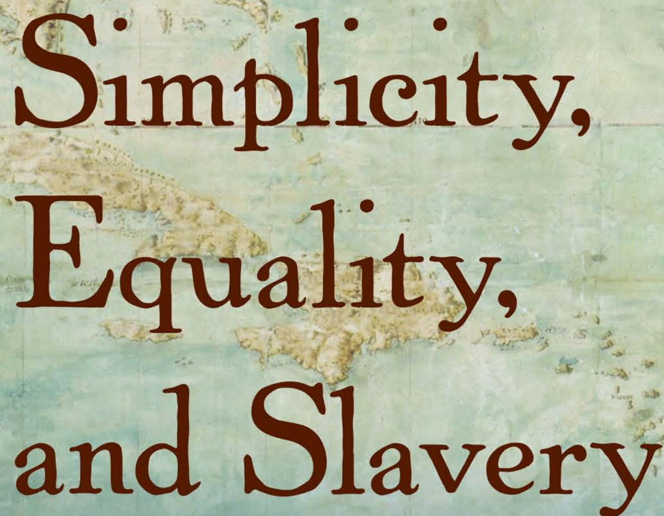

An Archaeology of Quakerism
in the British Virgin Islands, 1740–1780

Simplicity, Equality, and Slavery

Florida Museum of Natural History: Ripley P. Bullen Series

Simplicity, Equality, and Slavery

An Archaeology of Quakerism in the British Virgin Islands, 1740–1780

John M. Chenoweth

Foreword by Karl Dawson

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Dedicated to the people

of the British Virgin Islands whose history this is

and

in memory of RMC Jr.

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FOREWORD

I AM A PRACTICING CHRISTIAN. I am a native of the British Virgin Islands. I am of African descent and a descendant of the previously enslaved people in the British Virgin Islands. I am a researcher.

Aside from my practice of self-exposure to give insight to readers of possible bias, the preceding statement indicates how I am connected to this work by John Chenoweth on several levels. I believe that as a reader you too will find a point of contact. Indeed, I believe that this book will find among its readership persons who may be drawn to it based on a single association among those I have outlined or by multiple connections, some even beyond those mentioned.

Our view into the past is never complete, but various arms of history contribute to the clarification of what took place in years gone by. Various researchers interested in understanding the past may utilize different means. Documents are a significant source of insight but often represent significant bias from the point of view of the writer. Minutes of a meeting may reflect only those portions that individuals wished to be recorded, while accounts in a letter may have a goal of convincing the reader of a particular view, hence this may be reflected in what is written. Writers often present their "best self" or the best version of their group, thereby impacting their validity. Archaeology offers an approach that has significantly less human bias, as it examines the physical artifacts that may reveal occurrences contradicting popular stories.

Chenoweth does an excellent job of explaining the archaeological approach, as he presents his findings in a way that makes it very accessible to a new reader in the field. As he guides the reader, he not only makes the case for what archaeology can reveal but also offers words of caution where archaeological findings leave gaps in our full understanding of the past. The work is also made accessible by the intriguing story that envelops the studied site. The Lettsom family is traced, including those with whom they were affiliated

and their famous offspring, Dr. John Coakley Lettsom, founder of the Medical Society of London.

This work focuses on the Lettsom family on Little Jost Van Dyke but also considers their fellow planters and the enslaved Africans among them. Here again the reduced bias of the archaeological approach is beneficial, as those writing in those times would likely have had a particular perspective on the enslaved persons, resulting in a view that aspects of their daily lives were not worth recording. Physical evidence at an archaeological site does not discriminate, and the researcher is expected to take all evidence into account to determine what happened in the lives of persons in the period under investigation. Chenoweth's current work gives due attention to the enslaved persons although the investigation focuses primarily on the lives of the Lettsom family.

The first part of the book's title, "Simplicity, Equality, and Slavery," immediately illuminates what could be categorized as one of the book's themes: contradiction. The Religious Society of Friends, popularly called Quakers, have often been portrayed in history as embodying values such as equality and pacifism. Yet part of what comes to light in this study is that the seemingly incongruous value of equality and the practice of slavery appear to have existed side by side in the Quaker community of the British Virgin Islands. Such dissonance between what is preached and what is practiced is certainly not unique to this particular religious group at that time or in that place but is exposed in large part by the archaeological method in this study.

Quakers have a particular place in world history given their prominence in challenging popular sentiments, such as when they worked against African slavery in the Americas in the nineteenth century. Persons educated in the British Virgin Islands are all too familiar with the credit given to members of the Religious Society of Friends, particularly Samuel and Mary Nottingham, for releasing the persons they enslaved and bequeathing their property to them, supposedly based on Quaker principles. The Nottingham story fits well within some Quaker narratives, but the experience of many others in the Virgin Islands do not. While not a broad study on Quakerism, Chenoweth's work goes far beyond easily accessible surface-level information to facilitate an understanding of the movement in the British Virgin Islands and how it manifested in the daily lives of its members and those around them. Further extended, this work will likely stimulate thought among religious persons about contradictions between espoused values and practice up to this day.

Chenoweth's *Simplicity, Equality, and Slavery: An Archaeology of Quakerism in the British Virgin Islands, 1740–1780* utilizes the archaeological approach to give insight into lived lives in religious movements, gleaned from the context of the Lettsom family and those in their environment. For varying reasons, those who read this work will be enriched for having done so.

Karl Dawson, PhD
President, H. Lavity Stoutt Community College, Tortola

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ABBREVIATIONS FOR ARCHIVAL SOURCES

BL	British Library, London
BVI Archives	British Virgin Islands Archives and Records Management Unit, Road Town, Tortola
BYMFH	Britain Yearly Meeting (formerly London Yearly Meeting), Friends House Library Archives, London
CSP	*Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies*, accessible at *British History Online* (www.british-history.ac.uk)
HCPP	House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers
JNA	Jamaican National Archives, Kingston
LOC, WTP	U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., William Thornton Papers, Manuscript Collection 591
MSL	Medical Society of London, Lettsom House Library, London
SCFHL	Swarthmore College, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, Pa.
TMM Minutes	Tortola Monthly Meeting minutes and records, Haverford College, Quaker Collection, Haverford, Pa., Microfilm Box 128 (see note 2 in chapter 2)
UKNA	U.K. National Archives, Kew

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

"In the Bowels of Our Lord"

IN 1743, IN THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS of the Caribbean, a small community of the Religious Society of Friends—better known as "Quakers"—wrote to the Yearly Meeting of Quakers in London, "Dear Friends + Brethren, This comes with the Salutation of true + tender Love, in the Bowels of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and in his everlasting Covenant, we tenderly Salute you" (BYMFH Epistles Received 3:100). In the eighteenth century, *bowels* had a somewhat different meaning than it does now, when it inspires images of the least appealing parts of the human body; two and a half centuries ago it also meant the innermost parts more generally and, by extension, the source of compassion, pity, and true, loving emotions. Phrases like "the bowels of compassion," "in the bowels of the Father's love," and "bowels mercies" were common, and some appear in the letters this small group of Quakers sent to England. Converts to Quakerism, they came together in 1740 "in the bowels of the Lord" and embraced a religion that promised a simple holy life, equality, and peace as well as connections among and beyond the isolated small plantations in the British Virgin Islands (BVI). For more than two decades, Quakerism offered a sense of community, practical mutual support, and religious fulfillment in a land with little stability.

But just like the word *bowels,* our understanding of this community has changed because, despite Quaker ideals of equality and nonviolence, nearly every member of the group held other people enslaved. Members forced African women and men to work their lands and cook their meals, and they bought and sold the enslaved people as chattel. Today, our initial reaction to this idea is much like that we may have to the intestines: we are disgusted by what appears to be hypocrisy, and we are angered by violent slavery practiced by a group claiming to believe in equality and pacifism.

If told well, however, our stories of the past are not this simple. This story is

about how "equality" and slavery could coexist for the members of a Quaker community. The charge of hypocrisy may be justified from a modern standpoint, but in anthropology we seek to understand people on their own terms as well as from our outsider's view. In trying to understand the past (and indeed the present), a conflict between emic (insider's) and etic (outsider's) perspectives needs to be the beginning, not the end, of the analysis. Far from serving as an apology for the enslavers or just accepting that people are "products of their time," though, this book seeks to facilitate an understanding of how the Quaker group negotiated this apparent contradiction and to permit readers to gain insight into religious communities more generally. As members converted to Quakerism in the British Virgin Islands, their daily lives and broad worldviews alike were altered, and in this volume I argue that their new religion itself was also changed by their membership.

Despite the fact that I use the word *story* to describe this book, my aim here is to push beyond mere narrative. More than an anecdote to be filed away, this story also interrogates the nature of religion and religious groups. By studying the Tortola Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, as it was formally known, we hope to learn something about how religious communities work that cannot be learned by studying the written works on Quakerism alone: what happens when Quaker ideals are put into practice and what happens when they conflict with other demands? What happens—in short—when Quakerism is lived? We are apt to think of religions as lists of rules or actions carried out by rote: Quakers wear broad-brimmed hats, Catholics burn incense during mass, Muslims and Jews avoid eating pork, and so on. But as discussed more below, religions and religious communities as social creations are functions of what people do: how the ideas of these rules actually get played out, tweaked, changed, forgotten, or reinvented.

This understanding draws on a body of literature known as practice theory. In brief, this approach seeks the origins of broad cultural phenomena in the actions performed by individuals. Social groups exist only insofar as they are replicated by their members in daily actions, for instance. The goal of this book is not to provide a full theoretical review of this large and diverse body of work or to outline the details of a theoretical approach to religion. That is a task for other works (Chenoweth 2014; Ortner 1984; Schatzki 2001). Rather, this book is an extended example of the kind of considerations that become important when one seeks to examine culture, particularly social groups or "identities" centered on religious ideas, through the lens of practice. If religion is what people do, then what happens when some do it differently? Are they not "really"

members? How is the group united? How does it change, and what role do other concerns (such as money, status, and fear) have in those changes?

The little group in Tortola provides a perfect study for these questions because Quakerism seems so out of place in the rural, marginal Caribbean in the days of slavery. The British Virgin Islands (along with what were, in the eighteenth century, Danish islands but are now their U.S. counterparts) lie in the northeast corner of the Caribbean (figure 1.1) at the north end of the chain known as the Leeward Islands, the northern half of the Lesser Antilles. The British Virgin Islands consist of more than forty islands and cays (figure 1.2) and countless rocks, reefs, and pinnacles, many too small, steep, or dry to be inhabited. Far from the colonial core and agriculturally marginal compared to the great sugar islands, a poorer version of the plantation economy developed here simultaneously with the arrival of Quakerism. As Tortola Quakers negoti-

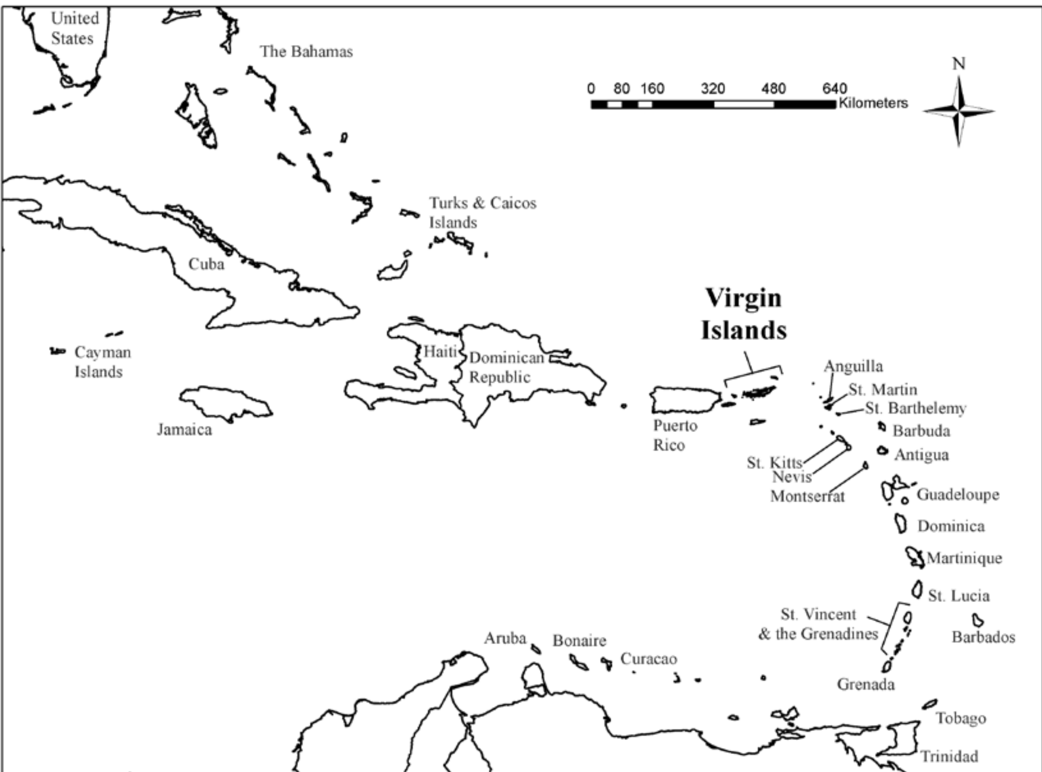

Figure 1.1. Map of the Caribbean with the Virgin Islands indicated. Map by the author based on data from the Pacific Disaster Center (http://ghin.pdc.org).

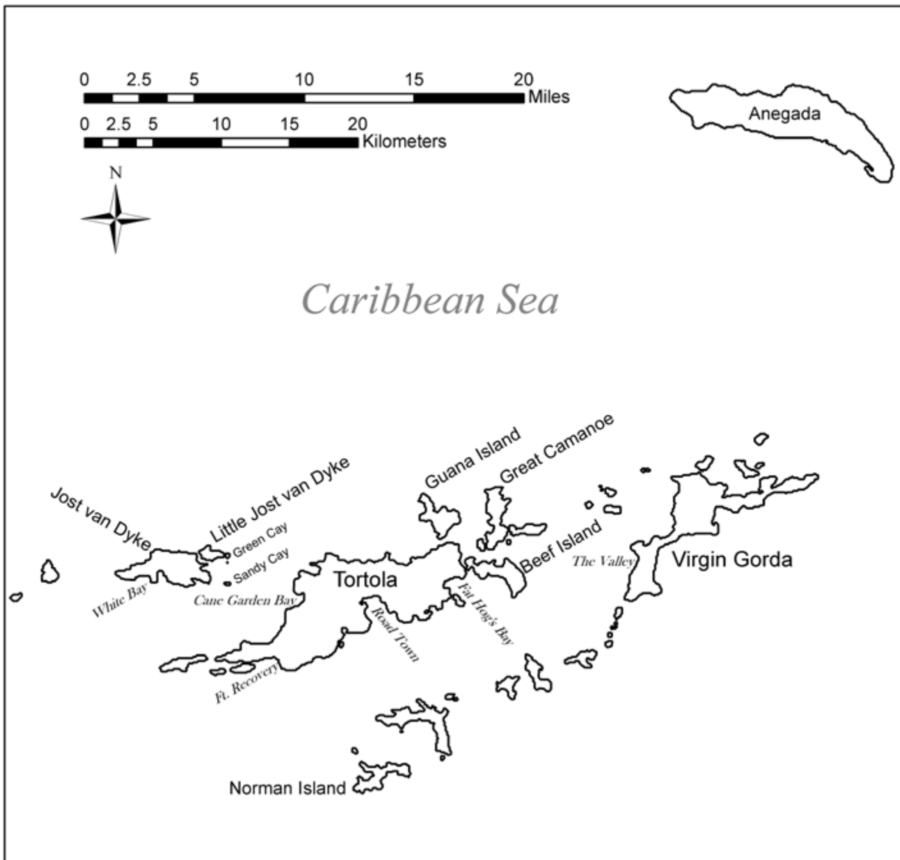

Figure 1.2. Map of the British Virgin Islands labeling islands and sites mentioned in the text. Map by the author based on data from the Pacific Disaster Center (http://ghin.pdc.org).

ated what modern eyes cannot help but see as stark contradictions between religion on the one hand and Caribbean economic and social systems on the other, what they actually *did* is an open question.

While we have many useful documents, what people do is the realm of archaeology. Shifting between written records and archaeology, the focus in this volume is primarily on one of the smaller islands, Little Jost van Dyke. This island was once owned by the Lettsom family, active members of the Tortola Quaker group at its founding who lived on the island with several enslaved people whom they held. The goal of this study is to help us understand how one set of individuals dealt with contradictions between different important parts of their lives: religion, economics, race, class, gender, and so on. By consider-

ing the communities of Quakerism in the British Virgin Islands, we can learn something about this particular corner of the world but also about religion as a whole. Then, as now, religion clashes with (and sometimes works with) politics, class, race, greed, and wealth as well as equality, simplicity, and peace—some of the ideals of Quakerism on which I focus throughout this work. Although this is a study of the eighteenth century, I think and hope that in these themes it will not be irrelevant to today.

Digging Up God: Archaeology and Religion

At first glance, archaeology may seem an unlikely way to study a group centered on religious belief, as religion is not generally thought of as material in nature and has not traditionally been a focus for archaeology. Any review of religion and archaeology almost inevitably begins with the statement of Christopher Hawkes that the ideological realm, the religious included, is the most difficult aspect of past human life to approach as an archaeologist (Hawkes 1954). Often referred to as "Hawkes' Ladder" (although he never uses the phrase in the article usually cited), his pessimistic statement considers the more "specifically human" aspects of human life to be the most difficult to approach archaeologically, while the more physical or "animal" are the easiest. Thus, the physical "techniques" producing archaeological phenomena may be "relatively easy" to see and understand, while the economic and sociopolitical are progressively more difficult, and the "religious institutions and spiritual life" of a past people, often summed up by later writers as the "ideological," are most difficult of all. These ideas are echoes of even more pointed sentiments by the famous archaeologist V. Gordon Childe a few years earlier, when he went so far as to say that religious belief is "irretrievably lost" (Childe 1951: 54–55). Beginning from these positions, many have assumed that an archaeology of religion is impossible without written documents and unnecessary with them.

Many archaeologists have engaged with questions that depart considerably from the "animal," however. The pots, as has often been said, do not "speak for themselves" in any sense, and in reality our knowledge of all aspects of past life is the result of the interpretation of these mute records. In this sense, how is "religion" as a human phenomenon really more amorphous than "structure" or even "economy" (Fogelin 2007), both of which have seen a great deal of archaeological attention?

But more important, written documents themselves do not define a religion, which only comes into being as a social group in and through the things people

do as members (Chenoweth 2012, 2014). Religion is not a list of rules but a product of social action and is better seen through peoples' daily lives, as the abstract ideals that might be written down (at least in one person's view at one moment) are put into practice by individuals in different situations. Religion is sometimes seen as static, rooted, and ancient, but its shape and meaning in peoples' lives change constantly. As discussed more in the concluding chapter to this volume, this view of religion is practice centered and, following the work of Catherine Bell (1992), focuses on how religiously important differences are drawn between different things, moments, and ideas: how these are "ritualized" in daily life. This study examines how and why some objects and actions become marked as more important than others, defining a more flexible and fluid notion of "sacred" and "secular" that permeates daily life rather than being restricted to churches, shrines, or meetinghouses.

In this way, we can examine religion much like any other social grouping or "identity." Identity is understood here, in keeping with the past two decades of archaeological scholarship, as an ongoing process rather than a static list of traits or features (Chenoweth 2009; Clark and Wilkie 2006; Conlin Casella and Fowler 2004; Meskell 2001; Meskell and Preucel 2004; Wilkie and Hayes 2006). Identity is "performed," created through being enacted (*sensu* Butler 1993). More than this, a religion, like any identity, is itself changed in the process of daily reinterpretation. As these works and others have shown, material culture—from buildings to the smallest archaeological artifacts—is an integral part of the creation of identity.

Religion is a part of daily life and thus has a material aspect so that it is archaeologically accessible (Keane 2008; Renfrew 1994; Spielman 2002), and these moments of ritualization come to define socially created groups: religions. Written evidence is a vital part of this project, despite the fact that there is far less of it for the British Virgin Islands than some other places in the contemporary Caribbean. Still, the use of this body of material comes with dangers for the analysis of religion. Disjunctions between what people say, write, and do are found everywhere in historical archaeology, and we should no longer be surprised at them. In place of a "gotcha archaeology" of religion (Chenoweth 2012), the focus here is on the variety of ways in which religion is *lived*.

If this is so, then the local context where religious ideas are practiced must have an important role in the shaping of the religion that results. The same objects and actions cannot have been ritualized in the same way in, say, eighteenth-century London, where many material goods were plentiful, as they were in the marginal Caribbean, where they were scarce. To make the role of such other

local forces as economy, social structure, and the natural environment clearer, this study examines a place very different from where Quakerism originated. In the eighteenth-century Caribbean, the Quaker religion, centered on ideas of simplicity, equality, and peace, might be expected to often conflict with other demands, particularly those of a slavery-based socioeconomic system. Archaeology is in a position to see the results of these conflicts as individuals interpret religious ideas, enact them, and, in so doing, create a religious community.

