

## THE SECOND CARIB WAR

Nathan McNew

The effects of the French Revolution extended far beyond France itself, and even the European continent. The best known example is that of Saint Domingue, where slave rebellions stemming from the ideas of liberty and equality led eventually to Haitian independence. This same Revolution spread throughout the colonies of the eastern Caribbean in the form of the Brigands' War, in which France and England battled yet again for control of the various small, but highly profitable islands. This entire war was directly effected by the events of the French Revolution, especially France's decision to liberate the slaves in its colonies, an act which dramatically supplemented the French force in the Caribbean with the addition of former slaves. As a whole, however, the Brigands' War was more political than ideological and generally resembled the prior conflicts between Britain and France over the same territory during the Seven Years' War and the War of the American Revolution.

On the island of Saint Vincent the Brigands' War manifested itself in a smaller conflict, known as the Second Carib War, between the Black Caribs, a group of natives supported by the French, and the colony's British rulers. The war on this island was unique: the majority of the fighting was done by natives rather than Frenchmen or freed slaves, and the natives were driven more by a desire for liberty than for profit. During the Second Carib War the Black Caribs were inspired by many of the ideas of the French Revolution to fight the British alongside the French in attempt to establish their status as "citizen's of a free nation."

### **First Hand Accounts**

For many years Young's *An Account of the Black Charaibs in the Island of St. Vincent's* has been the primary source of information on the Black Caribs, and the Second Carib War. The influence of this work, along with Shephard's highly comprehensive *An Historical Account of the Island of Saint Vincent*, is readily apparent throughout all of the available literature on the subject. Both of these works are written from the perspective of the wealthy British landowners: Sir William Young was the head of the Land Commission on Saint Vincent and himself one of the most prominent members of English Society on the island; Shephard was commissioned to record the history of the war by a large group of plantation owners who desired that their struggles and bravery would not be forgotten. Both seek to portray the English actions in the best possible light. The Caribs are portrayed at best as a

misled, simple people, and at worst as criminal defectors to the enemy, the French. Nevertheless, these sources do convey the strong impact that French Revolution, and its ideas had, especially on the Carib leaders. Young quotes the proclamation of Chatoyer in 1795: “Where is the Frenchman who will not join his brothers, at a moment when the voice of liberty is heard by them? Let us then unite, citizens and brothers, round the colours flying in this island; and let us hasten to co-operate to that great piece of work which has been already commenced so gloriously.”<sup>1</sup> Shephard further describes the effects of revolutionary ideas on the Carib people, which though they did not at first motivate the natives to action without help from the French, did visibly affect their character.<sup>2</sup>

More recently, additional sources have become available, which portray the Second Carib War in a different light. These works are generally more critical of the British and explore in greater detail the motives and behavior of the Caribs. The first of these is the manuscript of Alexander Anderson, the curator of the Botanic Gardens on Saint Vincent after 1784. Written around 1798, his work was not published until 1983. While a British citizen, he is far more critical of the British policy on the island towards the Caribs than the aforementioned works were. He gives a detailed description of what he believes to have been the causes of the insurrection. Not only does he cite the inconsiderate behavior of many of the planters in stealing rebel lands, but also the lack of significant efforts by the English to educate the Caribs and to convert them to the Christian religion. Further, while highly critical of the French Revolution, he views the influx of the new Republican ideals, especially due to the work of Victor Hugues, as a defining component of the rebel's insurrection, and believes that a greater effort should have been made to prevent the French ideas from reaching the island. “It was their connection with the French that rendered the black Caribs [sic] a dangerous people. ... Had that connection been timely cut off they might have been rendered useful to the colony and a singular tribe of mankind reserved that are now nearly extinct and will soon be forgot that such a race ever existed.”<sup>3</sup>

Another more recently studied work is the memoirs of Alexandre Moreau de Jonnes, *Adventures in the Revolution and under the Consulate*. Moreau was an 18-year-old French boy fighting in the Caribbean. In 1795 he was sent by Victor Hugues to Saint Vincent to train the Caribs to

