

Primary Sources: *Refugees in the American Colonies, 1670s-1710s*

Introduction

The two main developments highlighted in the Lessons 1 and 2 of this unit – religious persecution in Europe and the trans-Atlantic slave trade – were leading to the movements of new groups of refugees in the Americas too. This new lesson also allows us to see how some of the very same people involved in Lesson 1 interacted with some of the people involved in Lesson 2, which will help us to see how the Atlantic World functioned as a system of interactions.

As you read, first consider these questions:

- Were the forced migrants described in the sources refugees? Why or why not? How does your answer compare to the migrants in Lessons 1 and 2?
- How does the goals of the author in writing this text shape our understanding of their situation? What information might they be leaving out?
- What evidence, if any, did the author want to leave behind for others to access?

When you are done, go back over the text and review Reading 3.

Make a list of all the push factors compelling them to escape and all the pull factors that might have drawn them to their new destinations.

Then list all the preexisting structures that you can identify that shaped their travel.



PRIMARY SOURCES

INTRODUCTION

AN ENGLISHMAN DESCRIBES JAMAICA'S MAROONS

A DESCRIPTION OF THE KINGDOM OF PALMARES

A PRIEST DESCRIBES ALGONQUIN- SPEAKING WOMEN DISPLACED IN MONTREAL

A HUGUENOT REFUGEE IN THE AMERICAS RECRUITS CORELIGIONISTS TO JOIN HIM

Primary Source 1: *An Englishman Describes Jamaica's Maroons*



Leonid Parkinson, leader of maroons in Trelawny Parish, Jamaica

In 1647, the Englishman Richard Ligon moved to Barbados during the English Civil War, where he worked for the plantation owner Tomas Modyford. He returned to England in 1650, after falling ill on the island. In England he was imprisoned for not paying his debts. He wrote his history of Barbados while while incarcerated. Most of the 122-page book dispassionately describes the ecology, geography, economy, and daily life on the island. In these sections, though, Ligon describes Jamaica's African population, including its maroons.

Source: Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1657), 46, 98, 104-105.

"It has been accounted a strange thing, that the Negres, being more than double the number of the Christians that are there, and they accounted a bloody people, where they think they have power or advantages; and the more bloody, by how much they are more fearfull than others: that these should not commit some horrid massacre upon the Christians, thereby to enfranchise themselves, and become Masters of the Island. But there are three reasons that they take away this wonder; the one is, They are not suffered to touch or handle any weapons: The other, That they are held in such awe and slavery, as they are fearfull to appear in any daring act; and seeing the mustering of our men, and hearing their Gun shot, (than which nothing is more terrible to them) their spirits are subjugated to so low a condition, that they dare not look up to any bold attempt. Besides these, there is a third reason, which stops all designes of that kind, and that is, They are fetch'd from several parts of *Africa*, who speake severall languages, and by that means, one of them understands not another ... When they are brought to us, the Planters buy them out of the Ship, where they find them stark naked.... They choose them as they do Horses in a market; the strongest, youghfullest, and most beautiful, yield the greatest prices...

These Caves are very frequent in the Iland, and of severall dimensions, some small, others extreamly large and Capacious: The runaway Negres, often shelter themselves in these Coverts, for a long time and in the night range abroad the Countrey, and steale Pigs, Plantins, Potatoes, and Pullin,* and bring it there; and feast all day, upon what they stole the night before; and the nights being darke, and their bodies black, they scape undiscern'd.

*An old word for poultry.



Illustration of couple fleeing hounds and slave catchers on horseback

There is nothing in that Country, so useful as Liam Hounds,** to find out these theeves. I have gone into divers of those Caves, to trye what kind of ayre is to be found there; and have felt it so close, and moyst with all, as my breadth was neer stopt; and I doe believe, I have should remain there but one night, I should never come out againe....

And for the Huntsman and his Hounds, they will finde themselves at a dead fault, before they begin; for, upon this soyle, no Stag, with his lofty well shap't head, and active body, has ever set his nimble feet; and Herds of Vallow Deer, were never put to make a stand upon this ground; the nimble Roe-Buck, nor the subtle Fox, the Badger, Otter, or the fearfull Hare, have ever run their Mases in these Woods. And then, what use of Hounds?