THIS IS NOT THE ONLY WAY to approach religion as an archaeologist, of course. In some cases, the archaeology of a religion can be approached normatively, as a cultural and political horizon in keeping with a cultural historical approach, as when Islamic archaeology is defined as the study of times and places where the "ruling elite has professed the faith of Islam," thus incorporating the lives of non-Muslims under Muslim rule (Millwright 2010: 6). Perhaps more relevant here, as outlined by Mark P. Leone (1982), some of the earliest archaeological work to return to religion itself as a serious topic of inquiry after Hawkes came through structuralism, which held that all objects were shaped by the same grammar and therefore revealed elements of underlying structure, including religion. The work of Marxists on ideology (in the Marxist sense, somewhat different from how it is used by Hawkes and here) is another avenue where Hawkes's pessimism was confronted, and postprocessual approaches continued this push in a variety of ways. From whatever motivation or theoretical stance, writers have returned to religion and religious social life as serious, accessible, and important topics for archaeological work. This has resulted in several edited volumes (Hodder 2010; Insoll, ed. 2004; Rakita and Buikstra 2008; Whitley and Hays-Gilpin 2008) and overviews (Insoll 2004a) as well as numerous articles both theoretical and methodological (Aldenderfer 2012; Bradley 2003; Edwards 2005; Fogelin 2007; Joyce 2001; Spielman 2002; Tanyeri-Erdemir 2007; Whitley 2004; Whitley and Keyser 2003).

In historical archaeology, several studies and collections have recently made a point of examining religious sites (e.g., Baugher et al. 2009; Hodge 2005), and others have expanded from this to identify religion in other places, such as magico-religious deposits in houses (e.g., Fennell and Manning 2014; Merrifield 1987). Still others have begun to seek the influence of religion more broadly, such as in the more mundane aspects of material culture (e.g., Chenoweth 2006, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2014; Delle 2001; Fennell 2003; Kruczek-Aaron 2015; Lenik 2009; Miller and Gilmore 2016; Wilkie 1997), yet these studies are

still the exception to the rule, and religion is still often considered quite separate from daily life.

These works often echo the argument made explicit by Timothy Insoll that religion is a vital part of social life that has been too-long neglected (Insoll 2004b: 194), and many make the case that archaeology has a major contribution to make to remedying this oversight. Both archaeological and historical evidence can be brought to bear in this effort, as each provides a different and complementary kind of information working at different scales. In the case of the BVI Quakers, archival records tell us what members said to each other and to Quakers elsewhere and when their lands were bought and sold. To add to this, archaeological information on one site owned by members of this group gives us insight into the smallest moments of their daily lives, moments in which they enacted and created their religion and negotiated their identities as Quakers but also as whites, as Englishwomen and men, as poor or rich or upwardly mobile. If documents tell us what people say, archaeology tells us what they do. Both are vital.

The "Inner Light" and Its Consequences: Quaker Philosophy and Action

This study begins, then, with the premise that religion can be accessed by archaeologists, since it is religion as it is lived by members that matters most for religious communities and the negotiation of religious identity. But more needs to be said about the religion in question here and how material culture mattered for eighteenth-century Quakers. This group and its ideology are complex, and what "Quakerism is" and what members did and believed are all matters of issue for this study. The following presents a broad view based primarily on historical work that has not generally taken the practice-centered approach suggested here, resulting in a rough generalization, which it will be the work of later chapters to complicate.

The social, economic, political, and religious context from which Quakerism arose was one of conflict, debate, and unease. The political and economic issues of the first half of the seventeenth century culminated in the English Civil War beginning in 1642, the execution of King Charles I in 1649, and the institution of a decade of Commonwealth rule under Cromwell before the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. The religious conflicts of the period, which in part underlie these political conflicts, have even deeper roots in the sixteenth-century beginnings of the Reformation and rise of Puritanism. The influence of these events

on the group that came to be known as Quakers, and the emergence of that group, is a story better told by other sources (Braithwaite 1923, 1961; Dandelion 2007; Davies 2000; Tolles 1960; Vann 1969). This introduction, drawing heavily on these sources, attempts only a brief sketch of the issues most relevant to the present study.

George Fox is recognized as one of the principal founders of the group known to most as Quakers but to themselves as "Friends." His extensive surviving writings detail his search for religious understanding. Starting in 1647 when he was only nineteen, he traveled England speaking to ministers and teachers trying to rectify his views with the laws of his country. Finally, he wrote,

> when all my hopes in [Christian ministers] and in all men was gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, Oh then I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition," and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord did let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition. . . . And this I knew experimentally [i.e., through direct experience]. My desires after the Lord grew stronger, and zeal in the pure knowledge of God and of Christ alone, without help of any man, book, or writing. For though I read the Scriptures that spoke of Christ and of God, yet I knew him not but by revelation. (Fox 1952: 11)

This direct communion with God came to be the hallmark of the group. The fundamental tenets of Quakerism are that there is "that of God in everyone" and that all people can have a personal, unmediated experience with God through what they call the "Inner Light." Rather than reliance on a "closed revelation," a message from God that took place through Jesus and the events of the Bible and is finished, Quakers embrace the idea that God's speaking to humans is continual and that anyone can receive it at any time, without set prayers or dedicated buildings. This led directly to three terms of focus that, although differently interpreted, have always been at the core of Quaker belief: simplicity, equality, and peace.

These early Quakers argued for a return to what they called "primitive Christianity," or what Christianity had been and should be again without the interference of hierarchical structures of the Catholic, and later Anglican, Church, products of humans and not God. Earthly or "fleshy" places and things, even religious ones like churches, vestments, and communion vessels, were works of people and so removed from the true experience of God, possible only through inward searching. But if no part of the world or of life was more holy than an-

other (no sacred places or holidays) then *all* aspects of life must be conducted in a righteous manner. One could not be a Quaker only on "First Days" (many Quakers rejected named days and months because of their pagan origins) or only in some activities, during services but not in business life, for example. One's Quaker ideals must influence how one earned a living, taught one's children, even ate and drank.

More problematically in a social context, Fox (1952: 7) "saw clearly . . . that to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to make a man fit to be a minister of Christ," and so he felt that ordained ministers had no special knowledge of God. This, along with a rejection of oaths, tithes, and practices of "hat honor" (a derogatory Quaker term for signs of respect to social "betters" such as the doffing of hats), all based on scriptural arguments, brought them into direct conflict with social customs and the powers of the state as well as the church, the two being deeply intertwined in seventeenth-century England. All people had equal access to the Inner Light, and so no one—not even a judge or a king—was deserving of more respect than another: this position was theologically defensible but bound to cause problems for those who put it into practice!

The most well-known result of these ideas is perhaps the form of Quaker worship. In its original form (and in many although not all communities that identify as Quaker today), members meet together and sit in silence, waiting for one to be "moved by the Lord" to speak and share some inward unfolding of truth or prayer. Robert Barclay, an early Quaker writer, wrote of this form of worship that it "consisteth not in words, so neither in silence, as silence; but in a holy dependence of the mind upon God from which . . . silence naturally flows until words can be brought forth which are from God's Spirit" (quoted in Barbour and Frost 1988: 40). There is no organization to this practice, and any person present may speak, including, in a truly radical move for this time, women. While this did not constitute actual gender equality in any modern sense, women often had substantial roles in Quaker communities that they did not have in broader society, and several gained respect and acclaim as theological authors and thinkers.

There is a subtlety to living this way: intentions and inner thoughts are paramount, and outward appearances should stem from these but are sometimes less of an issue in and of themselves. Silent worship is an example of this, for as the above quotation from Barclay shows, outward silence was conceived as resulting from inward searching, rather than being itself a form of worship. Another relevant example (discussed more in the chapters that follow) is wealth,

which, while in modern eyes contradictory to the idea of simplicity, was not conceived of as sinful in and of itself. However, lusting after money was sinful, along with anything that implied pride or vanity or undue attention to the "fleshy" things "of this world" at the expense of the next. This rejection is often encapsulated in the word *superfluities,* implying things not necessary or worthy of effort, and was thus connected to ideas about wasting of time, money, or resources. There was often a better way to spend one's time, something more productive that could be done for one's own welfare and that of others, spiritual and material. But if these needs were met and it was not itself a goal, wealth might be—at least to some Quaker thinkers—acceptable or even a natural byproduct of godly industry.

From Millennial Fervor to Quiescent Grandees: A Quaker Chronology

Quaker actions in the first few years of the group are often presented, by contemporaries and present-day scholars alike, as extreme. The earliest Friends were often disruptive of traditional religious services, which they saw as corrupted by human hands, and were quick to debate with Anglican priests. Sometimes these efforts to gain attention and conversion from the "fleshy" old religion took more extreme forms yet, and early Quakers were even noted to have "run naked through the street calling people to repentance" (Davies 2000: 6). Others simply declaimed to anyone who would listen to what they felt God had given them to say: "Some stand in the market place . . . and cry 'Repent, repent, woe, woe, the judge of the world has come'" (Barbour and Frost 1988: 28).

All these actions brought Quakers into repeated conflict with others, and the result was often violent persecution. In his journal, George Fox wrote of many episodes of violence: "And when I began to speak, they fell upon me, and the clerk up with his Bible as I was speaking and hit me in the face that my face gushed out with blood, and it run off me in the steeplehouse [i.e., church]. And then they cried, 'Take him out of the church,' and they punched me and thrust me out and beat me sore with books, fists and sticks, and threw me over a hedge into a close and there beat me and then threw me over again" (Fox 1952: 98–99). Many Friends, including Fox (seven times for charges ranging from refusal of oaths to blasphemy), spent time in prison and were deprived of livelihoods and property for their beliefs. In the first dozen years of George Fox's preaching, twenty-one of his associates or followers are known to have died in prison or otherwise as a result of their faith (Nuttall 1952: xix) and more than four hundred did so throughout the course of the seventeenth century (Davies 2000: 178). This persecution was particularly intense during the Restoration,

after Charles II came to power and before the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 (Barbour and Frost 1988: 5).

Despite persecution, Fox's preaching quickly gained followers (literally, in many cases, as the movement and its leaders were often itinerant in their early years), including some wealthy and influential people, such as Judge Thomas Fell and his wife Margaret, the owners of Swarthmoor Hall in Cumbria in the far northwest of England, which early became a sort of headquarters for the group. From there, in a more or less organized fashion, Quaker ministers traveled out into England and also met to plan, write, and finance the project of returning the world to primitive Christianity.

The persecutions mentioned above were among the forces behind the creation of a more formal structure to Quakerism. What began as "meetings for sufferings," which combined resources to offer assistance to those suffering for their faith and organized to lobby the government for better treatment, eventually became a formal system of monthly, quarterly, and yearly "meetings for business" to run the day-to-day affairs of Quaker groups. This nascent organization began one of the defining contradictions of Quakerism: it was based on a rejection of temporal hierarchy in religion, and yet to achieve any of its ends, it needed to adopt some elements of earthly organization.

Monthly meetings for business, or "meetings for discipline," as they were often called early on, were held quite formally. Members were expected to attend most monthly meetings to consult on financial matters pertaining to the group ownership of land or buildings. But these meetings were also—perhaps, for some, primarily—intended to facilitate the moral and social oversight of the community. Members contributed their money and their time in the form of tasks assigned to many members, particularly leading ones. These tasks included writing letters, visiting other members including those thought to be straying from the group, and conducting business on the meeting's behalf. Several meetings for worship (a generally undefined group, because religious meetings could be held anywhere at any time) could participate in one "monthly meeting for business" for these ends, and a monthly meeting functioned as a group akin to a parish in the Anglican and Catholic Churches. Monthly meetings, in turn, would each send representatives to a "quarterly meeting" four times a year to discuss matters of regional importance, and these chose the members of the yearly meeting. There were yearly meetings in London, New England, New York, Philadelphia, and other colonies, usually in urban centers.

Early on in the movement, Friends also traveled far beyond England to spread their ideas. As early as 1655, Friends journeyed to British colonies in

the New World as well as to continental Europe and the Mideast (Barbour and Frost 1988: 32; Tolles 1960: 9–10). This culminated in 1671 when George Fox and a dozen fellows traveled to the Caribbean and British colonies in North America to visit existing Friends, convert new ones, and spread the formal structure of monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings (Tolles 1960: 12). Thus, several substantial meetings existed in the Caribbean for some decades (Durham 1972). Friends were attacked for their disruptions and disobedience in the colonies as much as in England (Besse 1753; Langford 1706). This work would also establish a long tradition of traveling and missionizing on behalf of Quaker ideology.

For Quakers the beginning of the eighteenth century was characterized by William Braithwaite, a well-known Quaker historian, as "a period of quietude" (Braithwaite 1923). After the "Glorious Revolution" in 1688 and the Act of Toleration in 1689, they were no longer subject to the constant, active persecution of the early years that drove William Penn to found his "Holy Experiment" of Philadelphia in 1682. With such acceptance, Quakers also stopped trying to convert the world, the imminent apocalypse seemed less imminent, and they concentrated on living their own lives in "a godly manner" and ensuring their security, including their economic security, to do so. Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost write that "it became clear that 'the Children of the Light' [an early term for Quakers; see Braithwaite 1923] would not replace the Church of England" (Barbour and Frost 1988: 5).

In stark contrast to the millennial troublemakers of the previous decades, a second image of Quakers emerges from this period: that of the "Quaker Grandees" described by historian Frederick Tolles, whose writing details this period in Philadelphia. Along with toleration and, frequently, wealth came a "turning inward" and insularity: rather than trying to convert the world, Quakers focused on their own communities and worked to minimize their conflict with and sometimes even their contact with the "world's people," as they termed non-Quakers. These were second- or third-generation Quakers whose families had sometimes become wealthy—some have suggested as a result of their Quaker-inspired work ethic or Quaker connections (Tolles 1963 [1948]: 89). They composed a group of gentry who interpreted Quaker simplicity and other ideals somewhat differently. An often-quoted dictum of Quaker life in the eighteenth century is that one should endeavor to have the "best sort, but plain" in all manner of things (John Reynell 1738, quoted in Tolles 1960: 88). In his famous *Meeting House and Counting House,* Tolles (1963 [1948]) captured this idea as the cultivation of "two plantations," one being an internal, religious

plantation and the other an outward, financial one (see chapter 3). Both were seen as important parts of eighteenth-century Quaker life, since true inward searching and attention to the religious were possible only for those who were not also preoccupied with their basic human needs.

This "quietude" ended in a period of internal upheaval around the middle of the eighteenth century. This was most keenly felt in Pennsylvania, as detailed by historian Jack Marietta (1984), where members struggled, among other issues, with the conflicts between their peace testimony and their possession of political power in the colony. Although rarely at the highest level, Quakers had generally controlled the political machinery of Pennsylvania from its earliest days through the 1740s. But politics meant responding to practical demands, including orders to engage in military preparations and action, a direct conflict with Quaker pacifism as it was understood then and there. The Seven Years' War or French and Indian War of 1754–63 brought the issue to a head, and many members of the Society ultimately chose to abandon political involvement and enact a more explicit interpretation of pacifism. This also resulted in damage to their numbers, as they disowned up to a fifth of their members from 1760 to the Revolutionary War for balking at this new standard of disengagement with political power and anything related to preparations for violent conflict, including the American Revolution. Members who supported that conflict were disowned in such numbers that in Philadelphia they created their own community of "Free Quakers," whose meetinghouse stands today near Independence Hall.

The past two centuries of Quakerism have been marked by schism and change. Complete agreement over matters of doctrine was always an unreachable goal (although one no less in the minds of many Quakers), and splits over precisely what the group should say, do, and believe were present in the earliest days. In the early nineteenth century, divisions inherent in Quakerism from its start came to a head. A more evangelical group coalesced around rejections of an overreliance on reason and of the quietist tendency, arguing that they needed to resume missionary work, focus on the Bible, and lobby secular government for temperance, prison reform, peace, and antislavery (Barbour and Frost 1988: 171). These Quakers, who would eventually be called "Orthodox," also focused on establishing a personal relationship with the biblical Jesus and may have been influenced by Methodism (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1997: 7).[1]

In 1827, a formal split occurred between this "Orthodox" group and the other, termed "Hicksite" after their most eloquent minister, Elias Hicks, or "liberal"

by some contemporaries. Hicks "believed in the divinity of Jesus Christ, but emphasized the primacy of the Inner Light" and, more in the tradition of the earliest preachers of Quakerism, "deplored creedal statements" (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1997: 7). Hicksite ministers "preached under the direct leading of the spirit" (Barbour and Frost 1988: 173). For more than a century following, there were two separate organizational structures, both calling themselves, for instance, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and both claiming to represent "true" Quakerism.

Meanwhile, Quakerism in both these forms traveled westward along with the rest of America, establishing meetings in Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, California, and elsewhere by midcentury. Other variations arose, such as the Evangelical Friends who split from Orthodox meetings and returned to more-programmed services with sermons and music. In time, the common commitments of some Hicksite and Orthodox meetings to reform in the secular world and support the cause of world peace formed the foundation for a formal reconciliation, which occurred in Philadelphia in 1955. The past half century of Quakerism has been marked by activism against racial and economic injustice and against all manner of wars, as well as by a continued expansion into the rest of the world. Quaker missionary work, centered on education and community assistance as well as on preaching, arrived in the Mideast in the 1860s; in the Pacific, India, Jamaica, and Japan in the later years of the nineteenth century; in Kenya, Guatemala, and Cuba in 1902; and in Bolivia by 1920 (Barbour and Frost 1988: 274–75). Although altered, Quakerism survives today in a varied group of about 350,000 members, perhaps best known today for peace activism and winning the 1947 Nobel Peace Prize.

Quaker Oversight and Mutual Support: Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings

While Quakers formed a religious community, conversion to Quakerism also had many secular consequences. For one, the Church of England was so tied into daily life that removal from it posed many unexpected problems for early Quakers. For instance, inheritance was confirmed by baptismal and marriage records kept by the parish church, which also distributed poor relief to those in need. These roles would have to be taken up by another structure for members to continue to function in society, which was another impetus behind the formal structure of meetings. This structure, primarily the work of George Fox in the 1670s, not only functioned as the nucleus of Quaker communities but also had substantial effects in other areas of life: economics, business, and mate-

rial culture. Usually, after the first decades of the group, this was centered on a physical structure, a meetinghouse, but this was not a requirement.

Meetings coordinated matters of doctrine and practicalities, such as maintaining meetinghouses, but among their primary purposes were social assistance to and social oversight of members. These were both spiritual and secular concerns, because these two areas were intertwined or overlapped entirely for Quakers. For instance, on economic oversight, James Walvin writes, "Quakers feared the public shame that commercial failure [of a member] would bring on the Society," and this fear led to the financial pressure that he argues meetings exerted on members (Walvin 1997: 56). Quaker "businessmen were under the permanent scrutiny of their immediate meeting. Whenever a member was in financial trouble, when doubts or complaints surfaced about business practice, bad debts, poor judgment or, worst of all, insolvency, a deputation from the meeting would examine the matter" (Walvin 1997: 72). For meetings, the issue was a concern for public relations (Chenoweth 2013; Walvin 1997: 73), although the initial need for "plain dealing" in business was religious in origin. But the result was also economic: "That outsiders were aware of these internal pressures upon Quakers served to strengthen their reputation. Which other commercial interest could make such claims of probity?" (Walvin 1997: 79). In the early days of the English banking system, with little regulation and great risk, meeting oversight of members' business practices guaranteed "plain business dealing" and lowered the risk associated with doing business with a member of a meeting.

Oversight and regulation also came with assistance and support. Poor relief (something traditionally the responsibility of the Anglican Church) and education (often religious in its goals) were central for the meeting. George Fox and Robert Barclay explicitly argued that caring for poor, elderly, and orphaned members was a necessity, and this was part of the justification for the creation of the membership structure (Vann 1969: 143). Fox wrote that while "we were taught to do good unto all," Quakers' focus in charity should be "especially unto the household of faith [i.e., Quakers]" (Fox 1952: 373). Tolles suggests that the source of this support lies in the concept of a "holy community" in which "need anywhere in the fellowship represented a moral claim upon the wealth of the other members" (Tolles 1963 [1948]: 65). Every member had equal access to "that of God" and so deserved sympathy and assistance from her or his fellows, and this supplemented the principle that those unable to eat would also be unable to seek the Inner Light.

In organizing the structure of monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, Fox's

plan also included a program of scholarships for the children of members to be apprenticed, thus strengthening the Quaker community (Fox 1952: 557). Their early exclusion from grammar schools and universities led to Quaker self-reliance on the issue of education, which continued after persecution ended. Education was to include "whatsoever things were civil and useful in the creation" but was also to be done in a strictly Quakerly manner by honest, sober Friends (Frost 2003: 25; Walvin 1997: 38, 96).

Evaluating Simplicity, Equality, and Peace

Quakerism has been described, so far, in the traditional way, with an emphasis on the practices associated with the group as understood through the voluminous written record. The Religious Society of Friends, as understood in these works, is often described as centering on the ideas of "simplicity," "equality," and "peace" (e.g., Tolles 1963 [1948]: 8). And yet one of the main ideas of the present book is that such a list is only a part of what any religion really is. In a practice-centered view, such ideals of a group grow from what members do, and structural understandings are seen as the result of sedimented individual actions rather than existing outside society as reified forces (Bell 1992; Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984; Ortner 1984). This view allows for variation and for change, as it must, because change is constant in social contexts. Often taken as relatively straightforward ideas—principles leading directly to prescriptive rules to be followed by all members—simplicity, equality, and peace have in fact been debated and even agonized over by generations of Quakers and by generations of historians and other authors considering the history of Quakerism.

