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The Royal African Company Slave Trade to Virginia, 1689-1713

Charles Lintner Killinger
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THE ROYAL AFRICAN COMPANY SLAVE TRADE TO VIRGINIA,
1689-1713

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

By
Charles L. Killinger, III
1969

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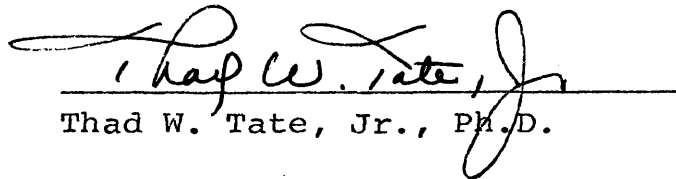
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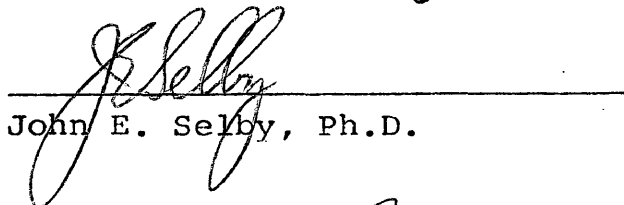


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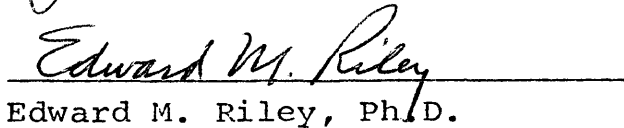
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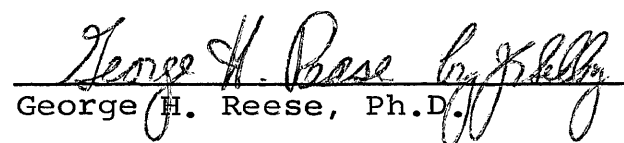
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ABSTRACT

Chartered in 1672 with a monopoly of the British slave trade, the Royal African Company initially prospered amid speculative enthusiasm. However, before its first decade of business closed, the company ominously had begun to suffer from various difficulties. These were compounded by loss of royal favor and general discredit which enabled opponents to revoke the company's monopoly by a Parliamentary act of 1698. This paper describes the Virginia slave trade of the African Company from 1689 to 1713, using as the basic source microfilms of the company's own records.

During the 1690s, the company increased its delivery of slaves to Virginia, although on a much smaller scale than its sales in the West Indies. As Virginia became an increasingly attractive outlet for Africans, the company commissioned agents there to manage its business and protect its monopoly against smugglers. Virginians chosen as agents were knowledgeable of Virginia's affairs, held political favor in the colony, and maintained exceptionally strong ties in England. They were commissioned at a rate which increased over the period from four to ten per cent of the bills they collected and paid them a substantial sum annually.

The slaves which the Royal African Company imported to Virginia came from the same regions of the West Coast of Africa as most American slaves, but their origins were scattered, with no evident patterns of concentration in areas thought among slave traders of that day to be the sources of the best slaves. These Africans were generally purchased in small lots by a varied cross-section of farmers, with no direct correlation between size of landholdings and number of slaves purchased. However, the typical purchaser, who resided in one of the "Middle Peninsula" counties, owned over three times as much land as the average Virginia landholder.

English traders, the most outstanding of whom was Micajah Perry, financed the credit purchases. Prices remained generally stable throughout the period despite fluctuations in supply and demand. The dominant factor influencing the relative success of company sales to Virginia was the frequent interruption of naval warfare and depression. Because of the wars of the League of Augsburg, 1689-97, and the Spanish Succession, 1702-13, the company employed emergency precautions during most of the period; both wars intensified tobacco depressions in Virginia. The inter-war period, however, provided a stimulus to the slave trade which doubled the slave population of Virginia in a decade. Despite the renewal of the colonial wars, the trade flourished in 1705, a year when the import duty on slaves expired. But soon the London merchants strangled the trade by tightening credit to Virginians. Before the Treaty of Utrecht was signed, the African Company, mired in mismanagement, unable to compete on an equal basis with private traders, its stock practically worthless, temporarily ended its slave trade to Virginia.

THE ROYAL AFRICAN COMPANY SLAVE TRADE TO VIRGINIA,
1689-1713

INTRODUCTION

The study of American Negro slavery has drawn the attention of scholars with increasing frequency and intensity in the quarter-century since World War II, partially as a result of the concurrent campaigns for political independence by black majorities in Africa and for social, political, and economic gains by black minorities in America. Equipped with new attitudes of the post-war era and borrowing the methods of the social scientists, historians concentrated on such subjects as the social and economic effects of slavery and the development of racial attitudes and concepts in America. Some historical evidence intrinsically lent itself to this vein of treatment: translations from the Arabic and oral histories shed new light on the African past; field case studies by anthropologists added dimension to Western knowledge of the origins of slaves and their New World cultural survivals; descriptions from the journals of early European witnesses were revived to illustrate the horrors of the "middle passage"; the writings of literate slaves and of early Negro intellectuals were reviewed in an attempt to understand their seldom articulated attitudes, to portray the humanity of the race and to overcome the "Sambo" stereotype; and local laws were re-evaluated as landmarks in the sequential institutionalization of Negro inferiority.

This paper will discuss the slave trade to Virginia in the two decades which closed the seventeenth and began the eighteenth century. Although it has scanned the subject, the scholar's spotlight has not often been focused on the trade in slaves to Virginia in this period. Except for the arrival of the original twenty Africans in 1619, the Virginia slave trade has most often been treated as an appendage of the tobacco trade, and with some merit, for the slave trade to colonial Virginia was inextricably tied to the fortunes of the venerated weed. Nor has the period at the beginning of the eighteenth century been a frequent target for students of Virginia slavery, with the possible exception of the studies of appropriate laws. This lack of attention comes as no great surprise, primarily because of the insignificance of the era relative to the entire slavery question. Furthermore, the period has not produced an abundance of evidence, particularly of the type adaptable to the methods of the social scientist--too often the slaves of this era appear to the historian as mute and faceless. The period has been overshadowed by more dramatically eventful epochs before and after; most historians agree that the Virginia Negro had been identified with lifetime servitude before the end of the seventeenth century, and not until the nineteenth century was slavery recognized as a social and political problem of grave national proportions. But the forgotten interim has an importance of its own in Virginia history, for it was

during these years that Virginia slaves increased from a few to nearly one-fourth of the total population, Negro bondage thereby replacing white servitude as the major source of Virginia labor and establishing a firm demographic basis for the Virginians' fears of that "dangerous population."

The records of the Royal African Company offer an opportunity to examine the history of this unspectacular but important era. They are limited nonetheless by several weaknesses. One is an absence of written testimony by the company's Virginia agents who might have defended themselves and described conditions of the Chesapeake slave trade in detail from their perspective, as agents in the West Indies and Africa did in their correspondence. If such records existed, as they surely must have, they have apparently been lost, forcing the historian to resort to inference where he might otherwise have found explicit answers. Another problem is the obscurity of the records. According to statistics available in the Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, 1708-09, No. 215, and those cited by Kenneth G. Davies from the company's Invoice Books, Homeward (T 70/936-956, P.R.O.), the company's trade accounted for barely 10 per cent of the slaves delivered to Virginia during this era; and the Virginia trade of the African Company represented probably less than one per cent of the annual British slave trade to the Americas. Nonetheless, those extant records relevant to Virginia, having been microfilmed by the Virginia Colonial Records Project from the company's archives preserved among

the records of the Treasury (T 70), Public Records Office, London, offer sufficient evidence--including letters sent to captains and plantations, accounts, and ships' books--to represent the company's Virginia activities. An advantage of working with the company's Virginia records is the abundance of parallel primary and secondary sources; while the West Indian records are more voluminous and more important to the history of the trade, they are also more difficult to confirm and to place in perspective. This paper will attempt to test basic assumptions made from other Virginia sources, to reach new conclusions, where warranted, and generally to fill out the historical account of the Virginia slave trade. The company's records have been used before, but usually to document a part of the West Indian slave trade or of the economics of colonial Virginia. Here the records will be considered a unit worthy of study in themselves, not as they are typical of the functioning of the slave trade, but as they represent the operations of the Royal African Company in Virginia from 1689 to 1713.

The specific topics on which assumptions are tested and conclusions drawn are dictated primarily by the scope, completeness, and direction of the information in the records and will center in three major areas: the people of the slave trade, merchants, planters, slaves, and particularly the company's Virginia agents; maritime commerce, including the dangers and effects of naval warfare and the company's attempts to survive its disruptions; and the economy, most notably the

interrelationships between Virginia tobacco, the world market, and the slave trade, as reflected in the company correspondence. Treatment of these topics will be confined to the years 1689-1713 for three reasons: first, the concentration of material dictated setting the study in the years around the beginning of the eighteenth century; second, the change in the company's legal status in 1698 suggested a chronological balance between the years when the company's monopoly was in effect and the years after it was modified by the British Parliament; and third, the predominance of warfare imposed itself as a factor to be reckoned with. The extremes of the two major wars of the period were chosen to limit the paper to the period from the beginning of King William's War, 1689, to the end of Queen Anne's War, 1713. This segment of time includes a period of four years of peace as a contrast to the twenty years of warfare, and it provides a period otherwise appropriate to the objectives of the project.

CHAPTER I

THE ROYAL AFRICAN COMPANY, 1672-1688

The Royal African Company of England was created by Royal charter in 1672 as a direct descendant of the ill-fated Royal Adventurers into Africa, the Restoration company which began searching for gold and ended in financial ruin after several years of mismanagement at the end of the Second Dutch War. Like the Royal Adventurers, the African Company was organized as a joint-stock company, which guaranteed it the benefits of incorporation and the association of capital. Each, in turn, was expected to serve as a public utility, which would satisfy an economic need of the British empire by supplying a labor force to its colonies; as a means to achieve its mission, each was granted a monopoly of the English slave trade.¹ But the African Company enjoyed a much more businesslike capitalization than its predecessor; although it retained royal support, the new company was not dominated by the Crown and the peerage as the Royal Adventurers had been--two-thirds of the company's shareholders were businessmen, and others, including John Colleton, Sir George Carteret, John Locke, Sir Edmund Andros, and

¹Kenneth G. Davies, The Royal African Company (New York, 1957), 122.

Sir Ferdinando Gorges, were intensely interested in the colonies.²

From the start, the company held several apparent advantages over the individual traders who were to become their staunch competitors. The company's most important advantage was its monopoly of the English trade to West Africa. The 1672 charter barred other Englishmen from even visiting the West Coast south of Cape Blanco without permission of the company, authorized seizure by company officials of the ships and cargoes of intruders, and arranged for their prosecution by establishing on the Guinea Coast a court of judicature.³ An additional advantage was its ownership and operation of slave factories and forts on the Guinea Coast which were staffed by permanent agents, many of whom were veterans of the trade. In the years ahead, however, the forts were to prove a mixed blessing.

The African Company began rather prosperously; it was capitalized ahead of schedule in a period of relative financial fluidity, began to pay dividends with some regularity in 1676, and, primarily because of capital appreciation, afforded

²Ibid., 17, 44 ff., 65-70; William R. Scott, The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish, and Irish Joint-Stock Companies to 1720 (New York, 1951), 1, 325 ff.; Charles M. Andrews, A Guide to the Materials for American History to 1783 in the Public Record Office of Great Britain, II, (Washington, 1914), 256.

sizeable profits to its original investors.⁴ By the time the company was chartered, the African trade had been converted from the original quest for gold to a more complex triangular system which served as the source of prosperity for the West Indian colonies and as the basis of the struggle by European states for mercantilistic hegemony. The company had therefore become one of England's tools in its seventeenth-century commercial contest with the Dutch, and its income had become geared to the triangular trade. On the first leg of the triangular journey, the African Company exported English manufactured goods, East Indian textiles, and European iron and copper, all of which were traded in West Africa for slaves, ivory, gold, dyewoods, palm oil, and other African raw materials. The slaves were then transported on the "middle passage" to the New World for sale to planters, particularly to provide labor for the sugar plantations of the West Indies. The final leg of the journey normally transported the African and New World products, such as sugar, cotton, ginger, and tobacco, to be sold in England for retail and re-exportation, as well as the bills of exchange by which the planters arranged credit payment for their purchases.⁵

⁴Scott, Constitution and Finance of Joint-Stock Companies, I, 302 ff.

⁵Davies, Royal African Company, 165 ff. See also *ibid.*, Appendix I, Exports, 350-357, and Appendix II, Imports, 358-360. The British manufactured goods included metalware, woolens, gunpowder, firearms, and knives.

By the mid-1670s the African Company began to encounter a myriad of troubles which resembled all too closely those which had plagued the Royal Adventurers and the other previously unsuccessful European ventures in the African trade. It became apparent that the company was under-capitalized, and it began quickly to experience a perennial pitfall of the slave trade--inability to obtain liquid capital because of the delays in transportation and communications and the preponderance of long-term credit payments. As a result of the slow turnover of capital, the company found it extremely difficult to purchase the £100,000 worth of goods required for annual export to Africa in order to meet the West Indian demand for slaves,⁶ and the forts along the Guinea Coast fell progressively into disrepair.⁷ To compensate, the company began in the mid-1670s to borrow money from which it also paid dividends. Though at first it borrowed on a short-term basis, the debt grew in scale until the interest became a sizeable portion of the company's annual expenditures, over £6,000 for the year 1688.⁸

Nor were all the African Company's troubles financial. The spirit of the Glorious Revolution engendered considerable opposition to monopolies based on royal prerogative, and the

⁶Davies, Royal African Company, 74.

⁷Scott, Constitution and Finance of Joint-Stock Companies, I, 303.

⁸Davies, Royal African Company, 77, citing R.A.C. General Home Ledgers, T 70/601-608, P.R.O.

African Company's close identification with the Crown, once a boon in inspiring confidence and financial support, now became a liability. Opposition from anti-Royalists and anti-monopolists complemented opposition to the company from other sources in the cities and the colonies. Merchants and shipping interests in London and Bristol fancied a slice of the African trade, manufacturers wanted wider markets for their goods with fewer artificial restraints, and colonists complained of inadequate supplies of slaves. The growing ill-will created by the company's favored status led to the formation of an organized coalition of opponents to the company's monopoly who out-petitioned them during the period of the debates at the rate of five-to-one.⁹ The African Company could no longer rely upon the Crown to shelter it from political attack; seizing upon the company's new vulnerability, the free-trade coalition forced in the 1690s a series of Parliamentary inquiries culminating in the compromise act of 1698 which opened the slave trade to all who would pay the specified charges to the African Company for the upkeep of its factories in Africa.¹⁰

Statistics found in the Company's Bill Books emphasize the importance of the West Indies in the total commercial

⁹Davies, *Royal African Company*, 129-130, counts 100 petitions favoring free trade compared to fewer than 20 for the monopoly.

¹⁰Leo Francis Stock, ed., Proceedings and Debates in the British Parliament Respecting North America (Washington, 1924-41), II, 145.

scheme of the African Company and act as a reminder that the company, as a public utility, existed more to serve the plantations than to be served by them. More important to this study, the Bill Books also emphasize the relative unimportance of Virginia as a market for company slaves, particularly in the years before the English Revolution. From 1673 until 1688, the years when the company's monopoly was strongest, Virginia accounted for less than 3 per cent of the company's slave sales.¹¹ But obviously Virginia had not been totally neglected as a slave market. Virginia planters continued to arrange purchases of slaves from their English tobacco merchants, and it is apparent from testimony of the planters, from later hearings of the Board of Trade, and from Virginia population estimates that the combined activities of the "enemy" separate traders far surpassed those of the African Company in supplying slaves to the Tidewater, both before and after the Glorious Revolution. In the 1690s, however, the company gained enough interest in Virginia to begin commissioning representatives there. It was through its Virginia agents that the company attempted to intensify its operations and to compete with the separate traders in the Tidewater; and it is largely from the correspondence which the London office maintained with these agents that a description of the African Company slave trade to Virginia is possible.

¹¹The following totals can be derived from Davies, Royal African Company, 359-360, Appendix II, Imports, Bills of Exchange, which was compiled from Bill Books, T 70/269-277: bills of exchange received, 1673-1688, West Indies, £248,049; Virginia, £7,087.

CHAPTER II

THE COMPANY AGENTS IN VIRGINIA

By the latter part of the seventeenth century the slave traders had transported to Virginia a number of African laborers sufficiently large that they began to be treated as a distinct segment of the population: Negroes were excluded from the militia, given a separate classification in the census and tax returns, and legally defined as slaves.¹ And although the bulk of the several thousand Virginia slaves had been transported by individual traders, the Royal African Company began to develop an interest in that Chesapeake colony as a market for its human cargo. Always overshadowed as a slave market by the British islands in the Caribbean and periodically weakened by depression or internal disorder, Virginia emerged only in the final years of the century as a significant focal point in the African Company's commercial system. Establishing a regular trade in slaves to Virginia involved a complex relationship between Mother Country and colony; slaves had to be transported and sold, bills collected, and payment submitted.

¹Wesley Frank Craven, The Southern Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, 1607-1689 (Baton Rouge, 1949), 219; Francis Butler Simkins, A History of the South (New York, 1959), 25; Thad W. Tate, Jr., The Negro in Eighteenth Century Williamsburg (Williamsburg, 1965), 1-22, particularly p. 7, n. 9.

The African Company delegated the responsibility for the profitable operation of the Virginia portion of its trade to a series of residents of the colony. Although letters written by these Virginians are apparently not to be found in the African Company archives,² enough information does exist both in the archives of the company and in the published records of Virginia history to provide the means for reconstructing an account of the agents--the company's methods of selection, the benefits and responsibilities of the position, and at least a partial sketch of each individual.

During the period 1689-1713, at least seven Virginians held the commission as African Company agent: Christopher Robinson (1687-93), William Sherwood (1695-96), James Howell (James River, 1700-01), Willis Wilson (York River, 1701), Edward Hill III (James River, 1701-?), Henry Fielding (York River, 1701-04), and Gawin Corbin (1705-?). Although the company's records do not fully explain either the criteria or the procedure used to choose Virginia agents, a comparison of these individuals indicates that the company was discriminating in its selections. Whether the agents qualified as aristocrats is a moot question, but all clearly had exhibited certain of the traditional signs of success before being commissioned by

²No letters from Virginia agents are included in the Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilm of the African Company records.

the company.³ Each agent owned a large estate. At least six held an aggregate of sixteen political offices, including four who were burgesses and four who were justices of the peace. Three were officers in the militia, including two county commanders-in-chief.

More relevant to this study than these general indications of prominence are several factors which appear specifically to have qualified these seven men as potential candidates for the agency. First, records of correspondence and of marriage bonds indicate that most of the company agents or their families were related to or acquainted with some of the leading Virginia planters.⁴ The degree of prosperity and political leadership attained by the majority of these agents,

³Louis B. Wright delineates the characteristics of early Virginia aristocrats in The First Gentlemen of Virginia (Charlottesville, 1964), 63-66. Genteel manners, cultural values, and personal traits, which are important to his thesis, are extremely difficult for the historian to measure, particularly in dealing with men who left records less complete than those of Byrd, Fitzhugh, and Carter. But among Wright's criteria are several which frequently are a part of the historical record. These include prosperity, the ownership of large quantities of land, leadership in the militia, and the holding of public offices, particularly those of sheriff, justice of the peace, burgess, and councilor.

⁴Christopher Robinson, Sr., of "Hewick," Middlesex County, took as his second wife Catherine Beverley, widow of Major Robert Beverley. See Stella Pickett Hardy, Colonial Families of the Southern States of America, Second Edition (Baltimore, 1968), 448. Louis Wright, First Gentlemen, 291, notes that Robinson was a friend of Robert Beverley, I, and later married his widow. Also, a "large-scale planter," Robinson was among the "friends, colleagues, and clients" of William Fitzhugh. Fitzhugh, William Fitzhugh and His Chesapeake World, 1676-1701, ed. Richard Beale Davis (Chapel Hill, 1963), 13, 235 n. 4. While serving in the House of

Burgesses, Robinson associated with Fitzhugh, *ibid.*, 28. Fitzhugh sent a letter to Robinson, "Instructions for John Withers," 5 June 1682, *ibid.*, 119, and a bill, Fitzhugh to William Leigh, 27 June 1682, *ibid.*, 122. Robinson was asked to relate a legal matter to Major Robert Beverley, Fitzhugh to Beverley, 21 Jan. 1682/3, *ibid.*, 129. Robinson was also Beverley's bondsman and neighbor, Fitzhugh, *Chesapeake World*, 120, n. 7, 133, n. 2. The best indication of Fitzhugh's high regard for Robinson appears in a letter, Fitzhugh to Robinson, 26 Jan. 1689, *ibid.*, 265-266 and nn.

William Fitzhugh wrote to William Sherwood of James City and referred to him in his correspondence: William Fitzhugh to William Sherwood, 10 June 1679, "Letters of William Fitzhugh," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, I (1894), 18-19; a second letter, Fitzhugh to Sherwood, 10 May 1684, *ibid.*, 271, concerns Sherwood's handling tobacco at Jamestown for Fitzhugh. William Byrd, I, used Sherwood's services in legal matters: William Byrd, I, to Mr. Harpur, 1 Aug. 1690, "'Letters of William Byrd, First,' (From his book in the collection of the Virginia Historical Society)," *Virginia Magazine*, XXVI (1918), 258-259; Byrd to Mr. North, 8 Aug. 1690, *ibid.*, 389.

For evidence that William Byrd, II, was a neighbor and intimate of company agent Colonel Edward Hill, III, of "Shirley," see William Byrd, II, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712*, eds. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (Richmond, 1941), *passim*. Evidently Byrd and Hill had mutual business interests. See *ibid.*, June 17, 1709, p. 49; March 14, 1710, p. 152; July 5, 1710, p. 200; July 18, 1710, p. 206; Oct. 12 1710, p. 242; Oct. 19, 1710, p. 245; Nov. 1, 1710, p. 252; Jan. 25, 1711, p. 291; Feb. 17, 1711, p. 303. Elizabeth, sister of Edward Hill, III, married John Carter of "Corotoman" and eventually inherited "Shirley" from her father, Hardy, *Colonial Families*, 111.

The marriage of agent Henry Fielding's daughter, Frances, to John Lewis of "Warner Hall" is recorded in "Virginia Council Journals, 1726-1753," (Vol. 605-1418, 4 Nov. 1727), *Virginia Magazine*, XXXII (1924), 258 n. 14.

That Colonel Gawin Corbin of Middlesex and King and Queen Counties probably knew Robert "King" Carter is indicated by an account of Ralph Wormeley's will. "Genealogy: The Wormeley Family," *Virginia Magazine*, XXXVI (1928), 100-101; both men were among "friends and relations" who were asked to aid in the management of the Wormeley estate. Corbin first married Wormeley's daughter, Katherine; second, Jane Wilson, widow of Willis Wilson and heiress of John Lane of "Lanesville"; third, Martha Bassett, daughter of William Bassett of "Eltham." Hardy, *Colonial Families*, 173. William Byrd's mention of Corbin, Nov. 1, 1710, Byrd, *Secret Diary. . . 1709-1712*, 252, suggests that the two were at least social acquaintances: ". . . we went home in the Governor's coach and Colonel Carter set Colonel Corbin and me down at the coffeehouse where we made Colonel Digges treat us." See also March 5, 1711, *ibid.*, 310; June 13, 1711, *ibid.*, 359.

which implies that they were better known than is documented here, also indicates a very practical consideration on the part of the company. The nature of the job necessitated their attempting to employ men with prior knowledge of the business activities of a wide circle of Virginians, and it would have worked to the advantage of both agent and company if they also were known and respected.

Secondly, they were in political favor in Virginia. Six of these men won political appointments during their careers.⁵ In addition, there is an uncommonly high incidence of close personal and political relationships with various

⁵Christopher Robinson, I, was Secretary of State and a member of the Council, "List of Colonial Secretaries," William and Mary Quarterly, Ser. 1, X (1902), 167, 173. A "List of Colonial Attorney-Generals," ibid., 165-166, includes William Sherwood. James Howell is listed as a justice of the peace in "Public Officers in Virginia 1680" (King & Queen Co., 25 Feb. 1699), Virginia Magazine, I (1894), 234. Edward Hill, III, son of Councilor-Attorney General-Treasurer Edward Hill, II, of "Shirley," was a collector and was named by the governor as one of the "gentlemen of estate and standing suitable for appointment to the Council." "Notes on Charles City County Grievances, 1676: Edward Hill (Winder Papers, Virginia State Library, Richmond)," ibid., III (1895-6), 156-159. Willis Wilson, son of William Wilson of "Ceelys," was a justice of the peace, "Public Officers in Virginia, 1680," ibid., I (1894), 234. A "Genealogy of the Corbin Family," ibid., XXIX (1921), 520, states that Gawin Corbin was a collector and a naval officer; and later, according to Hardy, Colonial Families, 173, Colonel Corbin became a Councilor and president of the Council.

governors.⁶ This evidence suggests that the Royal African Company may have taken advice from the governors, or, more likely, that they simply preferred to employ men who stood in the good graces of the Virginia government and the Board of Trade.

A third common characteristic more directly influenced the company's choices. Although it was not unusual for successful Virginians of that era to depend upon London merchants to market their tobacco crops, to keep their accounts, and to supply them with English goods, at least four of these African Company agents maintained more than the ordinary commercial

⁶ During Bacon's Rebellion, Sherwood was "an adherent of Sir William Berkeley," Virginia Magazine, XI (1903-4), 411. This is supported by "Bacon's Rebellion: William Sherwood's Account" (1 June 1676), ibid., I (1894), 167-168. One of Sherwood's Jamestown houses was "burnt downe by the Rebell Lawrence" in 1676, and he was accused in "Proclamations of Nathaniel Bacon, 1676 'The Declaration of the People,'" ibid., 60, as being among the "wicked, and pernicious Councillors, Aiders and Assisters against the Commonalty in these our Cruell Commotion." For an additional account of Sherwood's part in the Bacon incidents, see "Persons Who Suffered by Bacon's Rebellion. The Commissioners' Report" (Winder Papers, Virginia State Library), ibid., V (1897-98), 66-68.

The Robinsons of Middlesex and King and Queen Counties "made a practice of allying themselves with the governor, whoever he might be." For this view see David Alan Williams, Political Alignments in Colonial Virginia, 1698-1750, (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1959).