- 
- 1 Sir William Young, “An account of the black Charaibs in the Island of St. Vincent’s” in *An account of the black Charaibs in the Island of St. Vincent’s; with the Charaib treaty of 1779 [i.e. 1773] and other original documents. Compiled from the papers of the late Sir William Young, bart.* (London: Knight and Triphook, Booksellers to the King, 1795) in *The Making of the Modern World*, [database] Gale, Cengage Learning, 117 <http://0-galenet.galegroup.com/bianca.penlib.du.edu/servlet/MOME?af=RN&ae=U3602630355&srchtp=a&ste=14> (accessed February 27, 2009).
  - 2 Charles Shephard, Esq. *An Historical Account of the Island of Saint Vincent* (London: W. Nicol, Cleveland Row, St. James, 1831), 52, <http://books.google.com/books?id=DLUNAAAAQAAJ> (accessed February 27, 2009).
  - 3 Alexander Anderson, “Alexander Anderson And the Carib War,” in *Wild Majesty Encounters with the Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 229.

use artillery. He was a self described admirer of Rousseau and of the Revolutionary ideals, and personally communicated many of these ideas to the Caribs. While on Saint Vincent he lived for a period with a contingent of the yellow Caribs, and even fell in love with the daughter of one of the chiefs. While portions of his memoirs have been translated into English, the sections dealing with his time on Saint Vincent are only available in the original French.<sup>4</sup> With the exception of Moreau, all of these works are written from a British perspective which does not do justice to the role that the relationship between the Black Caribs and the French played in the conflict. This paper draws from these sources, but puts a greater emphasis on this relationship and the associated French ideas which influenced the Caribs.

### **Saint Vincent prior to the Second Carib War**

The events which played out on the island of Saint Vincent were largely a result of the island's unique history among the Windward Islands. The Windward Islands comprise the southern half of the Lesser Antilles and lie along the easternmost part of Caribbean Sea. Saint Vincent is roughly in the middle of this island group, just south of the island of Saint Lucia, west of Barbados and north of both Grenada and a group of very small islands known as the Grenadines. The island was visited by Columbus on 22 January 1498, the day of Saint Vincent in the Spanish Calendar. Though the island was officially claimed by Spain, it remained primarily undisturbed due at least in part to its rough terrain and the large number of natives living there.<sup>5</sup>

The most unique part of the history of Saint Vincent is the presence of the Black Caribs, a tribe of mixed Carib and African ancestry. The exact origin of the Black Caribs on Saint Vincent is unclear. References to the Negroes on Saint Vincent date back to at least 1620 when a Spanish missionary referred to at least 500 Negroes living there after a Portuguese slave ship ran aground.<sup>6</sup> The most commonly cited story is that of a Dutch slave ship, the *Palmira* which wrecked on the island of Bequia in the Grenadines during a hurricane in 1675. The slaves were rescued by the Caribs and taken to Saint Vincent. Here they joined an already substantial population of runaway slaves known as Maroons. Slaves on Barbados had discovered that they could escape by getting on a raft which would then be carried by the current to Saint Vincent. These blacks then married native Carib women, forming a new

---

4 James L Sweeney, "Caribs, Maroons, Jacobins, Brigands, and Sugar Barons: The Last Stand of the Black Caribs on St. Vincent," *The African Diaspora Archeology Network*, March 2007 Newsletter, 23. <http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/news0307/news0307-7.pdf> (accessed February 27, 2009).