In a sense, then, the study of religion *must* be archaeological. It must concern itself with what people, in different unique and situated moments, actually do as a result of (and thus creating) their religious community. Thus, here Quakerism begins from the written descriptions of ideas and rules outlined in the previous section but takes shape only when people put these into action. Written documents themselves are and should be examined as artifacts, not in a trivial but in a practical sense, because their creation and consumption are acts of practice by individuals at specific moments in time, and these must be understood in the context of other practices, such as those accessed archaeologically. Religion is a matter of what people do, and so to understand Quakerism in the British Virgin Islands or anywhere else, we must look at the negotiation between what people do in the minutiae of their daily lives (the realm of archaeology) and these broad ideas. In short, individuals creatively negotiate their positions, and

their actions (understood both through writing and through archaeology) create social groups, such as Quakerism.

The following chapters of the book employ both written and archaeological information to address the way the ideals of simplicity, equality, and peace were reinterpreted in the context of the Caribbean in general, the British Virgin Islands, and the specific island of Little Jost van Dyke. How did Quakers in the British Virgin Islands put their ideas about Quakerism into practice? What did simplicity, equality, and peace mean in their daily lives, and how does this differ from Quakerism as revealed in written records? It bears repeating that the goal is not to "catch them in a lie" by simply showing that written ideals and actual practice differ. This would be a shallow analysis of any religious group. Rather, the comparison of ideas as written and Quakerism as lived is intended to reveal the nature of the religious group itself, as a composite of action and idea. The two, of course, are themselves interrelated, as one action forms the ground for the next, as both are recursively restructured (Chenoweth 2014). The goal of this project is to tell the story of the community that came together in 1740 but moreover to help us understand how they negotiated the contradictions of religion, race, economics, geography, and social status through their daily lives.

JUST AS WE SHOULD NOT AIM merely to identify hypocrisy in the archaeological record—moments when people's religious lives as revealed in archaeology differ from what we expect based on the documents of their religion—it cannot be a goal to excuse the horrendous crime of slavery that permeates this story. This study shows how Quakerism could be effectively recast and reinterpreted to fit within the Caribbean slavery-based economy and society. It might be possible to misread this as an effort to argue that the enslavers considered here were just "products of their time" or even that we should pardon what they did. Such a pardon is not the purpose of this book. Indeed, I later take issue with the unjustified assumption that has been made by some that Quakers were somehow "kinder" masters who practiced a "more humane" brand of slavery (whatever that might mean). This often-repeated statement is not based on any clear evidence, historical or archaeological.

That said, the question on which this volume centers is one about religion, specifically, the Quaker religion as it encounters slavery. It may seem unjust to center a story of plantation archaeology on the white oppressors, whose fellows have been the focus of so much history, rather than on those of African descent held on these sites, whose voices are harder to hear in the historical record.

After all, the great strength of historical archaeology has always been its ability to tell us about the lives of "those of little note" (Scott 1994)—those literally noted rarely in documents, excluded from written history because of their subordinate, oppressed positions.

I have three comments to make on these concerns, without taking issue with their general points. First, although the Quaker oppressors here cannot be excused, they were themselves little noted by written history because of their marginal economic and geographic position. Second, as argued above, although religion is the motivator of many written works, only archaeology can tell us about what people do with the ideas captured in these writings. These two facts mean that archaeology has an ability to tell us something new here. Finally, for the moment, I excuse this focus on the oppressors with the promise that the enslaved people who lived on the site studied here—Rosett, Cudjoe, Myal, Nanny, Bentorah, Cassia, Cutto, Toney, Tom, Damon, Tracy, Isabel, Sam, and Teresa are the only names known—were very much the subject of the overall archaeological work conducted for the project. Discovering their homes and gaining insight into their perspectives were explicit goals of the research, and in other publications they receive what I hope is a respectful consideration, in addition to the ways their stories are included here.

Structure of the Book

This introductory chapter has so far sketched the questions and goals of the overall project and the foundations of the needed background information about Quakerism. Chapter 2 completes the context for this discussion, providing a history of the British Virgin Islands and how their unusual place in the colonial process produced a more isolated, poorer set of white colonists than many other Caribbean islands. The marginal agricultural potential of the British Virgin Islands left them uncolonized longer than most islands, and European settlement began there in a haphazard way, with no formal government, church, or other institutions. This left the settlers free to experiment with new social forms, such as Quakerism, the arrival of which is also recounted in chapter 2. But this isolation also posed challenges and left them in precarious positions. Chapter 2 also introduces the Lettsom family, who are the focus for the study, along with their island of Little Jost van Dyke, before describing the archaeological work undertaken to address the questions outlined above.

The remainder of the volume takes up the themes of simplicity, equality, and peace, shifting between written and archaeological evidence to reveal how

BVI Quakers understood and enacted these ideas differently than Quakers elsewhere. Chapters 3 and 4 focus particularly on the ideal of "simplicity." Chapter 3 examines how Quakerism everywhere involved a concern for economic well-being and how the Lettsoms in particular may have benefited from their involvement with the Tortola meeting. Although we do not suppose insincerity in the conversion of BVI Quakers, it is also true that economics and religion were intimately tied together, particularly for those in this rural, marginal part of the colonial world. Members of the community also seem to have been particularly concerned with physical markers of their group on the landscape. One expression of the idea of simplicity elsewhere was the fact that the Quaker form of worship takes place without formal programs, hymns, or lectures and can be conducted anywhere, even outside, yet BVI Quakers placed special emphasis on the building of meetinghouses. These structures were unique as civic buildings in the British Virgin Islands at the time, but they took on different meanings to different members, as is discussed in chapter 4.

Pacifism is a defining feature of Quakerism that has led the group into recognition by and conflict with society at large. However, it takes on a very different cast when pacifism is understood by people who hold others enslaved under the constant threat of violence and in turn spend their days threatened by foreign invasion. Archaeological markers of weaponry and documentary accounts of persecution over refusal to support the military are the subject of chapter 5, which details how Quaker pacifism was understood by BVI contemporaries and altered even further from modern conceptions by British Virgin Islanders.

Every group has standards of action that are enforced through various social mechanisms. Quakerism's greatest punishment was "disownment," or the expelling of a member from the group, but this was the result of a sometimes long process of meeting or "treating" with errant members. While this structure was common, the particular crimes that occasioned such procedures and the way they were prosecuted were very much local. Chapter 6 considers the way the "discipline" was and was not applied in the British Virgin Islands. Chapter 6 also begins to trace a series of fault lines in the BVI Quaker community: disagreements over priorities and perspectives. The written record must be seen as the product of only part of this community, and its increasing emphasis on formality and disciplinary control suggests a division not unlike that of the Orthodox versus Hicksite Quakers described above, although of a different kind and with more overtones of class and race in this Caribbean context.

Chapter 7 examines the question of equality in BVI Quakerism in two distinct but intertwined ways. The fact that all or nearly all members of the Tortola

meeting held Africans enslaved is, of course, a defining feature of this community and has attracted much modern attention. Although this apparent contradiction seems discordant to modern readers, chapter 7 traces a complex and equivocal history of slavery and Quakerism. To explore how these complexities manifested in the British Virgin Islands, in chapter 7 I examine what can be said about the relationship between the Lettsoms of Little Jost van Dyke and the enslaved Africans they held there. Typical Caribbean planters emphasized oversight and control of those they held enslaved, in part through the layout of their plantations, but the layout of the Lettsom plantation put the wealth (such as it was) of the Lettsoms on display and distinguished them from the enslaved Africans on the site at the expense of direct oversight. Quakerism was mapped onto existing racial and legal distinctions between white and black, free and enslaved.

Many BVI planters turned to Quakerism for a local community, but many more did not. Quakers probably never represented more than a fifth of the whites in the territory. Chapter 7 also examines the relations and concern for connections with non-Quaker planters. In particular, it suggests that some of the markers that performed and created Quakerism had to be moderated to avoid endangering ties beyond the group. Performances of Quakerism were more private, such as small-scale material choices and private events like marriages, whereas the most public statements of the Lettsoms would have been compatible with the planter community at large, as in maintaining racial distinctions and efforts at social climbing. In effect, even among Quakers an emphasis on racial inequality was key to creating a communal equality between all whites, needed because of the dangers of Caribbean plantation life, also described in chapter 7.

Divisions within the Tortola meeting hinted at in earlier chapters are brought to a head in the concluding chapter of the volume, which attempts to tie the various strands of evidence presented in the preceding chapters together, making connections between different discussions and summarizing some of the important arguments. In effect, two differing ideas of the Quaker community grew over the course of the meeting. Some BVI Quakers, such as the Lettsoms, saw the community as one of mutual support that complemented connections to non-Quaker neighbors, while others emphasized the separateness of Quakers: a chosen few among the sinful majority of the "world's people." There were also economic and social elements to this division. This closing chapter thus attempts to address one of the central issues remaining about the meeting: its end. Although previous writers have assumed (based on modern conceptions)

that incompatibility between Quakerism and slavery led to the end of the meeting, this book counters this suggestion and makes a new argument: that slavery was an issue in the dissolution of the meeting but not in the expected way. After all, Quakerism and slavery coexisted for decades in the BVI and elsewhere. Yet as ideas about slavery, simplicity, equality, and peace changed, wealthy BVI Quakers could follow trends from abroad and begin to consider emancipation—at least one family put this idea into action—but poorer members (like the Lettsoms), whose entire financial lives were entwined with those they held, could not. Thus, class differences in the Quaker group are revealed as playing at least as important a part in the meeting's end and are mapped onto the different visions of Quaker communities described above. In chapter 8, we see how widening gaps in social standing, including efforts on the part of the wealthy to "police" the religious lives of the poor, drove the group apart.

Finally, the concluding chapter reflects on what moving back and forth between archaeology and written documents can reveal about the nature of religious communities. This discussion explores the effects of Quaker ideology on new members of the Society of Friends in the British Virgin Islands. Equally, in summarizing and reconsidering the evidence presented, this final chapter shows that Quakerism itself began to change in the local context of the Caribbean. Religious ideals are performed and created in daily practice in particular local contexts, creating variation. These differences, as the concluding chapter suggests, are a fundamental part of the religion rather than footnotes to it or manifestations of hypocrisy, and archaeology is key to understanding them, focused as it is on mundane practice. While this is a story about particular people in an unusual setting, the way the ideas of Quakerism were negotiated by BVI members also provides insight into how religious communities may work in general.

Chapter 2

CONTEXTS

The History and Archaeology of the British Virgin Islands and Their Meeting

THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS consist of dozens of small islands and cays, some of which are too small to have ever been permanently inhabited. The main island of the group is Tortola (see figure 1.2), which, at 22 square miles (57 square kilometers), is the main population center today, home to about 24,000 people. It is a long, thin ridge that is rarely more than 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) in width but rises to a peak of over 1,700 feet (500 meters). Today a modern road runs along the south side of the island, where the greater part of the population lives, and another along the ridge, but until twenty-first-century development, some parts of the north coast were still inaccessible by car. Like all the other islands in the group, Tortola is steep, and level patches (excluding modern landfill projects undertaken since the 1960s) are few. At its center is an excellent anchorage at Road Town, the seat of government and culture, referred to by all simply as "Town" (figure 2.1). Before the twentieth century, movement around Tortola was by sea, and farming and building were often undertaken only with great difficulty through leveling and terracing projects.

The second-most-populated island of the British Virgin Islands is Virgin Gorda, where about 4,000 people live today. It is 8 square miles (21 square kilometers), but much of this is a tall mountain called Gorda Peak, and only a much smaller area known as the Valley is relatively flat. Reports of settlement by the Spanish in the seventeenth century or even before probably have some truth to them, as there is a sometimes-productive copper mine on the southern shore that was probably exploited long before English settlement, but no archaeological traces of the Spanish occupation have yet been recovered. This island was called for many years "Spanishtown," which is also the name of the principal settlement in the Valley there today. Anegada, at 15 square miles (39 square kilometers), is the second largest of the British Virgin Islands, but it exists apart

Figure 2.1. View of Road Town, Tortola.

in several ways, being isolated some 10 miles (16 kilometers) to the northeast of the rest and geologically distinct, being of level, flat, upraised limestone and poor for planting. Despite its large size, it has always been sparsely populated, with fewer than 300 people today. Its historical population supported themselves mainly by fishing and salvaging wrecks (Schomburgk 1832). The last of the four main islands of the British Virgin Islands, and the one that figures most prominently in this story, is Jost van Dyke, sometimes called "Gros," "Great," or "Big van Dyke" in historical documents to distinguish it from its smaller neighbor, Little Jost van Dyke. At 3 square miles (8 square kilometers), "Big" Jost has a present-day population of about 300 but in the mid-nineteenth century was home to upwards of 1,500 people.

Revisiting the History of the British Virgin Islands and Their Population

George Suckling, an eighteenth-century government official posted to the islands, claimed that the group was named by Sir Francis Drake in honor of Elizabeth I (the “Virgin Queen”) when he sailed through the islands in 1580 (Suckling 1780: 1), but others have suggested that Columbus named the islands after Saint Ursula and the story of her ten thousand virgin martyrs, because the islands seemed to number like the virgin saints (Dookhan 1975: xi; Jenkins 1923: 1). During the time we are considering here, half of this group (principally St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix) were part of the Danish colonies, becoming a

U.S. territory (as they remain today) in 1917. The early history of these islands stands outside the usual narrative of Caribbean colonization in many ways and has a direct bearing on the story of the Quaker community a century later. A plantation economy was slow in developing, as the islands were ill suited to agriculture, particularly for sugar, on the scale of other colonies. Although this cash crop was a force in the British Virgin Islands, many plantations—particularly smaller ones and those on what are called the "out islands"—relied on cotton and cattle, and much effort was devoted to growing provisions for the plantations themselves.

Freedom came to all enslaved people in the British Empire nominally in 1834, but in response to fears of various sorts, this freedom came with the baggage of the apprentice system. As elsewhere in the British colonial world, the newly "freed" in the British Virgin Islands were subject to forty-five hours a week of compulsory labor, wage limitations for any work done beyond that, restricted freedom of movement, and assorted other laws that sought to prevent "indolence," among other perceived sins (Dookhan 1975: 120). The 5,115 people apprenticed in the British Virgin Islands were finally freed on August 1, 1838 (Dookhan 1975: 124–25), when apprenticeship ended throughout the British Empire.

Landowners desiring labor on their estates were then required to pay wages, but the continuing decline in the sugar industry limited the work that was to be done. Property values declined, and many white-owned plantations went into receivership. This enabled some of the black population to acquire their own lands and begin their own small farms, as they were often unable to do elsewhere in the Caribbean (O'Neal 2012). The white population diminished as planters went bankrupt or simply abandoned their lands, and this trend was intensified by various acts of civil disobedience and violence by the black population, especially the 1853 "rebellion," which, although the British military restored control, is thought to have driven virtually every white person from the islands, at least temporarily (Harrigan and Varlack 1991).

Colonial disinterest in the British Virgin Islands both led to and resulted from economic stagnation. Conditions there were characterized as poor by the turn of the twentieth century, with the government deeply in debt and no viable economy to speak of (Dookhan 1975: 218). The mainly black small landholders grew what they needed, fished and collected shellfish, and traded a small surplus with nearby St. Thomas to purchase some manufactured goods. Economic progress was slow. In 1918 the major products were fresh fruit and charcoal, along with "drawn work [i.e., embroidery], in the making of which

the women are quite expert" (De Booy and Faris 1918: 236). Nonetheless, the almost entirely African-descended residents were justifiably dissatisfied with the economic situation, and many sought work elsewhere, causing a decline in the overall population.

A variety of governments were instituted and abolished by the British from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, but actual representative government was very limited until 1950. That year saw the restoration of the legislative council, consisting of four elected and four appointed members at the time (Dookhan 1975: 221), although it has been expanded since, and known as the House of Assembly since 2007. Property requirements remained for those who stood for election, but universal adult suffrage (after passing a literacy test) was instituted for the first time, as was the secret ballot.

Tourism began to be a major factor in the 1960s with the opening of a high-end resort at Little Dix Bay in 1964 and the arrival of charter yachts at the Moorings resort in 1969, leading toward a major boom in both visitors and residents in the 1980s (Rogers 2009). A 1984 act of the legislative council opened the door to offshore banking and the financial services sector. Between these forces, the British Virgin Islands have become one of the wealthiest parts of the Caribbean. Although an overseas territory of the United Kingdom and appearing on the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories, in many ways the British Virgin Islands are internally self-governing. Much of the wealth, power, and land are in the hands of British Virgin Islanders, a people whose ancestry is complex but who are primarily the descendants of the enslaved Africans whose hands actually tilled the ground and built BVI society.

"Foundations" of BVI Colonialism

This sketch of BVI history can be subject to some reexamination, drawing out ways in which the islands are unique and setting the stage for the discussion of the Quaker group. History is often represented as being made up more of important moments, such as those marking beginnings and endings, than of daily life. The history of New World colonialism, in particular, is often told with "founding moments" that begin its many stories: 1492, of course, is the most well-known, but anyone with a passing interest in the history of colonialism knows also that 1607 saw the founding of Jamestown and that 1620 was when the Pilgrims landed at Massachusetts Bay. Mythology has even provided the exact spot where, supposedly, the first Pilgrim foot touched rock. Archaeologists and others have taken issue with this focus on firsts and moments of "contact," which were often far less important, in the long run, than the continued inter-

actions of the colonists with each other, with the local populations, and with those who were brought to these shores less willingly. A focus on these moments wrongly eclipses the longer-term entanglements, which both directed the course of history and impacted the daily lives of actual people (Silliman 2005).

In the British Virgin Islands, a further critique is that a history made up of important, "founding" moments fits poorly with the documentary and archaeological records. The first settlers came to the British Virgin Islands as part of a very different story. The "founding" date for English possession of the British Virgin Islands is often given as 1672, when a Colonel William Stapleton gave orders that "reduced Tortola to the King's subjection," taking it away from the Dutch (Dookhan 1975: 3), but who exactly was "subjected" and how subjected they felt themselves to be during this event are highly questionable. Although this date is cited by most historians as the beginning of English possession, those acting under Stapleton's orders apparently did little more than destroy the Dutch fortifications (which were probably basic) and remove their cannon. There is no mention of English settlement, garrisoning, or other attempts to hold the island (*CSP* [1697–98] 1905: no. 220.i). Who was conquered is also in doubt. A 1697 report by Governor Christopher Codrington submitted to the Council for Trade and Plantations in London states that Tortola had been mostly abandoned for some time and that only a few families had ever been in residence (*CSP* [1696–97] 1904: no. 1347).

The early settlements of the British Virgin Islands appear instead to be much more haphazard than Jamestown or Massachusetts Bay, and the story of Stapleton appears to have taken on importance after the fact so that the British Virgin Islands had a foundation story to match. The Dutch had built what was referred to as a "fort" in 1643, reputed to be somewhere on the southern coast of the western end of Tortola (an area now named "Fort Recovery" is reputed to be the location but shows no signs of seventeenth-century occupation, although this has not been investigated with full archaeological work), and one of the principal academic historians of the British Virgin Islands, Isaac Dookhan (1975), refers repeatedly to "Dutch colonists." However, other writers call these occupants "pirates" and suggest a temporary base camp, not a settlement (Edwards and M'Kinnen 1805: 185). To add to the confusion, historian Robert Martin wrote that the Dutch arrived in 1648, not 1643 (Martin 1834: 380). Before Stapleton, in 1666 a group of English "pirates" forced the Dutch out and "pretended to take possession for the crown of England, and the English monarch, [who,] if he did not commission the enterprise, made no scruple

to claim the benefit of it" (Edwards and M'Kinnen 1805: 185). It is interesting to note that, although predating Stapleton's arrival by some years, this group was apparently considered too motley to be the basis of a foundation story, and Stapleton's more respectable military conquest was depicted as the first English occupation by later historians.

The typical story of colonial "progress" or "taming of a wilderness" is also different here. Rather than organized colonists, laying out towns and marking property boundaries, residents of these most marginal parts of the Leeward Islands in the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century came and went from various unoccupied islands as they saw fit and with little regard to national claims. In 1672, reports state that about eighty English, Irish, and Welsh people lived on Tortola (JNA MS 1007), and Dookhan suggests that some "ten or twelve Dutch families" remained at that time as well. However, a decade later, in 1685, only two people remained resident on Tortola (Dookhan 1975: 19). Bryan Edwards and Daniel M'Kinnen (1805: 185) suggest that the first large group of English settlers originated from Anguilla around the turn of the eighteenth century, while Frederick Henry Watkins (1924: 136) states that this group came around 1680. (This, too, is a simplification, as discussed later in the chapter; the early settlers named in a 1717 census were born in many different locations.) By 1697, a Jonathan Turner and his unnamed wife had come to live on the island to "breed stock, plant a little cotton and go fishing" and were apparently alone with their family, according to one report (*CSP* [1696–97] 1904: no. 1347).

