

From Freedom to Bondage: The Jamaican Maroons, 1655-1770

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Abstract:

The Jamaican Maroons were not a small rebel community, instead they were a complex polity that operated as such from 1655-1770. They created a favorable trade balance with Jamaica and the British. They created a network of villages that supported the growth of their collective identity through borrowed culture from Africa and Europe and through created culture unique to Maroons. They were self-sufficient and practiced sustainable agricultural practices. The British recognized the Maroons as a threat to their possession of Jamaica and embarked on multiple campaigns against the Maroons, utilizing both external military force, in the form of Jamaican mercenaries, and internal force in the form of British and Jamaican military regiments. Through a systematic breakdown of the power structure of the Maroons, the British were able to subject them through treaty. By addressing the nature of Maroon society and growth of the Maroon state, their agency can be recognized as a dominating factor in Jamaican politics and development of the country.

In 1509 the Spanish settled Jamaica and brought with them the institution of slavery. By 1655, when the British invaded the island, there were 558 slaves.¹ During the battle most slaves were separated from their masters and fled to the mountains. Two major factions of Maroons established themselves on opposite ends of the island, the Windward and Leeward Maroons. These two groups formed the first independent polities from European colonial rule. The two groups formed independent from each other and with very different political structures but similar economic and social structures. Nevertheless both groups suffered from increased bondage by the British under the guise of treaties promising autonomy.² The British never recognized the Maroons as independent and did not view the treaty as a document that would bring balance between the two nations. The children of former slaves created a unique collective identity and created a nation. From 1655 to 1770 the Maroons were integrated into the British bondage system through external military force, internal sabotage, and lack of political cohesion.

In 1660 the British hired Capitan Juan de Bolas to lead an army against fellow Maroons. The British gave him an individual land plot in exchange for his services, four years later de Bolas had reduced the number of Maroons from 558 to 100 and eventually perished during a campaign against a remote village in the Blue Mountains.³ The number of Maroons was a small fraction of the total population of the island and was not consolidated or united, with each village having thirty members or more. Maroons operated independently from British interference for

¹ Bryan Edwards. "Observations on the Disposition, Character, Manner, and Habits of Life of the Maroon Negroes of the Island of Jamaica; and a Detail of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the Late War Between Those People and the White Inhabitants." In *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, edited by Richard Price. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1973), Pg. 231

² The word treaty was defined as a formal agreement between two or more states in favor of peace and trade.

³ Barbara Klamon Kopytoff. *The Maroons of Jamaica: An Ethnohistorical Study of Incomplete Politics, 1655-1905*. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Press), 1972 . Pg. 13

the next 84 years. Their engagement was initially limited with others on the island. Contact was primarily through raiding and trading with slaves unwilling to leave their plantation.

Raiding took place mainly at night and without preemptive motives. Raiding was an act of desperation as trading was more the norm. Trading happened on a daily basis. Maroons would go into towns and trade in the markets with free blacks and also develop relationships with slaves in order to access goods only found on the plantation. Goods needed from the plantation and market place included farming tools, textiles, and iron and copper products. Goods gained from raiding included money, weapons, women, and slaves; however, they practiced a policy of isolationism.

The isolation policy adopted by the Jamaican Maroons allowed them to grow in political and social complexity. This allowed for generations to be born not on plantations but in Maroon villages. They utilized land suitable for agriculture which allowed for self-sufficient agriculture production. With population growth and the expansion of hunting and agricultural ground the Maroons who had not been born on the plantation established a sense of identity that was unique and free from bondage and identification with Britain.

The Maroons made extensive contact almost on a daily basis with slaves on the plantation, trading food product they had grown for tools, weapons, textiles, and pots and pans that they were unable to manufacture themselves. He argues that it was necessary in order to recruit new members because the mortality rate of life in the mountains was high.⁴ Even though mortality rates were high Maroons did not need to be recruited. Slaves participated in *petite marronage* on a daily basis. It was not unusual for slaves to go absent for a day or two and return. Slaves were given reign by the plantation overseers to participate in an urban

⁴ Vincent Bakpetu Thompson. *The Making of the African Diaspora in the Americas, 1441-1900*. (New York: Longman, 1993), p.273-292

environment that allowed them to travel long distances away from the plantation. Slaves sometimes migrated from plantation to plantation when they felt that the master's punishments were too grueling or unjust. Seasoned slaves and slaves born on the plantation participated in this kind of marronage, primarily because they had a heritage on the plantation that included a family unit. The increase in Maroon numbers was caused by *grand marronage*; mainly engaged in by slaves who had recently arrived in Jamaica and had not finished the seasoning process, a five year process of working on the plantation.