Onely one kinde are usefull here, and those are Liam Hounds, to guide us to the runaway Negres, who, as I told you, harbour themselves in Woods and Caves, living upon pillage for many months together."

19th century painting of maroons, pursued by dogs



** An old term for bloodhounds.

Primary Source 2: *A Description of the Kingdom of Palmares*

The description below comes from *An Account of the Wars made on Palmares de Pernambuco in the time of Governor Don Pedro de Almeida, from 1675 to 1678*. It was written during one of the many military campaigns sent by the Portuguese colonial government against Palmares. It was written by an unknown Portuguese chronicler during the militia campaign of Fernão Carrilho against the maroon at Palmares in 1676–77. This campaign provides one of the best descriptions of the refugee settlement. While clearly the author's judgements reveal his biases, we can also get glimpses here of some of the cultural fusions that were taking place in a society of mixed refugees.

Translation of *Relação das guerras feitas aos Palmares de Pernambuco no tempo do Governador d. Pedro de Almeida, de 1675 a 1678* by Robert Nelson Anderson in his article "The Quilombo of Palmares: A New Overview of a Maroon State in Seventeenth-Century Brazil," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 3 (1996): 553–54.



Location of the modern Brazilian state of Alagoas, where Palmares was located

"They acknowledge themselves to be obedient to one called Ganga-Zumba, which means Great Lord. This is one held to be king and master by all the rest, both natives of Palmares as well as those who come from the outside. He had a palace, houses for his family, and is attended by guards and officials that royal houses usually have. He is treated with all of the respect of a king and with all of the honours of a lord. Those that come into his presence put their knees to the ground and clap their hands as a sign of recognition and protestation of his excellence. They address him as Majesty and obey him out of admiration. He dwells in his royal town, which they call Macaco ['Monkey'], a name derived from the death dealt to one of these animals in that place. This is the principal town among the remaining towns and settlements. It is wholly fortified by a palisade with embrasures from which they could safely attack combatants. All around the outside was sewn with iron caltrops and such cunning pitfalls that it had imperilled our greatest vigilance. This town occupies a broad area; it is made up of more than 1,500 houses. There is among them a Minister of Justice for the necessary actions, and all of the trapping of any republic is found among them.

And although these barbarians have so forgotten subjugation, they have not wholly lost recognition of the Church. In this town they have a chapel to which they resort in their need, and statues to whom they commend their petitions. When this chapel was entered, there was found a quite well-made statue of the infant Jesus, another of Our Lady of the Conception, and another of Saint Blaise. They choose one of their most *ladinos** whom they venerate as pastor, who baptizes them and marries them.

*In a general sense, *ladino* often referred to people who were crafty or cunning, but in this usage it seems to refer to someone familiar with Christianity, who spoke Portuguese, and probably know some Catholic prayers.

The baptism, however, is without the form prescribed by the Church, and their weddings are without the particulars required by natural law. Their appetite is the rule of their choice. Each one has the wives he wants. They are taught some Christian prayers, and the precepts of the faith are observed which are within their capacity. The king who resided in this town was living with three wives, one mulatto and two native [black] women. By the first he had many children, by the others none. The way of dress among them is the same as is observed among us - more or less clothed as the possibilities allow.



Depiction of Sugar Mill in Pernambuco, Brazil, 17th c

This is the main town of Palmares. This is the king who rules them. The other towns are in the charge of potentates and chiefs who govern and reside in them.... The second town is called Subupira. In this one governs the king's brother, who is called Zona. It is all fortified with wood and stones [and] comprises more than 800 houses. It occupies an area of nearly one league in length. It is well-watered because the Cachingy River flows through it. This was the place where the blacks prepared for the combat against our assaults. It was wholly circled with pitfalls and to block (in the way of) our thrusts, it was sewn with caltrops."