Disinterest and a lack of control by London are made clearer by the early reports about those who lived in the islands. Edwards and M'Kinnen's comment (quoted above) that the English king did not "commission" the 1666 occupation makes the point that all of these claims and counterclaims were going on at the periphery of governmental awareness, in a gray area between military action in war, privateering, outright piracy, and small groups of independent actors moving at the colonial fringes. One European country's claim on these islands was just that, a claim, and no more. It was a function of statements made by wealthy elites in the capitals of Europe that had little to do with the lives of those in the Caribbean. Even direct orders issued from legitimate governments in Europe were liable to go unnoticed in the distant, tiny, dispersed settlements of the Virgin Islands. For instance, the English government ordered that Tortola be returned to the Dutch in 1686, fourteen years after its supposed capture by Stapleton, but this appears never to have happened (Dookhan 1975: 4). This order took two years to materialize and was in answer to a Dutch request for

return of the islands, which followed the treaty that entitled them to make such a request by a full decade. Clearly, sovereignty over these islands was of little moment to the kings, queens, ladies, and lords of Europe.

All this confusion is partly the result of a sparse documentary history for these islands, but moreover, there is a disconnect between documentary reports outlining apparently straightforward changes of sovereignty and founding moments and the actual experiences of these earliest occupants. The story of BVI settlement has been bent to fit the mold of colonialist histories like Jamestown and Massachusetts Bay and also those of Caribbean settlement: the 1609 wreck of the *Sea Venture* on Bermuda, the 1627 settlement of Barbados, the 1655 capture of Jamaica (by Admiral Sir William Penn Sr., the father of Quaker leader William Jr.). Why were the British Virgin Islands so different? The answer begins with geography and environment but extends to the people who made it home, who were never quite like those in Barbados or Jamaica.

Environment and the Late, Haphazard Settlement of the British Virgin Islands

Despite the lush palms and inviting beaches of today, the British Virgin Islands were not particularly attractive to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century settlers. In fact, the earliest recorded observations of the islands in English focus repeatedly on their disadvantages for settlement. Edwards and M'Kinnen quote a 1596 observation (probably by the Earl of Cumberland) of the Virgin Islands as "a knot of little islands, wholly uninhabited, sandy, barren, and craggy" (Edwards and M'Kinnen 1805: 184).

Indeed, the islands tend to be very steep and rocky (figure 2.2). Although less than 3 kilometers across at its widest, Tortola's Sage Mountain rises to a peak over 500 meters high, and the other islands often rise sheer from the sea. On many, there are few patches that are suited to growing sugar, the great cash crop of the Caribbean economy. These are also desert islands, having an average of just 130 centimeters (50 inches) of rain per year, and what rain there is can be erratic, with the islands prone to long droughts. Heavy tropical downpours can damage crops and buildings and then be followed by weeks without rain. This rain is almost evenly distributed through the year, but not by elevation: Sage Mountain, the highest point of the Virgin group, gets up to 200 centimeters (78 inches), but the smaller "out islands"—including Little Jost van Dyke—because of their lower elevations receive only about 90 centimeters (35 inches) over the year (Beard 1949: 175; Little et al. 1976: 5).

The geology of the British Virgin Islands is complex. An "island arc" chain

Figure 2.2. Tortola's west end, along north coast looking east on an area known as Belmont, showing typical BVI steepness and ruggedness.

resulting from the impact of the Caribbean and South American tectonic plates, the islands of the Lesser Antilles, most of the Virgin Islands among them, formed over the past 100 million years in a complicated series of volcanic and sedimentary episodes. This process continued until approximately 40 million years ago, when the islands were slowly uplifted and began to erode (Donnelly 1996: 36–37). The older age of these formations is one of the reasons why the islands do not have rich agricultural potential. Sugar was certainly grown, as evidenced both by the historic record and by the surviving ruins of sugar works of various sizes throughout the British Virgin Islands, but the more-resilient cotton was more common as a crop, especially for poorer farmers and those on less-productive lands.

Pre-Columbian peoples certainly lived in the British Virgin Islands, and their homes and lives have been the subject of several archaeological studies (Bates 2001; Drewett 2002, 2003; Drewett and Bates 2000a, 2000b; Righter 1990). (More work has been conducted in the neighboring U.S. Virgin Islands,

which of course would not have been a distinct area to precolonial inhabitants.) However, the stresses of diseases brought by the Spanish as well as Spanish slaving expeditions early in their foray into the New World hit the Caribbean peoples particularly hard. Despite the fact that Native people are reported to have lived on nearby St. John as late as 1665 (Hauser and Armstrong 2012), no records mention such a group on Tortola. Quite possibly the native population of the British Virgin Islands suffered a fate similar to that of many Bahamian peoples. There, as described by archaeologist William Keegan, the combination of disease and slaving left many islands empty by the early decades of the sixteenth century (Keegan 1992). Environmentally marginal spaces like the Bahamas and Virgin Islands were largely depopulated of native inhabitants early, and those who remained may have kept clear of the Europeans who produced documentary records. In any case, the British Virgin Islands are reported to have been without native residents when whites began to visit in the sixteenth century and take up residence in the seventeenth.

Partly as a result of the environmental and geologic factors outlined above, while the seventeenth century saw near-continual struggles among the European powers for possession of every speck of Caribbean land, there was little official interest in the Virgin Islands. A 1672 report to London on the status of some islands held or claimed by the English in the West Indies rates Tortola's importance as "none at all" (JNA MS 1007), and a 1677 report omits it entirely (JNA MS 1827). Time did not improve most opinions of the value of the British Virgin Islands. In the 1820s, the Virgin Islands were referred to as "decidedly and in every respect the poorest of all the West India Colonies" (M'Queen 1824: 317).

Some of the colonial confusion outlined in the previous section, then, stems from the fact that there was little economic potential for the British Virgin Islands and therefore they were not worth the kind of attention that might have led to clarity in the documentary records. As Dookhan writes, "The dilatory attitude of the European nations in establishing an early right of sovereignty over the Virgin Islands stemmed from the basic fact that these islands generally were not regarded as valuable plantation colonies" (Dookhan 1975: 14). The stage set for the earliest European settlers, who would arrive in fits and starts through the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, then, is one of low agricultural potential and distance and disinterest from the colonial core. Although many people from different backgrounds came to the British Virgin Islands, they could not expect mineral or agricultural wealth, nor could they count on any assistance from their European "betters." They were on their own.

"They Think Themselves Christians Because They Are Descended from Such": The Early Settlers

As just noted, the early settlers to the British Virgin Islands did not arrive as part of an organized settlement project, and so they did not have the same supports and connections that more-organized colonies had. They also did not have the same controls or restrictions. In truth, the first European residents of this area of the Caribbean were probably unrecorded by written history, staying for days, weeks, or years to collect lumber, live off the reefs, or grow provisions. By the mid-1600s, various individuals and small groups appear to have settled on many of the uninhabited smaller islands of the Caribbean, trading (legally and illegally), harvesting timber, farming, fishing, and doing whatever else they could to survive. These people had mainly left the social margins of Barbados or Jamaica (or the colonies of other nations) for the geographical margins of whatever small cays or rocks they could find. Other archaeologists working in the region have also noted the general poverty of Virgin Islanders at this period. Douglas Armstrong, in his sketch of the area's history, emphasizes how the early settlers to the region were "landless and jobless former indentures" and constituted a group "marginalized" elsewhere in the Caribbean and searching for "a niche of fortune, or at least survival" (Armstrong 2003: 22, 24).

Although nominally under the control of various colonial authorities, these people were spurned by those who could not control them, and they had minimal government. Governor Daniel Parke of the British Leeward Islands, the colony that claimed control over the British Virgin Islands after 1672, wrote of the inhabitants of Tortola and Virgin Gorda in 1709 that, while there was a deputy governor assigned to each island, "they regard him not, they live like wild people without order or Government, and have neither Divine [i.e., Minister] nor Lawyer amongst them, they take each others words in marriage; they thinke themselves Christians because they are descended from such" (*CSP* [1708–9] 1922: no. 597.i). Only recently had Parke been able to send a minister in the hopes of rectifying some of these inadequacies, but of this minister nothing more is ever heard. In 1724, Parke's successor, John Hart, was perhaps the first of the Leewards governors to visit, and wrote of BVI settlers that "upon inquiry how they came to settle those miserable islands, I found that the first inhabitants were such as had fled from Barbados and the greater islands for debt or to avoid the punishment for their crimes, and have since been increased by pirates who have come in upon acts of Grace, and are married and settled there, whose posterity not knowing the world, remain there and cultivate the ground

for a wretched subsistence" (*CSP* [1724–25] 1936: no. 260). In 1717, during a drought, the settlers petitioned en masse for permission (and presumably help) to leave Tortola and settle then-vacant St. Croix, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) away (UKNA CO 152/12, no. 67.vii). This request was not acted on, and things did not seem to improve financially. In 1728, Lieutenant General Matthew reported that the fewer than two hundred families of the Virgin Islands could not, together, pay for a single lawyer at the usual rates, and that government was nearly absent, for while there was "a particular Lt. Governour to each of them, . . . if his cudgell happen to be a whit less than a sturdy subject's, Good night Governour" (*CSP* [1728–29] 1937: no. 24). As late as 1755, the planters of the Virgin Islands were described as "generally so illiterate" that they were considered to be unable to effectively govern themselves (UKNA CO 152/28, no. Bb65).

A census of Virgin Gorda, Tortola, and Beef Island (a medium-sized island adjacent to Tortola, so close that today they are joined by a bridge and the latter hosts the main airport of the British Virgin Islands) taken in 1716 (UKNA CO 152/11, no. 6.vi) gives us some insight into gender and family relations, wealth, and slavery in the early British Virgin Islands. Of the seventy-eight households listed (seventeen on Tortola and most of the remainder on "Spanishtown," as Virgin Gorda was then called), all but twelve (85 percent) consisted of 1 man and 1 woman, there being 5 widowers or single men and 7 "Widdows" listed separately. There were 195 enslaved Africans held in the British Virgin Islands at this time, an average of 2.5 per white household, but this number is misleading. Fully twenty-three, or nearly a third (29.4 percent) of the settler families, had no enslaved people at all, and most (sixty-nine, or 88 percent) held 5 or fewer. On the wealthier end of the spectrum, four households held as many 9 people enslaved, and one had 10. Considering that many of these enslaved Africans would have been children or elderly, the vast majority of BVI planters probably had only a handful of able-bodied adults on each property, and the European-descended owners most likely labored alongside those they held in bondage, as opposed to being "gentlemen" in the usual picture of slaveholding planters.

Another census of Tortola from a year later (UKNA CO 152/12, no. 67.viii) suggests both the fluidity of life in the British Virgin Islands at this time and likely some problems with the documentary record as well. Of Tortola's 17 heads of household who appear on the 1716 census, 6 are not listed a year later, but, more strikingly, twenty-five new households are listed. Some of these most likely arrived during the year that elapsed between the two censuses, as they

held relatively large numbers of enslaved people, suggesting both a level of wealth that might have enabled migration and also a prominence that makes them unlikely to have been missed by the previous record. But the 1716 record was also probably incomplete. If we are to believe Governor Hart's 1724 statement (quoted above), it would be reasonable for those who had escaped debt or "punishment for their crimes" in other colonies to avoid census takers if possible. In 1717, when representatives from the government arrived, "one Ham[,] a notorious villain living on Beef Island [who] was on board of Bellame [i.e., served on a ship captained by "Black Sam" Bellamy] the Pirate when he was here, and as soon as they fired a gun at Virgin Gorda [i.e., when the government representatives arrived], he betook himself to a Bermuda boat he has and his negroes, and lurkt about the creeks and islands, until we were gone" (*CSP* [1716–17] 1930: no. 639.i). Not surprisingly, no one by the name of "Ham" appears on either the 1716 or the 1717 census.

Names familiar in the British Virgin Islands today do begin to appear at that point, and the census suggests a slightly higher degree of affluence: Benjamin Hodge, William Boone, Frances Pasea, and the one named single woman in the 1717 census, Elizabeth Holsom, each held either fourteen or fifteen people enslaved. This census also gives places of birth for those counted, showing that the new arrivals came from a variety of sources rather than representing a single large population movement. As noted above, several founding stories suggest that a major group of BVI settlers arrived en masse from Anguilla in the late 1600s or early 1700s (Edwards and M'Kinnen 1805: 185; Jenkins 1923: 3; Suckling 1780: 4; Watkins 1924: 136). However, there appears to be minimal direct evidence for this. Table 2.1 shows that the early population of the British Virgin Islands came from all over the English-speaking world and beyond. Of the forty heads of household listed, only seven were born in England and five more in Scotland and Ireland, putting the percentage of households hailing from Britain and Ireland directly at 30 percent. Twenty-two (55 percent) were born in other British colonial possessions, all but one from other Caribbean islands (but only five from Anguilla), and six (15 percent) came from beyond the English possessions entirely, two from Europe (France and Holland), and four from the Dutch Islands of Curaçao and St. Eustatius.

Twenty-six (65 percent) of Tortola's 1717 heads of households, then, were what would have been called creoles, born in various New World colonies (mainly other islands of the Caribbean) rather than being European in birth. Although Tortola is called a British colony, less than a third are listed as being originally from Britain. The recent and fluid nature of settlement in the British

Table 2.1. Places of birth for heads of household listed in the 1717 census of Tortola

Place of birth	Number
England	7
St. Christopher's	6
Anguilla	5
Antigua	5
Ireland	4
Statia (St. Eustatius)	3
British Virgin Islands	2
Scotland	1
Nevis	1
Curaçao	1
South Carolina	1
Barbados	1
Montserrat	1
France	1
Holland	1

Source: UKNA CO 152/12, no. 67.viii.

Virgin Islands is evidenced by the fact that only two (5 percent) heads of 1717 households were themselves born in those islands.

Trade and Connections

Although by no means inaccessible, the British Virgin Islands were, by and large, not well integrated into the Atlantic trade. Direct connections to England seem to have been rare. In 1724, the Virgin Islands had no direct shipping with England and had no customs houses, and their "small quantities" of sugar, molasses, and cotton were generally traded to the Dutch at St. Eustatius or the Danish at St. Thomas (*CSP* [1724–25] 1936: no. 260.viii). A decade later, shortly before the formation of the Quaker meeting on Tortola, a report by the Lords of Trade stated that Tortola still had "no immediate intercourse" with Britain and that the trade was still not worth the trouble of establishing a customs house (Commissioners for Trade and Plantations 1734/5: 10). A few years later, this isolation caused difficulty for at least two Quaker ministers to Tortola, who

were detained there for four months trying to find passage on a ship back to Europe (Anonymous 1787: 284).

John Coakley Lettsom, son of the owners of Little Jost van Dyke (discussed below), called the entire export of goods from the British Virgin Islands at the time of his birth there in 1744 "inconsiderable" and wrote that it primarily took place with the British ports Lancaster and Liverpool (Lettsom 2003 [1804]: 15). No ships from London regularly called in the British Virgin Islands until the 1770s, and then only two or sometimes three a year came from that port; there was minimal trade with the North American colonies directly (House of Commons 1790: 279). Communication with England proved as difficult as travel and trade: in their letters to the London Yearly Meeting, the Quaker community of the British Virgin Islands frequently mentioned other letters that had "miscarried" and failed to arrive, as in 1745 (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 28:8), or apologized for their letters arriving late (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 28:34).

Danish St. Thomas became the trade hub for the Virgin Islands, and most produce exported and manufactured goods imported to the British Virgin Islands passed through this nearby port, despite laws to the contrary at different periods. In the 1820s, St. Thomas was reported as a source for "India goods, tea, spices, Canton crape, Madras coifs, nankeens, &c.; wines, spirits, and preserved fruits from France; dried meats, medicinal waters, linen, &c., from Germany; lumber, shingles, maize, salt fish, &c. from the States; the coffee, cotton, rum of the Antilles;—these, with articles of European manufacture, whether for use of luxury, from a toy to a steam-boat, may find purchasers at St. Thomas" (Anonymous 1843: 92–93). In the 1920s it was noted that most BVI trade was still conducted through that port (Jenkins 1923: 91–92), and in fact even today many British Virgin Islanders travel to St. Thomas to shop at Kmart and other U.S. chain stores.

Manufactured goods were available in the British Virgin Islands in the eighteenth century, but not always easily. Merchants were few and these frequently lived only part of the year on Tortola. A merchant who lived on Tortola for two decades, Thomas Woolrich, wrote that for many in the 1760s "it was customary to hold the stores [i.e., to be in residence] about six months in the year at the crop time, for the selling of their goods and loading the ships; and the merchants frequently returned to Liverpool in the ships they brought their cargos in, and shut up their stores the remainder part of the year" (House of Commons 1790: 278).

Only in 1785, with the establishment of a "packet station" at Road Town and the use of that port as a rendezvous point for the Leeward Islands convoy to

Britain, was regular communication facilitated with the British Virgin Islands (Dookhan 1975: 56), and this did not last. By the 1830s, once again, "not above two or three" British ships called on the British Virgin Islands in a year (Martin 1834: 508). Even in the modern era, as late as the 1970s, sailing historian Douglas Pyle reported that manufactured goods were frequently hard to come by even on larger islands of the Lesser Antilles; even items such as nails were difficult to acquire, and residents had to develop ways to make do or wait until they could be located (Pyle 1981: 86). This problem even impacted early archaeological work: Alfredo Figueredo reported that in 1972, eggs, meat, and milk were difficult to obtain while in Virgin Gorda on a survey project, and most food was either from the sea or from cans (Figueredo 1972: 134). Thankfully, present-day archaeologists have no such difficulty, and today's British Virgin Islands are well supplied with virtually any item of merchandise or food.

Out Islands: At the Margins of the Margins

Three miles (5 kilometers) to the northwest of Tortola lies Jost van Dyke, the smallest of the four main islands of the British Virgin Islands. (Most pronounce the name "Yost," and it appears spelled this way in some historic records, but some British Virgin Islanders do pronounce the hard "J" today.) Today, the smaller or "out" islands provide quiet retreats or exclusive resorts, or serve as national parks, but in the eighteenth century they were the last lines of the Caribbean frontier. The smallest islands also were frequently the poorest, offering little shelter from storms, scant sources of drinking water, and deep isolation when weather made sailing difficult. Those who took up residence and were later granted legal ownership of these places were most likely among the poorest Europeans in the region.

Like most of the islands other than Tortola and Virgin Gorda, Jost van Dyke (often called just "Jost" by many British Virgin Islanders) was probably first used by Europeans only as grazing lands for cattle and goats, often without any residents to keep them. A 1711 report states of all the out islands, Jost included, that "they serve only as so many Parks, for the inhabitants of" Tortola and Virgin Gorda "to keep their Stocks [i.e., animals] on" (UKNA CO 152/10, no. 66). A few years later, in a 1716 letter from Leeward Islands Governor Walter Hamilton, they were described as "good for nothing but to food goats on being Rockey, Barren, Land having Nothing but Shruby Bushes thereon, Except one Called Gross Vandiks which has Som good houses built on it" (UKNA CO 152/11, no. 6.v). However, a 1717 report states that no islands except Tortola, Virgin Gorda, and Beef Island were occupied at the

time, again suggesting both the fluidity of life and the inconsistency of the documentation.

The contradiction in the documents could be the simple errors and inconsistencies that are common in frontier settings, or perhaps the "good houses" were temporary shelters for those tending livestock or crops left on the island. Another possibility is that these "good houses" were the homes of enslaved people living without oversight and ignored in the counts of the 1717 report. In the British Virgin Islands, leaving enslaved people alone on small islands was not an uncommon practice, as discussed by merchant Thomas Woolrich in the later part of the century: he notes that one planter owned an unnamed cay and left six newly purchased Africans alone on the island to farm cotton. A white overseer went to the island to put them to work on weekdays but left them alone during the times they were given to build their own houses and farm their own provisions (House of Commons 1790: 273). This practice is known in the early nineteenth century on Norman, Cooper, Ginger, Great Thatch, Prickly Pear, Little Jost van Dyke, Great Tobago, and Dead Man's Chest Islands, all of which are described in an 1826 report as having enslaved but not free people resident (see appendix A). Armstrong reports that the same was the case at that time for the nearby plantations of then-Danish St. John's East End, where prior to 1834 no free people lived on the estates (Armstrong 2003: 112–13).

A 1716 letter from Governor Hamilton came with a map that omits Jost van Dyke (as well as Norman Island) entirely (UKNA Maps MPII 1/25). Jost and Little Jost both first appear on a survey map of 1739 (UKNA CO 700/VirginIslands1). This suggests the low level of importance placed on this land early on. In 1740, some of the out islands are listed as having very recently been "manur'd" or cultivated, and they are together reported to "make about 60,000 [pounds of] Cotton and in a few years more will be Capable of making upwards of 400,000" (UKNA CO 152/23, no. 78). That same report also lists Jost specifically as having only just been settled: "Jos: Vandyke is just begun to be Cleared, and May make in a few years above 100,000 Cotton." These figures are probably exaggerations, given the production recorded in the early nineteenth century discussed below. By the 1820s, one traveler still described Great Harbor, Jost's main settlement then and now, as "a picture of the wildest seclusion I had yet witnessed" (Anonymous 1843: 74–75).