Grand marronage was carried out by large groups of slaves and their goals were to join a maroon group or form their own group, and most importantly never return to the bondage system which they had left. *Grand marronage* was conducted through rebellion or organized fleeing. In 1673 a maroon instigated rebellion on the Lobby Plantation set the precedent in Jamaica. The rebellion ultimately failed but it inspired other slaves to use the same organizational processes, utilizing knowledge of the landscape and military skills to help them escape, for the next 50 years. Again in 1673, St. Anne Plantation revolted under its own population's organization and 300 slaves escaped into the Cockpits occupied by the Leeward Maroons. In 1685 the Widow Grey Plantation experienced a revolt that allowed 150 slaves to escape. In 1690 on the Sutton Plantation 400 slaves revolted and was herald as the manifestation of Maroon organization efforts. Only 40 managed to escape, but the message had been understood by the British.⁵ Upward of 1,500 slaves revolted across the island, but there is no evidence that the majority of revolts were initiated by Maroons, unlike Brazil where rebellions were decidedly organized by

⁵ Bev Carey *The Maroon Story: Gordon Town, Jamaica: The Authentic and Original History of the Maroons in the History of Jamaica, 1490-1880*. (Agouti Press: A Maroon Publishing House, 1997). Pg. 145-152

Maroons. From 1655 to 1690 the maroons had grown in numbers and even though they had limited contact with slaves their presence was already that of legend.⁶

The British reacted by financing campaigns against the Maroons beginning in 1700. The expenditures reached 250,000 pounds and the British death toll rose to 3,000 men.⁷ In 1734 the Governor of Jamaica stated: “We are not in a condition to defend ourselves...and their success has had such influence on our other slaves that they are continuously deserting to them in great numbers...without your Majesties gracious aid and assistance must render us a prey to them.”⁸ The Governors’ concerns were echoes of the British crown which had wrote a letter claiming the conflicts with Maroons were going to bankrupt the country. The lack of labor on the island was threatening sugar production as *grand marronage* was on the rise, primarily due to lack of authority on the plantation. Most owners lived in Britain rather than Jamaica and their overseers participated in military campaigns against the Maroons only if the master had traveled to the island. The urgency of correspondence between Britain and Jamaica prompted the Governor to take a census of the Maroon population.

In September 1734, an estimate on Maroon population was released by the British: “The Windward [eastern] Rebels...amount to 490 persons...Those to the Leeward [western]...about

⁶ After 1690 maroon numbers stabilized as mortality rates provided equilibrium against new runaways, however maroon reproduction rates were high and helped population growth through 1734.

⁷ The casualties were much higher than Maroon mortality in battle. Maroon casualties reached at the maximum 200 men.

⁸ Address of Governor, Council and Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 21 February, 1734. This speech was published in Silvia W. De Groot, Catherine A. Christen, and Franklin W. Knight. “Maroon Communities in the Circum Caribbean.” In *General History of the Caribbean: Volume III The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*, edited by Franklin W. Knight, 169-193. (London: UNESCO Publisher, 1997), Pg. 56-91

the same in number...”⁹ The estimates were based on plantation owners who had submitted forms claiming the number of slaves that had abandoned their plantation. The figure was also based on the number of maroons they encountered on their military campaigns. Based on the numbers of escapees in previous years through rebellions, this number was inadequate. The only records from Maroons is that of Leeward Headman Cudjoe who recorded “231 men...women and children are considerable and in proportion to men.”¹⁰ Codjoe reported false numbers in an attempt to soften tension with the British. The number of men was greater than that of women and children because the proportion of men brought to the Americas is much greater than that of women; the number of women who participated in *marronage* was small, as they had established kinship or family ties on the plantation. Leeward and Windward Maroon combined population reached well over 1,000 by 1735 and the communities had developed an independent economy and material culture.