The Hills of "Shirley" sided with the governors. Colonel Hill, II, "...always adhered to Sir William Berkeley, though in some things too much...." See "Persons Who Suffered by Bacon's Rebellion," Virginia Magazine, V (1897-98), 66-68. Hill was disfranchised by Bacon's House of Burgesses and dismissed from the Council, ibid., II (1895), 408. His son, Colonel Edward Hill, III, the African Company agent, was nominated for the Council by the Earl of Orkney, "Notes on Charles City County Grievances, 1676" ibid., III, 156-159. Williams, Political Alignments, 77, states that the Wilsons of "Ceelys" were pro-Nicholson.

relationships in England. Most either had formerly lived there or retained influential relatives and friends.⁷ John, brother of Christopher Robinson, was Bishop of London, ambassador to Sweden, and first English plenipotentiary at the Congress of Utrecht;⁸ Colonel Corbin's brother Thomas was a close London associate of merchants Micajah Perry and Thomas Lane;⁹ William Sherwood left his entire estate, after the death of his wife, to the London merchant Jeffrey Jeffreys;¹⁰ and agent Henry Fielding named as an executor of his will Arthur Baily,¹¹ another man well-known in London commercial circles and a frequent financier of the slave trade, as were Perry, Lane, and Jeffreys. Affiliations in England, particularly with merchants, were essential to the Virginia agent, and

⁷Robinson was born and spent his minority in England, "List of Colonial Secretaries," Wm. and Mary Q'tly., Ser. 1, X (1902), 173, as did Sherwood, "Lists of Colonial Attorney-Generals," ibid., 166-167. Robinson, Fielding, and Corbin had close relatives in London. For Fielding's English relatives, see J. L. Miller, M.D., contributor, (will of Edward Fielding, dated 9 Feb. 1690) "Fielding and Davis Notes. The Fielding Family of Northumberland County," Virginia Magazine, XII (1904-05), 54.

⁸"Lists of Colonial Secretaries," ibid., 167.

⁹This relationship among Thomas Corbin, Perry, and Lane is indicated in a letter, Royal African Company to Gawin Corbin, 26 April 1705, Treasury Group, Class 70, Piece 58 (T 70/58), 175-176, Public Record Office, London (Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilm.) Hereafter cited as T 70/58.

¹⁰"Smiths of Virginia," Wm. and Mary Q'tly., Ser. 1, V (1896), 52, and Virginia Magazine, XII (1904-05), 54.

¹¹Will of Henry Fielding, signed 26 Oct. 1704, probated 27 Nov. 1712, Will-Register Books, 208 BARNES, Principal Probate Registry, Somerset House, London (Colonial Records Project photostat.)

they help to explain the process by which the African Company chose its personnel.

Leading London merchants played an important and sometimes decisive role in the selection of company agents. Each agent was recommended by a particular merchant, and more important, the merchant posted a performance bond or "security" for the Virginian of his choice.¹² The agent's efficient execution of his job constituted a link in the colonial trade of importance to the London mercantile set, who entrusted the agents with the task of extending large sums of credit, in the form of bills of exchange, to Virginia purchasers of slaves.¹³ If the agents accepted excessive numbers of bad

¹² Jeffrey Jeffreys recommended William Sherwood to be agent in 1695. See Royal African Company to Sherwood, 14 Jan. 1695, T 70/57, ff. 120 vo.-121 ro., P.R.O. The company acknowledged in a letter, R.A.C. to James Howell, 23 April 1700, T 70/57, f. 157 vo., P.R.O., that Arthur Baily and Benjamin Hartley recommended and made security for Edward Hill, III, according to R.A.C. to Edward Gill [sic], 3 April 1701, T 70/57, ff. 172 ro. and vo., P.R.O. A letter, R.A.C. to Henry Fielding, 16 Dec. 1701, T 70/58, 20-21, P.R.O., informs Fielding that Arthur Baily recommended, and Baily and Benjamin Hartley made security for him. Thomas Corbin and Micajah Perry recommended Gawin Corbin, and Perry made his security. See R.A.C. to Gavin [sic] Corbin, 26 April 1705, T 70/58, 175-176, P.R.O.

¹³"In its simplest form, the bill of exchange may be defined as 'An unconditional written order from one person to another to pay a third party a certain sum in money at specified time.'" John M. Hemphill, II, *Virginia and the English Commercial System, 1689-1733* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1964), 128, citing Sir James Murray, comp., *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, (Oxford, 1888); ". . . the bill of exchange on a British merchant was the only money with face values in English denominations which circulated to any extent in Virginia before the introduction of paper money in 1755." Hemphill, *Virginia and the English Commercial System*, 99. See also Philip A. Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1896), II, 516-521.

bills, or if they were delinquent in pursuing payment of protested bills, then the merchants would inevitably suffer losses. In the depression years of the early eighteenth century it became even more important that the agent know the financial standing of Virginia planters so that he could limit bills accordingly. If he failed to prevent overdrafts, his next course of action was to press persistently for payment of the interest and fees charged those who were overdrawn, in addition to rewriting the bills in acceptable form.¹⁴

Several additional motives existed for the merchants' interests in recommending Virginians for the position, aside from a desire to protect themselves as financiers. The agent was always able to assist in loading the merchants' vessels for the Atlantic voyage. Though the company owned slavers, they often leased ships from English merchants, contracting for the delivery to Virginia of a specified number of slaves. Once the slaves had been delivered, this transaction was terminated, the captain carrying to the company the entire proceeds of the sale in an envelope containing bills of exchange. The captain and the agent, acting on behalf of the

¹⁴In 1707, the company charged 15% interest and a fine ranging from 4/8 to 7/6 for each protested bill. A bill totalling £30, therefore, could have been increased to £34.17.6 by a protest from the merchant on whom the bill was written. R.A.C. to Corbin, 18 Nov. 1707, T 70/58, 310-311, P.R.O.; Copy Book of Bills, 8 Aug. 1707, T70/279, 29, P.R.O.

ship's owner, were then free to arrange a profitable return cargo. An agent who made judicious arrangements in exports and in bills of exchange with the proper Virginia planters, and who followed them to payment, could enhance the commercial operations of such prominent English merchants as Perry, Lane, Baily, and Jeffreys. Other than direct financial interest, the most obvious reason for the weight carried by English merchants in the selection of African Company agents was the merchants' custom of influencing Virginia appointments. Perry and his colleagues participated in the selection of councilors, much to the distaste of Governor Spotswood, who expressed his displeasure in a letter to his friend Colonel Nathaniel Blakiston:

I think it is doing little honor to the Government to have its Council appointed in the Virginia Coffee House, and I believe a Governor who has a power under the Great Seal to constitute and appoint Persons who are to be, to all intents and purposes, Councilors, until confirmed or removed by the Crown, has a [s] good a title to name and is as capable of Judging of the qualifications requisite for Persons in that Port as an Merchant in London who has no other Rule to judge of a man's merit than by the Number of his Tobacco hogsheads.¹⁵

If this group of English merchants were powerful enough to assert their will in the Virginia affairs of state, it follows logically that they would have been able to impose themselves similarly on the conduct of trade to Virginia by an English

¹⁵Spotswood to Blakiston, 1 Dec. 1714, Alexander Spotswood, The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood. . . , ed. R. A. Brock, in Virginia Historical Society, Collections, New Ser., II (Richmond, 1885), 79. (Brackets supplied by editor.)

company in which they held financial interest.

The recommendation and the "security" of an agent apparently were a single transaction, the company requiring the merchant to insure his choice. Once the merchant had posted the bond and the agent had been informed of his duties, the company was able to utilize the "security" directly against the agent as a tool of moral persuasion, reminding him of the affirmation of confidence in his performance and character made by the particular London merchant.¹⁶ Company officials also used it against the merchants, and thereby indirectly against the agents, by making threats of forfeiture of the performance bond. In several instances the company actually initiated lawsuits against London merchants, and once they told Colonel Gawin Corbin in a letter that they had sued his sponsors, Thomas Corbin and Micajah Perry, because of the Colonel's failure to pay the bills.¹⁷

Because the slave trade was beginning to be regarded in the Chesapeake colonies as a very profitable operation, many merchants and planters were eager to participate--as financiers, wholesalers, shippers, and consignment

¹⁶The company wrote to Henry Fielding in 1701, "...be careful to sell our Negroes to the best advantage for us, and make good and quick returns that your actions will correspond with Mr. Baily's account of your character." R.A.C. to Fielding, 16 Dec. 1701, T 70/58, 20-21, P.R.O. See also R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Feb. 1705/6, ibid., 217, and 19 March, ibid., 451.

¹⁷R.A.C. to Corbin, 3 Dec. 1713, ibid., 474; R.A.C. to Corbin, 19 March 1712, ibid., 451.

agents.¹⁸ The only men legally ineligible to become African Company agents in Virginia were the governor, lieutenant-governor, and judges of the colony, they having been disqualified by the compromise act of 1698.¹⁹ Among those eligible, there was competition for the position,²⁰ and evidence indicates that at least one agent, Henry Fielding, made application before being selected.²¹ The competition is not surprising; the agency allowed sufficient time for other business ventures,²² at least during the slower months of the

¹⁸ Arthur Pierce Middleton, Tobacco Coast: A Maritime History of Chesapeake Bay in the Colonial Era (Newport News, Va., 1953), 139 ff.

¹⁹ "No Governor or Deputy Governor of any of his Majesties Colonies or Plantations in America or His Majesties Judges in any Courts there. . . Shall be Factor or. . . Agent . . . for the said Company, . . ." An act to Settle the Trade to Africa," 5 July 1698, Elizabeth Donnan, ed., Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America, I (Washington, 1930), 421-429, citing Statutes of the Realm, VII, 393-397, 9 and 10 Wm. III, c. 26. A letter, Governor Beeston of Jamaica to the Board of Trade, 5 Dec. 1698, *ibid.*, 429 n. 2, citing Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, 1697-98, pp. 567-568, indicates that the inaccurate term "Deputy Governor" was interpreted as "Lieutenant-Governor."

²⁰ R.A.C. to Corbi, 20 Feb. 1705/6, T 70/58, 217, P.R.O.; Davies, Royal African Company, 296-297.

²¹ R.A.C. to Fielding, 16 Dec. 1701, T 70/58, 20-21, P.R.O. The fact that Fielding was also the least known of the agents may be more than coincidental with his application.

²² Davies, Royal African Company, 111, quoting T 70/76, fo. 64 d., T 70/78, fos. 11d., 101; Davies, Royal African Company, 296. Examples of agents' business ventures are numerous: Robinson was a planter; Sherwood continued his legal practice; Corbin was a customs collector as well as a planter; Hill was a planter and trader.

year,²³ and it afforded additional economic influence. The source of this economic authority rested largely in the credit economy, in which the agent assumed the role of proxy creditor to large numbers of the Virginia planters. The Governor of Barbados noted in a 1695 letter the extreme to which agents had asserted their authority on that British Island:

The agents held . . . 'such a sway here as almost to stop any proceeding, for if a man does not vote as they would wish for a vestryman or assemblyman they proceed against him for what he owes them for negroes (most of the planters being in their debt), thus ruining him and his family.'²⁴

Although it is unlikely that any Virginia agent ever achieved such "sway," Gawin Corbin was accused of misusing his position. In 1705, the Virginia Council objected to the Governor's renewal of Colonel Corbin's appointment as Naval Officer because, they charged, "he was agent for the Royal African Company and took exorbitant and unlawful fees."²⁵

The agent enjoyed several benefits, the greatest of which was his commission of the company sales which offered the possibility of a substantial income if the trade developed

²³The slower months were normally those at the end of the year, after the tobacco had been sold and before the slaves were needed for tobacco cultivation, Elizabeth Suttell, The British Slave Trade to Virginia, 1698-1728 (unpublished M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1965), 29; Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 99-101.

²⁴Davies, Royal African Company, 297, quoting Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, 1693-6, No. 1930.

²⁵Wm. and Mary Q'tly., Ser. 2, X (1930), 72.

to its potential volume. During the course of the period being examined, the company considerably increased the rate of pay of its Virginia agents; unfortunately for both company and agents, even the increased commission seldom produced the lucrative income for which they had hoped. Though the details of the series of Virginia pay raises are obscured, the pattern established by the company in dealing with its agents in the West Indies helps to clarify the Virginia situation.

The West Indian agents were permitted to trade in slaves while being paid at the rate of 4 per cent. When the company granted raises in pay, however, it normally tied to the raises certain new restrictions and obligations. Accordingly, in 1680, when the company prohibited private trading activities by its agents, it raised their pay rate in lieu of the profits they had formerly gleaned from private endeavors.²⁶ The commission in the West Indies was increased again in 1697 from 7 to 10 per cent; in return the island agents were made personally responsible for all credit they granted, and they were compelled to initiate payment of the entire proceeds from a slave cargo within a year of the sale.²⁷

There is no evidence to suggest that Virginia agents were subject to the 1680 pay increase or the additional obligations, and in April 1700, they were still being paid at the

²⁶ Davies, Royal African Company, 111.

²⁷ Ibid., 295, quoting T 70/85, fo. 11, P.R.O. See also according to Davies, T 70/57, fos. 133d.-134, 135d., 137d., 138d., P.R.O.

rate of 4 per cent.²⁸ Soon thereafter, probably by the following April, their commission was raised to 10 per cent, equivalent to the West Indian rate, and it remained at that level through the first two decades of the eighteenth century.²⁹ The increase entailed new responsibilities similar to those of the West Indies, requiring them to submit full payment within 18 months of the sale of the slave.³⁰ Also during this period the first evidence appears that the company barred its agents from collecting a commission on unpaid bills. These policies could have been enforced; but it is unlikely that the company was able to enforce its ban on private trade by agents, since there was seldom a company representative nearer to Virginia than the Maryland agent.

Because of the fragmentary state of the company's records, it is impossible to determine with certainty the annual earnings of a Virginia agent.³¹ However, during the years 1703-1710, the period for which the records of bills of

²⁸A company letter, R.A.C. to James Howell, 23 April 1700, T 70/57, f. 157 vo., P.R.O., states that Howell would be paid at the rate of four per cent.

²⁹A letter from the company to Edward Hill suggests that he may have been paid 10 per cent. See R.A.C. to Edward Gill [sic], 3 April 1701, T 70/57, ff. 172 ro. and vo., P.R.O. By 1705, Gawin Corbin was being paid 10 per cent commission, as he was in June 1708, T 70/279, 3, 6, and 36, P.R.O. For evidence that the company continued to pay agents at the 10 per cent rate as late as September 1722, see T 70/280, 17, P.R.O.

³⁰R.A.C. to Corbin, 8 Nov. 1710, T 70/58, 393, P.R.O.

³¹Davies, Royal African Company, 295.

exchange are most complete, it can be estimated that the agent earned between one hundred and four hundred pounds sterling annually, averaging approximately £282.

FIGURE 1: COMPANY SALES AND AGENTS' EARNINGS³²
(pounds sterling)

year	total sales	known protested	agents' earnings @ 10% commission
1703	2,126.18.05	448.00.00	167.17.10
1704	1,640.16.02	333.13.10	130.14.07
1705	11,878.05.07	1,672.06.03	1,020.11.10
1706	4,695.05.01	958.13.11	373.12.11
1707	8,628.00.02	4,797.11.04	383.01.07
1708	4,202.08.04	2,637.05.09	156.10.03
1709	2,571.10.07	1,541.16.08	102.19.04

Except for the two or three years at the beginning of the

³²The agents' annual earnings were calculated from the records of bills of exchange, most of which appear in letters from the company to its agents, Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilms of the Royal African Company records, T 70, passim., P.R.O., from letter books and from accounts, bills of exchange. An attempt was made to avoid duplicating bills and to attribute each to the correct year of sale rather than assigning the bill necessarily to the year when it was accepted or protested. In most cases there is no indication that these procedures occurred in different calendar years.

The agents' earnings were determined as 10% of the bills known to have been accepted annually, which is the difference between annual total sales and annual bills protested. Inasmuch as bills existed which are not included in these figures, the agents probably earned more than these calculations document. But this factor is at least partially offset by the likelihood that more protests were lodged than are represented above, thus preventing the agents' collecting that portion of their commissions. The tentative nature of these totals is therefore obvious.

Curtis Nettels states that the Royal African Company received in the years 1703-1706 bills for £8593, of which £2253 were protested. According to Nettels' totals, the agent would have averaged £158.10 per annum during this period, Curtis P. Nettels, The Money Supply of the American Colonies Before 1720 (Madison, Wis., 1934), 52 n. The totals calculated here from the African Company bills of exchange are approximately 78%

eighteenth century when the company maintained agencies on both the York and James Rivers, a single agent collected the entire annual commission. The major variables which influenced his income were the volume of sales and the portion of those sales for which the agent could collect.³³ The company paid him not at the time of the sale, but upon completion of payment.³⁴ Normally this was either at the time the bill of exchange was accepted, or, if protested, when the agent was able to collect and submit to London an acceptable "second" bill including fees and interest.

It is as difficult to evaluate the agent's income as to compute it. The first years of the eighteenth century were years when depression and war impeded the trans-Atlantic trade: tobacco prices were low, credit from England was tight, and currency was scarce. During this period, even a modest source of income would have been valued. A recent writer, in appraising Edward Randolph's 1702 income, states

higher, but this is a deceptive figure because of the abnormally high sales total for the year 1705. If that year is overlooked, the company figures exceed Nettels' by approximately 45%. This discrepancy can only be attributed either to a duplication in counting company bills in this study, a pitfall which this writer made a conscious effort to avoid, or to Nettels' failure to use a more complete account of the company's total sales. For external evidence supporting the sales boom of 1705, see below, pp. 95-97.

³³According to Nettels, Money Supply, 52 n., approximately 26 per cent of the Royal African Company Bills from Virginia, 1703-1706, were protested. The above table, Figure 1, indicates that approximately 31 per cent were protested in the years 1703-1710.

³⁴T 70/279, 28, P.R.O.

that "a man could support a family and live as a gentleman on £150 a year."³⁵ By nature the commission, directly dependent upon the volume of trade, was less reliable than the salary paid to an official of the state such as Randolph, and unlike many commissioned salesmen, the company agents could not have enhanced their total sales by means of aggressiveness and diligence. But the agents' earnings in this era consistently resembled Randolph's gentlemanly wage, exceeded the earnings of the commissioned Virginia officials--customs collectors, the auditor, and the receiver-general--and surpassed even the salaries of most all but the governor and councilors.³⁶ In addition to being apparently well paid, the agents occupied an advantageous position with respect to the flow of Chesapeake commerce. Surveying the trade from the mouths of the rivers, they could collect any income to which they were entitled, either in

³⁵Michael Garibaldi Hall, Edward Randolph and the American Colonies (Chapel Hill, 1960), 219.

³⁶The following were estimated from the statements of the accounts of the tobacco export duty revenue, known as the "two shilling per hogshead tax," and from the "15 pence per ton for ships trading to Virginia and 6 pence per poll for persons entering the colony," where available for the years 1702-1714, in the Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilms, CO 5/1313-1316, P.R.O.

Annual Salaries (pounds sterling)

Governor	2,000
Councillors	350
Auditor-General	100
Sollicitor	40-100
Clerk of the Council	15-100
Attorney General	40
Minister	20

sterling coin,³⁷ bills, slaves, or select imports from London which they could then credit to their own accounts.

The duties which the African Company expected its Virginia agent to perform were numerous. Even though he was free from company surveillance and relatively unrestricted by law from entering other private and public pursuits, the agent was limited by the company's demand that he fulfill several

Annual Commissions (pounds sterling)		
	rate	average earnings
Auditor	3-7½%	83.6
Receiver General	3-5%	113.4
Customs Collectors	10%	39.6
York River district		99.4
Rappahannock River district		56.16
Potomack River district		34.6
Upper James River district		26.16
Lower James River district		14.4
Accomac River district		4.11**
Eastern Shore district		4.13*

**reported only twice

*reported only once

According to the Audit Office Declared Accounts, 773/907, 23 Oct. 1697-25 Dec. 1698, P.R.O. (Colonial Records Project microfilms), the customs collectors were paid an annual salary of £40 which included maintenance of a boat. If this salary was continued in the years 1702-1714, in addition to the commission, the average income of the collector of the York River district, for example, would have been £139.4.

The figure of £2,000 annual salary for the Governor is confirmed in "Instructions for Francis, Lord Effingham, 1683" (printed in year 1688), McIlwaine, ed., Executive Journals of the Council, I, 517.

³⁷"Whatever coin was to be found in Virginia at this time was most probably in possession of men who held. . . positions which gave them an opportunity of acquiring whatever money sterling had been paid by the merchants and shipmasters." Bruce, Economic History, II, 506-507.

roles. As "correspondent,"³⁸ the agent was expected to serve as a source of information for the company. He was to submit a succession of reports on the importation of slaves to the colony, including the names of captains and the ships, and the condition, source, quantity, and prices of the slaves.³⁹ In addition, the agent was instructed to quiz the captains for information concerning the state of the company operations in Africa.⁴⁰ And, since the company often commissioned agents on both the James and the York Rivers,⁴¹ they were encouraged to consult and inform each other,⁴² though there is little to

³⁸For references to the agent as "correspondent" see R.A.C. to Sherwood, 14 Jan. 1695, T 70/57, ff. 120 vo.-121 ro., P.R.O. R.A.C. to Edward Gill [sic], 3 April 1701, ibid., 172 ro. and vo.; R.A.C. to Fielding, 16 Dec. 1701, T 70/58, 20-21, P.R.O.

³⁹R.A.C. to Captain Sorel, 5 Feb. 1701, T 70/43, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Edward Gill [sic], 3 April 1701, T 70/57, ff. 172 ro. and vo., P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Hill, 4 March 1702, T 70/58, 56, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 18 Oct. 1705, ibid., 201-202; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, ibid., 211; R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 March 1707, ibid., 277-279.

⁴⁰R.A.C. to Corbin, 18 Oct. 1705, ibid., 201-202; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, ibid., 211. The company had become infuriated, says Davies (Royal African Company, 125) with the friendliness which company agents and factors in Africa had shown towards the separate traders. This would have provided a point of inquiry along with general questions about the state of the trade and the condition of company property in Africa.

⁴¹Howell and Hill worked the James River through at least most of the first decade of the eighteenth century, while Wilson, Fielding, and Corbin were serving as their counterparts on the York. Corbin served part of his agency on the Rappahannock.

⁴²R.A.C. to Hill, 10 March 1701/2, T 70/58, 29, P.R.O.

prove that the efforts of any two Virginia agents were ever coordinated. A final duty of the agent as correspondent was to act as political liaison with his customers. Particularly when the company solicited support for the Parliamentary defense of its monopoly were the agents called upon to "Communicate to the Gentlemen Planters of your Colonys. . . ." ⁴³

Because much of his work as correspondent was tedious, unprofitable, and hindered by the inadequacy of the mails, ⁴⁴ the agent frequently ignored the company's letters. But he had more important obligations: the agent represented the company in all its affairs in Virginia, managed the company property, and supervised the shipping and sales transaction from the time the ship docked until the last bill had been collected, or, more realistically speaking, until the last debtor had been prosecuted.

In order to fulfill his duties as company executive, the agent was expected to keep a vigil of the Virginia coast

⁴³R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 April 1708, ibid., 331-332; R.A.C. to Corbin, 4 June 1709, ibid., 364.

⁴⁴Letters often went astray as a result of their being forwarded indiscriminately aboard any ship bound for the correct general destination. See John Spencer Bassett, "The Relation Between the Virginia Planter and the London Merchant," American Historical Association, Annual Report, 1901 (Washington, 1902), I, 568. For an example see R.A.C. to Richard Knight, 14 Feb. 1705, T 70/44, P.R.O.

in order to prevent the illegal entry of slaves.⁴⁵ He could expect assistance from the collector of the district and, possibly, from another company agent. However, given the irregularity and great length of the Chesapeake shoreline⁴⁶ and the willingness of Virginia planters, merchants, and officials to protect illegal trade,⁴⁷ this task was immense.

In addition to detecting illegal entry, the agent had to be familiar with appropriate laws and methods of prosecution, some of which were changing during the period in question.⁴⁸ These were relatively unsophisticated procedures which could have been learned while on the job, but they could not be taken for granted. Before the legislation of 1698 ended the African Company monopoly, the agents were allowed to

⁴⁵ Philip A. Bruce states that ". . . there were ship masters who . . . would seek to bring their cargoes of negroes into the Colony by stealth. In October (1687). . . one hundred and twenty slaves were landed at a lonely point on the Eastern Shore, from the English ship Society of Bristol. . . . The collector of the district seized it. . . ." See Bruce, Economic History II, 85, citing W. P. Palmer et al., eds., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts. . . Preserved . . . at Richmond (1652-1869), I, 30.

⁴⁶ "The total shoreline has recently been calculated at fifty-six hundred miles. . . . Nearly two thousand miles of that shoreline was open to seagoing seventeenth-century vessels." David Hawke, The Colonial Experience (New York, 1964), 114.

⁴⁷ Davies, Royal African Company, 113, 118.

⁴⁸ It may be significant to note that William Sherwood, formally trained in law, was one of the best known attorneys in Virginia. For accounts of Sherwood's preparation and prominent career see "List of Colonial Attorney-Generals," Wm. and Mary Q'tly., Ser. 1, X (1902), 166-167; "History of York County in the Seventeenth Century," Tyler's Quarterly, I (1920), 252; "Historical and Genealogical Notes: Sherwood," Tyler's Q'tly., II (1921), 207.

prevent outright the importation of slaves by any ship not sailing for the company.⁴⁹ The conflict in jurisdiction involved in the seizure of a ship and its cargo required the agent to discriminate between the authority of common law and that of the Royal African Company monopoly, both of which he had at his disposal. The preferred course of action, and the only one which proved consistently profitable, was immediate seizure of an interloper before he unloaded his slaves. This entitled the company to the cargo. Once the interloper had unloaded his slaves, he could not be held liable for damage to the company monopoly under authority of the charter. At this point, the company expected the agent to resort to common law procedures. While smuggling their slaves into the colony, interlopers usually violated the law by making false declarations to customs officers or landing slaves at places other than ports; common law courts recognized such acts as criminal offenses and punished the violators accordingly.⁵⁰ In common law cases, however, the maximum reward the company could win was the ship, the proceeds from the sale of which were often so meager that they failed to cover the court costs.⁵¹

⁴⁹Ships and Ship captains who attempted the illegal importation of slaves into the colonies were termed "interlopers." If they were apprehended, interlopers could be punished for violating the monopolistic charter of the company. Since in 1698 the monopoly was dissolved by law, the new term "separate traders" came into use to denote the category of those who imported slaves into the colonies by paying a 10 per cent duty to the African Company.

⁵⁰Davies, Royal African Company, 116.

⁵¹Ibid., 117-118.

The 1698 "Act to Settle the Trade to Africa," which altered the company's status in order to legalize the activities of private traders, also changed the executive role of the agent. The law prescribed a new 10 per cent ad valorem tax to be paid to the company by all non-company traders on goods, excluding slaves and redwood, exported from the Guinea Coast to England or any of her colonies.⁵² No longer could the company agent legally prevent trade to Virginia by private or, as they were now called, "separate" traders; instead, his major responsibility was to ensure payment of the duty to the

⁵²An account of the law appears in "An Act to Settle the Trade to Africa," 5 July 1698, Donnan, ed., Documents, I, 421-429, cited from Statutes of the Realm, VII, 393-397, 9 and 10 Wm. III, c. 26. Goods subject to taxation were those imported "from the Coast of Africa between Cape Blancho and Cape Mount. . ."