In the 1790s, cotton was the principal product of Jost, according to William Thornton, who also noted that "Sugar has also been made in several Estates [on Jost van Dyke], but they have all been deserted except one on the N. W. part, which still makes a little" (LOC, WTP f. 2808). Thornton was another British

Virgin Islander born to Quaker parents who received education abroad and became a successful doctor. He is most well known for being the architect of the first U.S. Capitol building and the first head of the U.S. Patent Office (Harris 1995; Stearns and Yerkes 1976) and was a friend and correspondent with his "countryman" John Coakley Lettsom. In 1815, only about 4 percent of Jost van Dyke's land surface was under cultivation for cotton, producing about 21,000 pounds annually, a relatively small amount, while about 3 percent was being cultivated for provisions; most of the land that was being used, about half, was for cattle (see appendix A, tables A.1 and A.5). In 1823, this decreased to 3 percent for cotton (see table A.2). These figures suggest that the population of 428 in 1815 and 506 in 1823 (see tables A.3 and A.4) would have had barely enough agricultural produce to survive, and most people probably gathered food from the nearby seas, reefs, and cays.

Despite reports that attempt to cast these small islands, like Jost and Little Jost, in the same light as sugar colonies elsewhere in the Caribbean, then, they represent something substantially different. Their settlement mirrors, in miniature, that of the British Virgin Islands as a whole: later, sparser, and more informal and unrecorded than the colonial core. But here the "core" in question is Tortola, already itself marginal to the colonies of Barbados or Jamaica. Residents there were later arrivals yet, and poorer yet, and the limited agricultural potential of their lands made it likely that most would remain relatively poor.

Little Jost van Dyke and the Lettsom Family

Studying a whole community, even one as small as the Tortola Quaker meeting, which had perhaps a hundred members, is a difficult prospect for an archaeologist. Ideally, we would gather every historical document related to any member and then excavate each member's house and outbuildings. Obviously, this is not practical. If nothing else, the precise location of the home of almost any member is not known. Surviving land records from this time are few and vague, making any association of an individual with a specific site difficult except in a few cases. So we must restrict ourselves to a partial view.

Here I focus primarily on one site, with comparisons drawn from several related ones and the written record. The site chosen for this study is known as the Lettsom site on the Vanterpool estate, located on the small island of Little Jost van Dyke. The small island location for this plantation is central to the social and economic story told here, but it also facilitates certainty about who the occupants were, since the thin documentary record indicates that the Lett-

soms and those they held as enslaved people were the island's only residents in the eighteenth century. Additionally, the remote and relatively unwelcoming location has helped preserve the remains of this occupation better than most eighteenth-century sites in the rapidly modernizing Caribbean.

Commonly referred to as "Little Jost," the island is irregularly shaped, about 1 by 0.5 miles (800 meters by 1,600 meters) at its greatest extent, 3 miles (5 kilometers) north of the western tip of Tortola. It is steep, rising to a peak of over 300 feet (100 meters) at its highest point, and its north coast drops almost sheer into the Caribbean Sea (figure 2.3). The land itself is often only a little less rocky, with areas of enormous, naturally occurring, well-weathered boulders (figure 2.4; see also figure 2.6) and a shallow, sandy soil that would have made farming sugarcane impossible. Today it is populated primarily by feral goats and is in parts densely overgrown with species of seaside balsam (*Croton* sp.), acacia (*Acacia* spp.), and cactus (especially *Cephalocereus royenii,* pipe organ cactus, and *Melocactus intortus,* Turk's head cactus), as well as the famously deadly "poison apple," or manchineel, tree *(Hippomane mancinella),* with its burning, blinding, poisonous sap. A small area on the southern side has been leased out by the government and is sometimes inhabited by members of one family. A ruin on the western beach is all that survives of a small bar and entertainment venue from the mid-twentieth century. This latter locale is shaded by untended coconut palms, a remnant of another plantation effort in the early twentieth century. The eighteenth-century occupation appears to be concentrated in the southwestern corner of the island, which is currently private property; while permission for the present study was granted by the landowning Vanterpool family, the site is not currently open to the public.

The island entered the historical record when it was granted by John Hart, the governor of the Leeward Islands, to a Jonathan or John Lettsom. The grant is backdated to July 16, 1725, but, as was not unusual, this was not formally recorded until 1739, with another apparently identical grant recorded in 1748 (BVI Archives, Deed Indexes). In effect, Hart probably formally recognized with a grant the fact that the Lettsom family had taken up residence on the unoccupied island in the 1720s. This places the Lettsoms at the heart of that group discussed at the beginning of this chapter who settled the British Virgin Islands informally and were most likely landless former indentured servants. A great number of these poor whites arrived in the Caribbean in the seventeenth century, though they have received relatively little attention from archaeologists (but see Reilly 2016). At times, these indentures were little better treated than the enslaved Africans who would largely supplant them in providing the back-

Figure 2.3. North coast of Little Jost van Dyke, looking westward from Green Cay, with Jost van Dyke in the background.

Figure 2.4. Large boulders on Little Jost van Dyke.

breaking labor required to "civilize" the main islands like Barbados. After their term of indenture expired, many hoped to receive land grants, but often the wealthier planters beat them to this scarce resource and they found themselves seeking lands elsewhere in poorer colonies and uninhabited spots. It was most likely in this way that the Lettsom family first came to Little Jost.

ALTHOUGH NO SOURCE IS OFFERED, one biographer of the Lettsom family states that the name came originally from a Cheshire town called "Letsom" (Fox 1919: 99) which may be modern Ledsham, 6 miles (10 kilometers) northwest of Chester. The earliest Lettsoms in the Caribbean region appear on two censuses, taken in 1716 and 1717 on Tortola. In the first (UKNA CO 152/11, no. 6.vi), "Jn° Letsom" is listed as living on Tortola with one woman, five children, and two enslaved people living with him in 1716. Although he appears in the records sometimes as "John," I will call this patriarch of the family in the Caribbean "Jonathan" to distinguish him from his grandson, John Coakley Lettsom. In the 1717 census (UKNA CO 152/12, no. 67.viii), Jonathan appears with only four children but five enslaved people. That same document also lists a "Robert Letsom," who is unmarried and has no children and does not hold anyone enslaved. Most likely, Robert is the eldest son of Jonathan, having left home between the two censuses. This places Jonathan Lettsom's age at about forty in 1717, in order to have a son in his late teens or early twenties leaving home.

The 1717 census also includes places of birth, which provide us with a possible sequence of moves for the family. Jonathan is listed as having been born on St. Christopher's (today usually called "St. Kitts"), while Robert was born on Beef Island, an island nearly touching Tortola. This suggests that Jonathan Lettsom is part of at least a second creole generation, the son of an indentured, poorer white immigrant, perhaps born to the landless or being a second son needing to find his fortune elsewhere. He probably came to the British Virgin Islands before Robert was born (around or slightly before the turn of the century if Robert left home between the 1716 and 1717 documents) and settled for a time on Beef Island, where his eldest child was born.

The 1716 census lists Beef Island separately from Tortola, and Jonathan is listed as living on Tortola, so he must have moved at some point between Robert's birth and the census, reflecting the informality and fluidity of settlement at this early date, indicating that planters may well have invested little in infrastructure and moved when convenient to another vacant plot of land. When Jonathan arrived on Little Jost is unknown, and the archaeology discussed be-

low is equivocal on the beginnings of colonial occupation, probably because these early residents had few manufactured, datable goods. In the absence of better data, we can probably accept the grant date of 1725 as an approximate beginning point for the Lettsom settlement on Little Jost van Dyke.

Jonathan appears as a signatory on the proclamation of the ascension of George II, read in Tortola on October 7, 1727 (UKNA CO 152/16, no. 67), but he apparently died before the 1740s, when the owners of Little Jost van Dyke are listed as Edward and Mary Lettsom, presumably another son of Jonathan and his wife. Edward and Mary are the ones who became early members of the Quaker community when it formed about 1740, and their occupation of the island is the period this study focuses on. (There are many John, Mary, and Edward Lettsoms in the family tree and in BVI archival records; see Chenoweth 2011: 84–90 for more details and a partially conjectural family tree that clarifies these.)

As the male and thus legal head of the household, Edward is the one most noted by historical documents, but it is Mary who takes a larger role in this story. Both were members of the Quaker community from its earliest days, but Mary outlived her husband by at least two decades, during which she had a pointed split with the Quaker group. Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine was, according to one source, descended from a line of Irish baronets who may have moved to the Caribbean during the Restoration in 1660, as they were "in favor of the Commonwealth" (Abraham 1933: 12).[1] There was a line of baronets named "Colclough," an Irish spelling of "Coakley," which ended with Sir Caesar Colclough on his death in 1687, but the connection if there was any is unclear, and in any case the family did not seem to retain much in the way of benefits from this association.

An Edward Coakley appears on the 1727 proclamation of George II in Tortola; he may be Mary's father and perhaps is the same Edward Coakley as that appearing on a 1717 census of the island of Anguilla living with three adult women (probably a wife and two grown daughters), two children, and twelve enslaved people (UKNA CO 152/12, no. 67.iv). Although a simplification (as discussed above), the usual story of Tortola's early white settlers moving en masse from Anguilla certainly has some truth to it, as many names on this Anguilla census are represented in Tortola's historic records and present-day families. However, it is more likely that Mary is the child of a poorer Edward Coakley who in 1717 is listed as having been born in Anguilla but was then living in Tortola with a wife, one child (perhaps Mary or an older sibling), and four enslaved people (UKNA CO 152/12, no. 67.viii). Unfortunately, the documents

reveal nothing of Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine's early life or birth. She gave birth to twin sons, John and Edward, in 1744, and so we can assume that she was born before 1730 (marriage as young as fifteen is known to have occurred in the British Virgin Islands at that time; see the example of Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie, below), probably in the 1720s.

The birth of Edward Lettsom is not recorded, but he was not an adult in 1727 when his father, Jonathan, and brother Robert, but not he, appear as signatories on the proclamation of George II. Assent to this proclamation, a part of the succession of the throne, was required of all adult males. This places Edward's birth after about 1710. We know from the writings of his son John that he died in 1758 (Lettsom 2003 [1804]: 18). Edward and Mary had at least two sons: Edward (referred to as "Edward Jr." here for clarity, although he is never identified as such in the few documents that mention him), of whom virtually nothing is recorded, and John Coakley Lettsom, who was sent to England for schooling and eventually became a wealthy and quite famous doctor and natural philosopher. John told his biographer the unlikely story that he and his brother were the seventh set of twin boys born to his parents, all of whom died but the last two, he and his brother (Pettigrew 1817a: 1:5). Although the records of births and deaths in the BVI community of Quakers are sparse and imperfect (indeed, the births of John and Edward Jr. are missing), it does not seem likely that twelve births and burials by this family otherwise so involved in the community—and the fantastic coincidence of them all being twin boys—would have gone unrecorded, and so we must consider this legend.

After the death of Edward in 1758, Mary married Samuel Taine, a cooper, almost immediately (Lettsom 2003 [1804]: 18). (Taine is erroneously named "Lane" by Jenkins in his otherwise excellent 1923 book on the Quaker group in the British Virgin Islands, as well as by several other sources who consulted that book.) Mary and Samuel appear to have continued to live on Little Jost. Archaeological evidence indicates that the main house was occupied well into the 1760s and perhaps even to nearer the end of the century, although the later occupation appears to be very light, with only a few artifacts dating to the 1780s or beyond. The enslaved people who remained on the island were probably few, perhaps only five from 1767 onward, and they are known to have left the island completely before 1791, when a visitor described an abandoned island and a collapsed house.

Although Mary appears to have been sincerely involved with Quakerism in her own right, the family's connection to the Tortola group did not long survive Edward, and Mary was expelled from the group for reasons discussed in the

chapters that follow. No further mention of Samuel Taine is made, but as just noted the island was abandoned by 1791 and the couple appears not to have had any children. Taine is almost absent from the written record, and we may never have known his name if it were not for Mary's dealings with the Quaker meeting or the fame of his stepson, John Coakley Lettsom. Taine was never a member of the Quaker meeting, and Mary's involvement with the meeting ended shortly after their marriage, but we do know that he was generally sympathetic to Quakerism and its values. In a document concerning Mary's "disownment," or expulsion from the meeting, we learn of "her husband who says his Mother was a weighty [i.e., important or respected] Friend in the Island of Barbados + he him self spakes well of Friends" (TMM Minutes 7:53).[2]

John Coakley Lettsom's biographer James Johnston Abraham suggests, based on a letter that could not now be located, that Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine died in 1781 (Abraham 1933: 55). The latest confirmation we have of Mary still being alive is in 1770, when John married: his marriage certificate, preserved in the records of the Medical Society of London, which he helped found, lists him as "John Coakley Letsome of Greenwich Street London, Doctor of Physic, Son of Edward Letsome late of the Island of Tortola in the West Indies, deceased, and Mary his Wife him surviving" (MSL, Lettsom Papers).[3]

ALTHOUGH JOHN WAS ONLY SIX when he left Little Jost van Dyke and is thus not a major part of the story of that island or the Quaker community, his fame enabled the survival of some of the historical documentation for the family and also probably influenced the formation of that record, and so he deserves some comment. Several substantial works exist to expand on this information (Abraham 1933; Lawrence and Macdonald 2003; Pettigrew 1817a, 1817b). By his own account, John Coakley Lettsom was born November 22, 1744, on the island of Little Jost van Dyke (Lettsom 2003 [1804]). Because he went on to education and fame as a doctor and was a founder of institutions and a correspondent of many more-famous individuals, a wealth of archival and historical material has been gathered about him. Unfortunately, little written by him or others accounts for his early life in the British Virgin Islands or the only time he returned there, the six months he spent on Tortola in 1767–68.

One of the exceptions is an account written around 1804 but not published in its entirety until 2003 (Lettsom 2003 [1804]). In this, he writes that his father owned "Little Vandyke, Green Island and Sandy island; besides which he owned a sugar plantation in Cane Garden Bay, Tortola," although his "favourite

residence" was on Little van Dyke. On that island, "he cultivated cotton with the aid of about 50 slaves, whose humble cottages were situated on a declivity near his little mansion" (Lettsom 2003 [1804]: 13). (This number of enslaved people is somewhat doubtful, as discussed below.) The islands today called Green Cay and Sandy Cay are extremely small, 14 and 12 acres respectively, and archaeological survey there did not produce any evidence of eighteenth-century use. If they were used at all, it was probably to run goats, perhaps a dozen of which still inhabit Green Cay.

Probably through the connections of the meeting, John's parents came to know a William Lindo, the Quaker captain of a vessel that sometimes traded with Tortola, taking the islands' produce back to Lancaster. In 1750 Lindo took the six-year-old John to England for education and placed him under the guardianship of two other Friends, brothers Abraham and Hatton Rawlinson. John wrote that he believed he was the first child born in the Virgin Islands to be so educated, and there is little reason to doubt this. At the Rawlinsons' home, he met Samuel Fothergill, a well-known Quaker minister and the brother of probably the most famous medical doctor of the day, John Fothergill. These two would play key roles in both John Lettsom's life and the Tortola meeting's spiritual life.

As a young adult, John Coakley Lettsom began his education as a doctor, but unable to afford to complete it, he returned to the British Virgin Islands briefly. In October 1767 he began his journey to return to the Virgin Islands for the first and only time after leaving as a child (Oliver 1910: 3:306). He arrived on December 8, 1767 (Abraham 1933: 51), and appears to have lived and practiced medicine in Road Town, not on Little Jost van Dyke, as he was described in later years as "sometime a practitioner in Road-town" (Anonymous 1843: 74). He treated hundreds of patients, mostly enslaved people, in his six-month residency, reportedly amassing a near fortune of £2,000 from his practice. He gave half of this sum to his mother, who was still apparently living on Little Jost, and by 1768 he had returned to Europe to finish his medical education, begin his practice, and marry, all by 1770 (Lawrence and Macdonald 2003). It should be noted that the figure of £2,000 is somewhat suspect (as are some other aspects of Lettsom's story of his youth, discussed below): this sum amounts to almost 4 percent of the worth of the entire colony's annual exports at the time and seems an unlikely gain for a half-educated doctor in a poor colony in six months' time.

John Lettsom's fame in later life derives from his medical practice, the founding of the Medical Society of London (an institution that still survives), and his work in natural philosophy, but also from his reported freeing of the enslaved

people he inherited from his father. This episode fits well into a traditional view of Quakerism and slavery, which is reconsidered here: a view that holds Quaker slaveholding to be "on average . . . less severe" (McDaniel and Julye 2009: 12). This simplistic view of Quakerism's involvement with slavery has been critiqued and complicated by Donna McDaniel and Vanessa Julye's recent, very substantial book, and an archaeology of Quaker-related sites has great potential to explore this relationship further.

In the case of John Coakley Lettsom, although perhaps the enslaved persons he inherited were free de facto, the documentary record suggests that he did not legally free them until much later in life, a quarter century after he claimed his inheritance during his 1767–68 trip. Even then, only a few of those who passed to his control from his father's estate received de jure freedom. Also recorded is that Lettsom actually purchased at least two enslaved people when he visited Tortola in 1767–68, although these two appear to have been free de facto and eventually freed legally. (For more details of these exchanges, see Chenoweth 2011: 90–93.)

THE ISLAND OF LITTLE JOST VAN DYKE is little documented after the Lettsom family. William Thornton left us a description of it abandoned in 1791. That year, Thornton visited Little Jost and made a drawing of the site and the Lettsom family house, which he turned into a painting much later, intending to send it to John. All that survives of this, however, is an engraving based on the painting (figure 2.5), first published in the London *Gentleman's Magazine* in November 1815 with a notice about John Coakley Lettsom's death (also printed in Pettigrew 1817a). This print appears to be rather accurate in terms of the positioning of the building but departs from the actual structure in several architectural points (Chenoweth 2011: 120).

Thornton's visit to Little Jost in 1791 also prompted him to write a substantial description of the site, parts of which at least were sent to John Coakley Lettsom in letters but parts of which survive only in a long manuscript document now held by the U.S. Library of Congress. Thornton noted that the island was uninhabited at the time:

> We landed in a Bay overhung by shady mangroves, and mounted the Hill-side by a winding path. The situation was pleasant, and when inhabited must have had many charms. The outline of Nature remains the same as in thy Day, but silence has taken thy seat, and her reign is seldom inter-

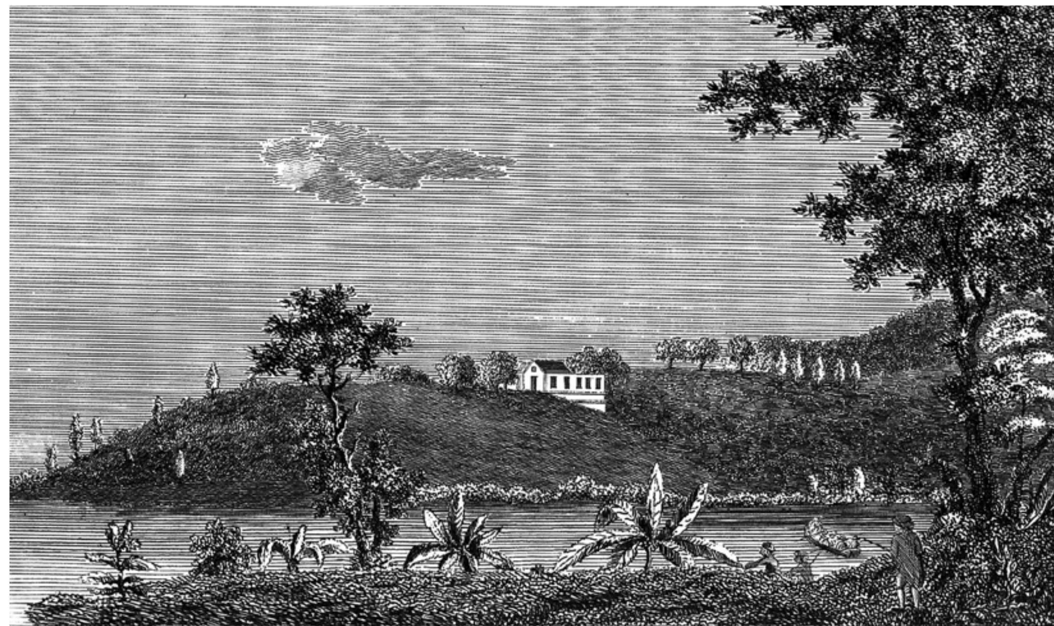

Figure 2.5. The abandoned Lettsom house on Little Jost van Dyke in an early nineteenth-century woodcut based on a painting, now lost, by William Thornton. Image reproduced courtesy of the Wellcome Library, London, under a Creative Commons license.

