

Jacobite Pirates?

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The dramatic upsurge of Anglo-American piracy in the Caribbean after 1715 coincided with a major Jacobite uprising in the British Isles. In the following years, pirates used Jacobite symbols and rhetoric as a sign of defiance of royal authority in the colonies and on the high seas. In 1719, several marauding gangs even cloaked their crimes as legitimate resistance to King George I and his regime. However, all references to the Jacobite cause were superficial and did not constitute active support for the cause of the exiled Stuarts.

La spectaculaire recrudescence de la piraterie anglo-américaine dans les Caraïbes après 1715 a coïncidé avec une importante révolte jacobite dans les îles britanniques. Dans les années qui suivirent, les pirates utilisèrent les symboles et la rhétorique jacobites pour défier l'autorité royale dans les colonies et en haute mer. En 1719, plusieurs bandes de maraudeurs perpétrèrent même leurs crimes au nom d'une résistance légitime contre le roi George I et son régime. Toutefois, toutes les références à la cause jacobite étaient superficielles et ne représentaient en rien un soutien actif à la cause des Stuarts en exil.

ON JUNE 20, 1723 the *American Weekly Mercury*, the first newspaper in Philadelphia, published the following:

On the 10th Instant about 30 Leagues from Sandyhook to the Eastward, Capt[ain] Morine and all his Passengers and Saylor[s] heard Great Guns from eight in the Morning till Twelve at Noon, which gave us hopes our Man of War had Engaged the Pyrates, but hearing nothing from her some will have it the Pyrates were Celebrating the Pretenders Birth Day.¹

No evidence records whether this report worried the reading public in the mid-Atlantic colonies, but it may have caused some concern among

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¹ For the significance of seafaring news in the early newspapers, see Charles E. Clark, *The Public Prints: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665–1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 114–119; Dave Copeland, *Colonial American Newspapers: Character and Content* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), p. 288.

the colonial administration. In any case, this brief account connected two of the most serious threats to royal authority in the British Isles and across the seas of the times: Jacobitism and piracy.²

Few historians have noted that the great upsurge of piracy in 1716 and 1717 followed the succession crisis and the Jacobite rising of 1715.³ This may be a bit surprising, as recent scholarship has sought to place early modern piracy within its wider social and political context. Piracy has been viewed as a form of protest undertaken by impoverished English and Anglo-American sailors discontented with their position in society and vengeful towards the autocratic conditions of the mercantilist era. According to this argument, pirates formed egalitarian, libertarian, and anti-authoritarian communities that directly challenged the imperial powers in the Atlantic World.⁴ In this context one might indeed expect to find connections between pirates and Jacobitism, which constituted the only movement aimed at overthrowing the political regime in the British Isles at that time.

After the failed uprising of 1715, Jacobitism surfaced at various places in the English-speaking seafaring world. In 1716 and 1717 the Royal Navy collected several forms of evidence that authorities interpreted as signs of Jacobite protest, ranging from the destruction of a boat with the king's ensign to the refusal to discharge guns on Coronation Day.⁵ Yet there was certainly no widespread Jacobite undercurrent among the seafaring population in Britain. The overwhelming majority of sailors in the Navy were reported to have rejected Jacobite propaganda efforts.⁶ At the same time, disturbances did occur in many parts of England. In North America and the West Indies, by contrast, the situation remained mostly calm, though it was well known that there was a "Jacobite

2 The supporters of the Stuart dynasty overthrown in the Glorious Revolution of 1689 were known as Jacobites after the Latin rendering of James II's given name Jacobus. The case of sailors who had a commission from James and were treated as pirates by the English authorities in 1692 is documented in the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, HA legal box 14 (1).

3 David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of Life Among the Pirates* (New York: Random House, 1996), p. 93; Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London: Methuen, 2003), p. 170; Colin Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2007), pp. 122–123.

4 Above all, Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon, 2004), *passim*.

5 The National Archives, London [hereafter TNA], ADM 1/1879, no. 10, Thomas Howard to Admiralty, November 3, 1716; National Maritime Museum, London [hereafter NMM], ADM/A/2064, report of Richard Rothman, January 2, 1717; TNA, ADM 1/5271, no. 74, deposition of Nathaniel Gardner, October 21, 1717. In addition to this evidence, there were probably many cases of intoxicated sailors drinking toasts to the Pretender. See, for example, TNA, CO 23/1, fol. 246, deposition of Sarah Skellitt, January 12, 1722; William Betagh, *A Voyage Round the World* (London, 1728), p. 118. In this context, it may be worth noting that early in 1718 a bill for punishing mutiny and desertion containing explicit references to Jacobites was debated in parliament.

6 *The Commentator*, April 1, 1720.

fact[io]n” in colonies with a substantial Scottish population such as New York or New Jersey.⁷ Nevertheless, the British government evidently did not see a manifest threat of Jacobitism in the New World; otherwise it would not have transported more than 600 “Rebel Prisoners” to the southern mainland colonies and the Caribbean beginning in late 1716.⁸

Years ago, when Jacobitism was one of the central issues in the historiography of eighteenth-century England, Paul Monod proposed that a Jacobite subculture was widespread and popular among large sections of society but did not necessarily reflect active support for the cause of the exiled Stuarts. Criminals, for example, used Jacobitism as a way to legitimize their illegal activities.⁹ On the other hand, Nicholas Rogers emphasized that popular expressions of Jacobitism were frequently employed as acts of defiance or provocation, representing the rejection of authority.¹⁰ These two interpretations may help in examining the spotty evidence that connects Anglo-American pirates with Jacobitism. However, before we can begin to analyse the subculture among pirate gangs, their emergence and rise after 1715 needs to be placed in a wider historical context.

Jamaica and the Upsurge of Piracy

From the days of Drake and Hawkins, freebooters enjoyed the support of the English authorities, provided they only plundered the Spanish. After the conquest of Jamaica in 1655, the island became a base of operations for the so-called buccaneers. Buccaneering was a peculiar blend of outright robbery — often raids on coastal towns rather than shipping — and privateering in which the two elements were often indistinguishable.¹¹ In general, as long as these predators were furthering English interests, the colonial authorities cared little whether or not they were legitimate. During the Restoration period, buccaneers expressed loyalty to the crown, for instance by naming islands or bays in remote parts of the

7 TNA, CO 5/971, fols. 29–32, Robert Hunter to William Popple, November 14, 1715 (quotation); Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and its First American Colony, 1683–1765* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 123–136; David Dobson, *Scottish Emigration to Colonial America, 1607–1785* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), pp. 44–54.