The law designates the "Collector of His Majesties Chief Custom-houses in England, or any of his Majesties Plantations" to make entry and bonds, administer oaths and receive the duties. African Company letters instructed the Virginia agents that they were ". . . Impowered to collect the Duty of 10 per Cent granted by a late Act of Parliament to Settle the Trade to Africa. . ." See R.A.C. to James Howell, 23 April 1700, T 70/57, f. 157 vo., P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Edward Gill [sic] 3 April 1701, ibid., 172 ro. and vo.; R.A.C. to Henry Fielding, 16 Dec. 1701, T 70/58, 20-21, P.R.O. This seeming contradiction is explained by the probability that the Customs Collector exacted the duty and submitted it to the company agent who received and forwarded it to the African Company, London.

Davies seems to concur in Royal African Company, 135-136: "Collection of the duty was in the hands of Customs officials, but agents in the West Indies were ordered to keep a careful record of vessels clearing for Africa for purposes of checking. In Virginia, Maryland, and New England, where there were no permanent agents, attorneys were appointed to receive the money." By "permanent agent" Davies apparently denotes an official sent from London, a non-resident, non-planter, like those agents in the West Indies. In any other sense, the company's Virginia agents appear to have been permanent.

The British duty resulting from the 1698 act of Parliament is not to be confused with the duties imposed by Virginia on imported slaves, discussed by Suttell, British Slave Trade to Virginia.

African Company's London office. By letter, the company defined a threefold procedure by which the agent could execute the new law: he was instructed to screen imports, making certain that the customs collectors taxed the appropriate goods; to keep his own set of accounts compiled from his observation and from "a true and fair Duplicate of all such Entries and Oaths made and Signed and bonds given and Monies paid," which he was legally authorized to demand from the collectors;⁵³ and to submit to the company office the returns which he received from the collectors.

Enforcing the tax clause of the 1698 law would appear to have significantly increased the work load of the agency. However, direct imports to Virginia of African gold, ivory, wax, ginger, indigo, palm oil, and the other African products were probably very small during these years, and consequently the instructions to the agent overemphasize the new tax. In all likelihood, the agent added to his job no more than a periodical check of the collectors' books. The 1698 regulation certainly did not require as careful scrutiny in Virginia as had the prevention of interloping in the years before the law; but regardless of which trade regulation was in effect, the arrival of an Atlantic cargo always intensified the agent's activities.

The first few hours after the arrival of a slave ship were critical. The agent immediately had to board every

⁵³R.A.C. to Howell, 23 April 1700, T 70/57, f. 157 vo., P.R.O.

slaver, company-operated or private, to examine the captain's records of the cargo. If the slaves were property of the Royal African Company, the captain was required to account for every one purchased in Africa, a policy which was intended to encourage the careful treatment of the slaves in order to reduce mortality in the "middle passage" and to discourage "black market" sales by the captains. If company slaves had been shipped aboard a leased or rented vessel, this count of heads determined the freight charge, which was based solely on the number of slaves delivered alive in Virginia.⁵⁴ After completing the preliminary inspection, the agent and the captain "mustered" the slaves and grouped them according to size, age, and sex, in preparation for the sale.⁵⁵

The agent suspended his legal and executive duties at this stage in the procedure, and he began the day-to-day business of selling slaves. He was expected to "give due and public notice" to the sale which would transpire two or three days after the ship landed. Publicity was especially important to those planters who were remote enough from the rivers to require advance notice, and lack of information was a common source of complaint by Virginians against the company.⁵⁶

⁵⁴George Francis Dow, Slave Ships and Slaving (Salem, Massachusetts, 1927), p. 68, abstracted from Captain Thomas Phillips' "Journal," printed in Churchill's Collection of Voyages (London, 1746), VI. See also Davies, Royal African Company, 198.

⁵⁵Ibid., 295.

⁵⁶R.A.C. to Henry Feilding [sic], 7 Nov. 1704, T 70/58, 151, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Gawin Corbin, 4 June 1709, ibid., 364.

"I am so remote," wrote William Fitzhugh to Ralph Wormeley, "that before I can have notice, they'll be all disposed of, or at least none left but the refuse."⁵⁷

In the eyes of the company officials, the one factor which was most important in determining the agent's success or failure as a sales manager was his ability to demand high prices, since the majority of the company's Virginia sales were made under the consignment system which eliminated most contracts and pre-arranged prices. By letter which preceded the arrival of a ship, or in the instructions carried by the captain, the company encouraged the agent to "sell our Negroes to the best advantage for us."⁵⁸ However, since the price depended most on the physical condition, skills, and ages of the slaves and the economic climate in Virginia, the agent had less control over the profits than the company contended.⁵⁹ The agent made most of his sales "by inch of candle," or auction, as provided in the charter,⁶⁰ with the agent presiding, though some slaves were sold in Virginia by contract. In the

⁵⁷ Fitzhugh to Wormeley, 19 June 1681, Fitzhugh, Chesapeake World, 92-93 and nn.

⁵⁸ R.A.C. to Edward Hill, 2 Dec. 1701, T 70/58, 29; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, ibid., 211; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Feb. 1705/6, ibid., 217.

⁵⁹ Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 139, citing Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, Jan. 1772/3-Dec. 1728 (London, 1920-38), 64-66.

⁶⁰ Scott, Constitution and Finance, II, 21.

latter instance, the agent merely had to distribute the slaves to those who had contracted to buy them, a minimal service for which the agent received a 1 1/2 per cent commission of the pre-arranged price.⁶¹ It is unlikely that the "scramble" method, another fixed-price method utilized in the West Indies during the eighteenth century, was ever a part of the Virginia slave trade.⁶²

While the slaves were being sold, the agent could not concentrate entirely on the sale because he was responsible for aiding the captain in the preparation of the slave ship for its homeward voyage.⁶³ First of all, this meant paying the captain and the crew a portion of their wages in order to facilitate the purchases of necessities, a practice which was requested by the captain in the event that his crew had been hired with the understanding that they would be paid monthly

⁶¹Davies, Royal African Company, 295.

⁶²The "scramble" method operated as follows: After the sick and "refuse" slaves were taken ashore and sold to "Jews and surgeons on speculation," all the remaining Africans were herded into a "large yard," each to be sold at the same, previously agreed price. When the hour of sale arrived, the gates were flung open and the purchasers rushed in "with the ferocity of brutes," rounding up all the slaves they could, and creating a great deal of confusion and animosity, as easily can be imagined. For a first-hand account of this practice, see Dow, Slave Ships, 152, "The Doctor's Narrative," abstracted from Alexander Falconbridge's Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa, (London, 1788).

⁶³R.A.C. to Feilding [sic], 7 Nov. 1704, T 70/58, 151-152, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 March 1707, ibid., 277-279.

wages while the ship was in port.⁶⁴ Agent Henry Fielding, for example, was instructed in a 1704 letter to pay the captain of the Angola frigate in cash rather than in bills, so that he might enjoy full purchasing power for the crew's needs. Whether Fielding obliged with cash is not of record, but cash payment was not the standard practice.⁶⁵

After the captain and crew were accommodated, the agent began the task of loading the ship for the return voyage. In few cases had the company contracted in advance for the entire voyage, so that the agent normally bargained on the open market for the ship's return cargo.⁶⁶ The slavers sometimes returned to England in ballast, either because of the scarcity of profitable goods in Virginia and their low prices in England, or because of "the general prejudice against slaving vessels as suitable ships to

⁶⁴"The ship Nymphas, bound from Suffolk, Virginia, to Cadiz, advertised for sailors promising them £2.5s. currency per month 'from the time of their Entry to the Ship's clearing out in Virginia, and Eleven Guineas for the Run, upon their being discharged at Cadiz.'" Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 278-279, quoting the Virginia Gazette, 20 Oct. 1752; see also R.A.C. to Captain William Cooke, 9 April 1706, T 70/63, 80-83, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Cooke, 27 April 1708, T 70/44, P.R.O.

⁶⁵R.A.C. to Captain Cooke [sic], 4 May 1708, T 70/9, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Captain Cooke, 27 April 1708, T 70/44, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Henry Feilding [sic], 7 Nov. 1704, T 70/58, 151-152, P.R.O.

⁶⁶Ibid., 152.

carry tobacco to Great Britain."⁶⁷ Frequently the agent assisted the captain in obtaining a cargo of export-quality⁶⁸

⁶⁷ By the middle of the eighteenth century, slavers exporting tobacco from the Chesapeake area were forced at times to charge freight rates lower than the established ones. It became "the general belief," says Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 141, "that slavers were 'never after in a Condition to take in tobacco.'" Evidence indicates, however, that this belief was not sufficiently widespread at the beginning of the eighteenth century to have prevented or seriously limited the exportation of tobacco on slave vessels from Virginia. See the letters from the company to the ship captains and plantations, T 70, passim., P.R.O.

⁶⁸ Export-quality tobacco was requested in the letter, R.A.C. to Gawin Corbin, 27 March 1707, T 70/58, 277-279, P.R.O. Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 124, explains that export-quality tobacco was that stock which was "prized" into hogsheads for export, as opposed to bulk tobacco, loose, in bundles or hands, which was termed "transfer" tobacco, and was utilized for local transactions. Middleton adds that "transfer tobacco could not be exported--because the act of Parliament of 1698 prohibited the importation of bulk tobacco into England."

In discussing inferior grade tobacco as "one of the curses of the trade," Calvin B. Coulter, Jr., The Virginia Merchant, Ph.D. dissertation (Princeton University, 1944), 8-9, explains: "Pressed by the difficulty of making a living when prices were very low, a good many planters in Virginia tried to help themselves by increasing their production. Many of them did so by planting greater crops than they were able to take care of and by planting on land that was not proper for producing good tobacco and by growing 'suckers' or second growth tobacco. When they got around to curing their tobacco, these planters . . . processed everything Some planters tried to pass off out-and-out 'trash' as good tobacco to the merchants. In general, though, the planters used some of their poor tobacco to pay their taxes and quit rents."

Richard L. Morton, Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill, 1960), I, 423, concurs, citing Alexander Spottswood, Official Letters, ed. R. A. Brock, I, 12, 13, 57, 72-74, 164; II, 28, 35:

"Since tobacco passed as legal tender for public dues and private debts according to weight rather than quality, many people were raising a quantity of trash tobacco with which to meet their obligations--a practice which led to fraud and injustice at home and discredit to Virginia abroad."

tobacco.⁶⁹ During the war years, the company preferred to transport tobacco only when a convoy was available. If no convoy was scheduled to sail from Virginia, or if the slaver loaded during a season inappropriate for the purchase of tobacco, the agent would arrange to substitute less desirable items of export.⁷⁰ Among the substitutes sometimes available in Virginia were ivory,⁷¹ furs, and skins,⁷² though lumber products seem to have been the most frequent alternatives to tobacco.⁷³ Virginia timber was a source for British naval

⁶⁹R.A.C. to Captain William Cook [sic], 22 Sept. 1707, T 70/9, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Christopher Robinson, 14 Feb. 1688, T 70/57, f. 38 ro., P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Henry Feilding [sic], 7 Nov. 1704, T 70/58, 151-152, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Gawin Corbin, 27 March 1707, *ibid.*, 277-279; R.A.C. to Corbin, 30 Sept. 1707, *ibid.*, 304; R.A.C. to Captain Thomas Arnall, 2 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 41, P.R.O.; lists of ships (Sarah), T 70/1225, 6, P.R.O.

⁷⁰R.A.C. to Feilding [sic], 7 Nov. 1704, T 70/58, 151-152, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Arnall, 2 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 35-41, P.R.O.

⁷¹R.A.C. to William Burlace, 11 Feb. 1708/9, T 70/9, P.R.O.; another letter, R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 March 1707, T 70/58, 229, P.R.O., indicates that ivory was valuable enough so that the company preferred that a large cargo either be divided or transported in a man-of-war.

⁷²According to Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 171, "The fur trade, which was so important in the early days of Virginia . . . steadily declined after the middle of the seventeenth century." An account of a voyage of the slave ship, Sarah, lists of ships (Sarah), T 70/1225, 6, P.R.O., serves as evidence that the exportation of skins from Virginia had not ended by 1721.

⁷³*Ibid.*; R.A.C. to Arnall, 2 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Captain Thomas Mackley, 28 Jan. 1706/7, 113, P.R.O.

stores, being especially well-suited for the production of masts. Smaller wooden products, such as staves, heading, shingles, and trunnels, far exceeded the more spectacular masts in export quantity, as did raw timber and its by-products of tar and pitch.⁷⁴ For example, Fielding was directed by the company in a letter of November 7, 1704, to make special arrangements in the event the Angola frigate did not arrive at a proper season to buy tobacco. In this situation the company advised its agent to "load her with Plank, Pitch, and Tarr" from the Elizabeth River area where these products were said to be plentiful and cheap.⁷⁵

The final stage of the sales transaction--collecting and arranging payment for the slaves--was the most difficult. The agent was involved in each of the various methods of payment. If the planter paid for the slaves in cash, it was the agent who accepted it; but because of the shortage of currency in Virginia at the time, this seldom happened.⁷⁶ Many more slaves were sold on contract than were purchased with cash, especially during the period of the monopoly.

⁷⁴Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 162.

⁷⁵R.A.C. to Feilding [sic], 7 Nov. 1704, T 70/58, 152. Bruce, Economic History, II, 493, confirms the company's directions: "In 1698, the only place where pitch and tar were produced in Virginia in a considerable quantity was in Elizabeth City County."

⁷⁶Nettels, Money Supply, 59, 206-209; Robert Polk Thomson, The Merchant in Virginia, 1700-1775, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Wisconsin, 1955), 11; Bruce, Economic History, II, 506-521; Hemphill, Virginia and the English Commercial System, 98 ff.

Contract sales were made in lots undifferentiated by the normal standards of sex, age, and health, and they required on delivery a cash collection of one-third of the total purchase price of the lot, the balance to be collected equally at intervals of two and six months.⁷⁷ The contractual sale of slaves always constituted a minor portion of the agent's total sales, and after 1690 the contract system lapsed into obsolescence.⁷⁸

The overwhelming majority of slaves imported to Virginia by the company were purchased by means of the credit system, using as the vehicle the bill of exchange, the misuse of which proved the greatest single source of friction between the company and its agents. The agent, by spreading small amounts of credit among many planters, soon accumulated a large and unmanageable deficit. In theory, the bill of exchange was utilized only when the drawer had a balance in the hands of the merchant on whom the bill was drawn.⁷⁹ If the agent had, in fact, limited credit to those who maintained a sufficient balance in London, and if, therefore, the London

⁷⁷Edward D. Collins, "Colonial Policy of England," American Historical Association, Annual Report, 1900 (Washington, 1901), I, 158. According to Davies, Royal African Company, 294, the contract system was advantageous to the Royal African Company because of "obvious merits, a guaranteed market and price, few or no agency costs, no debts, no lawsuits for the recovery of debts," and no problem in remitting payment at London.

⁷⁸Davies, Royal African Company, 294.

⁷⁹Bruce, Economic History, II, 516.

merchants had been able to accept the bills of exchange, the problem would not have existed. Acceptance of the bills as valid would have released the agent from responsibility. The company accordingly advised its agents that producing "better bills" would have benefited all concerned: "Surely if any Care was taken to Inquire into the Circumstances of the Drawers," they reprimanded Corbin in a 1709 letter, he "would never send such a parcel of bills."⁸⁰

Corbin's tendency to ignore the company's warnings against bad credit is partially explained by the fact that they were unrealistic. Such a large number of Virginia planters were indebted to London during this era that Corbin undoubtedly had difficulty in locating good risks.⁸¹ Successive unprosperous years of anticipating better returns from the tobacco crop led Virginia planters so deeply into debt that many found it difficult, if not impossible, to emerge.⁸² William Fitzhugh, a virtual model of prudence, managed to escape long-term indebtedness, but

⁸⁰R.A.C. to Gawin Corbin, 11 March 1709, T 70/58, 378, P.R.O. For additional examples of Royal African Company complaints about the poor condition of bills of exchange from Virginia, see the following letters, R.A.C. to Gawin Corbin, T 70/58, P.R.O.: 15 May 1705, 184; 20 Feb. 1705/6, 217; 27 March 1707, 277-279; 30 Sept. 1707, 304; 18 Nov. 1707, 310-311; 24 Feb. 1708/9, 351; 11 March 1709, 378; 8 Nov. 1710, 393; 14 Sept. 1711, 405.

It is apparent from a company letter, R.A.C. to Corbin, 14 Sept. 1711, T 70/58, 405, that partial acceptance of a bill was possible. In this instance, Micajah Perry accepted "between £4 and 5" of Martin Chalmer's bill for £33.12.9, but protested the remainder.

⁸¹For an explanation of this indebtedness and its relationship to war and depression, as well as an account of the general Virginia economy of this period, see Hemphill, *Virginia and the English Commercial System*, *passim*.

⁸²Bruce, *Economic History*, II, 368.

even he did so only with concerted effort, as he revealed in a 1695 letter to his English consignment merchant: "I desire you Sir to send my Account Currant by the first ships and send me two or three duplicates for fear of miscarriage, for not knowing how my account stands, I dare not send for goods though my wants are very great and pressing."⁸³ In addition to the general indebtedness, each planter usually dealt with more than one London merchant, which made credit rating an intricate task; when funds were low, some planters would keep an adequate standing with one merchant while simultaneously abusing the others by writing bad bills on them.⁸⁴ To make the agent's job worse, these merchants guarded their credit much more closely than they had during more prosperous and peaceful times,⁸⁵ and they were not above

⁸³ Virginia Magazine, IV (1896-97), 416. Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 380 n., says "few planters were as cautious as William Fitzhugh.

Middleton continues, Tobacco Coast, 106, citing Colonel William Byrd, (II) to --, 2 July 1736, "Letters of William Byrd, 2d, of Westover, Va.," Virginia Magazine, IV (1901-02), 124; Byrd to --, 20 Aug. 1733, ibid., 115: "The more prudent planters, realizing the importance of keeping out of debt, carefully avoided ordering more goods than their tobacco would cover . . . when in debt to the London merchant Alderman Micajah Perry, William Byrd II sold land and slaves in a desperate attempt to extricate himself from the clutches of that 'hungry magistrate,' preferring to incommode himself rather than 'continue in the Gripe of that Userer [sic].'"

For a statement of Colonel Byrd's "long and vexatious" debt to the London firm of Perry and Lane, see Bassett, "The Relation Between the Virginia Planter and the London Merchant," 572.

⁸⁴ Thomson, The Merchant in Virginia, 15-16.

⁸⁵ Hemphill, Virginia and the English Commercial System, 26, 102.

cheating the planters, perhaps in retaliation, by making false statements of account.⁸⁶

The company's letters and directions to their agents in Virginia imply that the position of agent must have been a demanding one, as in some respects it was. The responsibilities were broad in scope, and, at the height of slave trading activity, they were intense. However, this assessment requires qualification. The mere fact that Christopher Robinson, William Sherwood, and Gawin Corbin carried the agency as if it were a supplement to their extremely active careers in Virginia trade and politics places the job in a more realistic perspective. Though an agent potentially expended considerable amounts of time and energy, the fact is that the Royal African Company slave trade to Virginia failed to reach its potential. As a result, some of the duties anticipated by the company in its job descriptions were required only infrequently, and others in seasonal spurts. The major responsibilities were those directly associated with selling slaves; and the absence of company complaints against the agents for failure to sell implies that there were no serious breaches of that primary function during the period being studied.

The one time when the agent would have been busiest was the period during which a slave ship was anchored within

⁸⁶Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 106.

his domain, but this was infrequent. Although the Royal African Company sent considerable numbers of slavers to Africa during this era, relatively few were dispatched to Virginia, and of those, some fell prey to pirates and hostile privateers. Normally, at least four or five slave ships reached Virginia per year, but the majority belonged to separate traders. Some years passed when not one company slave ship sailed into Chesapeake Bay. Even in the busier years, the trade was concentrated between April and October.

FIGURE 2: SLAVES AND SLAVE SHIPS ARRIVING IN VIRGINIA,
1700-1710⁸⁷

	Jan-Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
ships	0	2	4	4	7	10	8	2	0	1
slaves	0	210	979	632	1308	1627	1125	491	0	67

Thus, in a dull year or an off season, the agent could have been relatively free, depending upon the degree of enthusiasm which he devoted to the peripheral tasks.

⁸⁷This estimate represents a synthesis of two sources: Elizabeth Donnan, ed., Documents Illustrative of the History of the History of the Slave Trade to America, IV, 172-173; and the Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilms of the Royal African Company records, T 70, passim., P.R.O.

Bruce, Economic History, I, 622-623, gives an explanation of this seasonal trend, which emphasizes that "all the planters were eager to forward their hogsheads to the foreign markets at the earliest possible moment in order to obtain the highest price." This allowed the shipper an opportunity for a "double profit, first the profit on the sale of laborers themselves after deducting the cost of their transportation, and secondly, the profit on the tobacco . . . when passed to the English dealers." This is obviously a goal similar to that of the Royal African Company.

These lesser responsibilities appear to have been left largely to the conscience of the particular agent. It is impossible to render a summary evaluation of the efficiency of the agents in corresponding, managing company property, prosecuting smugglers, and keeping the company accounts, though the company occasionally did censure or command its agents for certain of these activities. Even considering the extreme unreliability of communications, Colonel Corbin was a poor correspondent who apparently did not bother to inform the company when separate traders imported slaves;⁸⁸ in addition, his bookkeeping and management of credit caused complaint that his services were "very unmerchantlike."⁸⁹ Edward Hill, on the contrary, was complimented for his correspondence in which he had submitted intelligence concerning the arrivals of ships and the duties they paid, and officials even sent a copy of the letter of commendation to Hill's "security," Micajah Perry.⁹⁰ The company also thanked Christopher Robinson for his "diligence in lookeing after Interlopers" when he and a collector had seized the ship Little Society.⁹¹

⁸⁸R.A.C. to Gawin Corbin, 18 Oct., 1705, T 70/58, p. 201, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 14 Sept. 1711, ibid., 405.

⁸⁹R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, ibid., 211.

⁹⁰R.A.C. to Edward Hill, 4 March 1702, ibid., 56.

⁹¹R.A.C. to Christopher Robinson, 14 Feb. 1688, T 70/57, f. 38 ro. and vo., P.R.O.

Too frequently, mediocre performance by the agents contributed to the ineffectiveness of the Royal African Company, just as their successes contributed to its temporary survival. When they enforced the monopoly during its existence, they increased the company's share of the total volume of slave imports; and yet the company's best efforts to prevent interloping, to meet Virginia demands, and to withstand mounting pressure in Parliament were inadequate. By collecting a tax on goods imported into Virginia after 1698, the agents increased the company's profits; but even the assistance of Parliamentary legislation which prolonged the company's favored position did not salvage its Virginia trade or its financial structure. Enthusiasm could not have come easily to agents who were expected to manage such a sporadic trade; when there were no ships, there was no income, and when a ship arrived, the agent often had to deal slaves to fellow planters from whom he knew he would collect only with great difficulty. While short-term profits depended to some extent upon the agents, it was hardly within their power to assure the company's general success.

The day-to-day activities of the Virginia agents represent on their most fundamental level the operations of the Royal African Company in the colony. However, in order to achieve a balanced understanding of these operations it is necessary to view the dynamics of the Virginia market-- personnel, supply, demand, and prices--against the changing background of the domestic economy and the conditions of world trade.

CHAPTER III

VIRGINIA AS A MARKET FOR COMPANY SLAVES

Although the Royal African Company found Virginia an unimportant and unstable market for its slaves during most of the period 1689-1713, the company's London officials continued to anticipate an improvement; they periodically assessed the market, designated a succession of colonial merchant-planters as company agents, and imported into the Tidewater area possibly as many as one thousand slaves over the duration of that quarter century. Because the company maintained an active interest in the Chesapeake trade in spite of discouraging and unprofitable results, its records reflect certain characteristics of Virginia as a slave market: the geographic origins of Virginia slaves, the identity and geographic distribution of the Virginians who purchased company slaves, the identity of the British merchants who financed the trade, and an estimate of the average prices paid for slaves in this era. Following is an account of some of these characteristics.

A. Origins of Virginia Slaves

It was once argued that American Negro slaves represented a cross-section of the population of the entire



continent of Africa.¹ Considerable disagreement followed in attempting to determine African origins, but most contemporary scholars concur in their belief that the vast majority originated along a three thousand mile strip of West African coastline stretching between the Senegal River and present-day Angola.² One would instinctively expect the Virginia Negroes to have been representative of the total pattern. Anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits, whose work in this field is authoritative, was largely responsible for the new understanding of the role played by the West African in populating the New World;³ he found from the abstracts of ships' manifests that slaves imported into Virginia originated from the same stretch of West Coast, particularly from the regions of the Gambia River, the Guinea Coast, the Niger River Delta, and the lower Congo.⁴ African Company records substantiate Herskovits' conclusions; letters to ships' captains and agents show that

¹Melville J. Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past (New York and London, 1941), 46-47, discusses old and new ideas of African origins of American Negroes.

²Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America (London, 1964), 15-16.

³Stanley Elkins, Slavery (New York, 1963), 93, states that he "is accepting without question the findings and generalizations put forth . . . [by Herskovits] insofar as they relate to the Negro in Africa." Winthrop Jordan, White Over Black (Chapel Hill, 1968), 102, says, "though now challenged on many points, the single most important work on the African background of American slaves remains . . . Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past."

⁴Herskovits, Myth of the Negro Past, 40-51.

the slaves imported by the company in the years 1689-1713 came predominantly from the same areas--the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, "Guinea," the Niger River, and Angola. This is to be expected, not only because it is consistent with the larger pattern, but because ~~this~~ this portion of the West African coast was both the domain of the company charter and the home of company slave forts and "factories" during this era.

FIGURE 3: AFRICAN ORIGINS OF VIRGINIA SLAVES⁵

Place of Origin	Year	Ship	Number of slaves
Angola	1702	<u>Lusitania</u>	360
	1702	<u>Angola frigate</u>	320
	1720/1	<u>Prince George</u>	
Gambia	1683	<u>Sarah</u>	180
	1683	<u>Two Friends</u>	190
	1686	<u>Speedwell</u>	200
	1701	<u>Evans frigate</u>	300
	1702	<u>Urban frigate</u>	250
	1704	<u>Postillion galley</u>	150
	1704/5	<u>Phenix</u>	
	1707	<u>Seaford</u>	
Gold Coast	1707	<u>Bridgewater</u>	170
	1720	<u>Otter</u>	
	1705	<u>Dorothy galley</u>	80
"Guinea"	1705	<u>Angola frigate</u>	
	1720	<u>Sarah</u>	
Niger River	1692	<u>Katherine</u>	
	1702	<u>The Morris</u>	
	1702	<u>Thomas & John</u>	
Sierra Leone	1689	<u>Benjamin</u>	
	1693	<u>Jeffrey</u>	330
Sierra Leone	1701	<u>Gambia Galley</u>	100+
	1705	<u>Angola frigate</u>	

These imported African laborers brought to the New World, including Virginia, a variety of cultural backgrounds; and

⁵This table is derived from the Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilms of the Royal African Company records, T 70, passim., P.R.O., both from letter books and from accounts, bills of exchange.