The Maroons grew cocoa, sugar cane, plantains, melons, yams, corn, banana, wild yams and roots, and cabbage. The villages traded with each other for food stuffs cultivated in various parts of the mountains. Trade networks between villages made it possible for communities to build entire safe houses specifically for storage and house merchants traveling around to all the different villages.¹¹ The size and location of settlements outlined during excavations of

⁹ Address of Governor, Council and Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 20 March, 1734. The speech was provided abridged in Barbara Klamon Kopytoff. *The Maroons of Jamaica: An Ethnohistorical Study of Incomplete Politics, 1655-1905*. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Press), 1972

¹⁰ Cudjoe addressed the Governor of Jamaica in 1734 at the Governor’s request. The speech provided abridged in Kopytoff, Pg. 103

¹¹ Carey argued that these separate dwelling areas were built not for trade but in times of war during European campaigns against them; surplus was kept their indefinitely and that it also was never used unless that specific occasion rose. Michael Cranton “Resistance to Slavery.” In *General History of the Caribbean: Volume III the Slave Societies of the Caribbean*, edited by Franklin W. Knight, 222-270. (London: UNESCO Publisher, 1997). He suggested they were not built independently at all but rather they were old villages that had been abandoned early during the European campaigns against the Maroons and then transformed into storage units. Kopytoff argued

Accompong Town suggested they were too small to be occupied by a large number of people and that at the most around 30 people could occupy the settlements.¹² The outposts were not used for defense. Defenses were built into the villages and the Maroon populations trained in combat. This number is too low to accommodate the number of men used for military protection and is perfectly suited to fit the number of people allocated to conduct trade. Accompong of the Leeward Maroon community was the largest of the communities and built the largest outposts. The buildings had accommodation of 30 people which proves that they were used for storage and trade. They were hidden so that new runaways would not find and loot the buildings; also, Europeans would not find and destroy the surplus. If they were used for any other purpose than storage and trade then such measures would not have been made.

The Windward Maroons built their outpost on the rivers because fields suitable for agriculture were not in close proximity and they relied more on fishing. They also traded food products with slaves on the plantation and with free blacks in the urban market. If they were unable to produce enough to be self-sufficient or did not have enough surplus to engage in trade they raided. Maroons hunted extensively and raised hogs and birds for consumption. Salt was difficult to find for the Windward maroons and relied on boiling salt water, which meant they were in closer proximity to the plantation complexes than the Leeward Maroons. Plantations were located near the ocean so salt water could be easily gathered for local salt production; also access to trading ports was greater. Their location also gave them greater access to trade with non-Maroons. The Leeward Maroons relied heavily on wood ash for their salt needs. Salt was

settlements were built in case of emergency relocation but they were much larger in scale and built not far from the original settlement, preferably near a known productive agricultural field. She also says that the large scale settlement functioned in similar fashion to the small outposts when they were not used.

¹² Kofi E. Agorsah. "Background to Maroon Heritage." In *Maroon Heritage: Archaeological Ethnographical and Historical Perspectives*, edited by Kofi E. Agorsah, 1- 35. (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1994) Pg. 2-7

needed to preserve food products and also used medicinally for cleaning wounds. Wood ash was the only substance available that was comparable to sea salt or desert salt.

The agriculturists of the Maroon communities formed a non-militant faction of society. They were not armed on a continuous basis. The Maroons were able to build an artisan class which engaged in building canoes, spears and various kinds of arrows each designed for a specific purpose. They also made many musical instruments including the *abeng*, a horn like instrument, sometimes as rudimentary as a conch. They also made numerous variations of the drum. With specialization and large population the Maroon settlements were complex and self-sustaining. The Leeward Maroon Community of Old Nanny Town consisted of 120 separate huts with the village zoned for living and working quarters.¹³ Each village had a “Dancing Palace” where Headman conducted rituals and ceremonies. The Headman functioned not only as social leader but political leader too.

Political structures and Headman roles varied between the Windward and Leeward Maroons. The Leeward Maroons were centralized and leadership was based on kinship. Succession of Windward Maroons was matrilineal and always went to a younger generation instead of a brother, sister, or older relative. Leeward Maroons were patriarchal instead of matriarchal. By 1730, Cudjoe was the Leeward Headman and claimed legitimacy based on his lineage; his father was the Maroon who instigated the Sutton Plantation rebellion. Cudjoe claimed to be Nanny’s “brother” and claimed legitimacy through her lineage and his father’s lineage. Cudjoe was able to consolidate the villages under his authority by taking power away from the individual *obeah* women, further perpetuating patriarchy in Leeward Maroon society. He did allow *obeahs* to control domestic matters but economic and military policies were decided by Cudjoe. The Windward Maroons were more like a federation than a monarchy and it

¹³Agorsah, Pg. 20-25

was more egalitarian than totalitarian. There was communal leadership and hierarchy was based on age with elders at the top. Law and order was conducted by society as a whole. *Obeahs* were more influential and were advisors to the elders. *Obeahs* were considered to be the second highest positioning society. They were described as “supernatural technicians exercising their powers on behalf of the group, and they might begin to take on political powers and apply ritual sanctions on behalf of the group.”¹⁴ This was especially true of Nanny, the founder of the Windward Maroons.