8 Margaret Sankey, *Jacobite Prisoners of the 1715 Rebellion: Preventing and Punishing Insurrection in Early Hanoverian London* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 63–75.

9 Paul K. Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688–1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 112–113.

10 Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 50–57.

11 Piracy is defined as the indiscriminate and arbitrary seizure of persons, goods, and vessels at sea without state authorization. For some legal implications in the period under consideration, see Alfred P. Rubin, *The Law of Piracy* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1992), pp. 71–117. In wartime the maritime powers also commissioned private vessels as privateers to supplement the national sea power. In contrast to piracy, however, privateering was a legal and strictly regulated activity.

New World after Stuart kings.¹² Spain was the enemy of the English nation, and hostilities between these countries helped to legitimize acts of robbery. Furthermore, buccaneers relied on Jamaica as a market for supplies and spoils. A significant portion of Port Royal's legendary wealth was acquired through raids on Spanish overseas possessions.¹³

At the end of the seventeenth century, the attitude of the English government towards freelance raiding underwent a fundamental change. By that time England had become the leading imperial power with a considerable share in overseas trade, and the authorities — particularly in colonies with export-oriented staple economies — began to turn against the freebooters. Around 1685 marauders sought new targets in the South Sea, off the west coast of Africa, and in the Indian Ocean, where they caused much havoc. Eventually, the powerful East India Company forced the government to address the problem of piracy. In 1697 and 1698, after it had become obvious that the designated pirate hunter William Kidd had himself turned to piracy, the English authorities cut off all trade with Madagascar, which had served as a base of operations for sea robbers.¹⁴ Because of a lack of supplies and the deterioration of vessels, many pirates were left stranded and disappeared in Madagascar. Another rover, Henry Avery, who had looted an Indian treasure fleet in 1695, vanished in Ireland. By the early eighteenth century the pirates of this generation had become mythical figures.

The dramatic increase of piracy in 1716 and 1717 occurred after a Spanish treasure fleet consisting of eleven richly laden galleons had sunk in the shallow waters off the east coast of Florida in August 1715. Within a few months, more than a dozen vessels from Jamaica, Bermuda, and elsewhere sailed to the site to plunder the wrecks. Eyewitness accounts describe these events as a gold rush.¹⁵ Most of these fortune hunters later turned to piracy when their dreams of instant riches did not materialize, and they began to prey on Spanish, French, and eventually British merchant shipping.

The marauders of the early eighteenth century may have come from all over, but developments in Jamaica were certainly paramount to the rise of

12 NMM, P/32, fol. 107, Basil Ringrose, "The South Sea Waggoner: Shewing the making and bearing of all the Coasts from California to the Streights of Le Maire," c. 1683; Free Library of Philadelphia, Ms. Elkins 169, chart 21, William Hack, "Bartholomew Sharpe's South Sea Waggoner," c. 1688. The Galapagos, for example, were referred to as King James and King Charles Island respectively.

13 Nuala Zahedieh, "'A Frugal, Prudential and Hopeful Trade': Privateering in Jamaica, 1655–1689," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 18 (1990), pp. 145–168; Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500–1750* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), pp. 96–125.

14 Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 128–149.

15 Arne Bialuschewski, "Pirates, Markets, and Imperial Authority: Economic Aspects of Maritime Depredations in the Atlantic World, 1716–1726," *Global Crime*, vol. 9 (2008), pp. 54–56.

piracy. After the earthquake of 1692 had destroyed large parts of Port Royal, sailors and their camp followers rapidly repopulated the remnants of the town. Despite a devastating fire and repeated hurricanes that struck the settlement in the early eighteenth century, it was home to several hundred masterless men living on the margins of colonial society and always looking for opportunities to enrich themselves. These individuals were driven by plain greed, usually combined with hatred for the Spaniards. Moreover, they lived in a social environment in which the enforcement of law — particularly the unpopular *Navigation Acts* — was weak.¹⁶ Sailors in this part of the Atlantic World were used to dealing with more fundamental dangers than the legal procedures of colonial or imperial courts. They endured the tedium of long voyages and frequently fought against adverse forces of nature. Jamaicans often risked their lives simply to make a living in an inhospitable environment.

During the War of the Spanish Succession, privateering once again became a major source of income for the seafaring population of Jamaica, and illicit trade flourished. These activities must have brought considerable profits to the merchants and sailors of Port Royal and Kingston.¹⁷ However, hostilities in the Caribbean did not cease after 1713. In the first two years of peace, Spanish forces seized 38 Jamaican vessels under flimsy pretences and took them to their ports as legal prizes. It then comes as no surprise that, when the treasure fleet sank, many Jamaicans thought that the wrecks could be looted as compensation for previous losses to the Spaniards.¹⁸

Most freebooters who made their way “in Warlike manner” from Jamaica to the Florida coast in the latter half of 1715 and early in 1716 had previously obtained ill-defined privateering commissions directed

16 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Rawlinson A. 312, fols. 214–217, “An Extract of the Male [sic] Administration in Jamaica During the Government of Lord Hamilton,” 1716; Library Company of Philadelphia, Jonathan Dickinson letter book, p. 199, Jonathan Dickinson to Isaac Gale, June 11, 1718 (draft); The British Library, London [hereafter BL], Add. Ms. 40811, fols. 25–27, Edward Vernon to Josiah Burchett, October 28, 1719; Cambridge University Library, SPCK Ms. D 2/16, no. 7178, report of Calvin Galpine, July 13, 1722; Hispanic Society of America, New York, Ms. HC 363/1299, p. 8, “A Journal of a Voyage by Gods Permission on board the *Rose Galley* Robert Toll Commander, bound from London to the Island Jamaica,” 1725–1726.

17 University of the West Indies Library, Mona, West Indies Collection, Edmund Dummer to Thomas Harley, September 28, 1711; National Library of Jamaica, Kingston [hereafter NLJ], Ms. 249, p. 5, journal of Sir Hovenden Walker, November 14, 1712; *The British Mercury*, July 13, 1711; *Observations on, and Reasons against Vacating the Bonds Taken by Her Majesty's Collector at Jamaica* (London, [1712]).