> rupted. No voice was then heard save the melancholy cooings of Doves which sheltered in those waving Trees that adorned thy former residence, but now wave their soft Branches over thy departed Parents. . . . They lie under the two Tamarind Trees on the west of their old mansion. (LOC, WTP f. 2809)

Perhaps spurred by Thornton's visit and letter, in 1792 John Lettsom wrote back that he had "made proposals for the purchase of this island, tho' it [could] afford no emolument," for "it contain[ed] the ashes of [his] family" (Harris 1995: 197). Therefore, at some point, probably between 1781 and 1792, the island passed out of the Lettsom family's control, although the new owner seemed to have done little with it and did not live there. John Lettsom eventually did repurchase Little Jost: he related in 1795 that he had commissioned a Mr. Skelton of Tortola to buy the island along with Sandy and Green Cays and that he planned to build a "humble mausoleum" over the graves of his parents (Harris 1995: 298). Evidently these plans fell through, though, as no markers but simple fieldstone ones are to be found on the island today.

In October 1809, John Coakley Lettsom signed a power of attorney giving one Henry Hollis Floriman of Tortola the right to sell all his lands in the British Virgin Islands. He specifically listed himself as owning or "being seized in fee simple of the Island of Little Vandyke in the West Indies and also of certain Lands and Hereditaments in the Island of Great Vandyke," and he directed Floriman to either rent or sell Little Jost as Floriman thought best and to sell any lands Lettsom had on Jost for whatever could be gotten for them (BYMFH Box L 20/06). This sale is not recorded in BVI land records, but it apparently took place. Although the owner is unknown, the land appears to have been farmed in 1815, the year of John Lettsom's death, by five enslaved people, apparently living there alone, and in 1823 by seven enslaved people living with three mixed-race free people (HCPP 1826 [no. 81] XXVII:110–15; and see appendix A, tables A.3 and A.4).

On October 12, 1861, Little Jost van Dyke is recorded as being passed by "Testament" from H. G. Gordon to Ellen Gibson Gordon, although there is no indication as to how H. G. Gordon acquired the land (BVI Archives, Deed Indexes). On May 9, 1874, the island was sold by Joseph Gibson Gordon (who presumably inherited it from Ellen Gibson Gordon, although this too went unrecorded) and Alice Eleanor Joseph Gordon (his wife) to Edward Vanterpool, Joseph Armstrong, and Sarah Hatchet for $110 (UKNA CO 1031/3685). Again, few of the details survive, but descendants of Edward Vanterpool continued to hold the western third of the island where the Lettsom site is located, while the remainder of the land was held by the Crown.

Quaker Missionaries and Meetings in Tortola

The preceding discussion of BVI history notwithstanding, the overall documentary record of the Virgin Islands is comparatively slim. It should not be surprising, then, that the story of the beginnings of Quakerism in those islands is usually told with a focus on the non-Caribbean whites who traveled there as traders and then missionaries, about whom far more is known in the written record. A sequence of travelers from Philadelphia, Liverpool, and London, some well-known to Quaker historians, arrived in the British Virgin Islands during the first half of the eighteenth century: Thomas Chalkley, John Cadwallader, John Estaugh, Peter Fearon, Daniel Stanton, Samuel Nottingham, Phoebe Smith, Mary Evans, Thomas Lancaster, and Thomas Gawthrop all traveled to Tortola between 1741 and 1756 (Jenkins 1923). Some of these travelers left us journals (Chalkley 1751, 1808; Stanton 1772) and other documents (Anonymous 1787;

Estaugh 1745; Nicholson 1894; Philadelphia Monthly Meeting 1772; Willauer 1983) detailing their religious work. But these are often frustratingly silent on many of the questions we might have wished to ask. How did the travelers relate to the enslaved people they met, or did they relate to them at all? What were the houses like in which they stayed? How did wealthy and poorer members of the nascent Quaker community see each other?

Nonetheless, these writings form the frame in which archaeology aims to paint the picture, and recounting of the written evidence for the formation of the meeting is a starting point. The first Quaker recorded to have visited any of the Virgin Islands arrived on the thirtieth of the Fifth Month 1727:[4] this was Joshua Fielding, who spent just over a month on Virgin Gorda and Tortola (Jenkins 1923: 6). In Virgin Gorda he "had sundry large meets, at ye Governours house, and Elsewhere on ye Island, at all wch ye People were very kind and attentive" (Fielding 1927 [1728]: 28). His description of his time on Tortola is equally sparse: "Leaving Spanish Town [i.e., Virgin Gorda], the 12th 6 mo. I arrived at Tortolla, having many meetings among a sober ffriendly People, at Old Road [i.e., Road Town], and other Places, wch were large and comfortable" (Fielding 1927 [1728]: 28).

This brief visit made a great impression on a planter named Abednego Pickering and on his son, John, then about twenty. A eulogy to John Pickering by John Coakley Lettsom survives in a footnote Lettsom wrote when he published the memoirs of his mentor, the famous Quaker doctor John Fothergill (Lettsom 1786: 67). Born in 1707, probably in Anguilla, to Abednego and an unnamed mother who moved to the British Virgin Islands after 1717, John Pickering was by 1740 probably the wealthiest planter in Tortola and was named lieutenant governor of that colony. At the time, this was effectively the only direct form of government present in the colony, although his powers were probably quite limited, with no police or military to enforce decisions and no power of taxation. Nonetheless, he was influential, and when he began to practice many aspects of Quakerism, a small community coalesced around him. He lived until 1768, past the end of the meeting itself in 1762, and John Lettsom was present at his death.

Fourteen years after his initial encounter with Fielding, John Pickering wrote a letter to the London Yearly Meeting describing the events of that visit and following (reprinted in Jenkins 1923). He described how his father either already or after Fielding's visit came to consider himself a Quaker but was alone in this profession in the colony. A man, unnamed in the letter, who worked for Abednego as an overseer also came to share his beliefs, and after Abednego's

death about 1734, it was around this man and then Abednego's son John that a small group began to form.

This group met for religious meetings in the Quaker manner, as they understood it, but no formal meetings for business, or possibly even regular religious meetings, took place until several years later. Around 1738, another Quaker visited Tortola: James Birkett, a merchant from Antigua who had ties to Lancaster and apparently also family connections to some of the planter families in the British Virgin Islands. He arrived on a trading voyage and found half a dozen people who considered "that to be the true Way of Worship which the People called Quakers hold with" (Jenkins 1923: 8). Birkett wrote of this in 1739: "When I was first there they had not held any Meetings though Several were pretty fully Convinced of our [i.e., Quakers'] principles; But last year as their Number Increased, They were concerned to meet together in Silence On First Days and Some time after on Week Days also" (Vaux 1902). These early meetings were held at John Pickering's house in Fat Hogs Bay near Tortola's east end one week and the house of a man named Townsend Bishop in Road Town the next. Some Friends also met more informally in smaller groups for midweek meetings.

This was not yet the beginning of the formal meeting for business, for Pickering complained in a 1740 letter to a Friend in England, where Quakers were apparently curious about the new group in the Caribbean, that they were at that time still "very Ignorant of True Order," which he "Believe[d] is kept in the friends Meetings, Especially the Manner of Marriages, and the Intent of what is meant by Mens or Womens Meetings" (Jenkins 1923: 9). Thus, he asked for help from London and, in a separate letter sent to Philadelphia, for someone to instruct them in those matters. It is notable both that the idea of separate, independent groups of women and men, each having some measure of authority and agency, was so new to Pickering and that it was such an important element of the structure of Quakerism that he inquired about it specifically. Such gendered meetings did form shortly after this letter, and they existed for the entirety of the Tortolan community's life.

Also shortly after this letter of 1740, the formal records of the Tortola Monthly Meeting, as it came to be called, began. These offer an occasionally detailed, often opaque window into the social life of the little community. The records mention eighty-four people as members and list the deaths of fifteen members and births of fifty-three, along with marriages, certificates of removal for traveling friends, and disciplinary actions, although all of these are often fragmentary. These documents are primarily held by the Haverford College Li-

brary's Quaker Collection. Additional records are held by the Friends House Library of Britain Yearly Meeting in London, including parts of the correspondence between the London Yearly Meeting and Tortola, and by the U.S. Library of Congress, in William Thornton's papers. (See note 2 for this chapter for more on the organization of these records.)

Following Pickering's invitation, a small but steady stream of Quaker missionaries visited the British Virgin Islands, staying for a few days or months, attending religious and business meetings, advising on organizational matters, and preaching to any who would listen. The histories of each of these visits are better recorded elsewhere, but they bear listing. The first and most famous was Thomas Chalkley in 1741 (Anonymous 1787; Chalkley 1751, 1808), then John Estaugh and John Cadwallader the following year. All three died within weeks or days of their arrival in Tortola and were buried next to the meetinghouse established on Pickering's land in Fat Hogs Bay. Their graves have been the site of interest for later Quaker visitors for decades, although many visitors have had difficulty locating the graves and have misidentified a nearby graveyard at Bar Bay Inlet as their final resting place (see chapter 4). In contrast to the story told of earlier Quaker arrivals on other Caribbean islands, each of these missionaries also reported a great welcome by the planters. Large religious meetings were held in various parts of the British Virgin Islands, including Jost van Dyke, attended by "many people, diverse of them not of [the Quaker] profession" (Chalkley 1808: 288).

In the sexist pattern of most eighteenth-century documentation, men receive most of the attention and are granted most of the agency, but the life of at least one remarkable woman is reflected in the records of the meeting as well. Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie had an eventful life in which she repeatedly asserted her own will, a practice not valued by the often misogynist Caribbean plantocracy. Her maiden name unknown, she was born in Anguilla in 1721 and moved to Tortola with her father in 1734; there she married one Giles Powell in 1736 at the age of just fifteen. As a young widow aged about twenty, she was living with her father on or near Tortola when the Quaker community formed in 1740, and she was thrown out of his house when she joined this nascent group. She reconciled with him a few years later as he was ailing, and at the same time she left the Quaker community to marry a newly arrived Anglican minister, John Latham, in 1744. Her second husband died in 1758, after the couple had moved to St. Croix, and Dorcas married a planter named Lillie. Later in life, she returned to Quakerism, and the couple built a meetinghouse on their land for the very small community of St. Croix Quakers. After Lillie's death, widowed for a third

time in her life, Dorcas moved to the town of Christiansted, where she had plans to build another meetinghouse (see chapter 4 and figure 4.1). Later still, as a woman of sixty-four, in 1785 she felt moved to undertake a religious journey to Philadelphia, where among other things she preached as a Quaker minister and wrote her life story for curious Philadelphia Friends (Lillie 1832).

The Archaeology of Little Jost van Dyke

This documentary history is lopsided in several ways. While it expands on the previous histories of the British Virgin Islands and the Quaker community (Dookhan 1975; Harrigan and Varlack 1975; Jenkins 1923) with new syntheses and new archival material, it nonetheless still presents a picture of a straightforward, agreed-upon, and static theological interpretation of Quaker ideas rather than the day-to-day struggles of existence and of reconciling Quakerism with the realities of the Caribbean. This written history also tells us more about the visitors to this Tortolan group than the group itself. The wealthy members and those with connections abroad, particularly males in leadership positions like John Pickering, are reasonably well represented, but these are a minority of those who chose to convert to Quakerism. About the enslaved Africans held by these Quakers, almost nothing has been said at all.

Archaeological work has the ability to add to this documentary history, to assess the actual practice of Caribbean Quakerism as lived, and to add the voices of those "of little note" (Scott 1994) back to the story from which they have been silenced. Therefore, three seasons of excavation and survey took place on Little Jost van Dyke from 2008 to 2010, aimed at recovering a cross section of daily life for the enslaved people and the Lettsoms, as well as producing an understanding of the relationship between these groups and better insight into the broader Quaker community. The remainder of this chapter provides a brief description of this work and also describes the site as it exists today, providing context for the later comparisons within and between related sites.

The work consisted of surface survey and collection, mapping, targeted excavations (1 × 1 and 1 × 2 meter units located based on particular surface features or artifact concentrations), and subsurface sampling (a grid of 50 × 50 centimeter units), as well as survey of larger areas of the island as a whole. Approximately 10,000 artifacts were recovered and cataloged, three-quarters of which were fragments of shell associated with building and eating, but many hundreds of which were ceramic, glass, pipestems, and small finds (buttons, gunflints, pins, etc.) that provide a detailed and intimate portrait of life on

the site. The surface remains (architectural and artifactual) on Little Jost van Dyke are concentrated in a relatively small area on the southwest portion of the island (figure 2.6). The shallow, active soils of the British Virgin Islands complicated stratigraphy in most contexts except artificial house platforms, and most finds were part of a sheet midden. This same feature of the soils, however, also allows surface finds to be a relatively good representation of those present in an area. Krysta Ryzewski and John Cherry have noted the advantages of such soils for surface collections on Montserrat, which is less than 200 miles to the east of the Virgin Islands and geologically not dissimilar (Ryzewski and Cherry 2015: 362–63), as has Douglas Armstrong on nearby St. John (Armstrong 2003: 88).

The major visible feature of the site is the foundation of the house occupied by the Lettsoms, identified through comparison with similar sites and following a description by John Lettsom (Lettsom 2003 [1804]) and a description (LOC, WTP ff. 2807–36) and drawing by William Thornton (see figure 2.5). The site's main features, structurally, are the two concentric rectangular foundation walls and grand stairway of the planter house, all made from single-faced

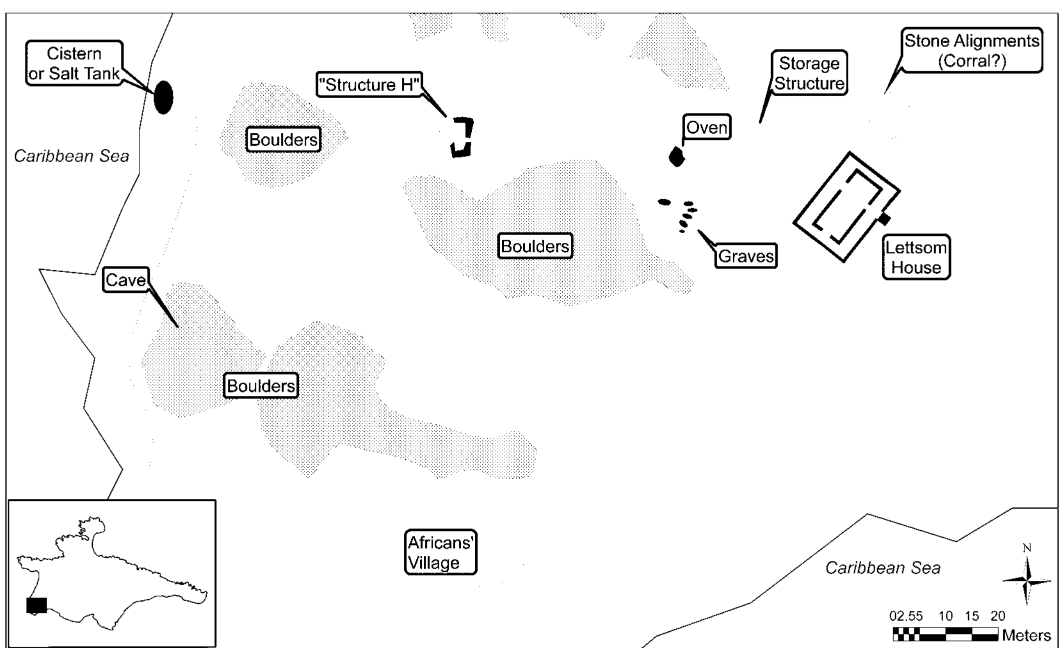

Figure 2.6. Map of the main eighteenth-century occupation area, in southwestern Little Jost van Dyke.

cut stone and mortar (figure 2.7). The foundations stand about 40 meters north of the shoreline, at an elevation of approximately 20 meters, with an excellent view of the entire north coast of Tortola from Sage Mountain westward to Belmont. They are oriented approximately northeast to southwest, with what appears to be the main entrance, the staircase, off-center in the southeast wall. The outside wall probably represents a covered terrace or walkway surrounding the main house, the inside foundation.

Figure 2.7. Main staircase and front (southeast) wall of the Lettsom house, showing the downslope wall at about 1.5 meters in height.

The house is sited at the top of a slope, such that the southeast wall is up to 1.5 meters in height while much of the rest of the remaining wall does not extend more than 20–30 centimeters above the surface (figure 2.8), and the north corner and parts of the northwest wall disappear under a thin layer of soil and organic matter built up since abandonment. In most places, the remaining wall appears to still be at the original height, suggesting that the walls were never intended for more than a foundation. Postholes revealed in excavation (in one

Figure 2.8. Rear (northwest) wall of the Lettsom house, nearly level with the slope, facing southwest.

case with traces of mortar on the wall still in the shape of the post) make it clear that supports for the superstructure of the house were set directly in the earth inside this foundation. The presence of a stone foundation and post-in-ground construction of a building's superstructure appears to be relatively common in the eighteenth-century British Virgin Islands. Fragments of a wattle-and-mortar wall litter the area, indicating the construction of the superstructure, which probably had a thatched roof. The remains of an oven can be observed about 23 meters northwest of the main house.

Directly west of the main house is an area sheltered by several tamarind trees, with several low piles of stone partly scattered but still clearly visible (figure 2.9). Graves in the Caribbean were frequently marked by piles of unmodified

Figure 2.9. Fieldstone grave near the Lettsom house.

stones like this, especially early graves and those of the poor, because no local material suitable for carving was available and traditional European-style grave markers would have had to be imported at great cost; before the nineteenth century, very few formal markers were present in the British Virgin Islands. In the letter William Thornton wrote to John Coakley Lettsom with the picture of the ruined house (see figure 2.5), Thornton noted that "the place where thy parents lie is under the two tamarind trees which stand in the middle of the picture, a little to the left of thy old mansion house" (Harris 1995: 338–39), identifying these as most likely the graves of Mary and Edward Lettsom.

Immediately behind the house, at a distance of some 5 meters with occasional ceramic or glass surface artifacts but few or no mortar fragments, is a dense cluster of large mortar fragments, often 30–40 centimeters in diameter and more than 5 centimeters thick (figure 2.10). Unlike most of the mortar around the

Figure 2.10. A 1 × 2 meter excavation unit (J1) laid out on top of an area of dense, primarily flat mortar fragments, suggesting a mortar-floored storage structure.

main house foundations, many of these pieces are flat on both sides and without impressions from wattle supports, suggesting flooring and thus a small storage building for crops or other material that might have been damaged by water or animal infestation. It should be noted that even the Lettsoms' own house, as revealed in excavations, did not possess the luxury of a mortar floor.

SEVERAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE NOTED the difficulty of identifying areas where the enslaved people of the Caribbean lived, because of the ephemeral nature of the buildings they were able to erect under the confines of the system of slavery (Armstrong 1990: 64; Handler and Lange 1978: 52) and which were often a part of African building traditions (Farnsworth 2001), which tended toward more-ephemeral buildings. On Little Jost van Dyke, the area believed to be inhabited by the enslaved people was identified through a combination of historical documentation and surface observations.

John Coakley Lettsom once wrote of his father that "he cultivated cotton with the aid of about 50 slaves, whose humble cottages were situated on a declivity near his little mansion" (Lettsom 2003 [1804]), suggesting an area just downhill from the planter house. The island's topography allows two areas to fit this description, one to the northwest and the other to the southwest of the Lettsom house. The area to the northwest contains no visible surface artifacts but does have a heavy concentration of surviving field terrace lines, making this an unlikely locale for the enslaved people to have lived. In fact, beyond the immediate vicinity of the house and its yard, the island appears to have very low concentrations of surface artifacts overall. This was confirmed by the 2008 surface survey, which showed that artifacts clustered tightly with the visible surface remains in that area (Chenoweth 2011: 165–66).

To the southwest of the house, a roughly level section termed "Area E," in contrast, revealed a very high concentration of artifacts spread over a broad area (figure 2.11). No similar concentration was observed anywhere else on the island, and because this area fit the description by John Coakley Lettsom it was identified as the location of the homes of the enslaved people. Fieldwork in this area was unable to securely identify architectural features, but at least two structures stood on this spot. Several poorly preserved stone alignments suggest the possibility of foundations, and some fragments of wattle and mortar were present. The remainder of the structures in this area were probably of wattle and daub or even more ephemeral thatching, consistent with other villages of enslaved people in the Caribbean.

