperativeness among the Council officers. The voyage still continued as the privateers transitioned from attacking enemy ships and settlements to one that focused on trading such as at Buton.

Throughout the voyage, the Council and its accountants recorded every penny that was exchanged. Not doing so would have just been asking for trouble. And trouble nearly found them in the form of the EIC as the expedition returned to Britain via Texel. Again, the Syndicate members relied on their personal and commercial ties to extricate their ships from a situation that could have reversed all their fortunes. Edward Acton used his relatives in the East India Company to gather information. Thomas Palmer used connections both in London and in the Netherlands to help prepare for lawsuits against the Syndicate. Other Syndicate members journeyed to London and Amsterdam in order to prepare for the expedition's arrival first in the Netherlands, then in London. By including this aspect of the voyage, this dissertation provides specific examples that illustrate the workings of the British mercantile world.

Once the EIC's claims to at least a portion of the cargo in the holds of the *Duke*, *Dutchess*, and *Batchelor* were settled, and the *Creagh* lawsuit failed, the expedition began selling the cloth and other items. Bristol merchants and relatives of Syndicate members were among the leading buyers.

Several Syndicate members who – prior to receipt of profits from their investment – had not had the means to participate in Bristol's civic institutions prior to the voyage suddenly received invitations to join the Merchant Venturers and other prestigious organizations. Thus the political status of several other members rose along with their economic standing. The tracing of the impact of the profits on their status following the expedition is a unique features of this study. Rogers may not have prospered as much as the Syndicate members, but his leadership of the expedition and

his account of the globe-circling voyage made him a national hero and paved the way for his appointment as governor of the Bahama Islands.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN

It was within an established series of commercial regulations and ties that the privateers and their investors operated. The privateers had to avoid sandbars and shoals whilst the backers had to dodge equally dangerous hazards ashore. Everyone involved in the expedition, from the Syndicate members to the officers and crewmen from petty officers down to ship's boys, consciously weighed his options before investing in the enterprise or sailing onboard the *Duke* or the *Dutchess*. The investors, since they put up the funds, could become incredibly wealthy and enhance their status in Bristol civic life. While none of the Syndicate members openly stated their motivations, it is clear from their activity after the voyage that they increased their charitable donations and either moved up or entered civic institutions.

Some of the investors risked financial ruin if the voyage failed, as some (especially Thomas Goldney) were in precarious financial straits. Had some events gone differently, it is likely that more investors would have joined Goldney in debtors' prison. As a business investment, the effects of a failed cruising voyage would have resembled those of a failed distillery or bakery except on a much grander scale.

The captains and senior officers put their reputations on the line. William Dampier and Edward Cooke sought to restore their recently tarnished images. Less is known of Stephen Courtney and Rogers' motivations, but Dover clearly wanted to

become a sea captain, and he never tired of mentioning his role in the voyage afterward. Had Dover been solely interested in money, he would have been content to stay ashore, continue to make a comfortable living as a physician, and let the owners' agents represent him like most of his colleagues had.

The petty officers and crewmen, like all sailors, ran the usual risks of being drowned in a storm, falling from the main top, or dying of scurvy or yellow fever. They understood the risks and made sure they got the most favorable deal possible when they signed up to join the expedition. Many must have found the provision of an appeal system attractive. These sailors were not uncomprehending cogs in a machine, at the mercy of the press gang or miserly merchant captains. They all volunteered in a great gamble, offering several years of their labor in the hopes of a lavish return.

To organize the expedition, for it to achieve its goals, and to protect its profits when it returned to England, every participant needed to respect the authority of the Syndicate and, while at sea, that of the Council. The Council was the key to success because it provided a forum for senior officers and owners' agents, to discuss potentially divisive issues in private, arrive at a consensus, and draft a document that all members would sign, thereby projecting a unified image to other officers and crewmen of the expedition.