18 TNA, ADM 1/1471, no. 24, John Balchen to Josiah Burchett, May 13, 1716; Jamaica Archives, Spanish Town [hereafter JA], 1B/5/3/8, fol. 32, deposition of Lewis Galdy, August 10, 1716; BL, Add. Ms. 39946, fols. 26–27, “Voyage to Guinea, Antego, Bay of Campeachy, Cuba, Barbadoes, &c.,” 1714–1723; Archibald Hamilton, *An Answer to an Anonymous Libel, Entitled, Articles Exhibited against Lord Archibald Hamilton* (London, 1718), pp. 28–30.

against Spanish pirates.¹⁹ Once the imperial authorities in London had learned about the illicit promotion of this treasure hunt, Governor Archibald Hamilton was replaced by former Chief-Justice Peter Heywood, who, together with the Council, launched a lengthy investigation into the privateering excesses. Beginning in August 1716 they questioned one sailor after another about their activities on the Florida coast, and towards the end of the year the first arrest warrants were issued.²⁰ This shift in politics may have caused strong resentment among the primarily seafaring population. According to an official account,

on the Seventh day of January [1717] Several wicked and ill minded Persons assembled themselves together in our Town of Kingston amongst whom were Thomas Cardiffe of the Parish of St David and Doctor Roane as Leaders and Commanders and in a riotuous and tumultuous manner with musick went about the Streets of the said Town drinking healths with huzzas to the Pretender by the name of James the third King of England and publishing Scandalous Pamphlets and Libells against us by the way of Song to the Tune of may the King enjoy his own again with several other outrages and offences against us.²¹

While there is no hard evidence to link this uproar with the clamp-down on privateers, it is likely that disaffected and inebriated sailors joined local townsmen in this Jacobite manifestation. Jacobite rhetoric and songs were probably widespread in the English-speaking seafaring world after 1715, but only tended to surface under certain circumstances — in this case as a sign of defiance of authorities.

Sailors in Jamaica and elsewhere must have been under the impression that the Hanoverian succession had brought about the strict enforcement of law and imperial authority. It is not surprising that some directed their

19 TNA, CO 137/11, fol. 94, "A List of Vessels commission'd by his Excellency the Lord Archibald Hamilton," 1716. There were various violent encounters with the Spaniards, who had begun a large-scale salvage operation shortly after the disaster.

20 TNA, CO 391/25, pp. 445–448, minutes of the Council of Trade and Plantations, May 19, 1716; JA, 1B/5/3/8, fols. 78–79, "A Proclamation Concerning Pyrates," August 30, 1716; TNA, CO 137/12, fol. 120, Peter Heywood to Council of Trade and Plantations, December 3, 1716; NLJ, Ms. 60, vol. 17, pp. 254–259, deposition of Joseph Eels, December 20, 1716; *The Weekly Packet*, June 2, 1716. In the course of the investigation, it turned out that Hamilton himself held a share in one of the vessels that had been dispatched to loot the Spaniards, but after he had returned to London the prosecution was eventually set aside by the crown. See the *Original Weekly Journal*, August 24, 1717.

21 JA, 1B/5/3/8, fols. 227–228, Jamaica Council minutes, January 16, 1717. At the same time a whiggish paper in London reprinted letters of loyalty to the crown written by "Merchants and Inhabitants of the Town of Kingston" as well as the Council and Governor Hamilton late in 1715. See the *Weekly Journal: or, British Gazetteer*, January 12, 1717. The original letters survive in TNA, CO 137/11, fols. 198–199. The circumstances of this publication suggest that there were already rumours of Jacobite activities in Jamaica.

anger against the new political regime in Britain. This did not mean that they actively supported the cause of the Pretender, but the significance of Jacobitism lay in the fact that it provided a reason to question the legitimacy of the suppression of raiding.

There can be little doubt that, towards the end of 1716, the enforcement of imperial law deprived merchants and ordinary seamen in Jamaica of a major source of income or, perhaps more significantly, a realistic prospect of making a windfall profit. The effects of this new policy were soon felt. On several occasions naval officers confiscated materials that allegedly had been received from pirates.²² In addition to their proceedings against free-lance raiding, officers also became involved in various commercial activities, often in competition with Jamaican traders. It was even claimed that, as a result of naval trading, local seafaring men “have not bread for want of Employment, which is the Chief Occasion of so many of them going a Pyrating.”²³ Against this background, open hostilities toward the Royal Navy emerged. According to the commander-in-chief in Jamaica, Edward Vernon, naval officers did not dare visit Port Royal for fear of being assaulted by the “whole Mobb of the Towne,” and in August 1720 unemployed “Privateers” rioted in nearby Kingston.²⁴ While all these factors may have influenced sailors who embarked on a career of robbery and plunder, various pirate groups need to be placed in a more specific historical context if we are to discern their attitude towards royal authority in the colonies and on the high seas.

A Network of Outlaw Activity

Freebooters relied on access to markets where they could exchange booty for all kinds of supplies. While the treasure hunters were looting the wrecks in shallow waters off the Florida coast in 1716 and 1717, the Bahamas, undefended and ungoverned by the crown, served as a centre of operations. According to eyewitness accounts, at least 800 marauders were based in New Providence, the main port of the Bahamas.²⁵ Vessels

22 NMM, ADM/L/W/80, log of HMS *Winchelsea*, December 19, 1717; TNA, ADM 1/1597, no. 1, order of William Fairfax, September 1, 1718; NLJ, Ms. 60, vol. 20, pp. 9–11, affidavit of Thomas Elbridge, September 5, 1719; NMM, ADM/L/F/104, log of HMS *Flamborough*, December 26 and 28, 1719; *The Boston News-Letter*, August 11, 1718; *The State of the Island of Jamaica, Chiefly in Relation to its Commerce* (London, 1726), pp. 8–11.

23 TNA, CO 137/13, fols. 32–34, Sir Nicholas Lawes to Council of Trade and Plantations, June 21, 1718.

24 BL, Add. Ms. 40811, fols. 25–27, Edward Vernon to Josiah Burchett, October 28, 1719 (first quotation); BL, Add. Ms. 40812, fol. 69, Edward Vernon to Sir Nicholas Lawes, September 22, 1720 (second quotation); BL, Add. Ms. 40813, fols. 129–130, Edward Vernon to Sir Nicholas Lawes, June 11, 1721.