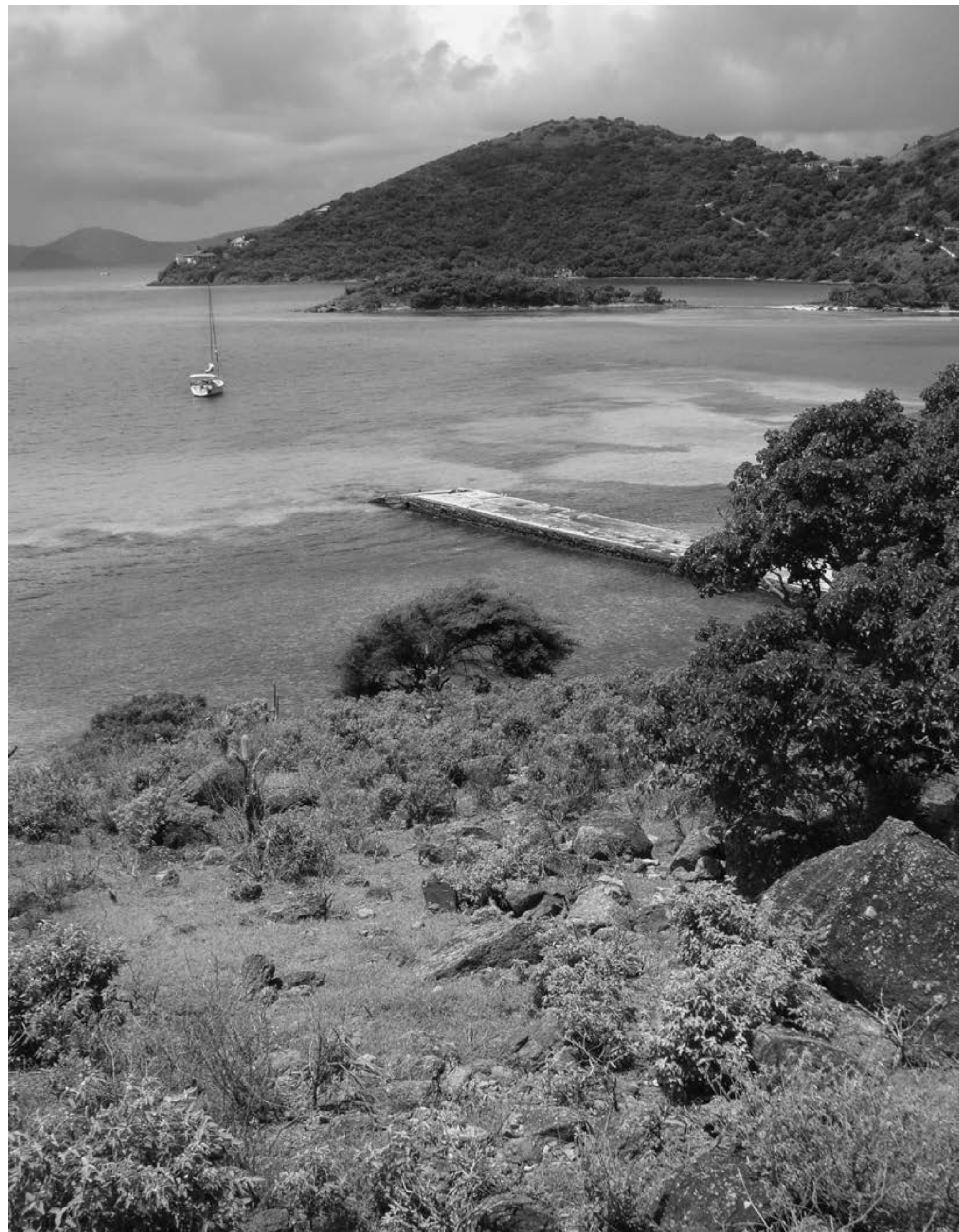

Figure 2.11. View of Area E, identified as the location of the homes of the enslaved people of Little Jost van Dyke, looking down from the top of a large boulder, with a modern partially ruined dock, Diamond Cay, and Jost van Dyke in the background, facing due south.

These finds are also consistent with historical descriptions of housing for the enslaved people of the British Virgin Islands in general. Woolrich related that "their houses [were] small square huts, built with poles and thatched at the top and sides with a kind of bamboo" (House of Commons 1790: 268). Trelawney Wentworth (1835: 160) gave a similar description, noting that a few such houses were furnished with stone walls or foundations, and both agreed that floors were rarely other than clay. Of whatever construction, they must have been generally insubstantial, as cabins on Pleasant Valley plantation (Tortola) in 1791 are described as "blown down" by a storm but in only "a few days were rebuilt" (Harris 1995: 168). Nonetheless, the inhabitants of these structures would have had a full complement of ceramic and glass vessels, shell and bone remains, and other artifacts. The presence of enslaved people living at this location on the Lettsoms' land would, therefore, explain both the minimal presence of standing architecture (compared, at least, to the planter house foundations) and the ample quantity of surface and subsurface artifacts. A single line of low terracing runs along the approximate brink of a steeper slope that extends southward toward the water, and this terrace seems to separate a level area relatively free from artifacts from a broad area of sheet midden

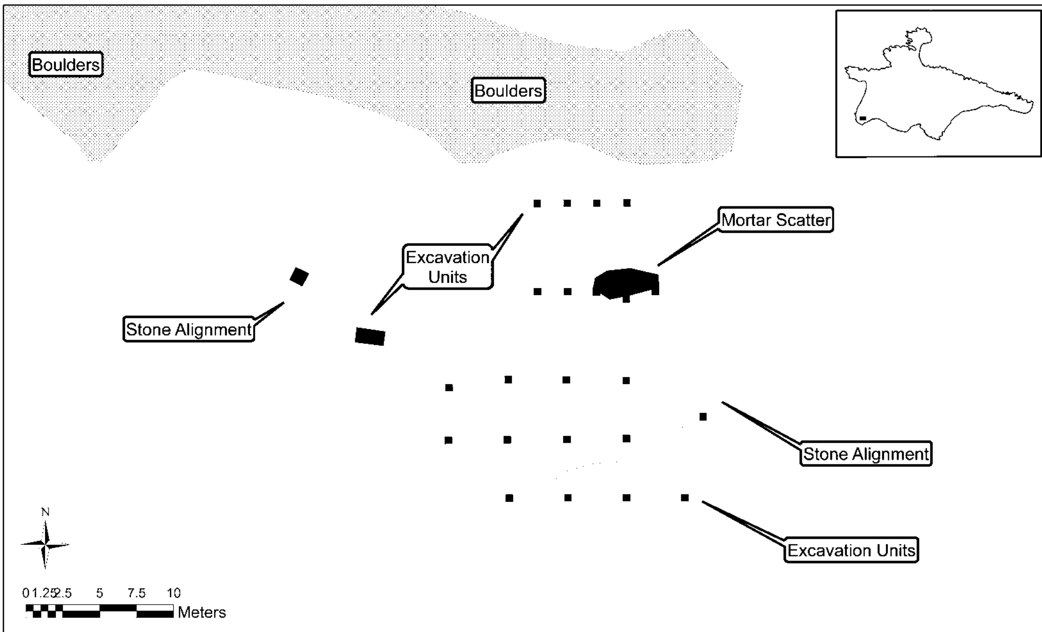

Figure 2.12. Map of features and excavations at the enslaved peoples' village.

that extends down this slope (figure 2.12). The former area is interpreted as a yard (see discussion and sources in Armstrong 2003: 10).

This area was the site of excavations aimed at gathering a sample of the material culture in use by the enslaved people on the site, obtaining chronological information, and encountering architectural remains. A grid of 50 × 50 centimeter test units was excavated with the hope that it would yield insights into the use of space across a portion of this area; although substantial artifactual remains were recovered, however, efforts to identify activity areas or architecture proved inconclusive.

ON THE WESTERN SHORE of the island sits a large rounded boulder with a natural depression that was modified by the addition of a carefully mortared stone wall, allowing it to hold a substantial amount of water. This could have been a water collection and storage feature, there being few sources of fresh water on the island, but the distance from the house (more than 100 meters) is unusual for a water source. The tank was also relatively shallow, only 20–40 centimeters, which would have promoted evaporation, so an alternative explanation could be that the shallow water container near the shore was used in salt making. Sea water could have easily been hauled up to this container in buckets and allowed to evaporate, leaving salt crystals. This was a common activity of poorer residents of the region, and it was easily accomplished where natural salt ponds formed, as on the aptly named Salt Island. Salt is a necessary nutrient, was used in preserving food, and was also an easily traded commodity. No natural salt features exist on Little Jost van Dyke, however, so an artificial tank such as this would have been required.

Some time was spent investigating a shallow cave, formed by massive boulders, which lies approximately 70 meters northwest of the enslaved village and 115 meters directly west of the planter house (figure 2.13). Only about a meter high in most places, it contains not more than about 10 square meters of surface area. Two test units there produced scant evidence of occupation, most of it prehistoric, in the form of low-fired earthenware ceramic fragments identified as Ostionoid. Although I cannot imagine that no eighteenth-century occupants of Little Jost ever entered this shelter, it does not appear to have been resorted to with any regularity during the Lettsom occupation or after. The enslaved people do not appear to have come to this cave with food or drink to consume them away from the prying eyes of the owners, for instance, as they did at Mapps Cave in Barbados (Smith 2008).

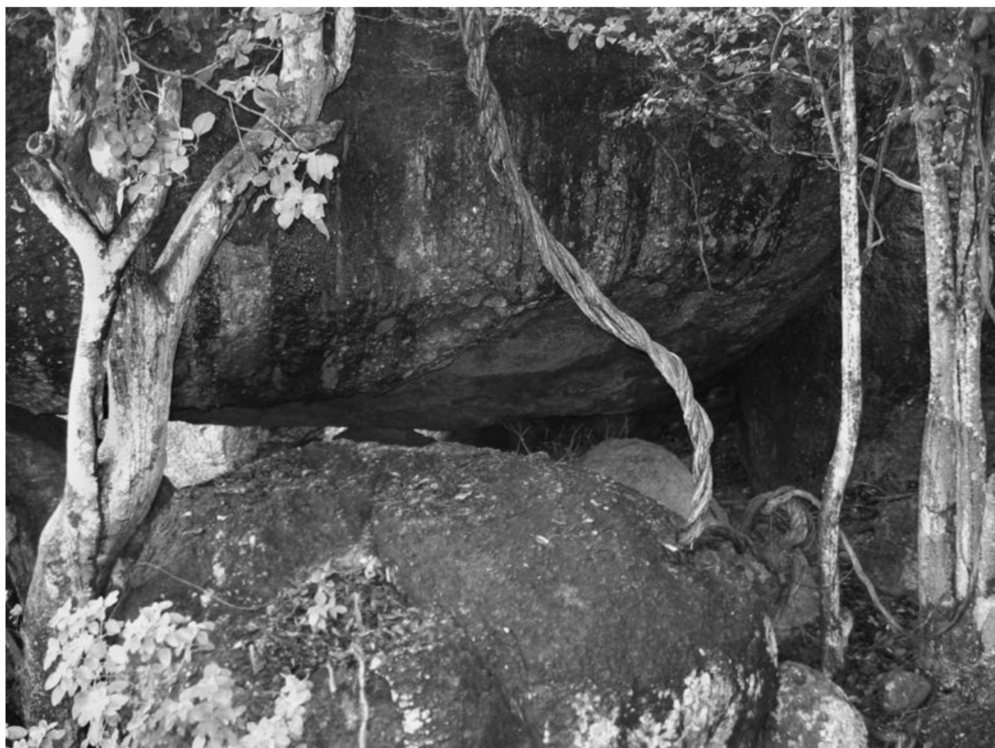

Figure 2.13. Massive boulders forming a low cave (Area K), about 115 meters west of the Lettsom house, 70 meters northwest of the village of the enslaved Africans.

Related Recent BVI Archaeology

Several additional sites in the British Virgin Islands provide comparisons or other lines of evidence relevant to this story. Archaeological work has also been undertaken at the site of the BVI Quaker meetinghouse, built by the community in 1741 in Fat Hogs Bay, to the east end of Tortola. This work is detailed primarily in chapter 4. Nearby Guana Island was home to two plantations in the eighteenth century, both of which can be located today, and the owners of both were members of the Tortola meeting. The Park plantation house (site GN17) has been built over with a mid-twentieth-century residence that now serves as part of a resort hotel, but eighteenth- and nineteenth-century remains are still present in the area. The Lake site (GN7) is substantially intact and has been the subject of preliminary investigations by Norman Barka and Edward Harris of the College of William and Mary in 1998 and by Mark Kostro, also of William and Mary, in 2007, although this work

has not yet been published. In 2014, I conducted preliminary test excavations on this site as well, also surveying the area and associated structures (such as the site labeled GN10). This work confirmed eighteenth-century dating and explored the potential for further work.

I have carried out additional work on Great Camanoe and Norman Islands, both of which projects are preliminary and were undertaken with the hope of further field seasons at a later date. Work in 2013 on Great Camanoe included the placement of several test units in a plantation house and associated buildings and the recovery of a wide variety of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century materials. This site may have Quaker associations (see chapter 5 discussion), but this is unconfirmed at present. Norman Island has not been associated with the Quaker community but provides a roughly contemporaneous comparison. The site of the main plantation house there includes a substantial multiphase structure on the ridge to the north and east of the main bay, the Bight, which has come to be known locally as "Blackbeard's Castle" (figure 2.14). Although

Figure 2.14. Main staircase of a ruined plantation house on Norman Island, locally called "Blackbeard's Castle," dating to Phase IV of the construction sequence for the site.

its namesake died several decades before any part of this structure was most likely built, the impressive scale and size of this building seem to justify its name. Certainly for BVI plantations on out islands, the size is substantial. Its main feature is a stone foundation that stands up to a full story in height.

The survey work conducted on Norman in 2014 consisted of extensive clearance and a detailed architectural survey to decipher the complex phasing of this site, along with limited collection of surface finds. The present building was erected in at least six different phases, which have been labeled chronologically. Mean ceramic dates for the surface collections of the site center on about 1800, with abandonment in the middle of the nineteenth century and the earliest substantial occupation around the time of the Tortola Quaker meeting's end in the 1760s. All of the dating is subject to the revision of a full study, but the earliest phases of this structure provide an out island comparison to the later phases of the Lettsom site.

Phase I of the Norman plantation house includes the first two rooms. At this point (see figure 2.15) the site was relatively modest, in line with similar middle and late eighteenth-century plantation houses in the British Virgin Islands, although with the somewhat unusual occurrence of a stone wall between

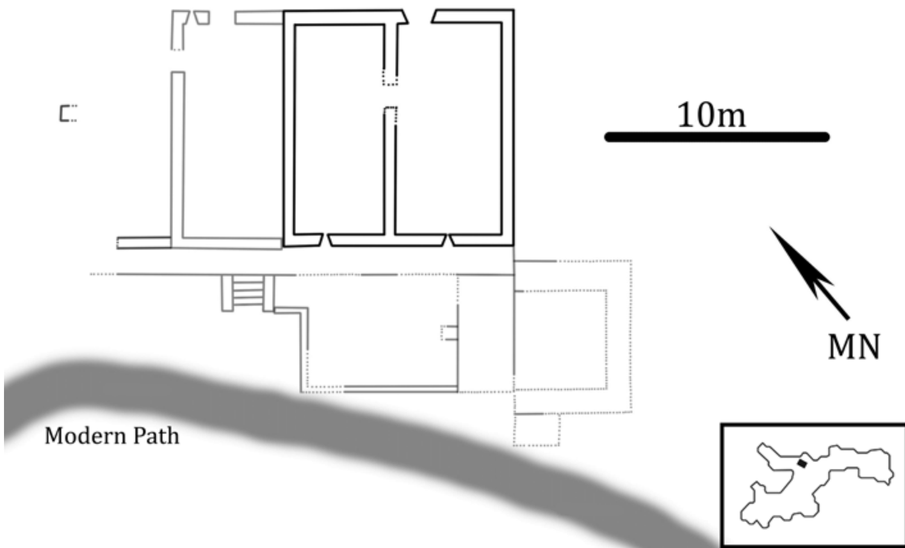

Figure 2.15. Map showing Phase I (black lines) and surviving later elements (gray lines) of a plantation house on Norman Island. Phase I is roughly contemporary with the site on Little Jost van Dyke.

the rooms. Most often, similar structures (including the Lettsoms' house) were built with a stone foundation on the exterior walls only, and wooden partitions created two rooms inside. Like most other BVI plantation houses, this wall was made of single-faced local stone, held together with lime mortar. A single entrance into the building is present into the southeast room, near the middle of the structure and facing Tortola. The northwest room would have been accessed from a door into the southeast room. Above this, there would have been a second story, which would have been made of wood beams and probably wooden siding as well, there being few wattle-and-mortar fragments observable on the surface. In the southwestern wall, although blocked by later additions, were two gun loops, triangular openings that are narrow on one side and wider on the other, allowing a defender to fire a weapon out of a building without being exposed (see chapter 5 discussion).

IN SUM, THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS stand somewhat apart from the traditional story of European colonialism in the Caribbean. Settlement there was late and haphazard, and governmental control was less organized and less extensive than elsewhere. As suggested above, this created both hardship and opportunity for those who arrived on the shores of these small islands and cays, but it also led to their partial exclusion from the historical narrative. As they oppressed and suppressed the voices of those whom they held enslaved, so their voices were often cut from the historical discussions that make up the first half of this chapter. The archaeology described here, then, offers an opportunity to gain new insight into the lives of all of these occupants. With the historical backgrounds of both Quakerism and the British Virgin Islands now sketched and the documentary account of the encounter between the two described, the chapters that follow return to the theme outlined in chapter 1: exploring the way BVI Quakers created their identities in daily life and reinterpreted the central themes of simplicity, equality, and peace.

Chapter 3

"TWO PLANTATIONS" ON THE PLANTATION

Simplicity, Wealth, and Status

IN HIS BOOK *MEETING HOUSE AND COUNTING HOUSE,* Frederick Tolles (1963 [1948]) described the image of "two plantations" as an apt metaphor for Quaker endeavor of the eighteenth century: the one being an internal, religious nurturing of communion with God, and the other being an outward, financial one. The emphasis on the second plantation is not as inconsistent as it might seem for a religion built on simplicity. A measure of wealth and stability was recognized early on as a practical necessity to Quakerly living: if one must live all aspects of one's life righteously, one must also have a home in which to live it and enough food to sustain it. In fact, many Quakers became extraordinarily wealthy, and this wealth was tied to a system of mutual support among Quakers that originated from the necessity of nourishing the body to avoid the desperation and poverty that bred sin. So wealth was not anathema to Quakers, at least not in a simplistic way (see also Chenoweth 2013). But neither was Quakerism completely compatible with the showy performance of wealth and power that characterized many Caribbean plantations, aimed at impressing neighbors and overawing the enslaved.

This chapter considers how the cultivation of Tolles's "outward" plantation affected the choices made by the Lettsoms on Little Jost van Dyke, how the Quakerly idea of simplicity modified the performance of status on the plantation, and how simplicity was itself modified in the process. Despite some probably revisionist history by John Coakley Lettsom, the Lettsoms probably began this story as relatively poor planters. Ironically, Quakerly ideas of simplicity became key to their efforts to improve their station, both economically and in terms of social performance. In fact, wealth and its display were not merely compatible with BVI Quakerism; the desire for wealth indeed came to be part of the cause for the initial success of the meeting.

Starting Positions: The Lettsom Family

Connections to other planters through the Quaker community were central because the Lettsoms were probably, by the standards of Caribbean plantation owners, not wealthy. The discussion of the earliest BVI settlers and the documentary history of Jonathan, Edward, and Mary Lettsom in chapter 2 suggest that the family came from the poorest sort of Caribbean whites. Because no Lettsom appears on a detailed 1707 (UKNA CO 152/7, no. 47.iv) or 1711 (UKNA CO 152/9, no. 88) census of St. Christopher's, where Jonathan was supposedly born around 1680, we can assume that he was one of the unnamed servants or soldiers listed as a group. As the term of this service expired Jonathan may have struck out on his own for the poorer but loosely governed lands of the Virgin Islands.

The island on which Jonathan ultimately landed is another indication of humble beginnings. An 1826 report provides estimates of Little Jost's productivity in the years 1815 and 1823 (appendix A and table 3.1). These dates are both well after the Lettsoms' ownership, but the later owners had similar resources (the same island and slavery-based labor) and technology available, and so the 1826 data can provide a general idea of the agricultural potential of the land. The figures are clearly estimates, given the inaccurate measurement of the island's size, but they give an indication of the low level of production and profit of which Little Jost was capable. Between the two dates, the population rose from five enslaved people living on the island alone to ten people, three of them free people of mixed African and European descent. Even with the addition of free people—presumably the owners of the enslaved people or their hired drivers—to force the others to work and with the doubling of the population, the output of the land increased only £3 or about 4 percent in those eight years. The increase of only £1 in profit seems to have been wrung out of the people by lowering their per-person consumption of the island's resources, rather than worked out of the land. Were it usable for planting, one imagines that more of the forest and brush could have been cut and turned into fields by the additional hands, but the area of the island dedicated to cash crops was not significantly expanded. These figures thus appear to represent something close to the maximum agricultural output of Little Jost van Dyke, a paltry 5 acres of cotton, plus enough provisions and sea resources for two or three families to survive.