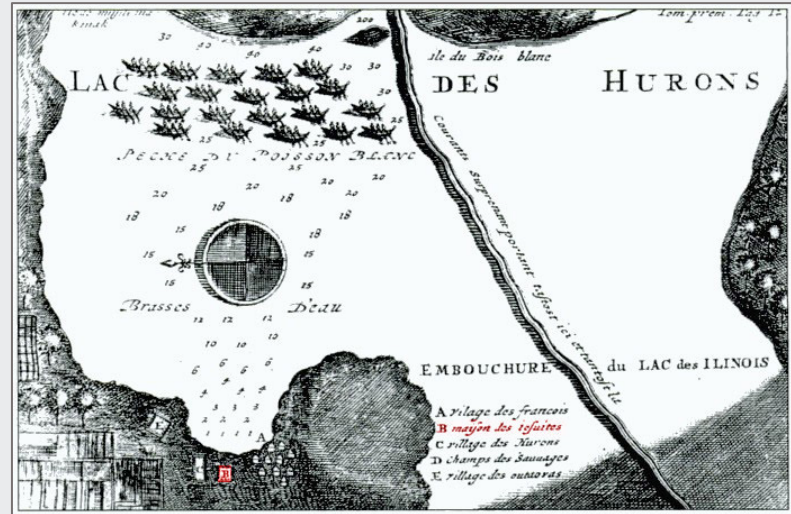


1647 map of the Captaincy of Pernambuco, Brazil, with a representation of the Palmares

Primary Source 3: *A Priest Describes Algonquin-speaking Women Displaced in Montreal*

Étienne de Carheil (1633-1726) was a Jesuit priest and missionary in New France at the St. Ignace Mission, located at the trading post at Michilimackinac, at the narrow strait between Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. On August 30, 1702, he wrote a long letter to Louis Hector de Callières, the governor of New France with a series of recommendations to improve the success of Catholic missions in the region. In this excerpt he described displaced Algonquian-speaking women who had made their way to Montreal, and reinvented themselves as companions to French traders.

Source: *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travel and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, vol. 65: *Lower Canada, Mississippi Valley, 1696-1702* (Cleveland: The Burrow Brothers Company, 1899), 239-41.



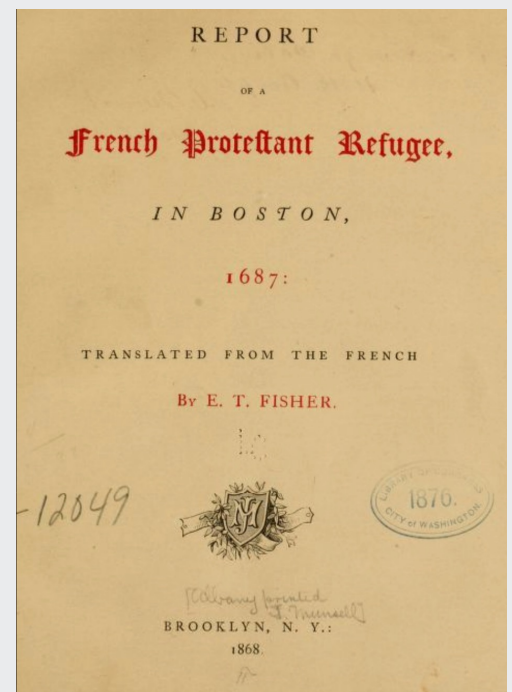
1717 map of St. Ignace, with the location of the Jesuit Mission indicated in red

“Finally, the most scandalous Evil of all, and that which needs to be most strenuously opposed, is that the [French] traders have become so accustomed to have [indigenous] women for their Use in the trading-places, and these have become so necessary to them, that they cannot do without them even on their journeys. I do not refer to Those who are taken with their husbands, because there is nothing in This that is not decent; and, consequently, those are not the ones whose company is generally desired. I refer to single women, women without husbands, women who are mistresses of their own Bodies, women who can dispose of them to these men, and whom the latter know to be willing to do so, – in a word, They are all the prostitutes of Montreal, who are alternately brought here and taken back; and They are all the prostitutes of this place, who are carried in the same way from here to montreal, and from montreal here. At present this is the usual manner in which their journeys are carried on; and voyages are no longer performed without a continual flow and Ebb of That tide of prostitutes, – whom we see ascending and descending, going and coming from one mission to another, without cessation, – to the most Heinous and loathsome scandal of the people. The pretext that they usually allege for taking women in preference to men on their journeys is, that women cost them less than men, and are satisfied with lower wages. They speak the truth; but the very Fact of their being Satisfied with less wages is a Manifest proof of their dissoluteness. If they Were wise would they not ask to be paid the same as men, since they perform the same services – and frequently do more, by Cutting wood for them and by Cooking their food, which the men will not do? Therefore that is not their sole Reason for taking women; but the reason is that The women, Being depraved, want them as men; and they, on their part, want them as women, on all Their journeys, – after which If they quit one another, They separate from these only to Seek others.”