25 Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Logan Papers, Misc. vol. 2, p. 167, James Logan to Robert Hunter, October 24, 1717. See also TNA, CO 5/1265, fol. 146, Mathew Musson to Council of Trade and Plantations, July 5, 1717; TNA, CO 37/10, fol. 29, Benjamin Bennett to Council of Trade and Plantations, March 29, 1718; *The Post-Man, and the Historical Account*, August 3, 1717.

commuted between the east coast of Florida, New Providence, Jamaica, and other colonial ports carrying men, provisions, supplies, and spoils back and forth.

Early in 1718 the famous privateer and circumnavigator Woodes Rogers was sent to the Bahamas to suppress “Pyracy and Rebellion” and to establish royal authority in this “Colony of Rogues.”²⁶ Soon after Rogers had taken control of New Providence, he met a woman named Pritchard. According to Rogers, she had money, dressed well, and “had Charms enough to tempt the Pirates, and when She pleas’d Could assume an air of Haughtiness.” When and how this lady had come to the Bahamas is a mystery, but she was certainly not the kind of woman one would expect to find in such a frontier settlement. Rogers noted: “She had often a loose way of Speaking, which made me conjecture. She Endeavoured to win the Hearts of her Admirers to the Pretender’s Interest.”²⁷ It seems likely that this remarkable woman provided pirates with Jacobite rhetoric and argument.

Surviving evidence suggests that there was a culture of defiance, augmented by Jacobitism, among the men who used the Bahamas as a base of operations. During the early months of 1718, for example, news reached England that the pirates staying in New Providence had “with one heart and voice” proclaimed the Pretender “for their King.”²⁸ At about the same time, when a naval vessel visited the Bahamas to announce a royal amnesty, the commander noted that the marauders “on all occasion Shew’d no Small hatred to Governm[en]t.”²⁹ Among the men who refused the amnesty offer was Charles Vane, a leading pirate of the period whose attitudes and actions were particularly notorious. He reportedly expressed his “Damnacon to King George” during a raid.³⁰ When Rogers arrived in New Providence a few months later, Vane’s crew set a prize vessel ablaze, “fir’d Guns of Defiance,” and fled the archipelago.³¹ The closing of the outlaw colony certainly caused further resentment among freebooters.

From the Bahamas piratical activities quickly spread to the Caribbean and the North American coast, but even the marauders who plied the

26 *The Original Weekly Journal*, November 9, 1717 (first quotation); *The Weekly Journal: or, Saturday’s Post*, November 23, 1717 (second quotation).

27 BL, Add. Ms. 5145C, fols. 123–126, Woodes Rogers to Sir Richard Steele, January 30, 1719.

28 The Royal Archives, Windsor Castle [hereafter RA], SP/29/49, George Camocke to Mary of Modena, March 28, 1718. Mary was James II’s widow.

29 TNA, ADM 1/2282, no. 13, Vincent Pearse to Admiralty, June 3, 1718. This passage is missing in the published version of the letter. See the *Evening Post*, July 3, 1718; *The Weekly Packet*, July 5, 1718; *The Weekly Journal: or, British Gazetteer*, July 5, 1718.

30 TNA, CO 37/10, fol. 35, deposition of Samuel Cooper, May 21, 1718.

31 TNA, CO 23/1, fols. 16–28, Woodes Rogers to Council of Trade and Plantations, October 31, 1718. See also the *Boston Gazette*, October 17, 1720, where Rogers declared these pirates “Enemies to the Crown of Great-Britain.”

seas between 1716 and 1718 did not cut off all ties to colonial society. Most of these men tried to walk the ill-defined line between piracy and legitimate commerce raiding, holding onto the option of returning to established society.³² Perhaps the most famous example of such conduct can be found in the exploits of Edward Thatch, or Teach, better known as Blackbeard, who participated in looting the Spanish wrecks in 1716, but decided to leave the region after he had learned of the proceedings against the freebooters in Jamaica.³³ A close look at some events in the careers of Blackbeard and several of his companions also shows how Jacobite sentiments evolved among the pirates of this period.

One man who had sailed with Blackbeard in 1716 was Samuel Bellamy. His crew captured a number of vessels in the Caribbean and then headed north. Off Cape Cod, however, their ship, the *Whydah*, sank in a fierce storm, and most of the men drowned at sea. Among the artefacts recovered at the site in recent years is a pewter plate with what looks like Jacobite graffiti.³⁴ This find seems to indicate that there were Jacobites among Bellamy's crew, though at this stage such symbols and sentiments should not be seen as signs of open protest.

Months later Blackbeard encountered Stede Bonnet, a plantation owner from Barbados, who had fitted out a sloop to join the freebooters.³⁵ Lacking maritime experience, Bonnet proved unable to lead his crew to the desired booty and so was content to join Blackbeard instead. In November 1717 they seized a French prize that would serve as their new flagship and renamed it *Queen Anne's Revenge*.³⁶ The name, which referred to the dynastic struggles in Britain, can be interpreted as an affront to King George and thus may have been a further indication of a Jacobite undercurrent.

32 Lauren Benton, "Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 47 (2005), pp. 719–721.

33 JA, 1B/5/8/3, fols. 212–213, deposition of Henry Timberlake, December 17, 1716. The image of Blackbeard as a cruel and ruthless villain was largely created by newspaper accounts and *A General History of the Pyrates*, first published in 1724. This book has been plundered by generations of historians, despite the fact that it is riddled with errors, exaggerations, and misunderstandings. See, for example, David D. Moore, "Blackbeard the Pirate: Historical Background and the Beaufort Inlet Shipwrecks," *Tributaries*, vol. 7 (1997), pp. 31–34; Michael T. Smith, "Blackbeard and the Meaning of Pirate Captaincy," *American Neptune*, vol. 61 (2002), pp. 400–405. Secondary literature based on the unreliable *General History* is not used in the present essay.

34 *Whydah*-shipwreck project, Provincetown, MA, artifact no. 14506.

35 A number of sources pertaining to Bonnet's background survive in the Barbados Department of Archives, but few historians have made use of them. Some have, including Warren Alleyne, *Caribbean Pirates* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 49–50; David B. Adcock, "Stede Bonnet," *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, vol. 41 (1993), pp. 200–201.