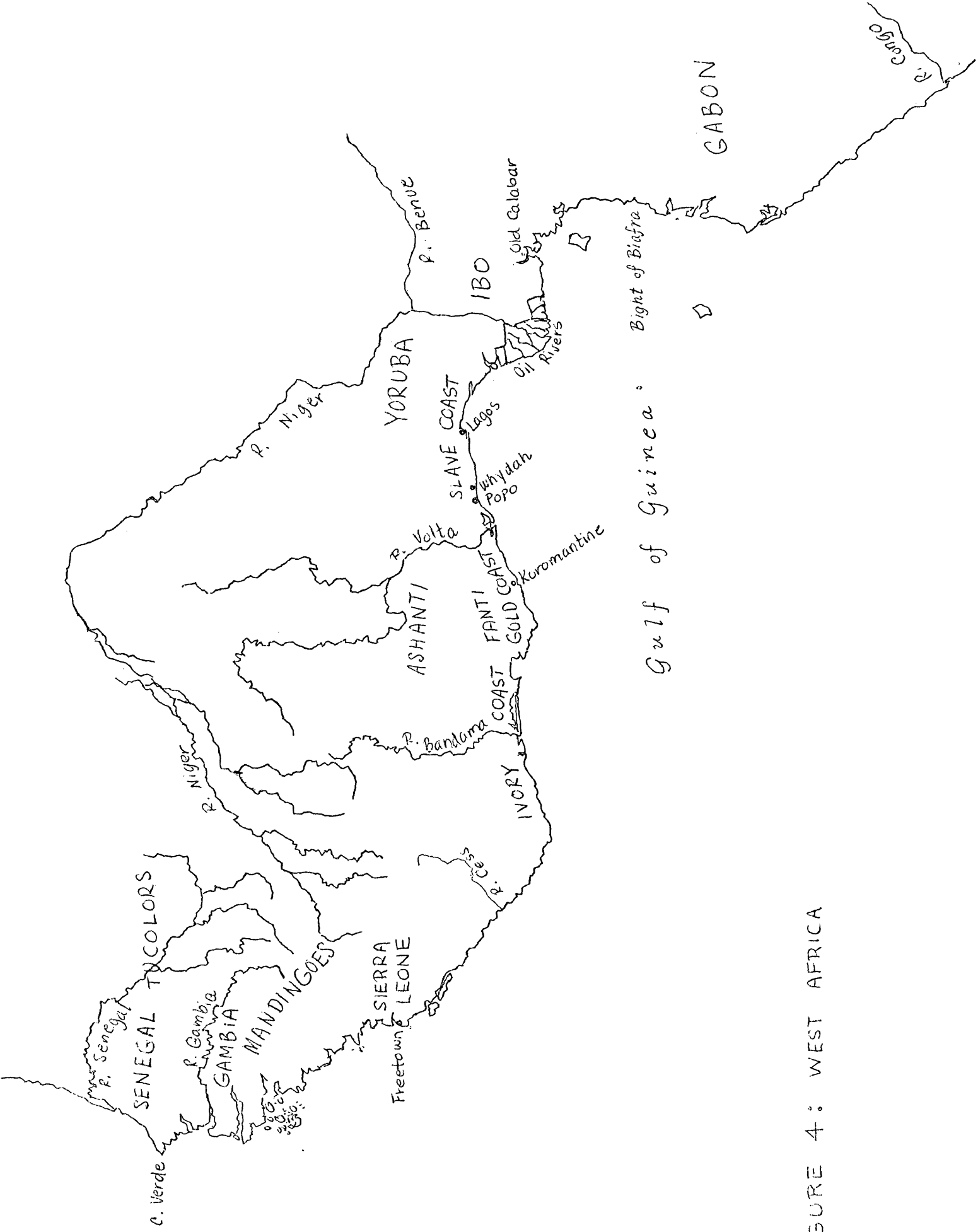


FIGURE 4: WEST AFRICA

though many of the West African groups can be classified by scholars as somewhat similar in language, music, dance, religion, and agrarian culture, the similarities are in many cases more academic than real. For example, many of the more than two hundred distinct tongues of modern-day Nigeria and Biafra can be linked by linguists, but only a few are mutually intelligible. Thus, although linguists would categorize most of the African slaves imported to Virginia as peoples of the same Mande and West Atlantic language groups, these Africans were to a large extent culturally heterogeneous. Virginians initially must have found the similarities of Africans more obvious than their differences, but the experienced eye soon began to distinguish the tall Gold Coast Ashanti from the shorter, lighter-skinned Bantu of the Congo River basin. Not only did the New World colonists discriminate, but they evaluated and labelled each ethnic group.⁶ That the purchasing of slaves became an artful business, at least in some areas of the Americas, is indicated by the descriptions of the eighteenth-century English emigrant planter-historian Bryan Edwards:

There are among several of the African nations
some striking and predominant features.

.

⁶Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (Chapel Hill, 1944), 37. See also Ulrich B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (Boston, 1929), 188-191. An early example of European thought about African ethnic traits is found in Dow, Slave Ships, 86, citing Churchill's Collections of Voyages (London, 1746), Vol. V: "The slaves of New Calabar are a strange sort of brutish creatures, very weak and slothful, but cruel and bloody in their temper, always quarreling, biting and fighting and sometimes choking and murdering one another without mercy."

The Mandingoes have frequent wars with each other. . . In truth, they display such gentleness of disposition and demeanour, as would seem the result of early education and discipline, were it not that, generally speaking, they are more prone to theft than any of the African tribes.

.

The circumstances which distinguish the Koromantyn, or Gold coast negroes, from all others, are firmness both of body and mind; a ferociousness of disposition; but withal, activity, courage, and a stubbornness, or what an ancient Roman would have deemed an elevation of soul, which prompts them to enterprizes of difficulty and danger;

.

Even the children brought from the Gold coast manifest an evident superiority, both in hardiness of frame, and vigour of mind, over all the young people of the same age that are imported from other parts of Africa.

.

Papaws. . . are unquestionably the most docile and best-disposed slaves that are imported from any part of Africa. Without the fierce and savage manners of the Koromantyn negroes, they are also happily exempt from the timid and desponding temper of the Eboes. . . . That punishment which excites the Koromantyn to rebel, and drives the Ebo negro to suicide, is received by the Papaws as the chastisement of legal authority, to which it is their duty to submit patiently. . . .

Eboes. . . in general. . . appear to be the lowest and most wretched of all the nations of Africa. . . . The great objection to the Eboes as slaves, is their constitutional timidity, and despondency of mind; . . .

Those from Congo and Angola. . . [are] of a disposition naturally mild and docile.⁷

Regardless of the degree of truth represented by these extensive ethnic generalizations, apparently they were a part of the popular lore of the slave trade. The question arises,

⁷Bryan Edwards, The History Civil and Commercial of the British Colonies in the West Indies (Philadelphia, 1806), II, 261-283.

then, as to the influence which such rhetoric exerted on the Royal African Company trade to Virginia--did Virginians prefer slaves of a particular ethnic origin?

One historian of the Virginia trade, Calvin Coulter, contends that although differences in "physique and temperament" were discernible,⁸ Virginians had little or no preference. Contrasted with the demands in South Carolina and Jamaica where slaves were carefully chosen by physique and temperament to work in the extensive sugar and rice plantations, the Virginia tobacco labor was so light that physical power was not essential.⁹ Because purchasers in other New World markets were more discriminating than Virginians in their demands for slaves, the Coulter argument continues, the Virginia slave population originated generally from less valued African sources. Blacks from the Gold and Slave Coasts seldom reached Virginia; instead, slave ships brought their Virginia cargoes from scattered localities, but particularly from the Gambia, Angola, and the Niger Delta. An analysis of the company records confirms the conclusion which Coulter made from his study of Naval Officers' Lists--at least 17 of the 23 ships in the company records secured their slave cargoes from the "less popular" regions.¹⁰

⁸Coulter, "The Import Trade of Colonial Virginia," Wm. and Mary Qrtly., Ser. 3, II (1945), 306.

⁹Coulter, The Virginia Merchant, 86-87.

¹⁰See above, Figure 3, page 53, for a regional listing of the origins of slaves imported to Virginia.

However, there is no evidence to assure that this particular distribution of origins is more than coincidental. The argument that Virginians did not select slaves from a specific region of Africa is strengthened by the realization that the company often had great difficulty in filling specific orders, and as a result sometimes it did not even attempt to discriminate. There were instances when the company office in London was not certain of the number of slaves available at their various African "factories." Though orders to ship captains were usually specific, one captain bound for Virginia was told rather vaguely to take 300 slaves, if he found them available at Cape Coast Castle or Sierra Leone. If not, the captain was instructed "to proceed [to] Whidah Allampo or Ardah" where the company hoped he could complete his cargo.¹¹

Despite Coulter's argument, another possible reason exists for Virginia's accumulation of a heterogeneous slave population--Virginia planters may have contrived heterogeneity as a measure of security. Several documents contemporaneous to the trade indicate that the planters deliberately diversified their slaves in order to minimize their cultural similarities, their ability to communicate, and, as a result, the likelihood of slave insurrection. "The plantations desire Negroes from several nations because they are thereby not so subject to rebellion" was the explanation made in British

¹¹R.A.C. to Captain Thomas Arnall, 2 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 35-41, P.R.O.

Parliament in 1684.¹² In 1710, Governor Alexander Spotswood made a plea to the Virginia Assembly in an attempt to encourage stronger laws for the prevention of slave insurrection: "The Tryalls [of slaves for treason] of last Aprill Court may shew that we are not to Depend on Either their Stupidity, or that Babel of Languages among 'em."¹³ Governor Spotswood may have arrived independently at the idea that the internal tranquility of the colony would be enhanced by the inability of the slave laboring force to communicate, but the captains who transported the slaves had long depended upon this "babel" of languages to lessen the likelihood of mutiny.¹⁴

There is little doubt that Virginia planters as well as colonial authorities were in this era aware of the danger of slave conspiracy. "We went to Council," William Byrd entered in his diary in April 1710, "where among other things we directed the negroes to be arraigned for high treason." Three days later, in the same "Tryalls" referred to above by Governor Spotswood, two of the slaves were convicted of treason by the General Court, executed, quartered, and in order to terrorize other potentially rebellious slaves, the

¹²Stock, ed., Proceedings, "Parliaments of England, William and Mary, Second Parliament" (2 March 1693/4, House of Commons), II, 93.

¹³Henry R. McIlwaine, ed., Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1619 . . . 1761, 9 vols. (Richmond, 1908-15), 1703-1712, 240.

¹⁴Elkins, Slavery, 90-91.

heads and quarters were "set up," one in Williamsburg.¹⁵ Slave plots had been uncovered in Surry and Isle of Wight Counties in 1709,¹⁶ and in 1710 a conspiracy discovered and foiled in Surry County drew widespread attention and prompted legislation in the Assembly.¹⁷ Another indication of the same fear is the growing number of Virginia laws restricting the Negroes' behavior, in some cases with the overt intent of preventing violent upheaval. Even the titles of some laws captured this mood of apprehension: "An act for preventing Negroes Insurrections,"¹⁸ "A byll Restraining Negroes going armed,"¹⁹ and "a more severe method . . . to prevent the meeting of Negroes."²⁰

If Virginia planters were relatively unconcerned with the African origins of their slaves, they evidently were more

¹⁵ See 18-21 April 1710, Byrd, Secret Diary . . . 1709-1712, eds. Wright and Tinling, 167-169; see also Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, 417.

¹⁶ 21 March 1709, McIlwaine, ed., Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond, 1925-1930), III, 234-235.

¹⁷ Robert E. and B. Katherine Brown, Virginia 1705-1786: Democracy or Aristocracy? (East Lansing, 1964), 71; Hening, ed., Statutes, III, 536-537; Spotswood, Letters, I, 42.

¹⁸ Hening, ed., Statutes, II, 481-482.

¹⁹ 28 Oct. 1686, McIlwaine, ed., Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia . . . 1659-1693 (Richmond, 1912), 266.

²⁰ Ibid., 429. See also "An additional act for the better preventing insurrections by Negroes," Hening, ed., Statutes, III, 86-88; "An act for suppressing outlying Slaves," Ibid.

concerned vis-à-vis the West Indian Negroes. The standard interpretation explains that the preferences of Virginia planters changed between the mid-seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries from West Indian to African slaves. Originally, before 1680, Virginians had favored slaves imported from the West Indies, particularly Barbados, because they had been "seasoned" --that is, planters felt that living in the West Indies had conditioned the Africans to the work and the climate of the New World.²¹ This made them more desirable than those "raw" Negroes²² imported directly from Africa, "savages of a very gross type unaccustomed to any form of restraint," requiring the constant supervision of an overseer.²³ In addition, credit arrangements made in the West Indies were more lenient than those made in London, Liverpool, or Bristol, an additional factor which encouraged planters to import slaves from the islands rather than from Africa.²⁴ However, by 1710, an apparent change in the attitudes of Virginia planters had taken effect. The Virginia Council reported to the House of Burgesses in 1710 that West Indian Negroes were inferior, "Either Such as are Transported for Crimes or Infected with Diseases." So opposed were the Councillors to the importation

²¹Coulter, *The Virginia Merchant*, 86-87.

²²Marcus W. Jernegan, "Slavery and the Beginnings of Industrialism in the American Colonies," *The American Historical Review*, XXV (1920), 225.

²³Bruce, *Economic History*, II, 108.

²⁴Coulter, *The Virginia Merchant*, 87.

of slaves from the English islands that they submitted to the House a resolution "Whither it may not be proper That a higher Duty be Laid on Them Than on Negroes Imported from Africa."²⁵

Again, company records do not conflict with the established view; not a single reference is made in company correspondence to slaves brought into Virginia by the Royal African Company from either the West Indies or any area other than the West Coast of Africa. Repeated letters tell of slavers, destined for Virginia, which would stop at the West Indies,²⁶ and some of the captains were directed to sell their slaves in the islands if they found it impossible to arrive in Virginia at the proper season. "in the month of August or Sooner";²⁷ but there is no indication that they or any other company slaves

²⁵ Entry of 30 Nov. 1710, H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1702-1712, 286-287.

²⁶ R.A.C. to Capt. Thomas James, 18 March 1685, T 70/61, f. 6 ro. and vo., P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Benjamin Alford, 10 March 1701/2, T 70/58, 29-31, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Paul Sorel, 16 Dec. 1701, T 70/62, 106-109, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. Joseph Bemister, 23 Dec. 1702, ibid., 173; R.A.C. to John Tozer, 11 Jan. 1703, ibid., 246-251; R.A.C. to John Addis, 26 Oct. 1703, T 70/43, 183, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. William Cooke, 9 April 1706, T 70/63, 80-83, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. Thomas Mackley, 28 Jan. 1706/7, ibid., 111-113; R.A.C. to--, 4 Jan. 1708, T 70/44, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. John Mitchell, 16 March 1720/21, T 70/64, 47-50, P.R.O.; Stock, ed., Proceedings, II, 136 n., citing Manuscripts, House of Lords, XV, 98; Donnan, ed., Documents, I, 414 and n.

²⁷ R.A.C. to Mackley, 28 Jan. 1706/7, T 70/63, 111-113, P.R.O.; see also R.A.C. to Horne, Thomas, Willy Barbados, 23 Oct. 1701, T 70/58, 17, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Sorel, 16 Dec. 1701, T 70/62, 106-109, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Bemister, 23 Dec. 1702, ibid., 173; R.A.C. to Tozer, 11 Jan. 1703, ibid., 246-251; R.A.C. to Cooke, 9 April 1706, T 70/63, 80-83, P.R.O.

were re-exported to Virginia from the West Indies. This, of course, does not preclude the possibility that Virginians imported slaves from the West Indies after 1680 through other channels, particularly in light of the private dealings of Chesapeake merchants; they frequently imported slaves in small numbers from the West Indies as an adjunct to their importation of goods and raw materials, not as a distinct slaving operation of the sort established by the African Company.²⁸

Virginia slave purchasers apparently did express one outstanding preference; they regarded Virginia-born slaves as superior investments.²⁹ This preference is not reflected in company records because the African Company did not participate in the domestic traffic--or "carrying trade," as it was known--and therefore did not sell Virginia-born slaves. But as long as slaves retained their fluid status in Virginia, until new laws of entail bound them to the land, there was a market for Virginia-born slaves which was catered to particularly by individual merchants. As late as 1713, however, natural increase had accounted for only a small minority of the total population of Virginia. A few slaves continued to

²⁸Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 139 ff.

²⁹Bruce, Economic History, II, 87; U. B. Phillips, in The Slave Economy of the Old South, 86, concurs: "A very instructive consideration is that, whereas in the West Indies among able-bodied slaves a freshly imported African would bring about the same price as a negro born and reared upon a sugar plantation, in Virginia, even before the eighteenth century a home-grown negro was considered nearly twice as valuable as a fresh African."

trickle from the West Indies to Virginia,³⁰ and there is some scant evidence that slaves were being imported in small numbers from New England.³¹ But, primarily because the supply of slave labor was by far the greatest there, the Guinea coast far outstripped all other areas as a source for Virginia slaves throughout the period being examined.

B. Identity and Distribution of Virginia Purchasers

More open to question than the geographic origins of the slaves are the identity, distribution, and economic status of the Virginians who purchased them. In this regard, several questions have been asked: Were the gentry or the yeoman farmers most responsible for creating the demand for slaves in Virginia at the end of the seventeenth century? Was slave labor, because of high initial costs, the exclusive privilege of the wealthy planters who purchased them in great lots, thereby widening the social and economic gap between themselves

³⁰Coulter, "Import Trade," Wm. and Mary Qrtly., Ser. 3, II (1945), 307.

³¹Donnan, ed., Documents, III, 21, records the following notice of sale (1706-1707): "Any person or persons that has a Negro man slave or slaves to sell or to be transported to Virginia for a market may repair to John Campbell, Post-Master of Boston." For additional references to slaves imported into Virginia from New England, see Bruce, Economic History, II, 81; "Sale of a Negro," Wm. and Mary Qrtly., Ser. 1, VI (1898), 117.

and the poorer colonists?³² Or were the small farmers, aided by available credit and the relatively low long-term cost of slave labor, also able to obtain slaves and thereby to perpetuate the existence of a strong yeomanry?³³

³²This view is stated partially by W. F. Craven, Southern Colonies, 400, and more precisely by Thomson in The Merchant in Virginia, 61-62. Thomson states, in part: "The few seventeenth century planters who had wealth enough to produce on a large scale rapidly became wealthier and began looking for means by which they could increase their production and lower their unit costs. Small planters were almost ruined. . . . The greatest cost of production was that of labor and small planters had utilized their own labor and that of indentured servants. . . . In the long run they were more expensive than the other major type of laborer, the Negro slave. The slave cost so much initially that the small planters could only with great difficulty purchase one. . . .

"The wealthy planters began the widescale use of slavery as early as 1660. Gradually the importance of slavery increased in the Virginia economy. By 1700 slave labor had replaced convict or indentured servants as the major labor supply. . . . The demand for land by the large planters who used slave labor led to the increase in the size of the plantation in the Tidewater, and the increase of social and economic distinctions between the large land holder and the poor farmer. The poor whites fled Virginia by the thousands before the onslaught of the Negro slave."

³³Wertenbaker, Planters, 152-153, most strongly represents this argument. Using eighteenth-century tax lists and county records, Wertenbaker concludes that "it must not be imagined that slavery drove out or ruined the entire class of small farmers, leaving Virginia alone to the wealthy. In fact, most of those who were firmly established remained, finding their salvation in themselves purchasing slaves . . . with the influx of thousands of negroes, the more enterprising and industrious of the poor planters quite frequently made purchases. Although the initial outlay was greater, they could secure credit by pledging their farms and their crops, and in the end the investment usually paid handsome dividends and many who could not raise the money to buy a full grown negro, often found it possible to secure a child which in time would become a valuable asset. . . .

"In Lancaster even so early as 1716 we find that the bulk of the slaves were in the hands, not of wealthy proprietors, but of comparatively poor persons."

The African Company records do not answer these questions. In themselves, they tell little about Virginia society, and their documentation of some characteristics of the economy of that colony is limited to only a small minority of the slaves purchased in Virginia, even in this era. However, in identifying Virginia slave purchasers the Royal African Company records serve a unique and valuable function. The most popular method for identifying the owners of slaves in early eighteenth-century Virginia has been to evaluate the extant lists of tithables.³⁴ While useful as an apparently complete index for some counties, these lists only indirectly identify slaveholders. Wertenbaker, who uses the tithables lists to document the existence of a "class of little slave holders," is forced to rest his case on an assumption, albeit a strong one: "As there were but few servants in the colony at this time it may be taken for granted that the larger part of the tithables paid for by others were negro slaves."³⁵ His method is a reasonable one which has been invoked by others,³⁶ but regardless of how convincing, it does depend upon an inference. The value of the copies of the company's bills

³⁴The tithables lists provided the basis for taxation in Colonial Virginia, and included at this time "all Slaves both Men and Women, and all white Men above the Age 16 Years." Henry Hartwell, James Blair, and Edward Chilton, The Present State of Virginia and the College (1697; Hunter D. Farish, ed., Williamsburg, 1940), 53.

³⁵Wertenbaker, Planters, 153.

³⁶See, for example, Browns, Democracy or Aristocracy?, Chapter 3, "The Impact of Slavery on White Society," 63-79.

of exchange is that they specifically document purchases of slaves by certain Virginians. In addition, whereas the tithables lists are limited in this era to several counties, none with extant lists for years before 1716, the company records touch all the existing counties in the first years of the eighteenth century. The records have their weaknesses. There is no assurance that the men named on the bills did not re-sell the slaves, and for this reason they are referred to as purchasers and not owners. As noted above, the records do not in any sense comprise a full enough documentation of Virginia slave purchases to merit broad assumptions about the overall nature of the Virginia slave trade. But they do lead to several observations about the purchasers of company slaves in Virginia which add dimension to the understanding of Virginia as a market for slaves.

Perhaps most obvious is the notable absence of a dominant figure or figures from the list of purchasers. Joseph Belfield of Richmond County who bought 13, Richard Wise of King and Queen County with 11, and Captain William Fox of Lancaster with eight were the leading purchasers.³⁷

Secondly, instead of being dominated by a few, the bulk of the company's business can be attributed to the many purchasers who acquired slaves in small quantities. As indicated by Table 3 below, of the 207 purchasers recorded in the company's copies of bills of exchange for slaves sold in

³⁷See Appendix F, pp. 138-146.

Virginia, 89, almost half, purchased only one slave, and the average purchase for the duration of the period was only 2.1 slaves.

FIGURE 5: SLAVES PURCHASED IN VIRGINIA FROM THE ROYAL AFRICAN COMPANY, 1689-1713: RELATIVE SIZES OF TRANSACTIONS³⁸

total purchase	number of purchasers
only one slave	89
two slaves	38
three slaves	21
four slaves	15
five or more slaves	17

Third, there seems to have existed a limited correlation between the size of a man's landholdings and the number of slaves he purchased from the company. Most of those who made relatively large purchases, in excess of £90, owned over 500 acres of land according to the 1704 quit rent rolls.³⁹ But there were exceptions, including William Crymes of Gloucester County and William Baker, Ann King, Henry Nelson, and Richard Wise, all of King and Queen. The reverse, however,

³⁸Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilms of the Royal African Company records, bills of exchange, T 70, passim., P.R.O.

³⁹The quit rent rolls were lists of landowners and the amount of land they owned prepared by the sheriffs of the counties as a basis for the annual quit rent tax of one shilling per each 50 acres paid by colonial landowners to the King of England. The only Virginia rolls in existence are those of 1704, exclusive of the Northern Neck counties of Lancaster, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Richmond, and Stafford, the quit rents of which were paid to the proprietors, the Fairfax and Culpeper families. The Virginia quit rent rolls have been reproduced in various issues of the Virginia Magazine and are consolidated as an Appendix in Wertenbaker, Planters.

shows no consistency. Many of the better-known and more prosperous planters who held vast estates--Major George Braxton, Major Lewis Burwell, Councillor Benjamin Harrison, Colonel Richard Kemp, William Tayloe of "Mount Airy"--bought only one or two slaves. This is substantiated statistically by the fact that the forty largest landholders, those owning in excess of 1000 acres, averaged purchasing 2.1 slaves, the exact average of the entire group of 207 purchasers. Absent entirely from the list are many of the familiar names of the Virginia aristocracy--Carter, Byrd, Ludwell, Beverley, Fitzhugh, Wormeley, Lee--a reminder of the relative unimportance of the company trade, of the fact that Virginians were being supplied slaves in large numbers from other sources.⁴⁰

Statistics compiled by superimposing the Virginia quit rent rolls of 1704 on the company records of bills of exchange indicate that those who purchased slaves from the African Company during this period held larger than average estates. But it must be added that small landholdings are quite in evidence throughout the company's records.

⁴⁰Wertebaker, Planters, 152, for example, figures that Robert Carter owned 126 slaves in 1716, none of which are on record as having been bought from the African Company. William Byrd, who had during the seventeenth century obtained slaves through his London agents, Perry and Lane, began in 1697 to import them directly from Africa in his own vessels. Wright, ed., "William Byrd and the Slave Trade," Huntington Library Quarterly, VIII (1945), 379-387.

FIGURE 6: LANDHOLDINGS OF VIRGINIA PURCHASERS OF AFRICAN COMPANY SLAVES, 1704 (in acres)⁴¹

(1) AVERAGE LANDHOLDINGS

	King & Queen	Gloucester	Essex	all counties
all landholders	407.5	387.7	388.3	415.2
slave purchasers	1123.1	801.8	576.67	1449.7

(2) SIZE OF LANDHOLDINGS OF PURCHASERS

	number of slaveholders	total slaves purchased	average slaves purchased
1000 acres and over	40	84	2.10
750-999 acres	11	26	2.36
500-749 acres	16	40	2.50
250-499 acres	21	32	1.53
1-249 acres	29	46	1.59

Because of the appearance among the company's financial records of many small-scale purchases and of Virginians with modest-to-average landholdings, the weight of the findings of this study support the belief that many small farmers in Virginia were able to purchase slaves in the early eighteenth century.

Fourth, the African Company transactions in this era indicate a definite geographic concentration in the Middle Peninsula, particularly in the counties of King and Queen, Gloucester, and Essex. The Northern Neck counties were a distant second, while the company did very little business south of the James River at this time.⁴² This distribution can be partially attributed to the location of Gawin Corbin, the dominant figure in the company's Virginia transactions of this era.

⁴¹Derived from the records of Royal African Company, bills of exchange, T 70, P.R.O., and from 1704 quit rent rolls, Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vols. XXVIII-XXXVII (1920-1929), passim.

⁴²See map below, following page.

