

The Indigenous Peoples and the Europeans

Topic: Settlement by the Non-Spanish Europeans in the Caribbean

European Rivalry and Settlement in the Caribbean in the 17th

The mid-17th century in the Caribbean was shaped by events in far-off Europe. For the Dutch Netherlands, France, Spain. In England **Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell ruled** from 1649–1660). The colonies in the **Spanish empire** were badly neglected from the middle of the 17th century, and freebooters and privateers, experienced after decades of European warfare, pillaged and plundered the almost defenceless Spanish settlements with ease and with little interference from the European governments.

The **non-Spanish colonies** were growing and expanding across the Caribbean, fuelled by a great increase in immigration as people fled from the chaos and lack of economic opportunity in Europe. While most of these new immigrants settled into the West Indies' expanding plantation economy, others took to the life of the buccaneer. Meanwhile, the **Dutch** made a fortune carrying the European trade goods needed by these new colonies. Peaceful trading was not as profitable as privateering, but it was a safer business.

English Settlements The first Caribbean islands to be settled by the British were St Kitts (1623/4) in the north-east and Barbados (1627) in the south-east corner of the Caribbean Basin. When this island filled up, English-speakers left for other locations, especially for Jamaica after it was taken by the British from the Spanish in 1655. The English colonies at **Saint Kitts** and Nevis were economically strong and now well-populated as the demand for sugar in Europe increasingly drove their plantation-based economies. The English had also expanded their dominion in the Caribbean and settled several new islands, including **Bermuda in 1612, Antigua and Montserrat in 1632, and Eleuthera in the Bahamas in 1648**, though these settlements began like all the others as relatively tiny communities that were not economically self-sufficient. By the 18th century the **Bahamas** had become the new colonial frontier for the British. The port of Nassau became one of the last pirate havens. A small British colony had even sprung up in former Spanish territory at **Belize in Honduras** that had been founded by an English pirate in 1638.

French Settlements The French also founded major new colonies on the sugar-growing islands of **Guadeloupe in 1634 and Martinique in 1635 in the Lesser Antilles**, as well as **Tortuga** and **St. Domingue**. Tortuga became a fortified island haven off the coast of Hispaniola for privateers, buccaneers and outright pirates.

Dutch Settlements: For the Dutch in the 17th century Caribbean, the island of **Curacao** was the equivalent of England's port at Barbados. This large, rich, well-defended free port, open to the ships of all the European states, offered good prices for sugar that was re-exported to Europe and also sold large quantities of manufactured goods in return to the colonists of every nation in the New World. A second Dutch-controlled free port had also developed on the island of **Saint Eustatius** which was settled in 1636. The Dutch also had set up a settlement on the island of **Saint Martin** which became another haven for Dutch sugar planters and their African slave labor. **In 1648, the Dutch agreed to divide the prosperous island in half with the French.**

The Dutch in the Caribbean

Assess the contributions of the Dutch to the development of the Caribbean.

The Dutch came into the Caribbean during the latter half of the 16th century and early 17th century came on the heels of them seeing the prosperous economic opportunities at the time dominated by the Spanish. Though the prime and most active time for the Dutch in the Caribbean lasted for about one hundred years, **they were able to damage the monopoly the Spanish blissfully enjoyed by their; privateering attacks this created a diversion so that the English and French could settle the Lesser Antilles.**

The Dutch were referred to as the '*foster fathers*' of the early English and French settlements in the Caribbean as they provided these British and French colonies with estate supplies, cultivation knowledge particularly on sugar and were a major influential factor to the gravitation of British and French colonists towards sugar cultivation, slave labour via the Atlantic slave trade and the

Activity **Read the textbook then complete the following:**

1. What was the name of the first English settlement in the Caribbean?
2. Who was the first governor of St. Christopher (St. Kitts).
3. Discuss four challenges faced by the early settlers in St. Christopher (St. Kitts)
4. Outline the role of Joint Stock Companies in settling the early English colonies.
5. Who were Lord Proprietors? Give the name of the Lord Proprietor of St. Kitts.
6. What was the crop chosen by the early English settlers to cultivate in the Caribbean and state the reason it was chosen.
7. Explain the mission known as the Western Design.
8. State the founder of the Western Design as well as its two leaders.
9. Give the factors which led to the capture of Jamaica by the English in 1655.
10. Conduct research on the buccaneers in the Caribbean. Include the following:
 - ✓ Who were the buccaneers.
 - ✓ State the Century in which they operated in the Caribbean.
 - ✓ Describe the activities of buccaneers.
 - ✓ Discuss the role of Henry Morgan.
 - ✓ State the reasons which led to the end of buccaneering activities in the Caribbean.