36 Lindley S. Butler, "Blackbeard's *Revenge*," *American History*, vol. 35 (2000), pp. 19–20; David D. Moore and Mike Daniel, "Blackbeard's Capture of the Nantaise Slave Ship *La Concorde*," *Tributaries*, vol. 11 (2001), pp. 15–31.

In June 1718 Blackbeard ran the *Queen Anne's Revenge* aground in Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina, and vanished with about 20 men and most of the accumulated plunder. In the following weeks Bonnet and the remaining crew refitted their sloop at nearby Cape Fear. Bonnet took this opportunity to make a direct reference to the Pretender by renaming his vessel the *Royal James*.³⁷ They then went back to sea. After having taken a prize, a witness later testified, the pirates “made Bowls of Punch, and went to Drinking of the Pretender’s Health, and hoped to see him King of the *English Nation*.”³⁸ From surviving sources it appears that more of this rhetorical insolence emerged as the fortunes of the pirates waned. Indeed, impotence and frustration were likely factors that contributed to the spreading of a peculiar sort of Jacobitism among these outlaw bands.

In the meantime, Blackbeard accepted the terms of the royal amnesty in Bath Town, then the capital of North Carolina. He did not abide by the amnesty, though, and soon thereafter he resumed seizing vessels. After this the governors of the neighbouring colonies determined to rid the coastal waters of all pirates. In November 1718 Blackbeard was chased down and killed by naval forces from Virginia. At about the same time, Bonnet was captured by the crew of a vessel from South Carolina. A few days before his trial Bonnet escaped from Charles Town prison, but he was pursued by local militiamen, recaptured, and subsequently tried and hanged.³⁹

The deaths of these legendary pirates, along with the establishment of imperial rule in the Bahamas in the latter half of 1718, mark the end of an era. Yet this chapter in the history of piracy has a noteworthy epilogue. By the time of Bonnet’s trial, a certain Richard Tookerman had appeared in Charles Town and claimed to be owner of one of the slaves found on the pirate vessel. When Bonnet fled from prison, Tookerman was accused of having aided in this escape, and the authorities detained him until Bonnet was recaptured.⁴⁰

37 The National Archives Southeast Region, Atlanta [hereafter NASR] Minutes of the Vice-Admiralty Court of South Carolina, vol. 1, pp. 276–278, court indictment of Nicholas Trott, November 19, 1718; *The Post-Boy*, September 4, 1718; *The Weekly Journal: or, British Gazetteer*, September 6, 1718. It seems likely that Bonnet had become acquainted with Jacobite ideas and rhetoric early in his life. For Jacobitism in Barbados, see TNA, CO 28/2, fols. 330–331, Francis Russell to Council of Trade and Plantations, August 25, 1695.

38 *The Tryals of Major Stede Bonnet, and Other Pirates* (London, 1719), p. 13. The court proceedings reveal that at this stage Bonnet was aiming to obtain a privateering commission from the Danish colony Saint Thomas, which was widely known as “a Nest that harbours all Villains and Vagabonds.” See TNA, CO 152/12, fols. 469–472, Walter Hamilton to Council and Trade and Plantations, December 19, 1718.

39 *The Original Weekly Journal*, February 28, 1719; *The Weekly Journal: or Saturday's Post*, February 28, 1719; *The Weekly Packet*, February 28, 1719.

40 NASR, Minutes of the Vice-Admiralty Court of South Carolina, vol. 1, pp. 289–290, claim of Richard Tookerman, November 21, 1718; BL, Add. Ms. 40806, fol. 149, deposition of Thomas

Several years later, on the Pretender's birthday in 1721, only a few weeks after Vane had been captured and executed — his corpse still hanging in chains near the harbour as a grisly deterrent to would-be pirates — a sloop discharged its guns off Port Royal. The officers of the naval vessels stationed in Jamaica interpreted this as a sign of Jacobite protest. An inquiry ensued, and Tookerman was identified as being responsible for this provocation.⁴¹ Vernon detained Tookerman and sent him to London to stand trial. The court, however, granted Tookerman a writ of *habeas corpus* that allowed him to go back to America.⁴² All these events suggest that there was a network of men involved in various kinds of outlaw activity, some of whom had Jacobite sympathies. Of course, such connections and their political ramifications remained secret unless — as in Tookerman's case — the authorities seriously investigated piratical networks.⁴³ Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that true Jacobites did not make up more than a tiny minority among pirates.

Across the Atlantic

As the war against piracy took shape in 1718, a split occurred among the diverse groups of freebooters. Members of the American seafaring communities restricted themselves to the coastal waters of the New World, or they returned to Jamaica, Bermuda, or other ports of the British colonial empire. On the other hand, a considerable number of rootless deep-sea sailors — mostly maritime workers without family ties — formed a cohort of rovers who had little to lose but their lives.⁴⁴ Most of this latter group left their traditional hunting grounds in the Caribbean and sought new targets, drifting from one vessel to another and sailing to wherever they expected to make their fortune. These men hoped to strike it rich

Conyers, September 12, 1721; TNA, HCA 1/55, fol. 4, information of William Rhett, September 27, 1721.

41 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Rawlinson A. 299, fol. 254, log of HMS *Hartford*, June 10, 1721; BL, Add. Ms. 40813, fols. 129–130, Edward Vernon to Sir Nicholas Lawes, June 11, 1721. After Tookerman had been apprehended, Vernon and some of his officers were assaulted by an angry crowd.

42 BL, Add. Ms. 40806, fol. 142, Edward Vernon to Josiah Burchett, October 30, 1721; *The Daily Journal*, November 21, 1721. In turn, Tookerman forced Vernon to pay a compensation of £1,000 for which the latter petitioned to be reimbursed by the crown. See TNA, PC 2/88, pp. 241–243, Privy Council register, March 25, 1723.

43 For similar networks on the other side of the Atlantic, see Paul Monod, "Dangerous Merchandise: Smuggling, Jacobitism, and Commercial Culture in Southeast England, 1690–1760," *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 30 (1991), pp. 150–182.