She was one of the only *obeahs* to exercise the full potential of her position. Most *obeahs* never engaged in fighting and were at odds with Headman over political control.¹⁵ Nanny on the contrary carried a large knife belt with 12 knives at any given time. Her reputation was solidified as a fierce warrior when she returned from battle against the Europeans with bracelets made of British teeth wrapped around her wrists and ankles.¹⁶ She had proven that the Maroon nation had legitimized itself as self-regulating political entity. She was said to have taken on the “...role of Queen Mother of Ashanti.”¹⁷ For most *obeahs* it was difficult to maintain power, one wrong prediction would dismantle their reputation within the community and they would be reduced to agriculturalist. The *obeah* is a part of Maroon society that is directly linked to their African

¹⁴ Kopytoff, pg. 83

¹⁵ This was evident when Windward Headman Quoha said: “When I consulted our Obeah woman, she opposed the measure, and said him being beccara [whites] for take the town, so cut him head off.” This quote is found in Kopytoff, pg. 85. The larger text can be found in the Jamaican archives. The message had been recorded by an unknown soldier held captive by the Windward Maroons. The “measure” that was “opposed” by the *Obeah* was to keep the captive soldier as a slave. Also the term “beccara” can be found spelled “bakra.”

¹⁶ Virginia R Dominguez. *Leadership and the Exercise of Authority in Maroon Societies*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) Pg. 14

¹⁷ *Ibid*, Pg. 109

heritage. Most runaways that joined through 1739 were African-born and *obeahs* are only one of many cultural aspects incorporated.

For Windward Maroons every aspect of culture was inherently African; the nature of authority, the belief in the supernatural, kinship relations and obligations, division of labor among the sexes, Headman roles, ritual leaders, and polygamy. Each village had its own medicine man and mid-wife. One of the strongest African influences was that of marriage and residence relations. Males could not settle in a new village individually while women could, and residency status usually depended on economic situations and hierarchy of lineage unlike Leeward Maroons.¹⁸ Leeward Maroons amalgamated cultural influences; successfully combining African and European religion, agricultural practices, and a rigid class system. This was more prevalent by the Maroons who had been born on the plantation in the Americas and those who had been institutionalized for more than 5 years. As a result of closer proximity to Europeans over the years Maroons increasingly took titles such as Colonel, Captain, and Governor.¹⁹

Proximity to plantation settlements was essential to Maroon communities and the importance increased as the British waged campaigns against them, burning their food crops and storage units. Proximity to Amerindians increased in significance over time, many of the agricultural techniques were developed by Amerindians and taught to Maroons; however, relations diminished as time progressed due to encroachment on Indian hunting territory.

¹⁸ Orlando Patterson "Slavery and Slave Revolts: A Socio-historical Analysis of the First Maroon War, 1665-1740." In *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, edited by Richard Price, 246-292. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1973). He argued they were very much syncretic: "Marriage systems forged in response and resistance to the dehumanization of slavery drew on both underlying African culture values and a transformation of European marriage to create a Caribbean Creole system of conjugality and procreation."

¹⁹ Eugene Burt. "Runaway Slave Communities in the New World: the Transportation of Africa to the Western Hemisphere." Seminar, March 15, 1977. Kenyatta University College.

Amerindians were also being contracted by the British to besiege the Maroons. Military alliance and competency was essential in keeping independence. Constant warring put a strain on all inhabitants' military capabilities.