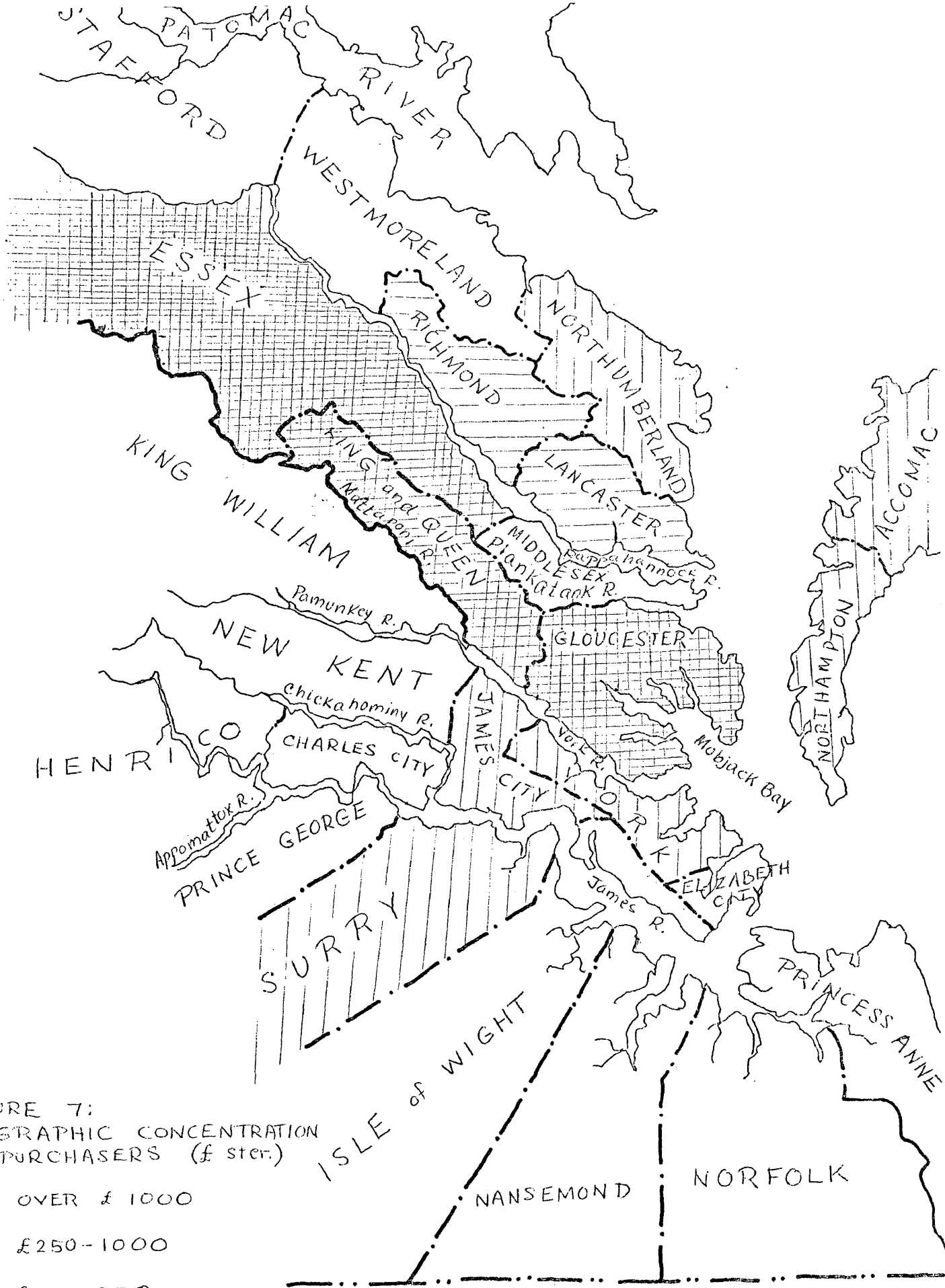
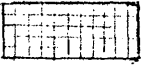
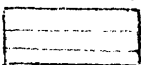

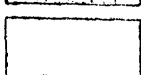


FIGURE 7:
GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION
OF PURCHASERS (£ ster.)

	OVER £ 1000
	£ 250-1000
	£ 100-250
	£ 0-100

Corbin, who lived in Middlesex and King and Queen Counties, served as the sole company agent in Virginia during much of the period, first locating his agency at the Rappahannock River, and after 1707 at the York River. Aside from the fact that Corbin's residences and agencies were located in the Middle Peninsula, there is no ready explanation for the concentration there of company business. This distribution does coincide neatly with the pattern which Robert E. and B. Katherine Brown found to have existed later in the eighteenth century, except that slavery had not by 1713 spread west to the Piedmont. Contrary to the standard belief that slaves were most heavily in evidence throughout the Tidewater area, the Browns show that "the greatest density of slaves existed in a strip of land which included both tidewater and piedmont counties, an area bounded roughly by the James and Rappahannock Rivers."⁴³ The Royal African Company appears to have contributed to this concentration of slaves in the Middle Peninsula.

C. English Financiers

The planters of the Middle Peninsula and other Virginia counties were able to accumulate slaves through credit arrangements made with English merchants. As indicated above, the credit system was integrated with the tobacco trade; to obtain a slave each planter normally signed a bill of exchange on a particular merchant with whom he had established credit, or who would accept the bill in anticipation of future tobacco

⁴³Browns, Democracy or Aristocracy?, 72.

shipments. Approximately 65 merchants and firms are on record as having supplied credit to Virginia purchasers of company slaves in this era. Of these, ten are credited with financing over £250 worth of bills, and one, Micajah Perry, stands alone as the dominant financier.⁴⁴

FIGURE 8: LEADING ENGLISH FINANCIERS OF THE AFRICAN COMPANY SLAVE TRADE TO VIRGINIA, 1689-1713⁴⁵

	amount
Micajah Perry & Co. (Perry, Lane & Co.)	£2176.05.06
Arthur Baily	549.11.01
Robert Bristow & Co.	493.19.00
Robt. Wise	426.05.00
Francis Willis & Co.	385.00.00
Richard Lee	355.16.00
John Goodin (Goodwin)	328.18.09
Francis Lee	285.15.06
Thomas Corbin	258.12.07
John Wright	254.18.08

Not only did he excel as a financier of the company's Virginia trade, but Perry exemplified the degree to which a tobacco merchant of his time could participate in Virginia affairs. While incorporated with his brother, Richard, and Thomas Lane as the London house of Perry, Lane, and Company, Micajah Perry served as London agent for the colony and as banker for the colony and the College of William and Mary as well as for many individual planters. In these positions, Perry was often called upon to express recommendations for mercantile laws and

⁴⁴For a more complete listing of the English financiers of the African Company trade to Virginia, 1689-1713, see Appendix G, 135-136.

⁴⁵Derived from the records of the Royal African Company, bills of exchange, T 70, P.R.O., passim.

as noted above, for colonial appointments; and at times he took the initiative in sponsoring legislation favorable to the tobacco trade.⁴⁶ In his contact with colonial planters, Perry accumulated extensive miscellaneous duties: he handled mail for colonists, bought and marketed their products, purchased and shipped goods for them, and administered their estates. There is some evidence that Arthur Baily and Thomas Corbin participated in a spectrum of activities wider than those of the slave trade, and it can be assumed that others among the financiers of the company's trade followed Perry's model, but incompletely and on a much smaller scale.

D. Prices of Slaves

A precise account of the price levels at which British merchants financed and planters bought company slaves would add depth to this sketch of Virginia as a slave market. Copies of the bills of exchange include the total amount paid, but

⁴⁶ Among his efforts, Perry attempted to open new markets for tobacco, including a contract with the Czar of Russia providing that the latter destroy all Circassian tobacco; he testified before the Board of Trade and the House of Lords in an effort to establish a July tobacco convoy; he petitioned the Board of Trade to send a man-of-war to clear pirates from the Virginia coast, and he reported to the Board on potential sites for Virginia ports, shipments of Virginia tar and pitch, and monetary legislation desirable for the colonies. A standard channel through which Virginians expressed to the Board of Trade their desire for public office in the colony, Perry is credited with securing for William Byrd a seat on the Virginia Council and making Philip Ludwell auditor of the colony. Although his interests normally coincided with those of the tobacco planters, Perry on occasion joined with fellow merchants in opposing Virginia planters, as was the case when the former protested against a Virginia law regulating the size of tobacco hogsheads. For a discussion of Perry's activities, see Donnan, "Eighteenth-Century English Merchants, Micajah Perry," Journal of Economic and Business History, IV (1931-32), 70-98.

unfortunately they do not specify the number of slaves which the total represents. As a result, average prices cannot be calculated from the internal evidence within the bills of exchange. However, other sources, both primary and secondary, exist for constructing a tentative appraisal of slaves sold in Virginia at this time, including several letters contained within the company's correspondence.⁴⁷ If the bills are interpreted in conjunction with existing knowledge, it is possible to calculate an annual average price for some years of the company's trade.

⁴⁷Sources for estimating prices of slaves in Virginia at this time are numerous. The relevant company letters are R.A.C. to Paul Sorel, 16 Dec. 1701, T 70/62, 106-109, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Messrs. Chaplin and others, Jamaica, 7 Dec. 1704, T 70/58, 154; identical letters follow to Barbados, Antigua, Montserrat, and Nevis. Other primary sources include Byrd, Secret Diary, 1 and 2 June 1710, p. 186; 2 Feb. 1711, p. 295; "Instructions for John Withers," Fitzhugh, Chesapeake World, 119; Fitzhugh to Oliver Luke, 15 Aug. 1690, ibid., 279; Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 57 n.; Lt. Gov. Nicholson to Board of Trade, 1 Aug. 1700, ibid., 67; Gov. Ed. Nott to Board of Trade, 21 Dec. 1705, ibid., 88; testimony of Virginia and Maryland merchants before Board of Trade, 1707, ibid.; Report of Board of Trade, 19 Dec. 1709, ibid., II, 105; ibid., 77; Report of Board of Trade to House of Commons, 19 Dec. 1709, Donnan, ed., Documents, II, 106. Sir Charles Turner from Commissioners of Trade. . . , 19 Dec. 1710, (H.C.), Stock, ed., Proceedings, III, 224 n.; Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, 1669-74, No. 985.

Among the estimates in secondary sources are Ballagh, History of Slavery in Virginia, 13, citing Cal. S. P. Col., 444, 452; Bruce, Economic History, II, 89; Gray, History of Agriculture, 368; Davies, Royal African Company, 143, citing Cal. S. P. Col., 1708-9, 215; Wertenbaker, Planters, 131; Morris Talpalar, The Sociology of Colonial Virginia, (New York, 1968), 305.

FIGURE 9: AVERAGE PRICES OF COMPANY SLAVES SOLD⁴⁸
IN VIRGINIA, 1689-1713 (pounds ster.)

year	total price	total slaves	average price
1689	61	3	20.06.08
1690	100	5	20.00.00

1703	2124	71	29.18.11
1704	1876	60	31.06.04
1705	3366	122	27.12.07
1706	473	17	27.16.10
1707	64	3	21.06.04
1708	1692	63	26.16.00
1709	917	35	26.04.02
1710	463	18	25.14.08
1711	47	2	23.10.06

Even if annual average prices could be established with confidence in their validity and accuracy, their value would be minimized by the nature of the auction method of sale used by the African Company in Virginia. In this system, the planters assessed the worth of individual slaves and paid accordingly; thus the price of a healthy, skilled adult would be sufficiently higher than that of an unhealthy or unskilled youth.⁴⁹ However, if it can be assumed that there were no drastic deviations in the annual percentage of healthy adult male slaves delivered by the company to Virginia over the period 1689-1713, several observations can be made about relative trends in prices.

⁴⁸These average prices were derived from the records of the Royal African Company, bills of exchange, T 70, P.R.O., passim. They include only bills accounted for individually, naming purchaser, date, and amount of purchase. The totals differ from Figure 1, p. 27, above, which includes bills accounted for en masse, disregarding individual names and amounts.

⁴⁹See Davies, Royal African Company, 312, 313; see also Parke Rouse, Jr., Planters and Pioneers: Life in Colonial Virginia (New York, 1968), 131.

1. Virginia prices appear to have been relatively stable. The value of a company slave in Virginia remained between £20 and £30 throughout the period, except for a rise to slightly over £31 in 1704, after which the average price declined very gradually. This trend agrees with Elizabeth Donnan's evaluations, both in price range and in its characteristic stability.⁵⁰

2. The increase in supply of slaves during the period had no obvious direct influence on their prices. It has been stated that prices of slaves rose in Virginia as their importance in the economy increased--despite an accompanying increase in supply.⁵¹ Although it is apparent that prices were generally higher in the first decade of the eighteenth century than they had been in 1689, this study can make no evaluation of supply-demand relationships because of the many variables which influenced market conditions in the few years when average prices are available.

3. There ensued throughout the period a continuous dispute between planters and company officials about the prices of slaves. Planters consistently thought that the

⁵⁰ Donnan, Documents, IV, 6, citing Virginia Historical Society Collections, IV, 722.

⁵¹ Davies, Royal African Company, 143; Herbert S. Klein, Slavery in the Americas (Chicago, 1967), 176; Bruce, History of Agriculture, II, 89.

company's prices were too high;⁵² the African Company office repeatedly expressed the feeling that the prices its slaves brought in Virginia were inadequate.⁵³

4. In the midst of the long legal struggle to regain its monopoly, the company expressed several opinions about price fluctuations. Officials argued simultaneously before Parliament and the Board of Trade that prices in the colonies increased after 1697 as a result of the open trade;⁵⁴ and they predicted that a fall in the prices of slaves purchased in Africa would reduce their sale price in Virginia.⁵⁵ There is no objective evidence in the records to support either claim, and because both were made in the context of a partisan campaign, they are not to be taken at face value.

Much of the information about Virginia as a market for African Company slaves is derived from extant copies of the company's bills of exchange. The bills in some cases supply information sufficient to document the course of the

⁵²Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, Black Cargoes, A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518-1865 (New York, 1962), 29.

⁵³R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, T 70/58, 211, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Feb. 1705/6, ibid., 217.

⁵⁴Scott, Constitution and Finance, II, 24, citing Journals of House of Commons, XVI, 64.

⁵⁵R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 April 1708, T 70/58, 332-334, P.R.O.

journey, the buyers, the creditors, and the size of their transactions. Valuable as is their contribution, the bills cast an uncertain image, one which reflects only in vaguest outline some of the fundamentals of the Virginia market. For a more complete understanding of the African Company trade to Virginia, one must consider the company operations and the Virginia market in the light of the prevailing commercial conditions of this quarter century. In this era, the slave trade to Virginia was nourished and impoverished by powerful forces--the fluctuations of the tobacco economy and the frequent disruptions of European warfare.

CHAPTER IV

AFRICAN COMPANY OPERATIONS IN VIRGINIA

While the success of the African Company in selling slaves to Virginians depended to a degree on the effectiveness of the company agents, this success was largely a function of the fluctuations of the Virginia market and of the company's ability to meet the changing demand for slaves in Virginia. The Virginia market was not an independent entity; the rise and fall of tobacco prices and the resultant changes in the fortunes of Virginia planters were inseparable from conditions of world trade. The primary factor influencing trans-Atlantic commerce in the period 1689-1713 was the prolonged state of armed conflict among the European powers. During all but five of those twenty-five years, British trade to Virginia was seriously impeded by all the dangers and inconveniences brought to bear on her merchant marine by naval warfare--harassment and capture by French men-of-war and pirates, the necessity of armed convoys, embargoes, and other emergency measures imposed by the British Navy, including impressment of merchant sailors. The impediments of warfare and the related fortunes of the economy are documented in varying degree throughout the quarter century by the correspondence of the Royal African Company.

A. Obstructions of Trade by Naval Warfare

Trans-Atlantic commerce suffered many forms of disorientation and abuse during the wars of King William and Queen Anne, not the least of which resulted from precautions taken to prevent actual losses of men and goods. The company's home office feared the seizure of its ships, and in an effort to continue its trade in the face of war and piracy it included routine precautionary measures in the orders to its captains. The format which recurred most often in the company's orders directed the captain "to be very circumspect, and not to leave [his] Ship, nor speak with any other, without absolute necessity, but always keep a good look and guard, to prevent surprize."¹ In addition, the captain was warned to avoid potential enemies, including the Portuguese, "that they may not under any pretense by stopping bring [him] under necessity of Complying to any unreasonable demands, or have Power to stop [his] shipp, ruin [his] voyage, as they have already done to some."² These vague precautions were probably included in the

¹R.A.C. orders to captains, T 70/64, 2, P.R.O. For similar instructions, see Appendix C, pp. 120-122. See also R.A.C. to Paul Sorel, 16 Dec. 1701, T 70/62, 106-109, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. Thomas Arnall, 21 July 1702, ibid., 121-126; R.A.C. to Capt. Joseph Bemister, 3 Nov. 1702, ibid., 162-166; R.A.C. to Capt. John Tozer, 11 Jan. 1703, ibid., 246-251.

²R.A.C. to Capt. Thomas Mackley, 28 Jan. 1706/7, T 70/63, 111-113, P.R.O.

company's orders to all its captains during this period, even in the years of peace.

The company did resort to more specific measures, however, in attempts to avoid and compensate for their losses at the hands of pirates. One preventive measure, prescribed to Captain Marmaduke Goodhand of the Speedwell in 1687, was to record in his journal the identity of the pirate ship and its master, owners, origin, destination, and any other information which might assist the company and, presumably, the Royal Navy, in apprehending the pirates. Other measures varied greatly in degree of aggressiveness, the boldest in 1689 when Captain Thomas Hone of the Benjamin was ordered to take advantage of his commission for the "taking of Ships . . . belonging to the French king and his subjects."³ This commission for seizure of the enemy appears to have developed from a peacetime commission to arrest interlopers⁴ and discriminated among nations during the wars, for instance exempting the ships of the Dutch Guinea Company from seizure in 1704.⁵ Seventeenth-century merchant ships were much less defenseless than their

³R.A.C. to Hone, 19 Nov. 1689, T 70/61, f. 83 ro., P.R.O.

⁴R.A.C. to Captain Marmaduke Goodhand, 12 Jan. 1685, T 70/61, ff. 3vo.-4ro., P.R.O.

⁵R.A.C. to Capt. Edward Tomlin, 16 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 44-46, P.R.O.

modern-day counterparts;⁶ in time of war, all the Royal African Company ships were armed and instructed to keep their gunpowder dry,⁷ a "ship of force" mounting 24 to 36 guns, and the smaller vessels from six to ten.⁸ Merchant ships also attempted to enlarge their crews during time of war, though the African slavers normally maintained large crews for "holding down hundreds of frightened and sometimes desperate slaves."⁹ Even the large, well-manned, and heavily-armed slave ships were not always safe, as was demonstrated by the French capture of two of the four "ships of force" dispatched by the company in 1694.¹⁰

By 1703, in the early stages of Queen Anne's War, the Company had become more prudent, attempting to avoid conflict in the treacherous Caribbean area. In cases when either the company or the captain deemed a voyage to Virginia potentially "prejudicial and hazardous" to both owners and freighters, the captain was provided the

⁶See Donnan, ed., Documents, II, 606.

⁷R.A.C. to Arnall, 21 July 1702, T 70/62, 121-126, P.R.O. See also Appendix B, p. 118.

⁸Davies, Royal African Company, 192.

⁹Ibid., 193.

¹⁰Davies, Royal African Company, 192, also notes from T 70/61, T 70/62, and T 70/63, passim., P.R.O., that 88 of the 184 company ships clearing English customs, 1691-1713, were in the 50-150 ton range. Nine were under 50 tons and twenty were over 350 tons.

alternative of selling his slaves at one of the company's island agencies, most likely Nevis, Barbados, or Jamaica,¹¹ thus enabling him to return to England without venturing across the Caribbean to Chesapeake Bay. The privateers of the Atlantic ports of Europe, particularly the French adventurers of the Gulf of St. Malo, easily intercepted the company ships as they sailed out of the English Channel and turned southward.¹² The captain's first obligation when under attack was to attempt to escape; but if escape was impossible, he was instructed "to throw overboard the Letters and packetts on board so that the Enemy may not by them come to any knowledge of your Company's castle factories or affairs."¹³ If any company ship was seized by pirates or any enemy man-of-war during the outward-bound voyage, the captain, at last resort, was authorized to "Redeeme your ship and Cargoe on the best tearmes you possibly can, not exceeding fifteen hundred pounds sterling." He could allow one officer to return to France with the French navy, if necessary, and the company advised that they

¹¹R.A.C. to John Addis, 26 Oct. 1703, T 70/43, 183, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. John Mitchell, 16 March 1720/21, T 70/64, 47-50, P.R.O.

¹²Davies, Royal African Company, 205.

¹³R.A.C. to Tozer, 11 Jan. 1703, T 70/62, 246-251, P.R.O. The "castle factories" referred to above were the company's forts scattered along the Guinea coast of Africa, for example, Cape Coast Castle.

would reimburse the captain for the ransom when he returned.¹⁴

A survey of company records and other sources indicates that the fears of seizure were well-founded. One contemporary author estimates that French privateers took approximately one-fourth of all company ships dispatched from England during the years of war, accounting for total losses in company goods and ships approaching £300,000,¹⁵ while another sets the company's total losses during King William's War at £400,000.¹⁶ Though no composite of seizures exists, at least seventeen ships carrying Royal African Company cargoes to Virginia were reported seized between the years 1694 and 1708, over four of which were years of peace. The Averilla and the Three Brothers, each 320 tons, and three smaller ships were taken by the French in 1694, as were eight of the smaller variety in 1703.¹⁷ Much less certain were the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the seventy-ton Gambia Galley, carrying in excess of one hundred company slaves from Sierra Leone, in the waters between Capt St. Antoine and Virginia in

¹⁴R.A.C. to Capt. Thomas Arnall, 2 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 41, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. Edward Tomlin, 9 April 1706, ibid., 47.

¹⁵Davies, Royal African Company, 205.

¹⁶Scott, Constitution and Finance, II, 21-22.

¹⁷Davies, Royal African Company, 192.

1702.¹⁸ The company feared the possibility that the Gambia had been stolen by her captain, just as it feared similar treachery in the winter of 1705/6 by the Captain of the Phoenix whom Gawin Corbin had highly recommended. Fortunately for Corbin, who appeared already to have strained his relationship with the company's London office, the company discovered by the following February that the loss of the Phoenix was the result of French seizure.¹⁹ The French were also blamed for the 1707 loss of the Dearing and John galleys²⁰ and the Chester man-of-war, the latter of interest to the company because of the 51 bills of exchange which were on board when she disappeared.²¹ The only instance recorded in company annals of the loss of a Virginia-bound ship having been expressly attributed to privateers is the 1708 seizure of H. M. S. Dunbarton,²² but it appears likely that pirates and privateers were responsible for many more losses.

¹⁸R.A.C. to Benjamin Alford, 10 March 1701/2, T 70/58, 29-31, P.R.O.

¹⁹R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, T 70/58, 211, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Feb. 1705/6, ibid., 217.

²⁰Donnan, ed., Documents, II, 78.

²¹R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 May 1707, T 70/58, 289, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 18 Nov. 1707, ibid., 310-311; R.A.C. to Corbin, 15 Dec. 1707, ibid., 311.

²²R.A.C. to Capt. William Cook [sic], 30 April, 4 and 21 May 1708, T 70/9, P.R.O.

Harassment, the threat of capture, and actual material losses inflicted by the enemy prompted the company's attempts to utilize the protection which the government provided the wartime tobacco trade. The convoy system was made mandatory in the English Chesapeake trade according to a 1690 decree from the Parliament,²³ though permits for unaccompanied voyages were granted and resulted in the loss of many vessels at sea during this era.²⁴ By the turn of the century, the convoy system was widely accepted as "the only possible expedient in time of war for securing the Atlantic shipping lanes of English commerce."²⁵ The African Company records abound with references to convoys used in transporting company slaves to Virginia;²⁶ but because the convoys were tailored to the tobacco trade, the company found difficulty in adapting their slave-trading

²³Cal. S. P. Col., 1689-92, 244.

²⁴Middleton, "The Chesapeake Convoy System, 1662-1763," Wm. and Mary Qtly., 3d Ser., II (1946), 187.

²⁵Ibid., 186.

²⁶See R.A.C. to Capt. Arnall, 16 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 42, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Gawin Corbin, 18 Oct. 1705, T 70/58, 201-202; R.A.C. to Capt. Cooke, 9 April 1706, T 70/63, 80-83, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 March 1707, T 70/58, 277-279, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to James and John Arnold, 28 Aug. 1707, T 70/44, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. Thomas Mackley, 28 Jan. 1706/7, T 70/63, 111-113, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. John Yeamens, 2 Dec. 1707, T 70/44, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Henry Feilding [sic], 9 March 1703, T 70/58, 124. See also T 70/43, T 70/62, passim.

voyages to the protection provided by the Royal Navy. The two followed different routes, the tobacco fleets generally having no reason to stray south of the Madeira Islands, the slavers pushing almost due south to the Guinea coast for their human cargo. On only one occasion is there evidence in the company's Virginia records of a convoy from England to Guinea, that being in 1704 when H.M.S. Oxford and H.M.S. Hastings were known to be available to the slaving voyage of the Angola frigate.²⁷ At best, the captain of the slaver could hope to follow the first available convoy out of the English Channel and, as he was advised, "keep company with the said Convoy as far as you can without prejudice to your voyage."²⁸ On occasion, the captain could follow a tobacco convoy as far as the Madeiras, there perhaps purchasing some wine for use as a "dash," or bribe, in the African trade,²⁹ and putting his ship "in a defensive posture"³⁰ for the voyage through the Cape Verde Islands to the company factories in Africa.

The company slavers normally required five to seven weeks to sail from England to the Guinea Coast, and they

²⁷R.A.C. to Arnall, 16 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 42, P.R.O.

²⁸R.A.C. to Capt. Joseph Bemister, 3 Nov. 1702, T 70/62, 162, P.R.O.

²⁹R.A.C. to Arnall, 16 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 42, P.R.O.; see also T 70/1225, 7.

³⁰R.A.C. to Capt. John Tozer, 11 Jan. 1703, T 70/62, 246; R.A.C. to Capt. Thomas Mackley, 28 Jan. 1706/7, T 70/63, 111, P.R.O.

allowed from one to three months to collect their cargo of slaves.³¹ The next leg of the triangular voyage was virtually unprotected, because there was less likelihood of their locating a British convoy westward across the Atlantic than of their being discovered by pirates or a hostile privateer or man-of-war. A stop in the West Indies often proved commercially advantageous to the Virginia-bound slaver and provided a safety-valve for the slave cargo if the captain thought he could get better prices in the islands than in Virginia, or if he could not arrive in Virginia before the tobacco had been sold. But, because the British chose not to protect their Caribbean trade with the American mainland at this time,³² the captain found little

³¹See R.A.C. to Capt. Arnall, 16 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 42, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Gawin Corbin, 18 Oct. 1705, T 70/58, 201-202; R.A.C. to Capt. Cooke, 9 April 1706, T 70/63, 80-83, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 March 1707, T 70/58, 277-279, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to James and John Arnold, 28 Aug. 1707, T 70/44, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. Thomas Mackley, 28 Jan. 1706/7, T 70/63, 111-113, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. John Yeamens, 2 Dec. 1707, T 70/44, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Henry Feilding [sic], 9 March 1703, T 70/58, 124. See also T 70/43, T 70/62, passim.