44 *The Weekly Journal: or, British Gazetteer*, July 5, 1718. For some characteristics of the maritime proletariat, see Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 13–73; Peter Earle, *Sailors: English Merchant Seamen, 1650–1775* (London: Methuen, 1998), pp. 29–64.

at some point in their voyages, and then they planned to disperse, retiring somewhere in wealth and prosperity. Whereas many of their predecessors had hesitated to attack British vessels, these newly formed marauding gangs abandoned all loyalty to their nation and preyed upon every possible prize. They headed for distant targets off the coast of Brazil, where in the 1690s gold had been discovered, or in the Indian Ocean, where the previous generation of pirates had looted enormous treasures.

Early in 1719 cohorts of pirates ravaged shipping in the waters off West Africa, sometimes sailing together, sometimes on separate routes. On their way down the coast they seized numerous poorly defended slave vessels. In the great majority of these cases, the victims offered little or no resistance, as few of them were willing to risk their lives to defend someone else's profit. Actually, many seamen voluntarily joined the pirates just to escape the harsh and often deadly shipboard conditions of the slave trade.⁴⁵ Among the five or six pirate gangs active at that time, a substantial minority of the ships' complements had been recruited from the crews of slave vessels.

The pirates who crossed the Atlantic frequently used Jacobite expressions. In fact, at this stage it was almost customary for pirates to convey contempt for the British authorities by invoking the Pretender's name. In April 1719 the slave trader William Snelgrave was captured by Thomas Cocklyn's crew and witnessed how the men drank "Healths, amongst which was that of the *Pretender*, by the name of *James the Third*."⁴⁶ Pirate ships were given names such as *Royal Rover*, *Flying King*, or simply *King James*. One prize was renamed *New King James*, and another was called *Wyndham* after a widely known Jacobite plotter. Two marauding gangs, one led by Howell Davis and the other by Edward England, named their vessel *Royal James*, and their French companion Oliver La Buse chose the name of a prominent exiled Jacobite, the Duke of Ormond, for his ship.⁴⁷ The pirates probably did not know that Ormond led an ill-fated invasion aimed at overthrowing the British government at the very time when they were sailing along the west coast of

45 TNA, ADM 1/2649, no. 16, Francis Willis to Admiralty, October 12, 1720; Stephen D. Behrendt, "Crew Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century," *Slavery and Abolition*, vol. 18 (1997), pp. 49–71; Herbert S. Klein, Stanley L. Engerman, Robin Haines, and Ralph Shlomowitz, "Transatlantic Mortality: The Slave Trade in Comparative Perspective," *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 58 (2001), pp. 105–117.

46 William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Guinea and the Slave-Trade* (London, 1734), pp. 216–217.

47 The Bank of England Archive, London, M7/19, William Snelgrave to Humphrey Morice, April 30, 1719; TNA, HCA 1/54, fols. 115–116, examination of Henry Hunt, September 27, 1720; National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh [hereafter NAS], AC 16/1, pp. 319–324, testimony of Roger Hughes, November 4, 1720; *The Daily Post*, October 17 and 22, 1719; *The Weekly Journal: or, Saturday's Post*, October 24, 1719; *The Weekly Packet*, December 12, 1719; *The Last Speech and Dying Words, of Richard Luntly, Carpenter Aboard the Eagle Snow* (Edinburgh, 1721).

Africa. In any case, Jacobitism must have appeared so attractive that even a French pirate joined in this peculiar British culture of defiance.

The commander of a slave ship seized by pirates reported that his captors claimed that they were acting under the Pretender's authority and that they had shown him a passport along with a medal, which they carried as a mark of fidelity to the Jacobite cause.⁴⁸ Such a commission was clearly a fiction, and there seems to be no evidence for a connection between the Stuart court in exile and the activities of any of these pirates. Nevertheless, this example illustrates that Jacobitism provided sea robbers with symbols and vocabulary to cloak their crimes as a principled opposition to royal authority on the high seas. Jacobitism gave these gangs a sense of legitimacy — even if a knowingly false one — when they plundered shipping, especially British vessels. Of course, pirates were primarily, if not exclusively, driven by plain mercenary motives, but, particularly for potential turncoat sailors from captured slave vessels, this ostensible legitimacy may have facilitated their decision to join the rovers.⁴⁹

Idioms of Jacobitism also provided the pirates with socially unifying expressions of cultural cohesion and fraternity. Arguments that questioned the legitimacy of royal authority over the seas probably met with strong sympathy among these men who had abandoned all loyalty to their nation. In the absence of a traditional enemy and any unifying factor other than greed, Jacobitism provided the sense of a common cause and may have strengthened the bonds of allegiance upon which the survival of pirate crews largely depended.⁵⁰

This form of Jacobitism was a short-lived phenomenon, though, in part because most pirate careers lasted no more than one or two years, and what suited each generation of pirates was transient. In August 1719, after Davis had been killed in an assault, the remainder of the crew led by Bartholomew Roberts seized a Portuguese treasure ship off the Brazilian coast. In the following months, while they were sailing through the Caribbean and along the American coastline, part of the company dispersed. Small groups secretly rejoined colonial society.⁵¹ During this period

48 TNA, ADM 1/4102, no. 70, Louis-Balthasar de Chammorel to Charles Delafaye, August 28, 1719; Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT, Osborn shelves c558, Charles Delafaye to James Stanhope, September 11, 1719.

49 The movements of the pirates only make sense when greed is taken into account. See Arne Bialuschewski, "Between Newfoundland and the Malacca Strait: A Survey of the Golden Age of Piracy, 1695–1725," *Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 90 (2004), pp. 173–186. It is hard to believe that pirates would have made long and arduous voyages to the Indian Ocean for other than mercenary motives.

50 Benerson Little, *The Sea Rover's Practice: Pirate Tactics and Techniques, 1630–1730* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), pp. 120–161.

51 Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Ms. 3, V8194, Sp685a2, pp. 324–329, Alexander Spotswood to Council of Trade and Plantations, May 20, 1720; NAS, AC 16/1, pp. 384–391, testimony of

Jacobite ship names disappeared, as pirates tried to avoid being heedlessly provocative. Rebellious rhetoric was still used by several marauders, for example by one of Roberts' crew, who, according to an official transcript, stated "that if they sh[ou]ld meet with any of the Turnep Man's Ships, meaning the King's Ships, they would blow up, and go to Hell together."⁵² Like so much of the language of Jacobite dissent in England, this was all bluster. In February 1722, when these pirates finally encountered a naval vessel off the west coast of Africa, some of them were too drunk to take up their arms, and most preferred to surrender rather than fight to death. The survivors were subsequently tried and many of them hanged.