Primary Source 4: *A Huguenot Refugee in the Americas Recruits Coreligionists to Join Him*

The first Huguenot refugees were arriving in colonies of Americas already in the years of the dragonnades, but after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes of 1685, they showed up in greater numbers. Most of those who arrived have first moved to England and Ireland, from where they moved to English colonies of Carolina, New York, Virginia, and Massachusetts. In part, because these Huguenot refugees were relatively wealthy, and in part because their pastors had done such a good job publicizing their suffering and their potential contributions to host societies, several colonies actively recruited. In this pamphlet, an anonymous Huguenot author wrote to coreligionists, encouraging them to settle in Massachusetts.

Report of a French Protestant Refugee in Boston, 1687, translated by E. T. Fisher (Brooklyn, NY: J. Munsell, 1868), 7-10, 16, 19-21, 25, 36-37, 40.



Report of a French Protestant Refugee in Boston, 1687

"By the Grace of God, I have been in these happy Regions, in perfect Health, since the seventeenth of the last Month, after a Passage of fifty-three Days We met a Number of Ships at Sea, some coming from the fishing Banks, others from the Islands of America; among others we met a Ship belonging in La Rochelle, which was coming from Martinique laden with Sugar, and which had previously made a Voyage to Guinea,* whence it had brought hundred and fifty Negroes, and two Capuchin Fathers who had been obliged to abandon their Post in Guinea, in View of the little Progress they there made. ...

By another Ship arrived from New York, we have Letters notifying us that the Governor of [Quebec] had written a very strong Letter to the Governor of New York, the Grievance being that he had supplied Ammunition to the Iroquois who are at War with the French, saying that if he continued his Assistance to the, he should come [with troops] and see them this Winter ... If any other News transpires, I shall not fail to communicate it...

There is no Religion here other than the Presbyterian, the Anglican, Anabaptist, and our own. We have not any papists, at least that are known to us...**

* That refers to the coastal areas of West Africa that include the Gold Coast and the Bight of Benin.

** The first three faiths referenced are different forms of English Protestants. The term "papist" is a disparaging term that Protestants once used to refer to Catholics. In this sense, the author suggests that not having any Catholics was a positive feature of life in Massachusetts.



View of Boston from the harbor, c. 1730-1760

You can bring with you hired Help in any Vocation whatever; there is an absolute Need of them to till the land. You may also own Negroes and Negresses; there is not a House in Boston, however, small may be its means, that has not one or two. There are those that have five or six, and all make a good Living. You employ Savages to work your Fields, † in Consideration of one Schilling and a half a Day and Board, which is eighteen Pence; it being always understood that you must provide them with Beasts and Utensils for Labor.

It is better to have hired Men to till your land. Negroes cost from twenty to forty Pistoles[‡] There is no Danger that they will leave you, nor Hired help likewise, for the Moment one is missing from the Town, you have only to notify the Savages, who, provided you promise them something, and describe the Man to them, he is right soon found. But it happens rarely that they quit you, for they would know not where to go, there being few trodden Roads, and those which are trodden lead to English Towns or Villages, which, on your writing, will immediately send back your Men. There are Ship-captains who might taken them off; but that is open Larceny and would be rigorously punished. Houses of Brick and Frame can be built cheaply, as regards Materials, but the Labor of Workmen is very dear; a Man cannot be got to work for less than twenty-four Pence a Day and found....

You must disabuse yourself of the Impression that Advantages are here offered to [Huguenot] Refugees. It is true that in the Beginning some Subsistence was furnished them, but at Present there is Need of some for those who shall bring Nothing. At Nicmok[§] ... Land is given for Nothing, and at Noraganzet^{||} it must be bought at twenty to twenty-five Pounds Sterling the hundred Acres, so that whoever brings Nothing here, finds Nothing. It is very true that Living is exceedingly cheap, and that with a little one can make a good Settlement. A family of three or four Person can make with fifty Pistoles a fine Settlement; but it needs not less than that. Those who bring much, do well in Proportion....

† By "savages" the author referred to indigenous Americans.

‡ A pistole was a kind of gold coin.