³²Middleton, "Chesapeake Convoy System," 195-197, reminds his readers that the convoy system was an imperialistic venture, "established and maintained primarily for the protection of the commerce of the mother country. . . . Insofar as colonial vessels used . . . [the sea lanes from England] . . . they were afforded the same protection enjoyed by British vessels." After heavy losses of unprotected ships, the company proposed in 1704 two West Indian convoys per year. See also Davies, Royal African Company, 210.

hope of convoy for the final stint to Virginia. In some cases of imminent danger, the company ordered the captain to sell his slaves in the West Indies, load with sugar, and return to England, rather than risk the Caribbean journey, unless a convoy presented itself.³³

Once the company slaver had reached Virginia safely, the captain could hope to attach his ship to the return voyage of the huge Chesapeake tobacco convoy. Unfortunately for the Royal African Company, it encountered the same problem in attempting to coordinate its efforts with the convoy as did the Virginia planters--unreliability. No master plan governed the tobacco convoy to the Chesapeake colonies, with the result that there was no fixed date or fixed number of convoys in a given year. The planters were forced either to patronize the season's first convoy, at exorbitant freight rates and low tobacco prices, or risk the loss of their crop by gambling upon the arrival of a second convoy.³⁴ Likewise, the captains of the company ships were forced to play the same odds, and their return voyages were often delayed by waiting for a convoy during time of war.³⁵

³³R.A.C. to Addis, 26 Oct. 1703, T 70/43, 183, P.R.O.

³⁴Middleton, "Chesapeake Convoy System," 186-195; Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 295.

³⁵R.A.C. to Capt. Wm. Cook [sic], 22 Sept. 1707, T 70/9, P.R.O.; Davies, Royal African Company, 207-208.

Waiting on convoys was only one of several possible delays which faced the company cargoes. The British government periodically ordered embargoes against merchant shipping, the most notable during this era being the general embargoes of 1689 and 1702, at the outbreak, respectively, of King William's and Queen Anne's wars.³⁶ It is impossible to determine the extent to which the embargoes hindered the delivery of company slaves to Virginia, but records show that at least three ships were considerably delayed by a 1707 embargo.³⁷ Even during the general embargoes, provisions were made to allow selected vessels to break the ban by supplying each with a letter of marque, referred to by the captains of that era as "the Queens lettre."³⁸ Among Virginia-bound company cargoes which apparently had been granted letters of marque were the Katherine³⁹ and the Thomas and John, allowed to pass in early 1702,⁴⁰ the Seaford, in 1705,⁴¹ and the Bridgewater on its voyage of 1707.⁴²

³⁶Ibid., 209.

³⁷Donnan, ed., Documents, II, 78.

³⁸R.A.C. to Capt. Cook [sic], 22 Sept. 1707, T 70/9, P.R.O.

³⁹Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 65, citing Acts of the Privy Council, II, 220-221.

⁴⁰Ibid., II, 4, n. 2.

⁴¹R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 March 1707, T 70/58, 277-279, P.R.O.

⁴²R.A.C. to Cook [sic], 22 Sept. 1707, T 70/9, P.R.O.

However, even the "Queen's lettre" did not provide absolute assurance of breaking the embargo as is demonstrated by a 1705 petition on behalf of the owners of the Dolphin and the Mermaid, both of which had delivered slaves to Virginia. The owners complained that the ships had been detained in colonial ports despite the letters of marque which they carried.⁴³

Other wartime restrictions which in turn dealt blows to the company's Virginia trade were the various emergency impositions of the Royal Navy. In order to assure that it had kept an adequate pool of trained manpower for the naval campaigns against the French, the British government placed a limit on the maximum size and composition of the merchant marine.⁴⁴ Crew size was particularly critical to the African slavers which required relatively more sailors than the vessels of the Mediterranean or Baltic trade.⁴⁵ Once the company was able to recruit a crew, it was anxious to maintain it intact and to secure it from impressment. In 1707, for example, the John and Thomas, Alexander, and Mary, all large ships sent by the company to Virginia via the Guinea slaving factories, lost their crews to the Royal Navy which planned to use them for an invasion of

⁴³Petition of Sir Richard Levett and William Lone to the Queen, 18 Feb. 1705, Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 84.

⁴⁴Davies, Royal African Company, 209.

⁴⁵Ibid., 193; see also above, p. 72.

Scotland.⁴⁶ Any time a British man-of-war anchored at a colonial port, including Virginia, its captain had the right to apply to the colonial governor for the authority to impress additions to his crew.⁴⁷ William Byrd II noted in his diary in 1709 that his sea sloop had lost several men to the Navy under similar circumstances.⁴⁸ In addition to these mandatory losses of merchant sailors, the company incurred numerous other losses of personnel when its crew members deserted. Fear of impressment was so great among the mariners that they frequently deserted as soon as their ships made port, with the result that government action in this way, though indirect, further weakened the company's manpower.

This manpower drain from the merchant marine to the Royal Navy proved debilitating in mid-voyage to some of the company's efforts to transport slaves to Virginia. In 1695, for example, London merchant Arthur Baily, who frequently traded with the company, complained that the British Navy

⁴⁶Board of Trade Report on the Trade to Africa, 1709, "Answer of the Separate Traders to Severall Queries, 31 Dec. 1708," Donnan, ed., Documents, II, 78.

⁴⁷Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 275-281, states that "the mariner was at all times subject to impressment into service aboard vessels of the Royal Navy."

⁴⁸"The sea sloop is safe arrived, . . . Two of her men were pressed by the man-of-war, notwithstanding the proclamation." June 29, 1709, Byrd, Secret Diary . . . 1709-1712, 54.

had at Barbados "impressed so many of his men as to make it unsafe to proceed to Virginia" with his cargo of Guinea slaves. Baily's ship was so handicapped as a result of his loss of sailors that he had to recruit men in the islands before he sailed for London. His ship, undermanned by an inexperienced crew, was seized shortly thereafter by two French privateers at a loss to the owners of over 25,000 pounds sterling.⁴⁹ Losses because of shipwrecks were similarly often the results of wartime restrictions on the merchant marine, which was forced "to carry a high proportion of unskilled landsmen"; this was particularly dangerous when delays caused by waiting on the tobacco cargo frequently forced the company slavers to navigate the Atlantic to England in bad weather.⁵⁰

B. The Trade, 1689-1697

The two decades following the Restoration of the Stuart dynasty brought such little demand for slaves in Virginia that the Royal Adventurers and their joint-stock successors, the Royal African Company, hardly considered the Chesapeake area a market for slaves. Virginia was mired in one of its long and frequent depressions, which saw tobacco prices drop to a low of one-quarter pence per pound,

⁴⁹Stock, Proceedings, II, 136 n., citing MSS, House of Lords, XV, 98.

⁵⁰Davies, Royal African Company, 207-208.

the result of overproduction and mercantile legislation strictly enforced by the mother country. The domestic disturbances which began in 1676 with Nathaniel Bacon's rebellion, itself the partial result of these economic strains, practically halted what remained of the Virginia trade.⁵¹ Profits were so scarce that, even if the poorer planters bought slaves, as Wertenbaker argues, neither they nor many other Virginians could have afforded to invest in slave labor during this depression. Despite England's increasing domination of the trade which had previously belonged to the Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish, the slave population of England's Virginia colony increased slowly from approximately two thousand in 1671 to three thousand during the 1680's.⁵² In 1674, the company managed to import 650 Africans to Virginia, and although their operations continued on a minor scale, their 1676 scheme of trade included Virginia as one of four potential New World markets.⁵³

By 1680, the return of internal stability and the rise of tobacco prices to the pre-depression level of

⁵¹Bruce, Economic History, II, 70, 73-76.

⁵²The 1671 figure is quoted by Hening, ed., Statutes, II, 514, from a report of Governor Berkeley; the latter is taken from an estimate by Governor Culpeper in Greene and Harrington, American Population, 137.

⁵³Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 5.

two pence per pound accompanied the recovery of the tobacco trade; and the supply, demand, and prices of slaves began to increase in Virginia as planters' profits and the flow of trade made the importation of slave labor again commercially feasible. But the company's response was feeble. The three ships they dispatched, 1684-1686, the Sarah, Two Friends, and Speedwell, were hardly adequate to satisfy even the relatively small demand of the Virginia planters.⁵⁴ So consistently did the African Company overlook the demand for slaves in Virginia that the separate traders broke their monopoly and delivered slaves in greater numbers than the company; the combined sources brought to Virginia an annual average of between one and two hundred slaves during these years.⁵⁵

The major reason why the Royal African Company appeared to ignore the potential market in Virginia during the 1680's was the success of the British slave trade to the West Indies. Though demand for slaves in Virginia generally increased over the course of the last quarter of the seventeenth century, it remained inferior to the demand in the sugar-producing islands to the south. Neither the

⁵⁴R.A.C. to Captain Marmaduke Goodhand, 12 Jan. 1685, T 70/61, ff. 3 vo.-4 ro., P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Goodhand, 23 Dec. 1686, ibid., f. 30 ro. and vo.; Lists of Ships, T 70/61, ff. 168 vo.-169 ro., 170 vo., P.R.O.; see also Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 135.

⁵⁵Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 56 nn. 1 and 2.

separate traders nor the African Company could afford to transport slaves to Virginia before 1680, when prices in the West Indies ran much higher, and when West Indian planters were complaining of the scarcity of slaves while Virginians appeared largely indifferent.⁵⁶ The West Indian sugar trade thrived during the Virginia tobacco depression, and even after the recovery of tobacco prices in 1680, the Virginia planters were unable to compete as potential buyers with their rivals in the islands.

In 1689, when King William joined the foes of Louis XIV in the War of the League of Augsburg, the tone was set for a century of Anglo-French warfare.⁵⁷ One result of this conflict was the retardation of transportation and business activity which hampered the slave trade to Virginia for the two succeeding decades. Convoys, embargoes, and impressment became a way of life for the company's London office as well as for its seamen. Perhaps just as important in determining the company's success in trading slaves to

⁵⁶Ibid., 56, n. 3, citing also Beer, Old Colonial System, I, 367-368.

⁵⁷Charles M. Andrews, "Anglo-French Commercial Rivalry, 1700-1750: The Western Phase, I," American Historical Review, XX (April, 1915), 546, states: "At the close of the seventeenth century France and England, the greatest states of the European world, after persistent efforts for forty years, had deprived the Dutch of their maritime and commercial supremacy. They now stood face to face, two powers actuated by like commercial and colonizing aims." See also Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, 40.

Virginia were the economic influences which the Atlantic warfare of the 1690s exerted on the Virginia economy. At any given time, at least one of the European markets was closed to Virginia tobacco; soaring freight and insurance rates squeezed tobacco profits to the levels of depression; the depression produced a spiral effect by bankrupting some tobacco merchants and by tightening the credit available to Virginia planters; planters in a desperate struggle to regain prosperity increased tobacco production and attempted to diversify their economic livelihood by manufacturing.

Despite a recovery from the conditions of the tobacco depression of the 1660s and 1670s, the Virginia tobacco trade was still depressed when the war of the League of Augsburg broke out in 1689.⁵⁸ This war, known in the Americas as King William's War, only aggravated the depression and left the Virginia market even less attractive to the African Company. Trans-Atlantic commercial ships became a rare sight in Virginia, and freight rates were by 1691 as high as 15 pounds sterling, almost three times the normal rate.⁵⁹ During several of these years, the Virginia tobacco fleet failed to arrive in sufficient strength to transport the crop, so apprehensive were shippers and merchants of

⁵⁸Hemphill, *Virginia and the English Commercial System*, 7.

⁵⁹Bassett, "Relation Between the Virginia Planter and the London Merchant," 560-567; Middleton, "Chesapeake Convoy System," 188.

capture and of the credit potential of Virginians.⁶⁰

Several documents partially explain the quality of Virginia as a slave market during King William's War. A 1692 petition complained of an impending labor shortage brought on by a combination of factors--the expiration of the indentures of a large number of white servants in Virginia and the failure of the company to import slaves since the outbreak of the war.⁶¹ If a labor shortage truly existed and if Virginians possessed the means and the desire to correct this shortage, then the company was largely unaware of it. Although they dispatched large numbers of slavers to Africa and the West Indies during King William's War, only the Jeffrey, in 1693, is in their records as having reached Virginia with a cargo of slaves.⁶² Two years later the London office explained trade conditions to William Sherwood, who had replaced Christopher Robinson as Virginia agent in January 1695. "At present we have no concerns in Your Parts," they stated, "but upon the return of Peaceable times tis probable we may." Obviously the company at least recognized Virginia as a potential market, as they had in their 1676 scheme: "If anything should

⁶⁰Hemphill, *Virginia and the English Commercial System*, 7.

⁶¹"Orders of the Privy Council, 3 Nov. 1692," Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 65.

⁶²*Ships in Service of the Royal African Company of England*, T 70/61, ff. 165 vo.-166 ro., P.R.O.

occur in respect to the demand of Negroes or any thing else materiall we hope you'll comunicate it to us."⁶³

C. The Trade, 1698-1701

On January 9, 1698, approximately three months after the event, "the welcome news reached Governor Andros that the long war against France had ended with the Treaty of Ryswick and that ships bound for England need no longer sail in convoys from Hampton Roads."⁶⁴ The end of hostilities stimulated the growth of the European economy, enabling England greatly to improve its commercial status among the imperial powers by expanding its overseas trade. In classic mercantilistic fashion, Virginia was both benefactor and beneficiary of this postwar economic surge; the expansion of world markets and the newly found freedom of the Atlantic shipping lanes reinvigorated the tobacco trade by increasing demand and prices and lowering the costs of transportation and insurance. Virginia planters once again began to taste prosperity. Profits appeared to be limited only by volume of production; and as a result a great new thrust for land and labor developed in Virginia in the closing years of the seventeenth century.⁶⁵

⁶³R.A.C. to William Sherwood, 14 Jan. 1695, T 70/57, ff. 120 vo.-121 ro.

⁶⁴Morton, Colonial Virginia, I, 352, citing Cal. St. P. Col., 1697-1698, 90, 132.

⁶⁵Hemphill, Virginia and the English Commercial System, 5-18; Wertenbaker, Planters, 115-133.

English commercial ships had begun to appear in Chesapeake Bay with more frequency in late 1697, delivering English manufactures in exchange for relatively scarce hogsheads of tobacco and bills of exchange which were granted more freely than they had been at any time since the Restoration. The following year, 1698, was an exceptionally good year for tobacco;⁶⁶ and because of the high prices and the necessity for laborers to harvest the plentiful crop, the suppliers began to deliver Africans to Virginia on an entirely larger scale, so that the slave population of Virginia doubled in the next decade.⁶⁷

Most of the responsibility for doubling the slave population of Virginia belongs to individuals not affiliated with the Royal African Company. These separate traders supplied almost 90 per cent of Virginia's slaves in the decade following the compromise act of 1698.⁶⁸ In contrast to its past performance, the African Company became aware of the Virginia market during this decade and began an attempt to reap the benefits of the Virginia planters'

⁶⁶Ibid., 120.

⁶⁷Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 134 ff.

⁶⁸For totals of slaves delivered to Virginia in this period, see "Report of the Board of Trade to the House of Commons, 19 Dec. 1709," Donnan, ed., Documents, II, 106; see also "Negroes Imported Into Virginia, 1699-1708," ibid., IV, 172-173. The law, 9 & 10 Wm. c. 26, is printed in ibid., I, 421-429.

demands for slaves. This awareness resulted in part from the outcry of Virginians who had aired their grievances during the Parliamentary debates of the 1690s. Virginia planters and merchants had joined the opponents of the monopoly in accusing the Royal African Company of ineptitude; and regardless of the degree of accuracy of their petitions, charging that the monopoly had failed almost completely to supply the colony, the Virginians succeeded in confronting the company's directors with the discontent which company operations had provoked in the colony.⁶⁹

The Treaty of Ryswick brought the conditions of peace which the London office had told agent William Sherwood they were anticipating; now the company understood that it had a genuine opportunity to improve its Virginia trade.

The rise of Virginia as a market for slaves during the peaceful interval of 1697-1702 is documented by scattered records. The headrights for the years 1699 and 1700 show that 349 and 229 Negro slaves were imported, respectively, in those years.⁷⁰ Two letters written by Lieutenant-Governor Nicholson in August 1700 reveal a new enthusiasm in official circles for the trade. "There are as many buyers as Negroes," Nicholson reported on August 1,

⁶⁹Stock, ed., Proceedings, II, 160-162.

⁷⁰U. S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, 1960), 769.

"and I think that if 2,000 were imported . . . there would be substantial buyers."⁷¹ Writing to the Board of Trade several weeks later, Nicholson wrote cautiously of the new prosperity. He wished, said the Lieutenant-Governor, "that the Royal African Company and others that trade thither would send in some [slaves] and while people have money to buy some, for it may happen that if Negroes don't come within a year or two that people may dispose of their money some other way."⁷²

By 1701 the company was expressing to its employees a newly optimistic assessment of the Virginia market. In separate letters written the same day, the London office redirected a slaver to Virginia, then explained the action to the captain. Writing to the agents in Barbados, the company informed them that they were to order the frigate Evans to Virginia instead of Jamaica, its original destination.⁷³ Explaining the change, the company wrote to Captain Prowde: "Since your departure wee have considered which may be the best Market for the Sale of Your Negroes, and are of opinion now that they will sell much better at Virginia than at

⁷¹Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 67 n., citing Cal. St. P. Col., 1700, 452. Hemphill, Virginia and the English Commercial System, 21, believes that "the Governor erred on the side of understatement."

⁷²Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 67 n., citing Cal. St. P. Col., 1700, 497.

⁷³R.A.C. to Messrs. Horne, Thomas, and Willy, 23 Oct. 1701, T 70/58, 16-18, P.R.O.

Jamaica where wee first intended."⁷⁴

If the company's attitude toward the Virginia market became more optimistic with the advent of peace in 1698, this attitude had been tempered by a decade of conditioning to the effects of warfare and by the uncertainty of the current fragile peace in Europe. Even in 1701 the company's new optimism began to waver as court intrigues and new treaties foreshadowed the return of convoys, embargoes, and depression. "We are at present under some apprehensions of a War," they instructed agent Edward Hill, who was replacing the deceased James Howell in the James River agency, "but upon encouragement, we may make some consignations to you."⁷⁵ And in the fall of that year the company officials continued to express to their agents their anticipation of the approaching European conflict: "Wee . . . are unwilling to run farther into shipping at present untill wee know whether wee Shall have peace or war."⁷⁶

D. The Trade, 1702-1713

Peace in Europe was indeed short-lived, interrupted soon after these letters were written by the conflict some

⁷⁴R.A.C. to Capt. Prowde, 23 Oct. 1701, ibid., 18.

⁷⁵R.A.C. to Edward Gill [sic], 3 April 1701, T 70/57, ff. 172 ro. and vo., P.R.O.

⁷⁶R.A.C. to Messrs. Horne, Thomas, and Willy, 23 Oct. 1701, T 70/58, 17, P.R.O.

consider the first of the "world wars."⁷⁷ Late in 1701 the forces of Eugene, Prince of Savoy, invaded Italy and officially began the War of the Spanish Succession, the twelve-year Hapsburg-Bourbon struggle for the Spanish throne, the European balance of power, and the great colonial empires. The only English military action in the New World during "Queen Anne's War," as the colonists knew it, was a defensive phase in the Caribbean in which Admiral Benbow and ships of the Royal Navy attempted to protect British islands and trade against Chateaurenault's strong French fleet and bands of French and Spanish privateers.⁷⁸ Queen Anne's War subjected Virginia to circumstances similar to those which had prevailed during the preceding war: a contraction of markets for their tobacco, increased costs of shipment, lower prices of tobacco, particularly the Orinoco variety, and a scarcity of European manufactured goods.⁷⁹ The tobacco trade suffered immensely, debt again became widespread, and the depression in Virginia at times reached depths unknown even during King William's War.⁸⁰ Yet the reactions of many Virginia planters to this depression

⁷⁷Paul A. Beik and Laurence Lafore, Modern Europe (New York, 1959), 182.

⁷⁸J. H. Parry and P. M. Sherlock, A Short History of the West Indies (New York, 1966), 99-101.

⁷⁹Morton, Colonial Virginia, I, 396.

⁸⁰Hemphill, Virginia and the English Commercial System, 26.

ensured the success of the slave trade, at least as long as they were able to continue their buying tactics.

Though some Virginians made serious attempts to diversify their production during this depression, and some successfully harvested other crops, the majority of the planters appeared to have reasoned that they could best improve their immediate economic situations by cultivating more tobacco, compensating for low prices by increasing production. Consequently, the traders, now familiar with the Virginia market, continued to meet the demand with greater energy than they had during the previous war, the Virginia labor force continued to expand, and tobacco production rapidly grew.⁸¹

Despite the fact that the African Company considered Virginia superior to Jamaica as a market for its slaves at the turn of the century, it continued to import a much larger volume of Africans into the West Indies than to the Chesapeake colonies throughout the period.⁸² While the separate traders were taking advantage of their new legal recognition by supplying the Virginia planters with laborers in ever-increasing numbers, no ship is on record as having delivered Royal African Company slaves to Virginia from the end of King William's War until 1703. In June of that year,

⁸¹Ibid., 26-28; see also Nettels, Money Supply, 55.

⁸²See above, p. 11.

the Angola frigate delivered 92 Angolan slaves to agent Henry Fielding at the York River and began a new spurt of company activity in the Chesapeake colonies.⁸³ The next ship in the company's service to reach Virginia was the Postillion galley which, although smaller than the Angola, brought 150 slaves to the York in 1704.⁸⁴ Fielding, the company agent on the York River, died in that year, leaving the cargo of the Postillion to the management of his successor, Gawin Corbin.

The company correspondence with Colonel Corbin concerning his duties in 1705 explains some of the difficulties which plagued the trade to Virginia during Queen Anne's War. Even though many Virginians continued to depend upon imported African laborers to bolster their tobacco output, and though Corbin had advised the company of a "great demand" for slaves in Virginia,⁸⁵ the depression was progressively diminishing their ability to pay. Numerous references to protested bills of exchange indicate the tightening of credit and the mounting debt which resulted

⁸³R.A.C. to Fielding, 4 March 1702/3, T 70/58, 57, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Capt. Thomas Arnall, 21 July 1702, T 70/62, 121-126, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Arnall, 28 July 1702, ibid., 129; R.A.C. to Col. Gawin Corbin, 29 Nov. 1706, T 70/279, 11-18, P.R.O.; Lists of Ships, T 70/62, 273-274, P.R.O.; Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 173.

⁸⁴List of Ships, Postillion galley, T 70/62, 273-274, P.R.O.

⁸⁵R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, T 70/58, 211, P.R.O.

basically from the Virginians' inability to sell their tobacco profitably.⁸⁶ The London merchants were becoming more discreet in screening their debtors as the sum of Virginia tobacco credits fell. As an example, the company office advised Corbin late in 1705 that the bills of exchange he submitted had not at that time been accepted, "the Persons on whome they are Drawn haveing taken time to Consider whether they will accept or not."⁸⁷

In addition to the tightening of credit by London merchants, the economic squeeze of the war era damaged the Virginia market in another respect--the company slaves brought unsatisfactory prices. As noted above, the company blamed Colonel Corbin because the slaves "will not answer in their prices."⁸⁸ But the blame for poor prices in 1705 must be attributed largely to the tobacco depression, which left Virginia a market of willing but increasingly less capable buyers.

Regardless of the weakening of the market and the general deterioration of the trans-Atlantic commerce, the African Company and the separate traders were able to import a larger number of slaves into Virginia during the year 1705

⁸⁶R.A.C. to Corbin, 26 April 1705, *ibid.*, 175-176; R.A.C. to Corbin, 15 May 1705, *ibid.*, 184; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Feb. 1705/6, *ibid.*, 217.

⁸⁷R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, *ibid.*, 211.

⁸⁸R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, *ibid.*, 211; see also R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Feb. 1705/6, *ibid.*, 217.

than during any year between 1689 and 1713. A total of nine ships, including three sailing for the company, delivered more than sixteen hundred slaves to Virginia that year. The Dorothy galley was the first company slaver of 1705, arriving in June with 75 slaves;⁸⁹ in August the Angola frigate returned, this time reporting a larger cargo of 214 slaves;⁹⁰ and during the same month, after a troubled voyage, the Phoenix sloop delivered a cargo of 51 from Gambia.⁹¹

The year 1705 was exceptional, not only because of the large volume of slaves imported in the face of a severe tobacco depression, but also because of one special circumstance which apparently contributed to the boom--the import duty on slaves expired. The Virginia Assembly had first passed in 1699 a twenty shilling head tax on slaves with the expressed purpose of raising revenue for rebuilding of the state house which had been destroyed by fire. The legislators were also motivated to some extent by the desire to

⁸⁹R.A.C. to Capt. Edward Tomlin, 16 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 43-46, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 18 Oct. 1705, T 70/58, 201-202, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Tomlin, 9 April 1706, ibid., 47; Lists of Ships, T 70/63, P.R.O.; Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 173.

⁹⁰R.A.C. to Arnall, 2 Nov. 1704, T 70/63, 41, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Arnall, 16 Nov. 1704, ibid., 42; R.A.C. to Corbin, 26 April 1705, T 70/58, 175-176, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, ibid., 211; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Feb. 1705/6, ibid., 217; Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 173.

⁹¹Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 173.

limit the importation of slaves, either because of genuine fear of the social and economic effects of the uncontrolled growth of the "dangerous population," or because they hoped to increase the value of their own slave holdings by limiting importation.⁹² Regardless of the motives of the legislators, their tax does not appear on the surface to have acted as a deterrent to the slave trade; the import totals continued to rise even though the law was renewed in 1701 and 1704.⁹³ However, it is possible that, despite the growth in absolute numbers of the slaves, the duty acted as a relative deterrent--perhaps an even greater growth in the slave population would have ensued without the tax. In April 1705 the 20 shilling duty expired. It was renewed in October, but did not take effect until May 1706, which left more than a year during which slaves were imported into Virginia duty-free. This proved a fruitful period for the slave traders. Governor Nott, writing to the Board of Trade in December 1705, reported: "I understand that there hath been brought into the country this summer about 1,800

⁹²R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Dec. 1705, T 70/58, 211, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 Feb. 1705/6, ibid., 217; Copy Book of Bills, T 70/279, 3, P.R.O.; Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 173. For the view that the purpose of the tax was to limit the "dangerous population," see James Curtis Ballagh, A History of Slavery in Virginia (Baltimore, 1902), 11; the opposite view can be found in Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, 66 n.

⁹³Hening, ed., Statutes, III, 193-195, records the 1699 law.