Major General Sedgwick foresaw the escalated incidents in 1656: “[Spanish slaves] must be destroyed or brought in...or else they will prove a great discouragement to the settling country.”²⁰ These sentiments were reiterated in a more acute form in 1734 when the Governor of Jamaica said:

[“We are not in a condition to defend ourselves, the terror of them spreads itself everywhere and the ravages and barbarities they commit, have determined several planters to abandoned their settlements, the evil is daily increasing and their success has had such influence on our slaves that they are continually deserting to them in great numbers and the insolent behavior of others gives but too much cause to fear a general defection...”]²¹

These concerns were coupled with increasingly expensive campaigns. Major-General Brooks remarks: “...to make a good mule road to the Negro town if practicable to be done and if not to find another road that may be made so, as the success of the present expedition will chiefly depend upon a constant supply of provisions and ammunition.”²² Distribution problems and casualties were not only experienced by Europeans but Maroons as well, however, the mortality for Maroons was not from combat but rather starvation and disease.

²⁰ Edwards, pg. 232

²¹ Address of Governor, Council and Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 21 February, 1734. This speech was published in full text in Silvia W. De Groot, Catherine A. Christen, and Franklin W. Knight. “Maroon Communities in the Circum Caribbean.” In *General History of the Caribbean: Volume III The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*, edited by Franklin W. Knight, 169-193. (London: UNESCO Publisher, 1997), Pg. 56-91

²² Carey, pg. 279

Prior to 1734 Maroons were not disrupting the plantation complex on a large scale and the limited contact conducted was not hostile or produced repercussions. After 1734 Maroon activity in close proximity to the plantations was viewed as a high threat and militias were sent to destroy their settlements and enslave if not kill them. The Maroons increased their isolation policies in order to keep the threat of British military action low. In order to drive the Maroons out of the mountains, the British burned agricultural fields, barred trade in urban areas between blacks, and restricted movement of slaves on the plantation and throughout Jamaica. The actions and reaction of both the Maroons and the British detrimentally exacerbated the incidents:

[“The Maroons were not less anxious for an accommodation they were hemmed in and closely beset on all sides; their provisions destroyed; and themselves reduced to miserable a condition by famine and incessant attacks, that Cudjoe declared, if peace had not been offered to them, they had no choice left but either to be starved, lay violent hands on one another, or surrender to the English at discretion.”]²³

Equally, the British were feeling the “horrors of continual alarms, the hardships of military duty, and the intolerable burden of maintaining an army on foot.”²⁴ The British were unaware that one or two more campaigns would have permanently crippled the Maroons. Before either side exterminated itself, the British offered a peace treaty in 1739. This treaty was the first step in assimilating the Maroons into Jamaican society; although, the assimilation was guised as recognition as an autonomous nation for Maroons.

The first draft of the treaty recognized only one town of the Leeward Maroons and not Windward Maroons. Trelawney Town, Accompong, Crawford Town, and Nanny Town adhered

²³ Kopytoff, pg. 106

²⁴ *Ibid*, pg. 107

to it after Cudjoe reported the treaty to each village; the British believed his lineage claim to both Windward and Leeward would give him the ability to represent all Maroons. The inability to recognize Cudjoes treachery incorporated Maroons that otherwise were self-governing and economically sufficient. Many provisions and stipulations were offered to the Maroons; including returning new runaways and those in the community who had been members for two years or less. Since the first draft only recognized one town, Trelawney Town, the land allotments were outlined exclusively for that town. The “ambiguity...of Maroon-Government relations allowed much flexibility in the application and interpretation of the treaties and eventually gave rise to serious differences between the two parties;”²⁵ the difference being in favor of the Maroons who were largely still acting with limited restriction. The Maroon economy was still allowed self-sufficiency through production of cash crops, except sugar cane. They could not, however, hunt within 3 miles of any British settlement. They were also required to build roads to their communities accessible by the British. This was a major process that would inextricably link the downfall of Maroon autonomy.

The British believed that all Maroons were highly centralized and gave full social authority to Cudjoe: “That Captain Cudjoe...and the Captains succeeding him shall have full power...”²⁶ The model was suited for the Leeward political structure but undermined the Windward political structure by forcing their egalitarian system into a patriarchal hierarchy. It also diminished the significance of *obeah* in politics. The British replaced *obeahs* with white superintendence stationed in or near the villages. Cudjoes village was required to have two and they were to be paid 200 pounds annual salary. Their main goal was to “...receive and

²⁵ *Ibid*, Pg. 118

²⁶ *Ibid*, Pg. 125 –The full text of Treaties is in Barbara Klamon Kopytoff. *The Maroons of Jamaica: An Ethnohistorical Study of Incomplete Politics, 1655-1905*. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Press, 1972)

communicate such orders as shall be sent by his Excellency the governor to the said Negroes.”²⁷

The mandate transferred the political power of Headman to the Governor of Jamaica. The governor ordered all Maroons to declare war against the Spanish. The Maroons were stripped of rank in the militias and all officers were British. If succession lines ran out in any hierarchical structure the appointee would be placed there by the British not the Maroon consensus.