§ The Nipmuc are a people indigenous to central and western Massachusetts and parts of present-day Connecticut and Rhode Island. In 1676, many had fought against the New England colonists, alongside the Wampanoag. Many Nipmuc died in war, while others were forcibly removed, executed, or sold into slavery in the Caribbean. The surviving refugees later regrouped in central Massachusetts, but much of their land had already been given away to European settlers. Today, there are two small Nipmuc reservations in central Massachusetts. While the state recognizes the Nipmuc as a tribe, as of 2021, the U.S. government declines to include the Nipmuc as a federally recognized tribe.

|| The lands of the Narragansett people are largely in present-day Rhode Island. Though the Narragansett remained neutral in King Philip's War, New England colonists attacked them in November 1675, massacring large numbers, and sending survivors into slavery in the Caribbean. The colonists destroyed Narragansett village and incorporated their lands into New England. The remaining survivors fled as refugees to join other indigenous groups in the area. Today, the Narragansett are a federally recognized tribe with a reservation in southern Rhode Island.



View of the city of Boston, 18th century

If our poor Refugee Brethren would understand tilling Land, should come hither, they could not fair of living very comfortably and getting rich, for the English are very inefficient, and can understand only their Indian Corn and Cattle.

Here in Boston there are not more than twenty French Families.... Two young men have lately arrived from Carolina, who give some News of that Country; especially they say they never saw so miserable a Country, and so unhealthful a Climate. They have Fevers there during the whole Year, such as that those attacked rarely recover ... Moreover the Heats there are so severe, that it is almost impossible to endure them, and that they infected the Water, and consequently caused Sickness, there being no other Drink than that....

There is Nothing to fear from the Savages, for they are few in Number. The last Wars they had with the English, twelve Years go, have reduced them to a small Number, and consequently they are incapable of defending themselves.



French Huguenot Church in Charleston, built in 1844, though the congregation dates back to the 1680s

Image Citations:

Page 1:

"A new map of North America shewing its principal divisions, chief cities, townes, rivers, mountains &c," Edward Wells, M. Burghers, University of Oxford, 1719, New York Public Library Digital Collections, Public Domain, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-c2f9-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Page 2:

"Leonid Parkinson, a Captain of Maroons," in *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica in Regard to the Maroon Negroes* (London: John Stockdale, 1796), title page, Public Domain, https://books.google.com/books?id=gIMXiU5fwBYC&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&prints_ec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Page 3:

"Fugitive slaves fleeing from slave catchers on horseback," from the *Narrative of the life and adventures of Henry Bibb, an American slave, written by himself*, (New York: Henry Bibb), 1849, New York Public Library Digital Collections, Public Domain, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-74ec-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>
Slave Hunt, Dismal Swamp, Virginia, by Thomas Moran, 1862, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Slave_Hunt,_Dismal_Swamp,_Virginia_by_Thomas_Moran.JPG

Page 4:

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Page 5:

Frans Post, Sugar Mill in Pernambuco, 17th c, Public Domain, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Frans_Post_-_Engenho_de_Pernambuco.jpg
Map of the Captaincy of Pernambuco, by Frans Post, 1647, Public Domain, [https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Mapa_da_Capitania_de_Pernambuco_com_representação%3%A7%3A3o_do_Quilombo_dos_Palmares_\(1647\).jpg](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Mapa_da_Capitania_de_Pernambuco_com_representação%3%A7%3A3o_do_Quilombo_dos_Palmares_(1647).jpg)

Page 6:

1717 Map of St. Ignace, Michigan showing location of Jesuit mission, Public Domain, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1717_Map_of_St_Ignace.jpg

Page 7:

Report of a French Protestant Refugee in Boston, 1687, translated by E. T. Fisher (Brooklyn, NY: J. Munsell, 1868), Title Page, Public Domain, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.reportoffrenchpr00fish/?sp=5>

Page 8:

John Carwitham, "A south east view of the great town of Boston in New England in America," c. 1730-1769, Library of Congress, Public Domain, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004671510/>

Page 9:

Samuel Hill, "View of the city of Boston from Breeds Hill in Charlestown," c. 1791, Library of Congress, Public Domain, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004670224/>
Huguenot Church, Charleston, South Carolina, 1904, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C., Public Domain, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016799773/>