

Sugar Barons

History

Lesson 3 of an enquiry of 4 lessons

Enquiry: Who lived in British America?

Miss Cusworth



Barbados

Caribbean island

Native population affected by Spanish

Colonised by Britain in 1627

$\frac{1}{3}$ size of London

Made Britain rich

Described as the first black slave society



Virginia and Barbados: create this table

Planters in Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- e.g John Rolfe- Grew crops like tobacco to sell back in England- Owned and generally lived on plantations- Often became rich
Planters in Barbados	



Sugar Barons

A sugar baron is the name historian Matthew Parker has given to the wealthy and powerful people who owned sugar plantations.

This lesson looks at their experiences and influence in the Caribbean and Britain.



Sugar Barons: Codringtons

Christopher Codrington I was born in about 1600 and was from South Gloucestershire in England.

Unlike other planters on the island (such as George Ashby who we will meet later) Christopher Codrington came from an **aristocratic** family.

Christopher travelled out to the new colony of Barbados to make money. He soon began to grow sugar using enslaved people and grew extremely wealthy.



Sugar Barons: Codringtons

Christopher Codrington II inherited the plantations his father had created.

He married, had children and was appointed the deputy governor of Barbados. This was an important position.

After being accused of murder, he moved to another Caribbean island, Antigua. There he set up more sugar plantations.



Sugar Barons: Codringtons

Christopher Codrington III, was born on Barbados but was sent to England to be educated. He then went to Oxford. After fighting in the Nine Years' War, he returned to the Caribbean.

In his will, he left a large amount of money to create a grand library at All Souls College, Oxford, which still exists today.

Not all of the later Codringtons lived in the Caribbean, but they benefited from sugar and slavery. Money from plantations leaves a **legacy** in Britain today.



Virginia and Barbados

Planters in Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- e.g John Rolfe- Grew crops like tobacco to sell back in England- Owned and generally lived on plantations- Often became rich
Planters in Barbados	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- e.g Codringtons- Grew crops like sugar to sell back in Britain- Owned and sometimes lived on plantations- Often became very rich- Owned large numbers of slaves- Invested money in Britain



Sugar Barons: Ashbys

Andrea Stuart is a historian who has traced her family tree back to a plantation owner called George Ashby. Ashby left England in the 1640s to seek his fortune in Barbados.

He started off with a small piece of land, which he soon worked with indentured servants. Later, he bought African slaves to work on his small sugar plantation.

Unlike George Ashby, many men who went to Barbados to seek their fortune died early.



Sugar Barons: Robert Cooper Ashby

Robert Cooper Ashby was a great-great-great grandson of George Ashby. He married the wealthy Mary Burke in 1794 and moved to her plantations which was known as Burkes.

Together they only had one child, John. However, Robert Cooper Ashby had many children with enslaved women on his plantation. Some of these women were teenagers when they gave birth.



Sugar Barons: Robert Cooper Ashby

Robert Cooper Ashby was part of a small group of about 120 families who controlled Barbados.

His power extended beyond Burke's plantation. He was responsible for local affairs, had a military role and a legal role. He was a highly respected local figure who had a lot of power.



Sugar Barons: Robert Cooper Ashby

After the **abolition** of slavery in 1834, Robert Cooper Ashby got compensation for his loss of property (the enslaved people he owned)

Using the UCL Legacies of British Slave-ownership database, he owned 257 slaves.

Robert Cooper Ashby was paid about half a million pounds (in today's money) in compensation.



Virginia and Barbados

Planters in Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- e.g John Rolfe- Grew crops like tobacco to sell back in England- Owned and generally lived on plantations- Often became rich
Planters in Barbados	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- e.g Codringtons and Ashbys- Grew crops like sugar to sell back in Britain- Owned and sometimes lived on plantations- Often became very rich- Owned large numbers of slaves who they often had children with- Invested money in Britain- as part of abolition, were compensated for their loss of property



Questions

1. Which Caribbean island did we learn about today?
2. What crop did planters grow in Barbados?
3. Did all of the Codrington family who grew wealthy from their plantations in the Caribbean live there?
4. Who was Robert Cooper Ashby?
5. Who did he have children with?



New England and Barbados

The weather in New England made growing a crop like sugar or tobacco very difficult, but this doesn't mean that the northern 13 British colonies weren't involved in the trade. New England was involved in slavery by selling food to the Caribbean and lumber (wood) for the slave ships.

There were also enslaved people in New England. Instead of working on plantations, they were often domestic servants, worked on small farms or for a family business.



New England and the Caribbean

Read the information in the work pack, write down whether these sentences are true or false.

The colonies in New England made a lot of money from growing sugar.

The weather in New England made growing a crop like sugar or tobacco very difficult.

There was no interaction between New England and the Caribbean.

There were no enslaved people in New England.

New England was involved in slavery by selling food to the Caribbean and wood for the slave ships.



Glossary

Abolition: when something is abolished (got rid of).

Aristocratic: belonging to the aristocracy, which is a powerful, wealthy group in a society.

Legacy: something that is left or is handed down.