In 1741 the treaty was revised in order to support European feudal notions of subjectship. Nanny Town received 500 acres in the parish of Portland. Maroons had an annual tax of 1 pound on the land and owed 1/20th on profits made by community. The town was required to have five white superintendents. Only a few towns had been given land outlines and most Maroons hunted and farmed far beyond their allotted territory. The expansion led to encroachment on British plantations and frontier settlements. This culminated in the purchase of the Peete Plantation by Britain for Maroons. In exchange for the 610 acre allotment they had to police surrounding plantations. Accompong was given 1,500 acres of land it were to be divided by all Leeward Maroon settlements. Encroachment also led to the purchase of 1,000 acres of St. Elizabeth Plantation. By this time the Maroons communities had been encompassed by whites. This was strategically done by Britain to keep land usage by Maroons as limited as possible and to restrict trade with one another and keep trade dominated European sanctions.

Under huge stress on the land, widespread starvation occurred and the Maroons rebelled. Trelawney Town and Crawford Town dissolved only to reestablish themselves as Scotts Hall and Charles Town. The agricultural variety plummeted and production was regulated; Scotts Hill was required to grow a certain amount of arrowroot and Charles Town was required to grow coffee and harvest lumber. Cudjoe's town was the only Maroon town after the treaty allowed to

²⁷ *Ibid*, Pg. 127

raise cattle. His town was also required to grow tobacco. Accompong was required to grow coffee and pimento. This caused large economic imbalances within the Maroon community causing Maroons to rely on grants from the British.

It was necessary to keep the economy floating since Britain's revision of the treaty in 1744 which stated slavery in Maroon communities was illegal. The breakdown of the slave labor system in the Maroon communities was covered up as the Act for the Better Order and Government of the Maroon Communities. This measure tore apart the social system and economic systems began slowing. The constant provisions and enforced restriction on treaties that were designed to enfranchise Maroons caused internal dissent. In 1749 Crawford Town rebelled and successfully murdered their Headman Crawford and British superintendents. Dissatisfaction with the Headman diminished their authority in the Maroon community.

The treaties restricted the Headman's ability to organize a militia and to exercise the death penalty, which were the two main sources of fear induced power over the community. Their power was also limited by restricting their access to the Jamaican government. The intrusion of superintendents on the villages further alienated the Headman from the group as they took over the role of mediator between the British government and the Maroons. The Headman's ability and the group's ability to appoint or elect their own leader was stripped from them: "A structure was erected - a group of Government - appointed Maroon officers, supervised by White superintendents, complete with commissions, and badges to legitimize it, but it never carried enough authority to satisfy other Maroon needs or British requirements."²⁸ The British treaty put the Maroons in a cycle of perpetual regulation and oppression.

The British government increasingly added more superintendents that would specifically control militias. Over time the responsibilities of all superintendents increased as the Headman's

²⁸ *Ibid*, Pg. 208

responsibilities weaned. In 1770 a superintendent-general was appointed to the Leeward Maroons and one was appointed to the Windward Maroons. It reduced the Headman's role been to figure head and the British government had control over all aspects of Maroon life. This solidified the whites as the wholly recognized supreme authority. The British government had been able to reduce the once autonomous Maroons to petty subjects.

Between 1655 and 1739 the Maroons of Jamaica functioned as an independently polity and had total control over their own economic, political, and social systems. Competition over resources and trade caused conflict between the British and the Maroons; internal sabotage exacerbated hostile relations and caused disunity among the Maroon groups and their leaders. In 1739 a treaty was signed promising recognition of the Maroon state in return for menial regulations. The revisions eroded Maroon agency from 1739 to 1770 and reached an apex when the superintendents took over governing practices from the *obeahs* and Headmen; ultimately leading to total economic, social, and political control by Britain and ended Maroon autonomy. The utilization of documents written by the British, archaeological excavations of settlements, and the most recent ethno-histories was essential in analyzing Maroon hegemony. The Maroons established a complex society with distinct culture and identity; it was through external and internal coercion that Maroon autonomy was stifled.

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