Negroes. . . . All these except a few are imported since the imposition Act expired."⁹⁴ The Governor may simply have been informing the Board of Trade and not necessarily pointing out the lapse in legislation as cause for the heavy summer traffic in Africans; but whether or not the change is attributed to the absence of a head tax, nearly two thousand slaves came into Virginia during the thirteen-month lapse, much larger than any annual total during the years under consideration.⁹⁵

Accelerated by this "black tide" of labor, production continued to spiral, enabling Virginians to export a record quantity of tobacco in 1706; but, ironically, because of the basic unsoundness of the economy, a turn of fate converted this great harvest into a disaster. The huge fleet of nearly three hundred ships, reputedly the largest ever to leave the tobacco colonies, hauled away most of the forty thousand hogsheads shipped between the summers of 1705 and 1706.⁹⁶ During its winter Atlantic crossing, the fleet was victimized by French privateers and bad weather to the extent of losing at sea 30 ships and almost fifteen thousand

⁹⁴Hening, ed., Statutes, III, 212-213, contains an account of the 1701 renewal, and the 1704 law is found ibid., 225.

⁹⁵Donnan, ed., Documents, IV, citing C. O. 5/1361, 421.

⁹⁶Morton, Colonial Virginia, I, 396; see also Middleton, Tobacco Coast, 244-245.

hogsheads of tobacco.⁹⁷ Many planters and merchants suffered from the loss; and yet so restricted were European outlets that the remainder of the tobacco inundated the London market. Unable to reexport the tobacco and unwilling to absorb the losses, London merchants retaliated on the one front where they held the initiative by tightening credit to the limit.⁹⁸

The combined effects of the disasters of 1706 and the extreme measures of retrenchment by the merchants against the depressed and glutted tobacco market precipitated the most dramatic substantive changes in the Virginia economy since the outbreak of King William's War. Whereas credit had been advanced to Virginians with progressively closer scrutiny through 1705, it was now discontinued. The merchants began methodically to protest all bills of exchange not covered by credit already on their books, and Virginians were, therefore, no longer permitted to purchase English imports on speculation of a profitable tobacco crop the following season. Because advance credit was no longer available, and because of the dearth of ships in Chesapeake Bay, English manufactured items became so scarce that many Virginians resorted to growing cotton, wool, and flax in

⁹⁷Parliaments of Great Britain, House of Lords, December 17, 1707, Stock, ed., Proceedings, III, 156-157.

⁹⁸Hemphill, Virginia and the English Commercial System, 26-29.

order to produce cloth from which to fashion their own clothes.⁹⁹ The new difficulty in procuring clothing meant that the maintenance of slaves, who could not usually produce their clothing as they could their food, became a greater burden to the planter than it had been in the past.¹⁰⁰ "Debt" had always been measured on an arbitrary chronological scale by the planter and the merchant, the quantity of debt depending upon the particular point in time where either man chose to begin or end his calculation.¹⁰¹ Immediately after a good tobacco crop had been sold by British merchants, Virginia debt was at a minimum. But 1706 was a year of poor profits; and when the merchants closed their books, refusing to honor any credit not previously existing, they trapped most Virginia planters deeply in debt. By any measure, the Virginia economy had been depressed for many years; but, with the exception of the spontaneous tobacco riots of the 1680s and occasional less frenzied attempts to limit production of the weed,¹⁰² planters continued to increase their output throughout the depression. In 1706, when the English tobacco merchants

⁹⁹Morton, Colonial Virginia, I, 396.

¹⁰⁰Nettels, Money Supply, 134.

¹⁰¹Bassett, "Relation Between Virginia Planter and London Merchant," 568.

¹⁰²Craven, Southern Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, 398 ff.

salvaged their businesses from bankruptcy by closing their books, they forced many planters to face financial ruin from the one cause they had most frequently disregarded, over-production of tobacco. Tobacco was now hardly worth the cost of shipping, and knowing that they were literally unable to earn a living by growing that traditionally sound staple, Virginia planters began of necessity to curtail its production.¹⁰³

A contemporary historian who elucidates the developments of the Virginia economy in the perspective of the English commerce of this period, and who emphasizes the importance of the "crisis" of 1706, also contends that Virginians began in that year to limit their purchases of slaves.¹⁰⁴ The total volume of slaves imported in the following years indicates a marked decrease in purchases in each year after the "flood" of 1705; however, it is impossible to know the degree to which the business decline can be attributed to a decision by Virginia planters to limit production. Undoubtedly, the downward trend of the Virginia slave trade was a product of the general deepening of depression, the effects of which included the ruin of increasingly larger numbers of Virginia planters and

¹⁰³Hemphill, *Virginia and the English Commercial System*, 26 ff.; Morton, *Colonial Virginia*, I, 396.

¹⁰⁴Hemphill, *Virginia and the English Commercial System*, 26 ff.

mounting pressure on the remainder.

According to their records, African Company sales did decrease; they failed to deliver a cargo to Virginia from August 1705 until the Bridgewater anchored at the York River with 170 slaves from Gambia in August 1707.¹⁰⁵ This period of inactivity contrasts to the relatively brisk flow of business in 1705, but instructions to agents and captains reveal no change in company policy regarding Virginia imports. Throughout Queen Anne's War, the company appears to have taken a pragmatic approach to its Virginia market. The company office, for example, warned Gawin Corbin in the wake of the 1706 crisis that they were discouraged by poor payment resulting from so many bad bills of exchange;¹⁰⁶ but if they knew that the English merchants had begun the categorical rejection of all bills not covered in advance, they did not acknowledge this information to Corbin. Since they must have been acutely aware of English finances, it can only be assumed that the company officials purposely avoided restricting Corbin unnecessarily, hoping that he could locate enough good risks to enable them to continue credit transactions at least on a small scale. In addition, the company had always been reluctant to change its credit

¹⁰⁵R.A.C. to Capt. Wm. Cook [sic], 22 Sept. 1707, T 70/9, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to William Thompson, 3 April 1708, T 70/44, P.R.O.

¹⁰⁶R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 March 1707, T 70/58, 278, P.R.O.

policy, even though recovering its capital was a constant problem. Eliminating credit sales to debtors would have further tarnished the company's public image in the colonies, and it would have eliminated practically all potential customers. Meanwhile, knowing that "good bills" were scarce, and hoping to recover some of the lost profit on the third leg of the voyage,¹⁰⁷ the company issued Corbin a new directive: "We have been so disappointed by Bills of Exchange that we are willing that you should send us in our own ship some returns in the best sort of tobacco proper for exportation."¹⁰⁸ The African Company, of course, was forced to depend upon the planters' resources as well as their demands; and they knew that the Virginians' demands often exceeded their ability to pay.

In 1707 the company must have found it difficult to determine the best method of tapping the planters' meager assets. Which medium of exchange was worth less--tobacco

¹⁰⁷The slave trading concerns traditionally hoped to profit from all three transactions of the triangular trade: the sale of European manufactured goods in Africa, the sale of African slaves in the New World, and the sale of New World agricultural products in Europe. During the tobacco depressions, when prices were low and European markets glutted with the weed, the Royal African Company chose bills of exchange in payment for slaves, avoiding shipments of tobacco and thereby forfeiting the third potential profit.

¹⁰⁸R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 March 1707, T 70/58, 278, P.R.O.

which probably could not be sold, or bills which probably would be rejected? The company office appeared to leave this rather arbitrary decision to the Virginia agent who was free to make the most advantageous arrangements possible in a given situation. Corbin utilized both media in processing the Bridgewater. By the end of September, a month after the arrival of the ship, he had sold 140 of its 170 slaves,¹⁰⁹ a fact which, in itself, proves that demand for slaves in Virginia had not in any sense been eliminated by 1707. Despite the glutted tobacco markets and the economic disaster of the previous season, Corbin loaded the slaver with tobacco for the return voyage. Because large quantities of tobacco had been left in the colonies each year for want of ships, and because there was no Virginia fleet in 1707, it is probable that the tobacco carried by the Bridgewater would not otherwise have been exported.¹¹⁰ A year later, Corbin used the second method of payment, forwarding approximately 124 bills of exchange which totalled over 3,500 pounds sterling as payment for the Bridgewater's slave cargo.¹¹¹ The Virginia planters obviously hoped that their tobacco credits would have been sufficient by September 1708

¹⁰⁹R.A.C. to Capt. Cook [sic], 22 Sept. 1707, T 70/9, P.R.O.

¹¹⁰Middleton, "Chesapeake Convoy System," 188.

¹¹¹Copy Book of Bills, 16 June 1708, T 70/279, 36, P.R.O.; 10 Dec. 1708, ibid., 39-42.

to accommodate their bills. The fact that the majority of the Bridgewater's bills of exchange were protested indicates that neither system of payment was functioning well in 1707; the tobacco cargo was still worth little and credit remained extremely tight in England.

The story of the African Company trade to Virginia between the 1707 voyage of the Bridgewater and the Treaty of Utrecht, which ended Queen Anne's War six years later, is one of decided inactivity. The company's London office had dispatched the Seaford to Virginia later in 1707, but her captain, Thomas Mackley, exercised his prerogative by rerouting his ship to Jamaica because he found it impossible to reach the Chesapeake shore before October, the established deadline.¹¹² The Seaford thus failed to reach Virginia, and while various merchant ships and men-of-war continued to transport the company's correspondence and bills of exchange to Virginia, as they had done during peace and war,¹¹³ the Bridgewater was apparently the last ship to

¹¹²For an explanation of the deadline imposed by the Royal African Company for delivering slaves to Virginia, see above, p. 58.

¹¹³The ship Corbin delivered bills to Colonel Corbin, R.A.C. to Corbin, 30 Sept. 1707, T 70/58, 304, P.R.O. The 51 bills of exchange carried by the ill-fated Chester Man-of-War, R.A.C. to Corbin, 18 Nov. 1707, ibid., 310-311, were later transferred to H.M.S. Guernsey, 15 Dec. 1707, ibid., 311. Correspondence was carried to Corbin that same year aboard the Hannibal of Bristol, ibid.; the Bristol Man-of-War transported bills to Corbin, R.A.C. to Corbin, 11 March 1709, T 70/58, 378, as did the Martha, 8 Nov. 1710, ibid., 393, and the Page frigate, 14 Sept. 1711, ibid.,

deliver African Company slaves to Virginia before the end of the war.¹¹⁴

The slaves supplied to the planters of Tidewater Virginia in the final years of Queen Anne's War were brought up the rivers by ships of the separate traders. The decline of Royal African Company activity in Virginia was only part of the company's general descent during the years of its desperate attempt to maintain a grip on the last vestiges of monopoly. The company's financial status had never recovered from the blow dealt it by the Revolution of 1689 which heaped discredit on all Royal monopolies and negated the support which the Stuarts had traditionally given the company since the Duke of York's sponsorship. In the prosperous years before the pressure of the Revolution and the wars with France, the company had made large profits from which it had paid dividends.¹¹⁵ But after an inter-war effort to stave off collapse by heavy and indiscriminate borrowing, the company had settled into a trend of steady fiscal deterioration, its stock losing value all the while it

405; and the ship Mortimer carried correspondence from the company to Corbin, R.A.C. to Jacob Reynardson, 31 March 1713, T 70/45, P.R.O.

¹¹⁴The company indicated this in a letter, R.A.C. to Corbin, 8 Nov. 1710, T 70/58, 393, P.R.O.: "Tis now over 3 years since the arrival of the Royal African Company's last consignment."

¹¹⁵Scott, Constitution and Finance of Joint-Stock Companies, I, 302.

petitioned Parliament for a fresh, monopolistic start. Until 1707, the company still paid some meager dividends, though these payments were made from capital. By 1708, so deeply were its capital assets tied up with the colonial planters that it was no longer possible to find the money to pay interest on its bonds, and the stock, which had sold at an average of 17 from 1701 to 1706, fell to $4 \frac{7}{8}$ in 1708 and to a fraction of 2 during the next four years.¹¹⁶ The Royal African Company was solvent only in the most technical sense.¹¹⁷

The financial weakness of the company, and particularly the inaccessibility of liquid capital, compounded the effects of the restrictions of Atlantic warfare and depressions, forcing a recession in the total volume of the company's business. The African Company managed to export from England goods valued at £1,500,000 between 1672 and 1713, averaging about £40,000 annually; but by 1706 the annual total dropped below £15,000 for the first time, and though it surpassed £23,000 in 1707, the total dipped to barely above £5,000 in 1708 and below that mark the following year. By 1709, the individual interests out-traded the company at

¹¹⁶Ibid., I, 374.

¹¹⁷Ibid., I, 302, ff., 374, ff., II, 21-25; Davies, Royal African Company, 79, ff.; see also C. M. Andrews, Guide to the Materials for American History, to 1783, in the Public Record Office of Great Britain (Washington, 1912-1914), II, 256.

a 30-to-one rate;¹¹⁸ and in 1710, the company no longer exported any goods, which explains their failure to dispatch ships to Africa.¹¹⁹ The same pattern is apparent in the drop in total imports, which can be measured in relative terms by the annual number of auctions for the sale of goods imported to England by the company. The company had held an average of six auctions per year at the African House before 1689, fewer thereafter, and the total tonnage of imports plunged after 1708 until in 1711 there was an unprecedented absence of import auctions.¹²⁰

Despite the general decline in company business in Africa, Europe, and the colonies, and despite the void in its Virginia slave trade, the African Company continued to operate, particularly in the West Indies, and continued to maintain a concern for Virginia throughout Queen Anne's War. The company had a vested interest in Virginia in the form of protested bills of exchange amounting to several thousands of pounds. This alone provided sufficient reason to retain an agent; even if he were never again to be consigned a shipment of slaves, it was hoped that he would

¹¹⁸Scott, Constitution and Finance, II, 24.

¹¹⁹These totals are taken from Davies, Appendix I, Exports, Royal African Company, 350, which is derived from Royal African Company Invoice Books, Outward, T 70/910-920, P.R.O.

¹²⁰Davies, Royal African Company, 179; see also ibid., Appendix II, Imports, 358-359, compiled from Invoice Books, Homeward, T 70/936-956, P.R.O.

successfully pursue payment of the planters' established bills. He was legally bound to collect, and after numerous warnings the company brought suit against Corbin for his failure to submit payment for his accounts within the time allotted by the terms of his agency.¹²¹ Beyond its desire to settle old accounts, however, the company remained interested in Virginia because of its hopes for the future of the slave trade.

Encouraged by the successes of Marlborough on the battlefield and the preliminary peace negotiations in 1708, 1709, 1711, and 1712, the Royal African Company nourished throughout these years aspirations of an imminent and profitable conclusion to Queen Anne's War. The company appears to have been confident of its future even while being energetically opposed in Parliament by an imposing coalition of separate traders and colonial planters which threatened its very existence. By using counter-petitions, the company waged a direct offensive against its foes, blaming the separate traders for the rise in the prices of slaves and the fall in the prices of English goods in Africa.¹²² Rather than beg Parliament to retain the semi-favored status, the company, with support from the Crown and some

¹²¹See above, p. 21.

¹²²Scott, Constitution and Finance of Joint-Stock Companies, II, 24, citing Journals of the House of Commons, XVI, 64.

London business concerns, particularly those represented on the company's board of directors, boldly petitioned for a new monopoly of the pre-1698 variety. In response, committees of Parliament consistently recommended plans for a regulated company similar to the one in existence, but the company's London office appears to have anticipated better business in spite of the opposition. Though its hopes proved largely fruitless, the enthusiasm is understandable.

First, the 1698 "compromise act" establishing a regulated company was scheduled to expire in 1712. The African Company officials assumed that, failing to win a new monopoly, they would at least be able to force a stalemate in Parliament, preventing new legislation and thereby reverting to pre-1698 status as a monopoly. Secondly, regardless of the outcome of the Parliamentary debate, the prospect of peace inspired visions of the expanded markets and unimpeded shipping of the previous peaceful interlude, with the added incentive of the treasured Asiento. El pacto del asiento de negros, the exclusive contract for supplying slaves to Spanish America, had been held in succession by the Portuguese and the Dutch, and while the Asiento had been suspended in the mid-seventeenth century, the Royal Adventurers had gained some experience supplying the Spanish-American colonies with slaves.¹²³ With its experience in

¹²³Davies, Royal African Company, 326.

the slave trade, its network of commercial ties, and its forts on the African coast, the company considered itself the organization most likely to assume the responsibility for transporting the slaves if the English were in a strong enough position at the conclusion of the fighting, as it appeared they would be, to win the Asiento at the bargaining table.

Because of the hopes which the Royal African Company held for the postwar trade, and because of its financial interest in Virginia, the company retained Gawin Corbin as agent in the colony well past the end of Queen Anne's War, though they frequently threatened him and blamed him for the low prices as well as the company's inability to collect for its slaves.¹²⁴ It appears that Corbin did not spend much time pursuing the payment of debts, although the company reminded him several times each year of his obligations in prosecuting the debtors.¹²⁵ The Colonel was called upon to arrange minor shipments of tobacco as payment for overdue bills,¹²⁶ and though there is limited evidence that some Virginia planters undertook new debts to the company in 1710 and 1711, it is highly unlikely that Corbin was occupied

¹²⁴See above, pp. 4-5.

¹²⁵See above, pp. 40 ff.

¹²⁶R.A.C. to Corbin, 18 April 1710, T 70/58, 382-383, P.R.O.

managing slave cargoes during these years.¹²⁷ Had the Seaford completed her original schedule in 1707, Corbin would have found his work load and potential profits for that year significantly increased by the cargo of 199 slaves which the Seaford carried.¹²⁸ Anticipating the arrival of the slaver in Virginia, the company officials had instructed Corbin to collect tobacco for its return voyage, evidently hoping to compensate for the bad bills of exchange they expected to accompany any Virginia transaction.¹²⁹ After Corbin had dispensed with the Bridgewater in August 1707, the company's failure to ship slaves virtually relegated the Colonel's agency to a position of collector and correspondent. The latter function gained importance as the company became increasingly preoccupied with its quest for a new monopoly. If the African Company could regain its position of favor, the logic read, then the Virginia trade would inevitably improve. Consequently, the company made a concerted effort to keep Colonel Corbin, as well as its other colonial agents, well-informed on the issues of the Parliamentary proceedings pertinent to the company, forwarding to him

¹²⁷R.A.C. to Corbin, 14 Sept. 1711, ibid., 405; Receipts by Corbin, ibid., unnumbered pages attached to pp. 406-407.

¹²⁸Instructions to Captains, T 70/63, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Mackley, 28 Jan. 1706/7, ibid., 111-113, P.R.O.; R.A.C. to Corbin, 27 March 1707, T 70/58, 277-279, P.R.O.

¹²⁹R.A.C. to Corbin, 30 Sept. 1707, T 70/58, 304.

diatribes against the "enemy of the Royal African Company" and literal transcriptions of the petitions which had been presented;¹³⁰ the company also directed Corbin to enlist support from the planters, sending him blank petitions to be signed, particularly in the last critical years before the expiration of the 1698 act.¹³¹ The Virginia planters are not known to have presented a petition favoring the Royal African Company monopoly, but Corbin cannot be held responsible for alienating them, since they had traditionally been counted among the allies of the separate traders.¹³² Even when the company was supplying slaves to the colony at prices cheaper than those of the separate traders, the Governor of Virginia stated that he believed the planters would oppose any restrictions against free trade.¹³³

E. Conclusion

The Royal African Company experienced periodic spurts of commercial success in the years following the Treaty of

¹³⁰R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 April 1708, ibid., 332-334.

¹³¹T 70/58, unnumbered, undated sheet attached to p. 331; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 April 1708, ibid., 331-332; R.A.C. to Corbin, 20 April 1708, ibid., 332-334; ibid., note, p. 354; R.A.C. to Corbin, 4 June 1709, ibid., 364.

¹³²Stock, ed., Proceedings, II, 160-162, 217; Commons Journals, XII, 133, 185; Davies, Royal African Company, 145, 149.

¹³³Davies, Royal African Company, 143, citing Cal. S. P. Col., 1708-9, 197.

Utrecht, particularly with the wave of speculative investment which accompanied the South Sea Bubble in the early 1720s. But the gains were never sufficiently productive to be shared among the company's stockholders, only temporary aberrations from the trend of decline which had steadily followed the Glorious Revolution. In 1730 the African Company requested and received from Parliament a grant of £10,000 per annum for the upkeep of its forts and factories in West Africa, a final admission by the government that the company's African garrisons served the Empire by defending British commercial interests. After 1730 the company existed more as an arm of British imperial authority than as a viable trading corporation. In this posture the company atrophied and became entirely dependent so that, when the Crown in 1756 ended its subsidy, the company could no longer exist. The following year Parliament dissolved the African Company and in 1752 transferred its forts to the Crown.¹³⁴

The small scale of the Royal African Company's Chesapeake commercial venture minimized the interrelation between the company's lack of success in Virginia and its gradual demise as a joint-stock corporation. In either component of its commercial venture, old world or new, the African Company must be judged in relation to the adverse conditions of the time. Although it failed to satisfy the

¹³⁴Davies, Royal African Company, 344-349; Andrews, Guide, II, 256.

demands of Virginians for labor, the company did supply them possibly as many as one thousand slaves during this quarter-century. That it did so without long-term financial growth can be attributed to the high risk factors inherent in the slave trade and in shipping on the high seas in time of war, to the instability of the Virginia economy, to the inefficiency of the company's absentee operations, and to the high costs of maintaining its facilities on the African continent. To operate profitably a trade of similar magnitude, even under ideal conditions, would have challenged the resources of a mid-twentieth century corporation. This is not to excuse individual carelessness, mismanagement, and shortsighted policy decisions by the company's board of directors, but it does emphasize the futility of the efforts of all. If the losses of royal favor and of the monopoly were not fatal, the prolonged pressures of Queen Anne's War were. The Virginia trade inevitably suffered. Perhaps in the light of the difficulty the company met in delivering slaves across the Atlantic and in collecting for their sale in Virginia, the surprise is not that the trade collapsed, but that it survived as long as it did.

APPENDIX A

SLAVE SHIPS DISPATCHED TO VIRGINIA, 1689-1713

year	ship	slaves	captain	home
1689	*Benjamin		Thomas Hone	
1692	Katherine ¹			
1693	Jeffrey	265	John Soan	
1694	*Averilla ⁴			
1700	Nicholson	229		
1701	Neptune	79	Henry Forty	London
	Expectation	67	Wm. Levercombe	Bristol
	Two Brothers	60	Roger Gray	London
	Shrewsbury	154	Jona. Gladiman	London
	African Gally	57	James Westmore	London
	Warner	184	Jno. Jarman	London
	Nicholson	262	Joseph Munday	London
	*Evans ³	300	John Prowde	
	*Urban ³	250	Joseph Bemister	
1702	Gambia Galley ⁵	100	Patrick Bourn	
	Anna Bonaventure	90	Fra. Martyn	London
	Mary	143	Ambrose Smith	London
	Callibar Merchant	181	Ph. Gadson	London
1703	*Industry			
	*Angola frigate	92	Thomas Arnall	London
	Ann	64	Hump. Howard	Bristol
	*Lusitania	360	Paul Sorel	
1704	Ann Gally	81	Nicho. Gellibrand	London
	Mermaid	229	James French	London
	William	110	Wm. Martyn	London
	*Postillion	76	John Tozer	London
	Eagle Gally	229	Wm. Snelgrave	London
	Codrington	262	Frances Squerrel	London
1705	*Dorothy	75	Edward Tomlin	London
	London Gally	240	John Bickford	London
	Jno. Bonaventure	420	Anthony Ford	London
	Constant Abigail	148	Jno. Vanburgh	London
	Wm. & Mary	90	Wm. Bell	London
	Thomas & John	292	Robert Ransom	London
	Claron Frigate	109	Thomas Smith	London
	*Angola Frigate	214	Thomas Arnold	London
	*Phoenix Sloop	51	Thomas Durham	London
1706	William	120	Jno. Collingwood	London
	Neptune	243	Wm. Thurticle	London
	Eagle Gally	300	Wm. Snelgrave	London
	Waking Lyon	154	Arnol Wimtell	Bristol
	African Gally	196	Francis Bond	Bristol

1707	John and Thomas ⁶			
	Alexander ⁶			
	Mary ⁶			
	Deering ⁴			
	John ⁴			
	*Seaford ³	199	Thomas Mackley	
	Dolphyn	175	Nevison Taylor	London
	Ann Gally	209	Alexander Miller	London
	*Bridgewater	171	Wm. Cooke	London
	Queen Anne	90		
	John & Constance	285	Saml. Parker	London
	Delight	106		
	Bridgewater		Wm. Cooke	London
1708	Eagle Gally	296	Wm. Snelgrave	London
	Young Margaret	280		
	Mary Crookshank	274		
	Prosperous	100		
1709	Providence ¹	150		
1710	Jno. & Constance ¹	270		
	Leopard ²	201		
	Prosperous ²	125		London

*Owned or engaged by the Royal African Company.

¹Donnan, Documents, Ships From Great Britain to Africa, II, 92-94, citing C. O. 388: 13, p. 103 (1-3).

²Donnan, Documents, II, 116-117.

³Failed to reach Virginia because it was unable to meet deadline.

⁴Failed to reach Virginia because of conditions of maritime war.

⁵Lost at sea.

⁶Embargoed.

The above list of ships was assimilated from the extensive work of Donnan, Documents, IV, 172-173, and the Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilms of the Royal African Company records, T 70, passim.

APPENDIX B

PRINTED ORDERS TO SHIP CAPTAINS

African-House

Captain

Commander of the

1. Upon receipt hereof, having signed Bills of Lading for the Goods, Merchandize, Stores, and Provisions put on board Your Ship, You are to take the first opportunity of wind and weather that God shall send, and sail with your Ship from the River of Thames, and after being cleared at Gravesend, put your Ship in a posture of defence and make the best of your way to

[here is a large blank space, presumably for particular instructions]

2. And that God may bless you with good Success, We desire and recommend it to you, that the worship of God be religiously observed on board your Ship.

3. We strictly require you to stow your Gun-powder securely, and that your Gunner be a careful and sober person.

4. Take especial care, that your Ship be sailed according to the Act of Navigation, and that you have at least two thirds of your Men English, and healthy season'd Men; that you be duly cleared at the Custom-House in all respects relating to the King, and that you have a Mediterranean-Pass.

5. We desire and require you to give the best accommodation your Ship can afford to such Passengers as We shall order on board, and to treat them civilly, and with respect according to the Posts they serve us in.

6. We Order and Direct you (whether at Sea or in Port) frequently to heel and scrub your Ship, and to Paye the same between wind and water, that she may be at all times clean and fit for sailing.

7. If you happen to put into any Island, [y]ou are to be cautious what Men you send on shore, especially of your Officers that they may not under any pretence of stopping, bring you under a necessity of complying with any unreasonable demands, or have power to stop your Ship, and ruin your Voyage.

8. And because Pirates do frequently and much infest the Coast of Africa, and the Ships of Sallee have been very troublesom of late, We Order you to be very circumspect, and not to leave your Ship, nor speak with any other, without absolute necessity, but always keep a good look out and guard, to prevent surprize.

9. Let us hear from you from all Ports you put into, and by any Ship you meet with at Sea, before you get to Guinea, and afterwards by all Ships you can conveniently send by, whether bound to the West-Indies, Holland, or other parts; and therein advise Us as fully as you can, of all needful perticulars.

10. We Order you at your return, to render Us an account in Writing of every particular taken on board your Ship, at any time during Your Voyage.