5 Shephard, 1.

6 Sweeney, 23.

race which was taller than the remaining “yellow” Caribs.<sup>7</sup>

The French and English began to take an interest in the Lesser Antilles during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. King Charles I claimed the island as part of his mandate over Barbados, and in 1627 granted the island to the Earl of Carlisle. The Caribs there repelled most attempts at colonization, however. Two French priests came to the island in 1653 but were generally unsuccessful at converting the natives. In 1654 an inter-island council of Caribs agreed to fight to expel the French and English from the West Indies. The Caribs in Saint Vincent killed the French Priests, and the French responded by sending an expedition which destroyed Carib villages and crops.<sup>8</sup> This inter-island Carib offensive was unsuccessful, and on 31 March 1660 a peace was signed between the Caribs and the French and English. In this agreement the Caribs agreed to abandon all of the islands except for Saint Vincent and Dominica. As a result the French and English agreed regard these islands as neutral.<sup>9</sup>

Despite this legal neutrality, the English continued to assert sovereignty over the island. King Charles II granted the island to Lord Willoughby in 1672, making him governor of Barbados, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Dominica. However, the British did little more than use the island to water and acquire wood.<sup>10</sup> By 1700 tensions had risen within the island between the Yellow and Black Caribs, who asked the Governor of French Martinique for assistance. The governor responded by creating a line called Barre de l’Isle which divided the island between the Black Caribs in the east and the Yellow Caribs in the west. The agreement was gladly accepted by both parties, and both sides ended up viewing the French as an ally. As a result an increasing number of French came to settle on the island, primarily on the yellow half of the island.<sup>11</sup> The Caribs increasingly interacted with the French as well, some chiefs even sent their children to be educated on Martinique. “It is said that the most famous leader of the Caribs, Chief Joseph Chatoyer, ... was as comfortable having dinner and doing business with a European governor at Government House as he was trekking through the jungle in a loincloth with his several wives in tow.”<sup>12</sup>

Despite the growing French influence on the island, the French and English reaffirmed the neutrality of the island in the treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle , which ended the War of Austrian Succession.

---

7 I A Earle Kirby and C I Martin, *The Rise and Fall of the Black Caribs*, (Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: St. Vincent & the Grenadines National Trust, 1997), 9 [http://www.svgonline.com/carib\\_history.pdf](http://www.svgonline.com/carib_history.pdf) (accessed February 27, 2009).

8 Kirby and Martin, 8.

9 Jervis Langdon, “The French Revolution in Martinique” (Thesis for Bachelor of Letters, Cornell University, 1897), 29 <http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924022781615> (accessed February 27, 2009).

10 Young, 4.

11 Kirby and Martin, 14.

12 Sweeney, 17.

This lasted until fighting again broke out in 1756. The island was taken by General Monokton of the British in 1762, and was formally ceded to Britain in the Treaty of Paris at the end of the war in 1763.<sup>13</sup> After the treaty, England attempted, for the first time, to assert control of the island. The treaty had made no mention of the Caribs on the island. At this point Saint Vincent was the last of the islands of the Caribbean to come under European Control.<sup>14</sup>

The English quickly sent a commission led by Sir William Young to survey the island and sub-divide it to be sold, at which point a great number of English began to migrate to the island. Unlike the French settlers who had generally come to settle permanently on the island, the English settlers expected to use the island as a way to strike it rich, and then return to England. As such they had very little interest in establishing good relationships with the natives. Instead they generally wanted to turn the land into large sugar plantations worked by slaves. As the land best suited for growing sugar lay in the heart of the Black Caribs' territory, conflict was inevitable. The English tried a great number of techniques to trick the Caribs out of their land, which were generally unsuccessful. The Black Caribs harassed surveyors who entered their territory and evaded several agreements designed to relocate them to Bequia, in the Grenadines.<sup>15</sup>

The skirmishes between the Black Caribs and the British increased until eventually breaking out into a full scale war, known as the First war of the Caribs in 1772. Young, the British surveyor, in his work argues that the Caribs had not cleared all of their land and that the English were therefore justified in taking the land that the Caribs were not actively cultivating. He quotes a letter from the leadership of Saint Vincent to the King which states that “The culture of such lands that are at present and must forever be unnecessary to that people, his Majesty's revenue will be greatly increased.”<sup>16</sup>