Members of the Syndicate did not appear to have fully understood the Council's importance and the contribution its members made to the success of the expedition. This is illustrated by the Syndicate's treatment of Rogers.

Some Syndicate members may have formed a dim view of Rogers when he had to wait longer in Cork than they expected in order to sail under protection of a convoy.[9] Its antipathy against Rogers became more intense when Syndicate members received letters from Vanbrugh and Dover, implying that Rogers had delayed the expedition's departure from Batavia and the Cape of Good Hope longer than necessary. In fact, Rogers had done exactly as instructed; he had used his best judgment to bring the expedition safely home. But that seemed unnecessary to the Syndicate as its members cut Rogers out of post-voyage activities who, with the advantage of hindsight, knew the expedition had met with no danger from enemy warships or privateers after leaving Batavia. Rather than applaud Rogers for his prudence, critics ignored documents signed by Council members that approved of Rogers' decisions and blamed him for incurring costs accumulated while awaiting departure with the convoys.

Rogers was not above criticizing Dover, especially after the expedition's failure to extract a larger ransom from Guayaquil to spare their town from the torch. Rogers believed that the expedition could have gotten more from the residents and captured additional incoming vessels had it remained off Guayaquil longer. Rogers' mere suggestion that the ships go to Brazil from the Cape of Good Hope and trade in that low-risk area drew criticism from Dover in his letters to the Syndicate and a charge that Rogers was about to turn pirate.

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[9] Letter from Francis Rogers to Batchelor, dated September 3, 1708. "Creagh v. Rogers," C 104/160, NAUK. As quoted in Tim Beattie, *British Privateering Voyages of the Early Eighteenth Century* (2015), 74.

The Syndicate was just as focused on maintaining a united front at home as the Council was at sea. If Dover decided that Rogers was untrustworthy, then the rest of the Syndicate was inclined to believe him. As Tim Beattie speculates, the conflict between Rogers and Dover was probably of a deeply personal nature between two ill-tempered individuals that turned into a rivalry between crews of the *Duke* and *Dutchess* when Dover moved to the latter frigate. Ill feeling continued as the expedition sorted out plunder and reached its zenith at the Cape of Good Hope.[10] James Poling suggests something more of a constant, envious, one-sided grudge from Dover that fermented for nearly the entire three years of the cruise. It is likely that the rivalry sharpened because the *Duke* experienced much more success at sea whereas the *Dutchess* suffered more casualties while capturing fewer prizes. Privateers and buccaneers often argued over plunder no matter how well run their voyages were, but a prize as valuable as the *Disengaño* instilled envy in the *Dutchess* officers who had missed the action with the *Disengaño* when she was captured and took the brunt of punishment in the failed attempt on the *Begoña*.

There were other interpersonal conflicts, such as those between Carlton Vanbrugh and the many officers he had annoyed. The difference was Vanbrugh was never seen as a threat to anybody's authority and he did not have the influence to damage his superiors' reputations. It is quite likely that Dover, who desired appointment to command of a ship, resented having to serve under Rogers. Dover was probably also jealous of the support Rogers received from the *Duke*'s crewmen during the dispute over

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[10] Tim Beattie, *The Cruising Voyages of William Dampier, Woodes Rogers and George Shelvocke and their Impact* (2013), 102.

crewing the *Disengaño*. There is a reason the Syndicate's expedition soon became known as Rogers' expedition. Dover, however, did not command that respect from the crew and so he constantly used his influence with fellow members of the Syndicate to impugn Rogers' competence and character.

Rogers, Dover, Cooke, and Courtney did not cross paths again after the voyage. The sailors they had worked with for more than three years also parted ways and dispersed throughout the maritime world. Whatever became of them, the veterans of the 1708-1711 expedition shared a common experience. They had entered the Spanish Lake, captured a Manila galleon, and made a mockery of Spain's trade policies by openly trading contraband. It was clear that the Syndicate privateers could enter the Spanish Lake and turn it into their hunting ground and marketplace.

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