Madagascar

Towards the end of 1719, pirate gangs led by Edward England, George Taylor, and Oliver La Buse began to ravage shipping in the Indian Ocean. Between their forays, these men frequented Saint Augustin in southwestern Madagascar. There they recovered from the strains of ship-board life and provisioned their vessels for further raids on merchant shipping.⁵³ Madagascar once again became a place where marauders and their hoards of loot were to be found.

Leading Jacobites learned of pirate sympathies for their cause and assumed — or hoped — that these outlaws would join forces with them to overthrow the political regime in Britain.⁵⁴ In December 1722 two vessels, the *Revolution* and the *Lady Mary*, which had been bought by the Jacobite diaspora for the Pretender's service, accompanied a Swedish frigate on its way to Madagascar with a view to enlisting pirate allies. However, due to organizational and logistical problems combined with a chronic shortage of funds, this venture collapsed at an early stage, preventing the vessels from travelling farther than Spain. To avert suspicion and make some money, the *Revolution* went on a trading voyage to Genoa, where it was seized by the Royal Navy in January 1723.⁵⁵ In the

Archibald Murray, November 4, 1720; *The American Weekly Mercury*, March 17, 1720; *The Boston News-Letter*, April 11, 1720; *The Last Speech and Dying Words of John Clark, Condemned for Piracy* (Edinburgh, 1720).

52 TNA, HCA 1/99/3, p. 98, testimony of Joseph Trahern, April 7, 1722; *A Full and Exact Account of the Tryal of all the Pyrates, Lately Taken by Captain Ogle* (London, 1723), p. 42. In Jacobite subculture, King George was depicted as a fool, who had been hoeing turnips in his garden when the news of Queen Anne's death arrived. It was rumoured that George later planned to plough Saint James's Park and sow it with turnips.

53 TNA, HCA 1/55, fols. 7–9, information of Robert Dunwick, November 14, 1721; BL, Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections, IOR/E/1/13, no. 97, report of Richard Lazinby, March 30, 1722; *The Boston News-Letter*, April 30, 1722.

54 National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, Ms. 992, fols. 2–4, undated memorandum of Johan Friedrich Osthoff.

55 RA, SP/65/122, Andrew Galwey to David Nairne, December 6, 1722; TNA, ADM 1/4104, no. 72, John Carteret to Admiralty, April 12, 1723; *The Daily Journal*, February 4, 1723; *The London*

end, a possible alliance between Jacobite forces and pirates merely reflected wishful thinking. Indeed, after the failed rebellion of 1719 and the Atterbury plot of 1722, Jacobitism constituted little more than a lost cause. For their part, the pirates fared about the same as the Jacobites.

Years after this episode, the crews of several British vessels called at Saint Augustin on their way to India. They were greeted by the indigenous population with expressions that one visitor described as “a Terror to every *English* Christian.” Among the phrases that the Malagasy must have learned from the pirates was “D[am]n King George.”⁵⁶ Though not necessarily a Jacobite expression, this example illustrates that the oral culture of piracy — even at the margins of the then-known world — stood in opposition to the prevailing British political and social norms.

A Dwindling Force

The final stage of early modern piracy began in January or February 1722, when a band of mutineers led by George Lowther happened to meet Edward Low, who had seized a ship off Honduras.⁵⁷ Unlike their predecessors, these pirates had no specific targets. They were constantly on the move, cautiously avoiding direct confrontation with the naval powers that were increasingly taking control of the Caribbean and the coastal waters of North America. On their rampage Low, Lowther, and their lawless companions became progressively more antisocial and violent. At the same time, they forced captured sailors — particularly those with much-needed skills — into service on their vessels to replace crew members who had deserted or died.⁵⁸ Even though their number was inconsiderable, these outcasts caused much stir, prompting the imperial authorities to launch a fierce extermination campaign against them.

In September 1722 a combined marauding gang led by Edward Low, Francis Spriggs, and John Russell seized three English and two

Journal, March 23, 1723; *The Weekly Journal: or, British Gazetteer*, March 23, 1723; *The Evening Post*, March 26, 1723; *The Freeholder's Journal*, March 27, 1723; *The St. James's Journal*, March 30, 1723; *The Weekly Journal: or, Saturday's Post*, March 30, 1723; *The Whole Proceedings upon the Arraignment, Tryal, Conviction and Attainder of Christopher Layer, Esq. for High Treason* (London, 1723), Appendix, pp. 37–38.

56 Clement Downing, *A Compendious History of the Indian Wars* (London, 1737), p. 81 (first quotation); Edward Ives, *A Voyage from England to India, in the Year MDCCLIV* (London, 1773), p. 8 (second quotation). Captives on board a pirate vessel reported that the language was rougher than in merchant shipping. See, for example, the *Post-Boy*, October 11, 1720; *The Tryals of Captain John Rackam, and Other Pyrates* (Kingston, 1721), pp. 18–19.

57 Massachusetts Archives, Boston, Records of the Court of Admiralty of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, vol. 2, fol. 106, James Thucher vs. Peter Papillon, July 3, 1722; *The New England Courant*, June 11, 1722.

58 TNA, CO 37/10, fols. 223–224, John Hope to Council of Trade and Plantations, February 21, 1723; *The Boston News-Letter*, June 18 and 25, 1722; *The New England Courant*, October 15, 1722; *The American Weekly Mercury*, June 6, 1723.

Portuguese merchant vessels off the Cape Verde Islands. The commander of one of these prizes, George Roberts, later wrote a detailed account of his experiences during his ten days' captivity among the pirates. Roberts' book, published in 1726, provides valuable information about the character and behaviour patterns of pirate crews in the early 1720s.⁵⁹

According to Roberts, the pirates he encountered were a diverse group of characters. Low is described as a gentle, well-behaved commander, and most of the crew seemed to be benign. Russell, on the other hand, often cursed and threatened not only captured sailors like Roberts but also his fellow pirates. He was a quarrelsome, flamboyant man of Portuguese descent, whose Catholicism may have influenced his outspoken Jacobite conviction.⁶⁰ These contrasting personalities among the pirates invariably led to tensions and frequent disputes. In the male environment of piracy, such conflicts easily escalated — particularly following the consumption of alcohol — and volatility remained a factor that characterized shipboard life.⁶¹ From Roberts' description, it appears that Russell's Jacobitism met with little sympathy from the other pirates.