Two British regiments were ordered from North America to force the Caribs into submission or to deport them from the island if necessary. The Black Caribs fought a highly effective guerrilla-war however, avoiding any organized battles and attacking British settlements at night. This, combined with a change of heart among the British leaders who felt that the war had been “founded in injustice, and reflected dishonor on the National Character, a violation of the natural rights of mankind,” led to calls for a fair and just peace treaty to be drawn up with the Caribs. In the resulting treaty the Caribs were allowed to retain control of a third of the island, but in return agreed to recognize the sovereignty of the King of England over the whole of the island, to return any escaped slaves under penalty of loss

---

13 Langdon, 29.

14 Kirby and Martin, 20.

15 Kirby and Martin, 23.

16 Young, 58.

of land, to come to the support of the British when called upon, and to discontinue communication with the French.<sup>17</sup>

The Caribs remained loyal to the French, however, and greatly assisted a French takeover of the island in 1779 during the War of the American Revolution. A British attempt to retake the island in 1780 was decisively repelled by a combined force of French and Carib fighters. The French agreed to withdraw from the island, though, in 1783 at the Treaty of Versailles, and the island returned to British control for the next decade. The English were willing to pardon the Caribs for their support of the French and were eager to return to the terms of the treaty established in 1773.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Second Carib War**

On the eve of the French Revolution, Saint Vincent was becoming a fairly profitable colony. Relations between the Caribs and the English had remained tranquil, and the planters were successfully converting many of the old tobacco and cotton farms into large-scale sugar plantations. The Black Caribs remained strong enough that the English desired to maintain their friendship, thus the people were allowed to maintain their land, and the chiefs were periodically entertained by the British.<sup>19</sup> Thomas Coke, a famous preacher working for John Wesley, visited the island in 1788, and visited several of the Caribs, including Chief Chatoyer's son. In a letter to Wesley that same year he praised the hospitality of the Caribs, and recommended a greater attempt by the English to educate the native children. In the letter he said: "I feel myself much attached to these poor savages. The sweet simplicity and cheerfulness they manifested on every side, soon wore off every unfavorable impression my mind had imbibed from the accounts I had received of their cruelties. Cruelties originating probably with ourselves rather than with them."<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, however, the island was ripe for the ideas of the French Revolution. The Caribs had continued to sympathize with the French ever since the intervention of the Governor of Martinique at the beginning of the century. Caribs traded routinely with various French islands, especially Martinique, despite incentives used by the British to try and prevent this practice. As a result of this trade the Black Caribs were still in frequent communication with the French, many were fluent in the language. Even while the Carib-British relations were calm, the Caribs resented the land that was lost to the English for their sizable sugar plantations. Alexander Anderson, the Botanist on the

<sup>17</sup> Kirby and Martin, 31.

<sup>18</sup> Sweeney, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Shephard, 52.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Coke, "Thomas Coke's Letter to Wesley (1788)" in *Wild Majesty Encounters with the Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 188.

island records that “the planters set themselves down clearing, planting and building onto the very boundary.... forgetting they were surrounded with mortal enemies who viewed their prosperity with chagrin and jealousy from their long possession, regarding every foot of land the planter cleared as intrusion on their property.” These relations were made worse by the fact that the British, unlike earlier French settlers, made little attempt to relate to their neighbors, the Black Caribs. Anderson also relates, “Few Englishmen in the island know the surface of the earth within their bounds further than Mt. Young, a few only out of curiosity ever attempted to go as far as it. ... These impolitic steps naturally led these savages to conceive that the English were afraid of them.”<sup>21</sup> The Black Caribs were a second-class, often conveniently ignored group, a position similar in many ways to that of the Free People of Color in Saint Domingue.