11. You are to receive no Corn on board your Ship but what is sound and good; And you are to take a receipt from our Governors and Chief Merchants for all Goods, Stores, Passengers, Provisions, or whatever else you deliver them, signifying in what condition they are.

12. Whereas our Chiefs on the Coast of Africa have received Orders, to put on board each of our Ships that Trade thither, three or four Negroes, in order to their being trained up, and instructed in the Sea service, You are to take particular care they be so instructed accordingly, as the Company's Servants; but you are not to enter them on the List of the Ship's Company as Sailors.

13. Carefully keep a Journal of all particulars, and if any of your Men happen to die, mention the time of their death, and what is due to them.

14. You are to take care upon your return to England, within ten days after your arrival in Town, that your Own and your Mate's Journals be deliveted to the Committee of Shipping, upon pain of suspension for the neglect thereof.

15. You are hereby strictly charg'd and required, not to carry out or bring home any Letters or Packets, but what are delivered you at your going out, by Us or Our Secretary, and at your coming home by Our Governors and Chief Merchants at the settlement from whence you are dispatched, which you are to put up in a box, directed for Our Secretary; And take care upon your coming into any Port in England, immediately to send them up to this House, by some trusty person belonging to your Ship; And as you are not to suffer any of your Ship's Crew to carry out, or bring home any private Letters, but all such are to be put under the Company's Cover, or in the box before-mentioned. In all which you are not to sail, on penalty of the forfeiture of all Salary, Wages, and Gratuity, which may be due to you.

16. When you come into the Downs, either outward or homeward bound, you are to hoist the Company's Jack, to the end our Agent there may know when you pass by him, in case he should have any occasion to speak with you.

APPENDIX C

A LETTER TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE SLAVE SHIP, LUSITANIA

London
16th December 1701

Mr. Paul Sorel

After receipt hereof you are to take the first opportunity of wind and weather that God shall send to sett sail with your Ship the Lusitania from the river of Thames and make the best of your way to the Coast of Angola in Africa as your self and Owners are Obliged by Charterparty where you are to use your uttmost Endeavours to dispose of the Cargo of Goods wee have Laden on board your ship amounting as per Invoice to 2500 4s. 7d. for the purchasing of 360 lusty and with provisions for them and with the surplus of of [sic] the Cargo you are to buy what Elephants Teeth you can get for our Account.

Having finished your business on the Coast of Angola in such time as that in all probability you may arrive at York river in Virginia from the first of May to the last of July. In such case you are to make the best of your way thither and deliver your Negroes to Mr. Willis Wilson our factor there, But in case there be no liklyhood or probability of reaching Virginia within the time limited then you are to Make the best of your way to the Island of Antigua and deliver our Negroes to Mr. Edward Chester or to Such person or persons as at your arrivall shall produce our Orders for the receipt and disposall of our Effects there.

If you deliver your Negroes at Virginia you are to receive from our factor there Two third parts of your freight in Negroes as they shall arise by Lott at Twenty pounds Ten Shillings per head but if you dilliver at Antigua Antigua [sic] you are to take from them to whom you deliver a certificate of the number of Slaves you deliver and deliver to him or them the remainder of your Negroes provisions and take their rest for the same.

Your Orderly Government on board your Ship must be needful for the good of the whole voyage and more especially when your Negroes on board for many mischifs have happened thro too much neglect and security.

Herewith you have a book Signed by our Sub-Governor or Deputy Governor wherein you are daily to enter all passages in the trade and how you dispose of what you sell which will be an account of your managing the trust reposed in you reposed in you [sic] and a Charge on your success or in case of your decease therefore use it daily and fairly and not Late. (?)

Wee hereby order you to take notice of all Negroes as they shall be put aboard the Ship that you as Master with your Mates Boatswain and Carpenter or so many of you as Shall be a board do number them and enter such Number with their Quality each day into the Book therewith delivered you and that The said Officers do sign such Entries in the said Book as often as any Negroes come aboard and that the Negroes be mustered once every fourteen dayes all the voyage untill their arrivall and that every muster be entered in the said Book by the said Officers and what mortality shall happen among the Negroes in the Voyage wee require you for our satisfaction that you send or bring home a Certificate thereof under your Mates or Surgeons hands listifying [sic] the time of the death of such as shall happen to dye or wee will not allow of any more that shall be missing but what was certified to be dead nor shall wee without such certificate pay your Surgeon the head mony wee allow for the Living which is Twelve pence each.

Any curiosities of Birds Beasts etc. that you meet with take care to preserve for our disposall.

Let us hear from you from all ports you put into before you come to Guiney and afterward. By such ships as you can conveniently send by wether bound to the West Indies, Holland or any other part and therein advise us as fully as you can of all needfull particulars.

You are to advise us by all opportunities what ships you meet with or hear of trading on the Coast, wherein advise the Masters Name and what he brought the ships burthen and as near as you what slaves or other goods they carry off the Coast.

To prevent the Mortality of your Negroes you must observe frequently to wash your Deck with vinegar and divert them as much as you can with some Musick and Play.

We strictly require you to take especiall care to store your Gunpowder securly and that your Gunner be sober carefull person.

Wee do here [sic] that some Pirats are cruising upon the Coast of Africa. Wee order you therefore to be very circumspect and not to leave your ship nor speak with any other without absolute necessity but alwayes keep a sufficient guard both at sea and in port to prevent any surprize whatsoever.

Wee order you not to come nearer than fifty Leagues to the Westward of the Madeiras nor to the Eastward of the Meridian till you pass the Tropicks.

Take Especiall care that your ship be sailed according to the Act of Navigation that you have at Least Three fourths of your men English that you be duly cleared at the Custom house in all respects relating to King and according to the Act to Settle the Trade to Africa that you be Registered as the plantacon Act directs and that you have a Mediterranean pass.

Wee herewith deliver you an Act of Parlaiment [sic] for the more Effectuall Suppresing of Pirats which we order you to read or cause to read once a month (at least) on board your Ship during the Voyage Voyage [sic] in the hearing of all your men or so many of them as can possibly be present.

Make observatons what sorts of Goods are most vendible in every place and Colect what Cargoes are most proper for those places and render an account to us in writing.

Wherein anything is omitted in those Instrucons you must always observe to Act what is most for the Companies Intrest and cause that all under you do the like and according as you approve your self in this present Trust you may depend upon our favour upon any occasion where it may be usefull to you. Wee wish you a good Voyage and remain your Loving friends etc.

John Evans Esqr Sub-Governor
Urbun Wall Esqr Deputy Governor

Alex. Cleeve
Ralph Lee
Dalby Thomas
Wm. Hamond
Col. Rt. Lancashire

John Morgan
John Nicholson
Jno. Bennet
Jef. Jorye

Wm. Jollife
Tho. Pinder
Wm. Hazakerbey
S. Ma. Andrews

APPENDIX D

THE GAMBIA GALLEY

The following passage is a description of the Gambia Galley, a slave ship dispatched to Virginia by the Royal African Company in May, 1701. The description appeared in a letter, R.A.C. to Benjamin Alford, 10 March 1701/2, T 70/58, 29-31, P.R.O., enlisting Alford's support in locating the slaver which had taken "100 and odd Negroes" at Sierra Leone, touched at Barbados for fresh provisions, and was lost on her way to Virginia. Copies of this letter went to Edward Hill, James River, and Henry Fielding, York River.

The Gambia Galley is about 70 Tuns, Square Sterned, a Long Sharp vessell, hath 3 Masts, one Deck and a half with a fall in the fore Castle and Cabbin. Is Irish Built which any Carpenter may know by her Plank and Timbers, is about 6 years old, and sheathed about 2 years Since with a half Inch Board. Carries 6 Guns and 2 Patteraroes.

Hath Small round ports with Carved work Thereon, as also Carved work on Each Side of her quarter in Imitation of small Gallerys or Window. When she went home was Painted Yellow.

The five officers:

Ages

47 Patrick Bourn, Master, a Tall Spare Black man, long visage, Stoop a Little in the Shoulders. Irish.

31 John Paul, 1st Mate.

32 John Greenhill, 2d Mate and Guner. A thick Short man, fair Complexion, round Visage, Inclining Sanguin.

Rowland Hall, Carpenter, A thin, Spare man,
Middle Size.

Robert Brown, Bosen.

The men aboard the Gambia Galley:

Patrick Bourn	Capt.	45
John Paul	Chief Mate	30
John Greenhill	2d mate and Guner	30
Rowland Hall	Carpenter	46
Robert Brown	Boatswain	38
Thomas Carter	Chyrgeon [<u>sic</u>]	30
William Blundle (?)	Cooper	23
Robert Micham	Cook	24
John Alder	Seaman	31
Jos. Thomlinson	Sailmaker	23
Peter Reylout	Seaman	35
William Ellerby	Seaman	23
Robert Rippitt	Seaman	18
Edward Burbank	Seaman	32
Peter Ward	Seaman	17

APPENDIX E

COMPANY SLAVES PURCHASED IN VIRGINIA, BY COUNTY, 1689-1713

County (number of purchasers)	amount (£)	number
1. King and Queen (32)	£2052.13.04	70
2. Gloucester (22)	1654.08.07	58
3. Essex (28)	1359.14.09	47
4. Richmond (10)	851.04.05	35
5. Lancaster (8)	404.15.06	15
6. King William (5)	391.18.04	14
7. New Kent (6)	275.06.08	9
8. James City (4)	209.00.00	7
9. York (4)	188.00.00	8
10. Accomac (4)	184.04.10	9
11. Northumberland (5)	177.03.04	6
12. Northampton (3)	135.03.09	5
13. Surry (4)	120.12.10	4
14. Isle of Wight (1)	92.00.00	3
15. Westmoreland (3)	67.04.11	2
16. Nansemond (1)	61.00.00	2
17. Middlesex (5)	55.07.03	2
18. Stafford (2)	46.00.00	2
19. Isle of Wight (1)	35.00.00	1
20. Prince George (1)	34.00.00	1
21. Charles City (1)	30.00.00	1
22. Norfolk (2)	28.06.00	1
23. Henrico (3)	23.19.02	1
24. Elizabeth City (1)	17.00.00	1
25. Warwick (1)	3.15.01	

APPENDIX F

VIRGINIA PURCHASERS OF COMPANY SLAVES, BY COUNTY, 1689-1713

name	estate	amount	number	dates
<u>Accomac County</u>				
Abbot, Elizabeth		18.06.11	1	1710
Justice, Ralph	1050	92.13.03	4	1707-10
Savage, Griffin (Griffeth)	650	26.04.08	2 ?	1707-10
Samford, Samuel	3250	47.00.00	2	1709
<u>Charles City County</u>				
Harrison, Col. Benjamin	6350 2750 (Su) 150 (PG)	30.00.00	1	1690
<u>Essex County</u>				
Bird, Katt. (Widdo.)	100	29.00.00	1	1705
Brown, Daniel Jr. Sr.	150 450	21.10.01		1707-10
Buckner, Richard	1200	200.00.00	7	1705
Catlatt, Thos.		15.14.03	1	1705
Chew, Larkin (Lakin, Larden)	850	72.02.06	2	1708-9
Crittenden, Henry		28.00.00	1	1705
Covington, Wm.	400	30.03.09	1	1710
Dangerfield, John (Daingerfield)	270	29.00.00	1	1705
Edmondson, Thos.	700	60.00.00	2	1703
Faulkner, Ed.	530	129.04.03	5	1705-6
Ferguson, John	150	27.00.00	1	1705
Finney, John		38.18.03	2	1708-9
Fisher, Jonathon	250	50.00.00	2	1705
Garrett, Thomas	1000 200 (KW)	34.00.00	1	1703
Gordon, Mary		34.00.00	1	1704
Gouldman, Edward		20.03.04	1	1709
Haile, John (Hail, Hayle, Laile)	900 685 (KQ)	55.00.00	2	1705
Harper, John	748 100 (G1)	30.00.00	1	1705

name	estate	amount	number	dates
Harwar, Thomas	647	68.19.07	2	1705-9
Loyd, Stephen		57.00.00	2	1709
Pagett, John (Podgitt)		10.06.09		1704-5
Pickett, John	800	49.00.00	2	1705
Rennoldson, James		28.00.00	1	1703
Shackelford, Francis (Shakleford)	300	45.05.01	1	1708
Thacker, Samuel		25.08.07	1	1708
Young, Wm.	1000	55.13.05	2	1708-10

Elizabeth City County

Robinson, Wm.	50	17.00.00	1	1705
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Gloucester County

Baker, Ralph	150	28.15.05	3	1705-9
Bernard, Will (Barnard)	810	212.00.00	7	1703
Billups, Geo.	1200	32.00.00	1	1704
Bohannah, Dunkin	113	32.12.07	1	1708
Brodhent, Joshua	200	61.00.00	2	1703
Buckner, John	900	160.00.00	6	1703-5
Crittenden, Richard	280	30.18.03		1706-10
Cooke, Mordecai	1200	160.00.00	5	1703-5
Crymes, Wm.	400	97.10.00	3	1704
Fleming, Wm.	600	64.10.00	3	1703-5
Harper, John	100	30.00.00	1	1705
Lewis, Edward	1000	85.00.00	3	1703
Peyton, Robert (Payton)	4180	91.08.05	3	1706-9
Powell, Thomas	460	188.00.10	7	1703-9
	72 (Ex)			
	100 (IW)			
Pritchett, John	850	22.00.00	1	1703
Reed, Thomas (Read)	2400	74.00.00	3	1703-7
	150 (Nh)			
Roane, Wm. (Loane)	500	32.00.00	1	1703
Simons, Edward	500	24.00.00	1	1704
Smith, Phillip	700	207.00.00	7	1703-5
Stephens, Edward	150	4.04.10		1703
Stubbs, John	100	10.11.09		1704
Thornton, Wm.	525	7.11.06		1703

name	estate	amount	number	dates
<u>Henrico County</u>				
Dodd, Richard		6.13.02		1710
Puckett, John	215	7.06.00		1708/9
Webb, Giles	7260	10.00.00		1705

Isle of Wight County

Smith, Mary		60.00.00	2	1703
Pope, John	250	32.00.00	1	1709
Williams, Wm.	1100	35.00.00	1	1704
	100 (NK)			
	100 (Ex)			
	860 (EC)			

James City County

Bray, Col. David	5758	120.00.00	4	1703
	1000 (KW)			
	230 (CC)			
Green, Thomas	550	27.00.00	1	1705
Knewstep, John	150	27.00.00	1	1705
Wade, Edward (Waide)	150	35.00.00	1	1704

King and Queen County

Baker, William	350	119.15.10	5	1709
Barbour, James	750	50.00.00	2	1705
Braxton, George	2825	44.00.00	1	1703
Carlton, Christopher	200	26.00.00	1	1705
Conner, Timothy	1410	72.09.09	4	1708-10
Ewbank, Wm. (Eabanck)	350	32.00.00	1	1703
Fielding, Henry	1000	4.13.02		1704
Gregory, Richard		17.02.04	1	1703
Herring, Arthur	50	28.00.00	1	1703
King, Ann (Kink)	275	159.19.05	5	1704-8
King, Daniel	200	56.18.00	2	1703
Leigh, John	6200	46.14.03	2	1708-10
Letts, Arthur (Letto)	475	31.00.00	1	1704
Livingston, John (Levingstone)	1350	113.00.00	4	1704-7
Major, John	650	78.15.03	2	1704
	200 (JC)			
	390 (Nh)			
Nelson, Henry	440	118.09.03	4	1707-9
Pollard, Wm.	100	9.18.05		1708
Roy, Richard	1000	123.19.02	4	1708

name	estate	amount	number	dates
Shackelford, Roger	250	50.11.03	2	1705-10
Shea, Patrick	200	74.00.10	3	1704-5
Smith, Nicholas	700	60.00.00	2	1703
	280 (G1)			
Southerland, Daniel	200	35.00.00		
Story, John	3000	104.08.03	3	1703-9
Todd, Richard	1050	20.00.00	1	1703
Walker, John	7000	32.00.00	1	1709
Walton, Thomas (Wallson)	200	69.19.03	4	1707-10
Ware, Edward	735	47.16.00	1	1703-6
Welborn, Thos. (Willbourn)	250	18.00.00	1	1704
Williams, Eliza.	900	32.00.00	1	1703
Wise, Richard	209	285.16.08	11	1707-10
Clowder, Jeremiah (Clawder, Clowdes)		12.31.04	1	

King William County

Craddock, Samuel	600	200.00.00	6	1704
Fleming, Charles	1700	80.01.09	4	1704-10
Palmer, Martin	1200	52.00.00	2	1708
Spencer, Thomas	600	24.16.07	1	1704
Waller, John	200	35.00.00	1	1704

Lancaster County

Ball, Wm.	22T	28.10.09	1	1704
	1093 (Ri)			
Chilton, John		108.00.00	4	1705
Chinn, Rawleigh	12T	30.00.00	1	1705
Downman, Rawleigh	4T	30.00.00	1	1705
Fox, Samuel		29.00.00	1	1705
Fox, William	50 (JC)			
		261.08.07	8	1705-8
Heale, George	2650	48.00.00	2	1705
	8T			
	(Jr. 1300)			
Hewes, John (Hemes, Heins)	2T	111.04.09	4	1705-7
Ladner, Hugh		20.00.00	1	1708

T=number of tithables according to 1716 lists of tithables

name	estate	amount	number	dates
<u>Middlesex County</u>				
Jones, Humphrey	150	16.11.05	1	1706
Kemp, Col. Richard	2000	2.00.00		1704
	200	(G1)		
Robinson, John	1350	3.00.00		1704
Seager, Oliver (Segar)	380	5.05.10		1708
Thack, Spencer		26.00.00	1	1704
Williamson, Robt.	200	28.10.00	1	1705
<u>Nansemond County</u>				
Collins, Wm.	1220	61.00.00	2	1705
	350	(KQ)		
	100	(NO)		
Waters, Wm.	600	27.10.00	1	1703
<u>New Kent County</u>				
Anderson, Robert Sr.	700	33.00.00	1	1704
Brandingham, Robt. (Bradenham)	150	33.15.06	1	1706
Howes, Job (Howse, House)	300	7.07.11		1706
Littlepage, Richard	2160	110.00.00	4	1705
	2600	(KW)		
	2367	(KQ)		
	4886	(Pamunkey Neck?)		
Macgirt, Daniel (Magutt)	1168	30.00.00	1	1705
Martin, Thomas	100	61.03.03	2	1710
<u>Norfolk County</u>				
Tayloe, Wm.	265	21.00.00	1	1688-9
Gough, James (Geough)		7.06.00		1708

Name	estate	amount	number	dates
<u>Northampton County</u>				
Hunt, Samuel		104.00.00	4	1708
Waterson, John (Watterson)	4T	3.13.09		
<u>Northumberland County</u>				
Ingram, Charles		3.00.00	1	1710
Neale, Christopher		65.02.07	2	1705-8
Neale, Ebenezer		25.05.06	1	1709
Presley, Peter		16.15.03		1709
Wilday, George (Wilde, Wildey, Wildy)		35.00.00	1	1704
<u>Prince George County</u>				
Harrison, Wm.	1930 150 (JC) 50 (Y)	34.00.00	1	1704
<u>Richmond County</u>				
Barber, Chas.		60.00.00	2	1705
Barber, Wm.		23.00.00	1	1705
Belfield, Joseph		323.06.06	13	1705-8
Brereton, Henry		77.18.09	3	1705-6
Fitzherbert, Wm.		16.00.00	1	1705
Glasscock, Ann (Glasscock)		58.00.00	2	1705
Glasscock, George (Glasscock)		89.12.01	6	1705-10
Glasscock, Thos.		64.13.03	2	1705-6
Goade, Abraham		48.00.00	2	1705
Woodbridge, Wm.		90.13.10	3	1705-7
<u>Stafford County</u>				
Mountjoy, Edward (Edmund)		30.00.00	1	1711
Murrey, Anthony (Murray)		16.00.00	1	1705

name	estate	amount	number	dates
<u>Surry County</u>				
Champion, Abraham		6.10.03		1707
Collier, Chr.		27.00.00	1	1705
Lane, Mary (Lang)	77	35.00.00	1	1704
Nicholson, Geo.		52.02.07	2	1705-8

Warwick County

Dawson, John (Davison)	300	3.15.01		1708
Jones, Constance		37.00.00		1704

Westmoreland County

Annis, John (Anis)		25.00.00	1	1705
Butler, Edward		2.04.11		1709
Spencer, Col. Nicholas		40.00.00	2	1689

York County

Bacon, Nathaniel		50.00.00	3	1690
Barber, Thomas	600	13.00.00	1	1705
Matthews, Baldwin (Mathews)	1300	90.00.00	3	1705
Wade, Edward		35.00.00	1	1704

Purchasers With Landholdings in Several Counties*

name	estate	amount	number	dates
Angerson, Wm. (Andersen)	150 (Ac) 235 (PG)	34.00.00	1	1704
Burwell, Lewis	8000 (CC) 7000 (IW) 4700 (KW) 3300 (G1) 2100 (Y) 1350 (JC) 200 (NK)	20.00.00	1	1690
Collier, John	400 (KQ) 350 (Su)	47.02.11	2	1710
Cooke, Thomas	350 (G1) 300 (IW) 50 (KQ)	99.00.00	3	1704
Davis, John	850 (Nh) 200 (KW) 100 (Mi) 90 (KQ) 80 (NK)	80.00.00	3	1704-10
Graves, John	150 (KQ) 100 (KW)	59.07.00	2	1708-9
Hunt, Wm.	4738 (Su) 3130 (CC) 1300 (JC) 312 (KQ)	29.00.00	1	1703
Jones, John	350 (PG) 300 (Ex) 300 (NK) 200 (IW)	77.14.06	3	1704-11
Matthews, Edward	300 (H) 160 (KQ) 50 (Su)	63.00.00	2	1703-4
Smith, Wm.	3150 (Ex) 2100 (IW) 150 (Wa) 110 (NK) 50 (G1)	2.10.00		1709

name	estate	amount	number	dates
Walters, John (Walters)	400 (Nh) 150 (Ex) 50 (G1)	90.00.00	3	1705
White, John	400 (Nh) 190 (Nk) 150 (Na)	94.19.07	3	1705-6
Collier, Charles	684 (Y) 450 (KQ)	36.05.07	1	1709

Key to Abbreviations

(Ac)=Accomac County
(CC)=Charles City County
(Ex)=Essex County
(EC)=Elizabeth City County
(G1)=Gloucester County
(H)= Henrico County
(IW)=Isle of Wight County
(JC)=James City County
(KQ)=King and Queen County
(KW)=King William County
(L)= Lancaster County
(M)= Middlesex County
(Na)=Nansemond County
(NK)=New Kent County
(N)= Norfolk County
(Nh)=Northampton County
(No)=Northumberland County
(PG)=Prince George County
(R)= Richmond County
(St)=Stafford County
(Su)=Surry County
(Wa)=Warwick County
(We)=Westmoreland County
(Y)= York County

T=number of tithables according to 1716 lists of tithables, Wertenbaker, Planters, 153, and Wm. and Mary Qtly., Ser. 1, XXI

*In some cases, e.g. William Smith, each landholding may represent a different person; in other cases, e.g. Lewis Burwell, the multiple landholdings belonged to the same owner.

APPENDIX G

ENGLISH FINANCIERS OF THE AFRICAN COMPANY TRADE TO VIRGINIA*

name	amount financed	dates
Arthur Baily	549.11.01	1703-10
James Ball	27.10.00	1703
David Beddore	29.00.00	1705
Thos. Bettyjohn, Bridgewater	25.05.06	1709
William Bowden	26.13.03	1710
Benjamin Bradley, James Bradley and Salvatore Muscoe (Va.)	62.10.01	1709, 1710
Benjamin Bradley	40.13.01	1708
Owen Buckingham	30.19.05	1709, 1710
Arden Carlton	5.00.00	1707
Wm. Clayton, Esq., Liverpool	65.02.07	1705, 1708
John Cleveland	5.05.10	1708
George Cooke	26.06.00	1711
John Cooper	175.03.09	1703-10
Capt. Thos. Cooper	66.00.00	1705
Thomas Corbin, Steelyard	258.12.07	1703-8
William Dawkins	171.12.00	1705-10
John Dawson & Co.	67.00.00	1704
Robert Dunkley	20.00.00	1707
Thomas Ellis	143.01.09	1703-8
Edward Foy	55.12.10	1708
Joshua Franklin, Bristol	29.00.00	1705
Richard Franklin, Bristol	95.07.01	1703-8
James Geough, Bristol	105.06.00	1705, 1708
John Goodin (Goodwin)	328.18.09	1705-10
Nathaniel Grundig (Gundry)	8.15.03	1709
Edwin Harford	20.01.09	1704
Thomas Hartwell (Haistwell)	43.00.00	1707
Hugh Hayward, Bristol	168.13.05	1705-7
Benjamin Hatley (Heattlay, Hatly)	186.00.11	1704-9
Capt. John Hide	107.14.03	1709, 1710
Samuel Hunt	104.00.00	1707
Jeffrey Jeffreys	50.00.00	1690
Cuthbert Jones (John's)	189.10.00	1704-9
Thomas King	108.18.00	1703, 1708
Francis Lee	285.15.06	1703-5
Richard Lee	355.16.00	1707-10
George Livingston (Levingstone)	37.00.00	1703, 1704
James Loyd (Loyde), Bristol	137.11.04	1705-9
Joseph Lyman	26.10.00	1710
George Martin	20.10.03	1710
George Mason, Bristol	36.00.00	1705
Jonathon Mathews	37.00.00	1704

name	amount financed	dates
John Maynard	6.13.02	1710
Edmund Mountjoy	30.00.00	1711
Arthur North	198.05.03	1703, 1704
Henry Offley	158.03.06	1709, 1710
Thomas Orbell	52.02.07	1705, 1708
John Pemberton, Liverpool	30.00.00	1705
Micajah Perry & Co., (Perry, Lane and Company)	2176.05.06	1703-9
Thomas Pitkin & Co.	12.03.04	?
Joanna Pope	27.12.00	1707
Michael Pope & Co., Bristol (Michael Pope, James Loyde & Co.)	178.05.09	1703-9
John Purvis (?)	22.00.00	1703
Royal African Company	2194.27.06	1703-5
William Raphe & Co.	200.00.00	1704
Hamlett Robinson	180.00.00	1705-8
Thomas Sandford	31.04.08	1707, 1710
Richard Sargent	26.00.00	1709
Arthur Sawyer, Jr.	30.00.00	1710
Braham Smith	7.07.11	1706
Abraham Springer (Spranger)	74.00.00	1705
Thomas Storke	40.00.00	1689
John Walcar	25.14.06	1706
Capt. Thom. Wharton	67.00.00	1704, 1705
Francis Willis & Co.	385.00.00	1703
Robt. Wise	426.05.00	1704-10
John Wright (Right)	254.18.08	1704-10

*Derived from the records of the Royal African Company, bills of exchange, T 70, P.R.O., passim. Although most are identified as English, it is possible that several lived in Virginia.

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