Most pirates must have been aware of political currents and events in the British Isles, and captured sailors kept them informed of recent developments. It seems reasonable to assume that pirates learned within a few months of the new alliance between Jacobites and Spain, which led to the aborted invasion of 1719.⁶² This development made Jacobitism unattractive even for ruthless marauding gangs whose norms and values were somewhat detached from British mainstream society. The pirates' hatred for Spaniards is well documented. Early in 1723, for example, Low and his crew seized a group of 45 Spanish sailors in the Bay of Honduras and "put them all to the Sword" for no apparent reason.⁶³ Even though other pirates may have been less violent, there is no indication that their general attitude towards Spaniards was any different.

Sailors who had been forced on board pirate vessels at this time reported that their captors often talked of vengeance, which gave their

59 *The Daily Post*, January 26, 1723; *The Post-Boy*, February 12, 1723; *The St. James's Journal*, February 16, 1723; *The British Journal*, February 16, 1723; *The Weekly Journal: or, British Gazetteer*, February 16, 1723; *The Weekly Journal: or, Saturday's Post*, February 16, 1723. There has been a discussion as to whether the account is fictional, but no factual evidence has come to light to dispute its authenticity. See Philip N. Furbank and William R. Owens, *Defoe De-attributions: A Critique of J. R. Moore's Checklist* (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), pp. 142–143.

60 George Roberts, *The Four Years Voyages of Capt. George Roberts* (London, 1726), pp. 70–89.

61 *The Post-Boy*, August 9, 1722; *The London Journal*, August 11, 1722; *The Weekly Journal: or, Saturday's Post*, August 11, 1722; John Barnard, *Ashton's Memorial: An History of the Strange Adventures and Signal Deliveries of Mr. Philip Ashton* (Boston, 1725), pp. 13–16.

62 The events were first reported in the colonies in the *Boston News-Letter*, May 4 and 11, 1719. For the historical background, see Daniel Szechi, *The Jacobites, Britain, and Europe, 1688–1788* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 107–110.

63 *The Daily Post*, June 27, 1723; *The Evening Post*, June 27, 1723; *The British Journal*, June 29, 1723.

crimes a sense of legitimacy.⁶⁴ It appears that the more immediate motive of revenge replaced the older and rather far-fetched Jacobitism as a cohesive force that was meant to justify robbery and other transgressions. For the great majority of pirates, Jacobite arguments evidently had either lost their meaning or never had any. In 1724 an eyewitness even claimed that Spriggs' crew never drank "any other Health than King *George's*," and, when these desperate fellows received news of the death of George I, "they immediately hoisted *Jolly Roger* half Mast, and drank his Royal Highness's Health by the Name of *George* the Second."⁶⁵

During this period the pirates met with increasing resistance while internal conflicts, often resolved by the division of crews, continued to weaken them. Many marauding gangs were chased down by naval forces and brought to justice. Public hangings in all parts of the Atlantic World signalled the victory of royal authority in the war against piracy.⁶⁶ Those who escaped the gallows were not safe either. Many died violently somewhere at the periphery of the trading empires. By 1726 the last surviving pirate bands of the early modern era had disappeared from the seas.

Conclusion

Pirates were opportunists, taking advantage of a storm of multiple economic and political events. While the upsurge of piracy in the Caribbean after the Jacobite rising of 1715 was a parallel and unrelated phenomenon, numerous freebooters made use of Jacobite symbols and rhetoric. Initially, expressions of Jacobitism represented the rejection of royal authority, particularly in Jamaica and in the Bahamas, where a shift in imperial policy deprived freelance raiders of their lucrative trade. However, references to the Pretender soon acquired a new meaning. Convinced Jacobites may have been only a small minority among pirates, but they provided fellow outlaws with arguments to cloak robbery and other crimes as legitimate resistance to royal authority in the British colonies and on the high seas. In the close confinement of a vessel, Jacobite sentiment quickly

64 TNA, CO 37/11, fol. 37, John Hope to Council of Trade and Plantations, January 14, 1724; *The Daily Courant*, June 12, 1724; *The Evening Post*, July 7, 1724; *The Daily Post*, July 15, 1724; *The Weekly Journal: or, British Gazetteer*, July 18, 1724; *The British Journal*, August 8, 1724; *The Post-Master: or, Loyal Mercury*, February 12 and 26, 1725; *The Weekly Journal: or, Saturday's Post*, February 20, 1725; *The British Journal*, February 27, 1725.

65 *The British Journal*, August 22, 1724.

66 TNA, CO 152/14, fols. 223–225, John Hart to Council of Trade and Plantations, June 8, 1723; *The New England Courant*, June 17 and 24, 1723; *The Boston News-Letter*, May 14 and 21, 1724; *Tryals of Thirty-Six Persons for Piracy* (Boston, 1723), pp. 12–13; *An Account of the Conduct and Proceedings of the Late John Gow* (London, 1725), pp. 55–62; *The Trials of Five Persons for Piracy, Felony and Robbery* (Boston, 1726), pp. 32–34; *The Tryals of Sixteen Persons for Piracy, &c.* (Boston, 1726), pp. 21–24. These trials gave some pirates a pretense for seeking revenge. See the *American Weekly Mercury*, May 28, 1724.

spread among the crew, then from ship to ship, and even across cultural borders.

The pirates active in the period under consideration, particularly those who sailed down the west coast of Africa in 1719, created a Jacobite sub-culture. However, Jacobitism did not serve any ideological purposes on pirate vessels. Even though references to the Pretender may have been frequent at times, they were superficial and did not mean that pirates were adherents of the Stuarts, let alone active supporters of their cause.⁶⁷ Instead, Jacobitism played an important role in the psychology of piracy. Jacobitism became the self-justifying façade behind which pirate gangs increasingly alienated themselves from mainstream society. But the façade was fragile and quickly disappeared when Jacobite politics collided with the long-standing animosities of English sailors against Spaniards. After all, the driving force behind robbery was greed, and justifications for crime were easily replaceable.

⁶⁷ The commander-in-chief of the Royal Navy in Jamaica came to a similar conclusion. See BL, Add. Ms. 40812, fols. 90–97, Edward Vernon to Josiah Burchett, November 7, 1720.