The first manifestations of the French Revolution in the Caribbean occurred in Saint Domingue where the new ideas led to the slave revolt of 1791, a precursor to Haitian independence. These ideas quickly spread along trade routes to the other French Islands however, leading to lesser slave revolts on Martinique, Guadeloupe and Saint Lucia.<sup>22</sup> The news and ideas of the French Revolution came to Saint Vincent by way of Martinique early in the 1790's. While the ideas resonated with the Caribs, no plans for insurrection were put into place without more concrete assurances of support from the French.<sup>23</sup>

This turned out to be a wise move, as the French position in the West Indies floundered over the course of the next several years. The governors of both Martinique and Guadeloupe were strong Royalist supporters. In Martinique this led to a prolonged civil war between the revolutionary city of Saint Pierre in the north of the island, and the royalist Fort Royal in the south. Upon receiving false news that the Prussians had captured Paris and reinstated Louis XVI in 1792 both governors proudly flew the white flag, representing the monarchy, on their islands.<sup>24</sup> Saint Lucia, on the other hand, was taken early on by two revolutionary leaders from France who deposed the royalist governor. Many revolutionaries from the other French islands took refuge there, and Captain Lacrosse, sent by the National Assembly, set up his base there. In 1792, the Assembly honored the devotion of Saint Lucia by renaming it “La Fidèle,” the faithful island. They could offer no military support at the time, however, and when war broke out with England in 1793 British forces under Grey and Jervis were soon

---

21 Alexander Anderson, “Alexander Anderson And the Carib War,” in *Wild Majesty Encounters with the Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 217-218.

22 Sweeney, 26; Mitchell Bennett Garrett, *The French Colonial Question* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1970), 66.

23 Shephard, 52.

24 H. Morse Stevens, *A History of the French Revolution* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), 479-480  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=wqUNAAAIAAJ> (Accessed February 27, 2009).

in control of Martinique, Saint Lucia and the greater part of Guadeloupe.<sup>25</sup>

Things turned around for the French in 1794 after the decree of 4 February which abolished slavery throughout the French colonies. After abolishing slavery the National Convention selected Victor Hugues, a staunch Jacobin, as the new Commissioner of Guadeloupe. He was sent, with a small group of men, with the mission of retaking the French colonies lost to England and to enforce the abolition of slavery. He arrived at Guadeloupe in June 1794. Joining with the rebels on the island, he proclaimed the abolition of slavery, and by October of 1794 he and an army of 2000 freed Negroes drove the English from the island. Now in control of the island, Hugues set out not only to retake the other formerly French Colonies in the Caribbean, but also to spread the ideas of the French Revolution to the English colonies. To do this, he raised up armies comprised primarily of freed slaves, but mixed with the sans culottes from France. All of his soldiers received the same pay, and some of the blacks even achieved high positions in the military.<sup>26</sup> The Black Caribs were impressed by the equality with which the Blacks were treated, and by the French decision to free the slaves, as they had long been uneasy that large numbers of people with their complexion were enslaved on the island.<sup>27</sup>

Saint Vincent was one of the first islands targeted by Hugues in a plan that involved a coordinated rebellion with the island of Grenada. Agents were sent from Guadeloupe to meet with the Carib chiefs, communicate the new ideas of the Revolution, and offer French support in an insurrection. Hugues' propaganda relied on the historic relationship the French had with the Caribs, and the new ideas of equality and liberty associated with the revolution. Hugues' proclamation to Chatoyer is printed below:

#### LIBERTY - LAW - EQUALITY

The Commissioners, delegated by the National Convention to the Windward Islands, to General Chatoyer, chief of a free nation.

The French nation in combating with despotism is allied to all free people: it desires nothing but liberty. It has always sustained the Caribs against the vile attempts of the English. The time is arrived when the ancient friendship between the French people and the Caribs ought to be renewed. They should exterminate their common enemy, the English.

We swear friendship and assistance in the name of the French nation to you and your comrades... Attack! Exterminate all the English in St Vincent; but give means to the French to second you. We have nominated citizen Toraille Captain, and citizen Michael

---

25 David Gaspar and David Geggus, *A Turbulent Time* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 104.

26 Gary Kates, *The French Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 1998) 264-265 <http://books.google.com/books?id=RcNFKDN-n3gC> (accessed February 27, 2009).

27 Kirby and Martin, 17.



Mather Lieutenant of the Infantry of the Republic.<sup>28</sup>

The Caribs embraced these ideas enthusiastically, and set out to begin preparations. Plans were made for two separate armies of Caribs to descend upon the capital at Kingston. One, led by Chatoyer would come down the leeward side of the Island, the other led by Chatoyer's brother Duvalle would come from the windward. Here they would meet up with the French invasion at Kingston harbor and massacre all of the British on the island.<sup>29</sup> The date of the proposed rebellion was 10 March 1795, however the rebellion on Grenada began a week earlier on 2 March. The president of Grenada immediately sent out a warning to all of the other colonies about the insurrection, which reached Saint Vincent on 5 March. The governor there immediately put the military on alert. The governor learned further of the Caribs' plans from a merchant, who had “been strongly urged by a neighboring Carib to withdraw himself from the island without delay, as it was the unanimous intention of his countrymen to declare war on the British.”<sup>30</sup>

In response the Governor immediately summoned the Carib chiefs Chatoyer and Duvalle, requiring their attendance in accordance with the terms of the 1773 peace treaty. This did not reach the Chiefs for several days, however, at which point their response was simply: “It is too late, it might have been sent sooner.” Realizing that their plans were suspected, the Caribs decided to begin their offensive as soon as possible. The Second Carib War began on 8 March 1795 with the burning of the estate of Madame La Croix and massacre of its inhabitants. Duvalle quickly advanced down the windward side of the Island, killing anyone he found, burning all of the estates and destroying the crops. Chatoyer similarly proceeded down the leeward side, but left the property unharmed, thinking that it could be useful once they were in control of the island.<sup>31</sup> Chatoyer led a combined force of Carib and French troops, including both troops from Guadeloupe and French colonists on the island. Victor Hugues had already named Chatoyer as a general in the French Revolutionary army.<sup>32</sup>

The forces of Chatoyer and Duvalle met on the top of Dorsetshire Hill on 14 March for the final attack on Kingston. Here Duvalle, who arrived first had taken down the British flag and replaced it with the French tricolor. His forces had also taken the fort at Stubbs Bay, and were dragging a cannon

---

28 Curtis Jacobs, “The Brigands War in Saint Vincent, the View from the French Records, 1794-1796” The University of the West Indies at Cavehill, Barbados, <http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/bnccde/svg/conference/papers/jacobs.html> (accessed February 27, 2009).

29 Jacobs.

30 Shephard, 59.

31 Kirby and Martin, 39-40.

32 Sweeney, 27.

that they had taken from it (weighing 1200 pounds) up the hill.<sup>33</sup> Before they could attack the city however, the governor led a force up the hill under the cover of night to ambush the French and Carib troops. The city was likely saved by reinforcements which arrived from Martinique (which had not yet been retaken by the French.) This ambush surprised the rebels, and successfully drove them from the hill. At some point during this fight, general and arch-chief Chatoyer was killed. Many legends exist as to how Chatoyer died, the most famous being that he died in a duel with Major Alexander Leith. Today he is a national hero in Saint Vincent, and 14 March is recognized as a national holiday.<sup>34</sup>

With Chatoyer's death the rebel movement fell into disarray. Many of the French who were under his leadership deserted, and attempted to flee to the south of the island, with disastrous consequences as most were caught and hung by the British. The Black Caribs had viewed their leader as invincible and returned to their homes afterward in shock. Nevertheless, the war continued on for more than another year under the leadership of Duvalle. In this second phase of the war, the Caribs relied primarily on guerrilla warfare rather than the direct offensive that they had used at first.<sup>35</sup> They continued to receive support from Hugues, who at this point had declared an all-out war with the British saying that they had “trampled over the rights of humanity by placing a bounty on the heads of our brave and loyal Republicans in Grenada and by attacking our friends and loyal allies, the Caribs, in Saint Vincent.” Once the Island of Saint Lucia came under French control, Hugues organized a battalion of the best fighters who had resisted the English occupation, most of them former slaves, into the First Battalion and sent them to Saint Vincent. Slaves which had been freed by the French during the revolution were a critical part of the fighting, including slaves which were freed on Saint Vincent along with those from other French islands<sup>36</sup>

On at least one occasion the French and Caribs were again on the brink of taking Kingston before being driven back. The fighting that continued for the next year took a heavy toll on the people there, on both sides. The war influenced the planters enough that after the war they commissioned a historian, Charles Shepherd to record the history of the war “that the particular circumstances attendant on the insurrection in 1795 should be preserved in a convenient form, and with more minuteness than has hitherto been done ... to them the Narrative is as deeply interesting as the Annals of European warfare are to the general reader.”<sup>37</sup> His work, *An Historical Account of the Island of Saint Vincent*, published in 1831 records in astounding detail the military history of the island in this time period.

33 Kirby and Martin, 40.

34 Sweeney, 28.

35 Kirby and Martin, 44.

36 Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens* (USA: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 231.

37 Shephard, xiii

The British finally gained the upper hand in the battle in 1796 after they had retaken the island of Saint Lucia from the French. In doing so they deprived the Caribs of one of their primary sources of reinforcements and could focus on the fight in Saint Vincent. Lieutenant General Sir Ralph Abercrombie arrived in Saint Vincent on 3 June with a force of more than 4000 men and on 10 June he forced the Carib leaders to surrender. The Caribs did not forget their allies however and insisted that the French be included in the negotiations. From this point on the Caribs did their best to evade the British, disappearing for days at a time into the woods, prolonging the negotiations for surrender.<sup>38</sup>

The sentiment among the British on the island was that the planters could no longer coexist with the Caribs. Sir William Young's *An account of the black Charaibs in the Island of St. Vincent's*, published in England in 1795, was a long history of the Black Caribs and English on Saint Vincent, primarily justifying the actions taken by the English people, and ending with a powerful argument that the Caribs need to be removed from the island. Among his points are: "The [Caribs] combination of barbarous and of national enmity is not to be broken, and that the Charaib will ever be French;" "The nation can have no further confidence in treaty;" and that British planters would no longer have confidence returning to their plantations as long as they were still in fear of another Carib uprising. He ends the account with the statement: "Under all these circumstances and considerations, the Council and Assembly of St Vincent's, in the instructions to their agent in London, declare the sole alternative to be, '*That the British planters, or the Black Charaibs, must be removed from the island of St Vincent's.*'"<sup>39</sup>

In the end, this sentiment prevailed, and the Black Caribs were forced to agree to an unconditional surrender, whereby they would be removed first to the Grenadine island of Balliceaux, and then to the island of Roatan off the coast of Honduras. Even after the surrender, however, the Black Caribs did not accept this easily. After the Carib chiefs were sent back to report the decision to their people, with orders to respond within 4 days, the majority again disappeared into the woods and only 280 left for Balliceaux. Abercrombie's troops were again sent to track down the natives and bring them in. The Caribs responded as before with an attempt at guerrilla warfare. This time the British responded by laying waste to the Caribs settlements and torching their provisions. At one point Chatoyer's son had offered to surrender along with his large number of followers, but had again disappeared before they could be conveyed off of the island. In the end, however, the policy of burning provisions wore them down and the people became destitute. The British sent two of the

---

38 Kirby and Martin, 45.

39 Young, 125.

captives from Balliceaux to the people to explain how well they were being treated, which turned out to be highly successful. By October 5080 Caribs had turned themselves in, Chatoyer's son and Duvalle were among the last to do so. The Caribs were loaded onto transports which set sail for Roatan on 11 March 1797.<sup>40</sup>

In reality, life on Balliceaux had been harsh: More than half died of disease before they arrived at Roatan. Those who made it to Roatan, however, fared relatively well. Most eventually moved to the mainland and became farmers, some joining in the wars of independence there. Their descendents are known today as the Garifuna people, living throughout Honduras, Guatemala and Belize, and number in the hundreds of thousands. A very few escaped to the most remote parts of the island of Saint Vincent and remained in hiding for many years until the eruption of the La Soufriere volcano in 1812. The English, impressed by their bravery granted them a small reservation. A small remaining contingent of the Yellow Caribs, who had not participated in the war were also allowed to remain and were granted territory on the island.<sup>41</sup>

While the efforts of the French and Caribs in the Second Carib War were unsuccessful, the war itself represents an important case of a non-French group of people who took up the ideas of the Revolution and applied them to their own struggle for liberty and equality. The relationship that the French had with the Black Caribs demonstrated the concept of equality, regardless of race that was evolving in the Republic. The Caribs themselves believed in the French Revolution, not only because it gave them an opportunity to attack their oppressors, the British, but also because this new French society was one in which they had confidence they would be treated as equal citizens.

---

40 Kirby and Martin, 47; Sweeney, 29.

41 Kirby and Martin, 47.

## WORKS CITED

## Primary Sources

- Anderson, Alexander. "Alexander Anderson And the Carib War." in *Wild Majesty Encounters with the Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day An Anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Coke, Thomas. "Thomas Coke's Letter to Wesley (1788)." in *Wild Majesty Encounters with the Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day An Anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Young, Sir William. "An account of the black Charaibs in the Island of St. Vincent's." in *An account of the black Charaibs in the Island of St. Vincent's; with the Charaib treaty of 1779 [i.e. 1773] and other original documents. Compiled from the papers of the late Sir William Young, bart.* London: Knight and Triphook, Booksellers to the King, 1795. in *The Making of the Modern World*. [database] Gale, Cengage Learning. 4  
<http://0-galenet.galegroup.com/bianca.penlib.du.edu/servlet/MOME?af=RN&ae=U3602630355&srchtp=a&ste=14> (accessed February 27, 2009).

## Secondary Sources

- Dubois, Laurent. *A Colony of Citizens*. USA: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Garrett, Mitchell Bennett. *The French Colonial Question*. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1970.
- Gaspar, David and David Geggus. *A Turbulent Time*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Jacobs, Curtis. "The Brigands War in Saint Vincent, the View from the French Records, 1794-1796." The University of the West Indies at Cavehill, Barbados.  
<http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/bnccde/svg/conference/papers/jacobs.html> (accessed February 27, 2009).
- Kates, Gary. *The French Revolution*. New York: Routledge, 1998. <http://books.google.com/books?id=RcNFKDN-n3gC> (accessed February 27, 2009).
- Kirby, I A Earle and C I Martin. *The Rise and Fall of the Black Caribs*. Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: St. Vincent & the Grenadines National Trust, 1997.  
[http://www.svgonline.com/carib\\_history.pdf](http://www.svgonline.com/carib_history.pdf) (accessed February 27, 2009).
- Landon, Jervis. "The French Revolution in Martinique." Thesis for Bachelor of Letters. Cornell University, 1897. <http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924022781615> (accessed February 27, 2009).
- Shephard, Charles, Esq. *An Historical Account of the Island of Saint Vincent*. London: W. Nicol, Cleveland Row, St. James, 1831. <http://books.google.com/books?id=DLUNAAAAQAAJ> (accessed February 27, 2009).

Stevens, H. Morse. *A History of the French Revolution*. New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1891. <http://books.google.com/books?id=wqUNAAAAIAAJ> (Accessed February 27, 2009).

Sweeney, James L. "Caribs, Maroons, Jacobins, Brigands, and Sugar Barons: The Last Stand of the Black Caribs on St. Vincent." The African Diaspora Archeology Network. March 2007 Newsletter. <http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/news0307/news0307-7.pdf> (accessed February 27, 2009).