The direct documentary record of the Lettsoms' wealth is more complex, but overall it also suggests that the family was rather humble until John Coakley Lettsom's medical success. There are some arguments for wealth, but there are

Table 3.1. Data on Little Jost van Dyke abstracted from an 1826 parliamentary report

	1815	1823
LAND USED (IN ACRES)		
Cotton	3	5
Provisions	7	9
Pastureland	94	90
"Forrest and brushland"	106	106
"Barren land"	12	12
Total	222[a]	222[a]
PRODUCTION		
Cotton produced annually	450 lb.	750 lb.
POPULATION		
White residents	0	0
"Free coloured" residents	0	3
Enslaved people	5	7
ANNUAL VALUE OF PRODUCE		
Estimated total production	£71	£74
Produce sold	£26	£27
Produce consumed	£45	£47

Source: HCPP 1826 (no. 81) XXVII: 110–15 (see appendix A).
[a] This contemporary estimate for the island's size is substantially off; the island's actual size is known today to be 155 acres. Nonetheless, this report provides useful estimates of rough percentages of land dedicated to each purpose and approximate produce.

also reasons to doubt these. John Coakley Lettsom wrote that his father held "about 50 slaves" and, in addition to Little Jost van Dyke and the surrounding islands, a sugar plantation in Cane Garden Bay, on Tortola (Lettsom 2003 [1804]). To explain his poorer circumstances as a young adult, he suggests that after Edward's 1758 death, "my Father's executor had neglected my property, and had disposed of the sugar plantation in Cane Garden Bay" (Lettsom 2003 [1804]: 18). This statement appears to be inaccurate, however, as a sale of a property of 100 acres (quite a large parcel for Tortola, and two-thirds the size of Little Jost itself) in Cane Garden Bay is recorded from Mary and Edward Lettsom to James Purcell in 1754 (BVI Archives, Deed Indexes), four years before Edward's death. This sale is part of the argument for how the Lettsoms crafted the way they were viewed by others.

The most specific evidence for wealth we have in the documentary record

is John Coakley Lettsom's inheritance from Edward, which he received in 1767 when he visited the British Virgin Islands as an adult. The inheritance consisted of ten enslaved people, two listed as "old" and four as either boys or girls, while his mother kept five more, at least two of them children. John's brother Edward Junior was possibly still alive at that time,[1] and if so, one supposes that he received an approximately equal share of the family wealth, but this still suggests a total of twenty-five enslaved people at most, including the aged and children. The data on Little Jost from the early nineteenth century in table 3.1 (discussed above) also suggest that so many would have strained the resources available on Little Jost. In studies of contemporary accounts cited by William Hampton Adams and Sarah Jane Boling (1989), the Lettsoms would be classed as at most yeomen or middle-class farmers, based on the number of enslaved people they held. Even in the most optimistic assessment, that of John Coakley Lettsom, Edward and Mary had no more than fifty enslaved people (Lettsom 2003 [1804]: 13). This is only a tenth of what John Pickering, the first clerk of the Quaker meeting and lieutenant governor of the islands circa 1739–42, is recorded to have had at his death, suggesting, in any case, a substantial distinction between the Lettsoms and the higher levels of planter society in the British Virgin Islands.

The crop grown on Little Jost also suggests that Edward Lettsom would not have been seen as a wealthy man. Sugar was the crop that led to Caribbean fortunes, and the merchant Thomas Woolrich notes that it was always planted in the British Virgin Islands wherever doing so was possible or could be made possible by the availability of labor. Cotton was usually planted only "upon the poorest parts of the island[;] . . . upon rocky and steep places" where sugar was impossible, such as "the keys [i.e., small islands] and rocky hills" (House of Commons 1790: 280). Several areas of surviving field terracing were mapped during survey work on Little Jost van Dyke (figure 3.1). These long, low alignments of stones, unworked and unmortared, usually only one course high, were used both to dispose of the many stones littering the surface of the island, clearing it for planting, and also to prevent the shallow soil from being washed away down the relatively steep grades (figure 3.2). Where they are clearly observed, the terraces on Little Jost are approximately a meter apart, appropriate sizes for cotton rows on marginal soils, according to a nineteenth-century manual (Brooks 1898: 134). Cotton was the main and probably only cash crop grown by the Lettsoms, and so despite the fact that they owned what would have been in England a sizable estate, the output of those lands was severely limited.

Because of the lack of stratigraphy (as discussed in chapter 2), many of the finds from the site represent a mixed deposit that may have been influenced by

the events of different time periods: pre- and post-Quaker involvement, as well as activities during the time of the Quaker community. Nonetheless, the modesty of the ceramic and glass assemblage is telling, indicating the relative lack of overall wealth on the site as compared to the great houses of other islands. Porcelains, the finest and most expensive ceramic wares on eighteenth-century sites, were present but made up just 4 percent of the ceramic sherds at the house. This was greater than but comparable to the low level of porcelains (1 percent of the assemblage of sherds) that the enslaved people of Little Jost managed to acquire. Far more of the ceramics were creamware, which was considered elegant when it first became common about the time the Quaker community on Tortola was ending, but it quickly became standard. The largest group of ceramics (38 percent) at the Lettsoms' house was tin-glazed wares, often called "delft," which were rapidly going out of fashion by the middle of the century, partly because of their soft bodies, which led to easy breakage and greater wear.

Table glass, an accessible but nonetheless elegant addition to a household, was virtually nonexistent on the site. The only example from Little Jost came from the homes of the enslaved Africans, not the Lettsoms; it was a fragment of a wine glass stem decorated with twisted air bubbles, about 4 centimeters long and dating to the earlier part of the eighteenth century. This piece is relatively heavy, at 1.4 centimeters in thickness, and thus comparatively durable, but it nonetheless represents a relatively elegant counterpoint to most of the glass and ceramics recovered on Little Jost van Dyke, including at the Lettsom house.

BY THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY when he wrote his "Recollections and Reminiscences," describing his family and childhood, John Coakley Lettsom had a substantial investment in being a member of the upper classes: he had joined the ranks of London's elite and was welcome in even the bedchambers of the most wealthy and influential people as their doctor. He was a philanthropist, integral to the founding of the world's oldest still-surviving medical society, the Medical Society of London (see Hunting 2003), and was a man of science, practicing botany, which at the time also entailed being a man of leisure (Yentsch 1994: 122–23).

For such a man, a colonial birth might be forgiven, but not parental poverty, which might explain the way Edward Lettsom is portrayed by the historical record: as a wealthy planter and member of the gentry. The evidence here suggests that he was far more likely a member of the lower or at best middle classes. Although perhaps not strictly poor, being landowners and slaveholders, Mary

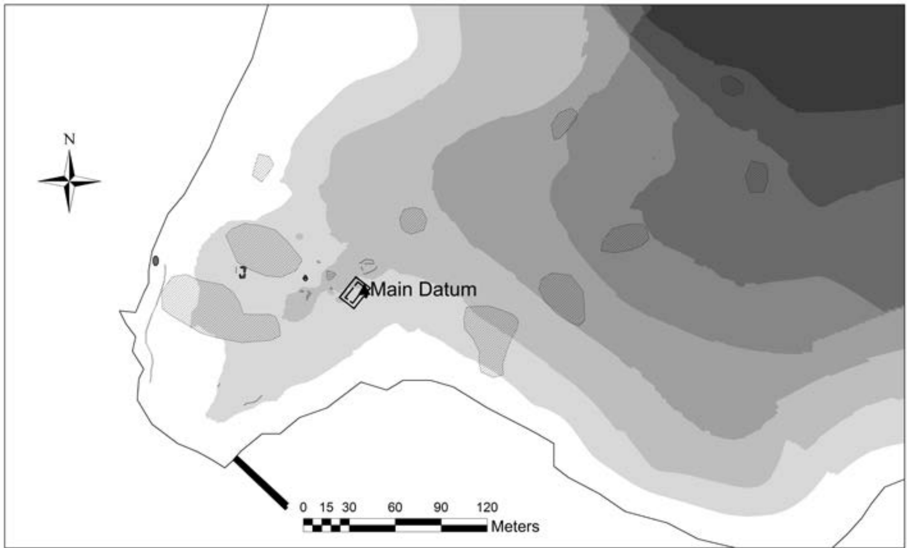

Figure 3.1. Map of areas of extant field terracing (gray crosshatched areas) on Little Jost van Dyke, along with 10-meter contour lines.

Figure 3.2. Example of terracing on Little Jost van Dyke.

and Edward were certainly poor-*er*. Most likely, they had to work themselves, rather than being a gentleman and gentlewoman, entirely at their ease; this is further suggested by the observation above that this was so for nearly all the BVI settlers of Jonathan's generation and by the fact that Mary Lettsom's second husband was known to be a cooper.

Simplicity and the Performance of Status

John Coakley Lettsom's concern with the financial reputation of his ancestors most likely mirrored a concern by his parents themselves. The rest of this chapter discusses the evidence for how they worked to overcome their relative poverty, but especially to overcome the appearance of poverty. The Lettsoms, like most other BVI planters of their time, came from families of little means or influence at the margins of Caribbean white society. However, analysis of the way they viewed and constructed their island and its landscape suggests that they were intent both on changing their actual financial means and, perhaps more important, on securing social connections and a gentrified identity. Analysis of the architectural changes to their house suggests some economic advancement but also how Quaker simplicity seems to have been recast to fit a version of a particularly Caribbean performance of wealth and status.

Little Jost van Dyke as a Quakerly Country Estate

Edward Lettsom owned "Green Island and Sandy island; besides which he owned a sugar plantation in Cane Garden Bay, Tortola," the latter being what is today a famous tourist beach, but his "favourite residence" was on Little Jost (Lettsom 2003 [1804]: 13). As noted above, despite John Coakley Lettsom's claims to the contrary, the lands at Cane Garden Bay were sold off by the Lettsoms in 1754, and they retained their favorite house on Little Jost. If the goal of Quakerly wealth was merely security—the freedom to practice one's religion without distracting and sin-breeding hunger—then this is a very unlikely choice. As the name suggests, Cane Garden Bay was some of the best sugar land in the British Virgin Islands, and this crop offered a better path toward stability and wealth than the cotton grown on Little Jost van Dyke ever could. But other forces may have been at work besides economics. The choice of Little Jost as a home was also a statement about social standing.

Anne Yentsch notes that in English class relations, living apart spurred advancement in social status: "A gentleman should locate his home apart from those of great neighbors" to keep his achievements and possessions from being

overshadowed (Yentsch 1994: 47). The idea of the country estate was influential among the Quakers in the colony of Pennsylvania, where many wealthy Quakers took to establishing "plantations" in the country (sometimes highly impractical ones that could not, because of their size, be used for more than day trips) in an effort to imitate the landed gentry of England (Tolles 1963 [1948]: 96, 132). "William Penn and the Philadelphia Quakers demonstrated perhaps the earliest expression of a country house ideology in the American colonies" (Reinberger and McLean 1997: 243). This is not to suggest that the "country house ideology" is a uniquely Quaker trait, only that such a show of means and social standing was felt by many to be compatible with Quakerism.

An island estate apart, however humble the land may actually have been for cultivation, may have been an impressive idea among BVI planters, most of whom at least ancestrally hailed from England or other European areas, where land was expensive, difficult to acquire, and the ultimate status symbol, since aristocracy was based on land ownership. For Edward and Mary Lettsom, the desire to live apart even trumped the economic choice of which land to retain and which to sell. While a country house may have been an acceptable show of standing among elite Philadelphia Quakers, such a performance should not have come second to actual financial security. And yet Mary and Edward gave up more-promising lands in the shadow of wealthier neighbors for a country house, living apart at an economically less-promising location. Despite their apparent lack of substantial wealth, Mary and Edward Lettsom were making efforts to appear upwardly mobile—making choices based not just on their financial security but on their social appearance as well. A Quaker principle of simplicity might allow for shows of stability, but in the Caribbean, the show took precedence.

A Young Quakerly Gentleman

One possible explanation for the need for funds, which prompted the sale of the Cane Garden Bay lands, is John Coakley Lettsom himself, and this also suggests another way in which Mary and Edward tried to improve their social standing at the expense of their economic standing: John's education. John was sent away to England for schooling at the age of about six, enabled by Quaker connections and traveling with a trading vessel's Quaker captain. He believed that he was the first person born to Virgin Islands colonists sent back to Europe for such an opportunity, so it was a rare occurrence, and we know that he was placed "in the care" of the Rawlinsons and associated with the Fothergills, noted Quaker families (Lettsom 2003 [1804]). He was later sent to boarding school, apprenticed to an apothecary, and then attended medical school as well.

All of this must have cost a great deal of money, and the arrangements for covering these costs are not discussed in any surviving document. John had little money available to him as a young adult; he complained that his "pecuniary circumstances" prevented him from spending more than a year educating himself in London (Lettsom 2003 [1804]: 24), and when he did make a substantial amount as a young doctor in the Virgin Islands in 1767–68, he left half of this with his mother, suggesting that she also had little money. The silence in the records about John's brother Edward Junior is also telling. We know almost nothing of him except that he did not go to school in England, an advantage he certainly would have been given if his parents were financially able to send both children.

Quite possibly, Edward and Mary had to sell off the Cane Garden Bay estate to pay for John, aged about ten and in school for four years at that point, to continue his schooling. As noted above, they were sacrificing land with great agricultural potential, which could have provided stability for them, to live on an island that was "apart" but far less productive. They made this choice to pay to educate a young gentleman rather than a prospective farmer or even a wealthy planter. In the British Virgin Islands, education in England was not required for economic success, as made clear by the story of John Pickering, who amassed probably the largest estate in the British Virgin Islands in his day without formal schooling. Indeed, John Coakley Lettsom tells us that Pickering was "early brought up to a mechanical employment" and was otherwise self-taught (Lettsom 1786: 67). While there was probably an expectation that John Coakley Lettsom would use whatever wealth his education provided him with to assist his family back in the Caribbean—an expectation that was repaid seventeen years after he left home—this was a very long-term investment strategy. The benefit of having a gentleman in the family may well have been a more immediate attraction than any prospect of eventual monetary return, and was more of an investment in identity than wealth.

House Placement and Community Concerns: Being Watched and Watching

The archaeology of the Lettsom site suggests that the house in which the Lettsoms lived also played a part in this effort at performing upward mobility. The house is of a typical size for a modest plantation in the British Virgin Islands at this time: the inner foundation wall (excluding the surrounding terrace) measures 13.5 meters by 6.5 meters and covers about 87 square meters. Other out island BVI houses are similar in size: the house of the Lake family, also members of the BVI Quaker meeting, on nearby Guana Island measures about 12.5 meters

by 5 meters (about 63 square meters), and the earliest phase of the main house on Norman Island, not associated with the Quakers and probably slightly later in date, measures about 9.5 meters by 9.5 meters (just over 90 square meters).

But the placement of the house is not as one might expect if the goal were merely a secure shelter. The house was placed with great care such that it would be visible from some distance and would itself have a view of the bay below and the north coast of nearby Tortola (figure 3.3; see also the results of the viewshed analysis discussed in chapter 7 and figure 7.1). William Thornton's drawing (despite the problems with this image [figure 2.5]) and his description of the house (LOC, WTP f. 2808) show that the house was clearly in view from some distance even in a semiruined state, and when whole it would have had a view of and would have been visible from Tortola, the local center of the planter community.

Figure 3.3. North coast of Tortola, viewed from the Lettsom house terrace, facing southeast. Sandy Cay, also owned by Mary and Edward Lettsom, is visible to the left.

This visibility came at some cost in terms of labor. The excavated units in the house had a great variety in depth because of the natural slope on which the house was built. Units in the rear of the house reached bedrock or subsoil after 20–40 centimeters of excavation or less (excluding postholes, which were cut into bedrock), while those toward the front extended to a depth of 80–90 centimeters or more. The floors would have been leveled by infilling, but the progression from shallow to deep fill is not even across the house. Rather, the house appears to have been sited carefully to take advantage of a natural rise in the land to avoid too much leveling work.

But simple minimization of effort does not seem to have been the only goal when the Lettsoms placed their home. The postholes were cut deep into tightly packed rock and subsoil (probably by an enslaved person), and the setting at the brow of a hill required substantial effort to level the platform and build retaining walls. While this was kept at a minimum by the choice of the knoll on which to build, it could have been eliminated entirely by setting the house only a few meters farther back, on the more-or-less level area behind the house. Yet this would have impacted both the view of the house and the view from it.

For Caribbean planters, seeing and being seen were clearly important. Christer Petley (2014) highlights the importance of views to neighbors in order to moderate isolation, and Christopher Ohm Clement (1997) suggests that the placement of plantation houses was ruled by several factors, central among them the making of statements of symbolic power and prestige and the fostering of a sense of community via intervisibility among the planter families. James Delle found similar intervisibility in Jamaica (Delle 2011: 133–34). The choice of location for the Lettsom residence speaks more to these social concerns than others outlined by Clement or to "simple" practicality.

This intervisibility of plantation houses was, in part, a safety mechanism, allowing neighbors not only to foster community but also to come to each other's aid in the event of rebellion of the enslaved Africans they held. While the possibility of revolt by the enslaved people is clearly more of a concern on larger plantation islands, by the time of Edward Lettsom's death, free people in the British Virgin Islands were outnumbered perhaps five to one by enslaved people, and substantial rebellions did take place there (Dookhan 1975: 85–86). Yet if safety and oversight were goals in the placement of the Lettsoms' house, one would also expect the ability to oversee the enslaved people of Little Jost to be a priority: the construction of "landscapes of surveillance," wherein the owners of plantations showed their power and practically observed the actions of the enslaved people, has been discussed by Delle (1999) and includes both an

element of safety (that is, oppression) and economic maximization. While the Lettsom house would have been visible to many other plantation houses on the north side of Tortola, the houses of the enslaved people and even much of their work areas (if these are defined by the extent of the surviving field terracing) would have been invisible (see chapter 7 and figure 7.2).

The orientation of the house toward Tortola is also somewhat surprising. If fostering a sense of community for safety was a primary goal, it would have been best served by focusing on the nearest planters: those on neighboring Jost van Dyke. The eastern end of that island would have been clearly visible from the Lettsoms' house, and these would have been the people most likely to send aid in the event of an emergency, as they were much closer. Assistance from Tortola would have had to come by boat, across 3 miles of only partly sheltered sea, and could not have arrived in rough weather. Communal assistance was more possible from Jost van Dyke, because even though Jost is a separate island from Little Jost, the water separating the two is rarely more than waist deep. There was at least one occupied plantation present in this area of Jost van Dyke, at a place called Brown Ghut, which I briefly surveyed in 2010. Substantial remains of a plantation house and several outbuildings, including an oven of similar design to that on Little Jost, are present halfway up the hill, and mid-eighteenth-century ceramics are visible on the surface, suggesting that this site would have been occupied at the same time as the Lettsoms' plantation. Indeed, the name of this area, "Brown Ghut," implies that it was the plantation of David Brown, whom Edward Lettsom was asked to meet with concerning the purchase of property for a meetinghouse (see chapter 4).

Yet the Lettsom house is not oriented to face Jost van Dyke or the direction from which visitors walking over from Jost would be coming: its main stairway is in the southeast wall and firmly focuses the house on Tortola's north side, more than ninety degrees from the approach of anyone from Jost. The community being fostered by this intervisibility was, apparently, also exclusive. It was focused on the wealthier planters on the more central and productive lands of Tortola and their closer connections to Europe, material goods, and cosmopolitanism. The Lettsoms could have walked to their neighbors on Jost, who were, like them, living on the margins of the marginal BVI colony, but instead they placed their enslaved people between themselves and Jost like a buffer and then kept their distance from and cultivated difference with the enslaved people as well (as discussed below), while they focused their attentions on connections to the local economic, political, and social "core" on Tortola.

So the choices of where to live and how to build a house were tied up with

Quakerly concerns but also concerns more traditionally associated with other Caribbean planters, serving to perform status and work toward improved social standing. It was not merely enough to make money, although making money was in its way Quakerly enough. Instead of a recognizable version of simplicity focused first on providing for one's family or ensuring that one had enough money to live in a Quaker way, Mary and Edward made efforts to appear wealthier than they were, to build connections to the wealthier colonial core, and to fit trends of landownership and "living apart" that marked them as a country gentleman and lady fit to associate with their colony's wealthiest.

The Value of Quaker Connections

A suitable income was still necessary for Quakerly life, however, and regardless of the attention paid to appearances, the sometimes very difficult nature of life in the British Virgin Islands (detailed more in chapter 7) made it a central concern for all who lived there. As discussed in chapter 1, members of the Religious Society of Friends often supported each other in various nonreligious ways with religious justifications. Quakerism is a religion of practice—one cannot be a Quaker without enacting the values of the group constantly in one's daily life—and members recognized that to live a holy life one had to have certain basic needs met: personal needs such as housing and food, as well as needs for the whole community, such as security and a measure of religious freedom from the government, which was (in England at least) deeply tied to the established church.

The early Quaker answer to these concerns was organization: the system of monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, which, among other things, provided relief to the poor, advocated for the persecuted, and appealed for the freedom to practice their religion in their own way. In at least some contexts, this support network was also instrumental in members amassing significant wealth, as detailed in James Walvin's *The Quakers: Money and Morals* (1997) and Frederick Tolles's *Meeting House and Counting House* (1963 [1948]). But this mutual support network (and its accompanying scrutiny of the lives of members) has been discussed primarily in Quaker "core" communities of Philadelphia and London, and a somewhat different version can be traced in the British Virgin Islands.

Direct cash charity seems to have existed for at least one member of the BVI community: Rebecca Britt. Thomas Britt, presumably Rebecca's husband, joined the meeting in late 1746 and presumably died about the time she began

to receive assistance, a decade later. The minutes for the twenty-seventh of Sixth Month 1757 record, "It is required by this meeting to give out of the Treasury Monthly for the Relief of Rebecca Britt £1.2.6 beginning at this date" (TMM Minutes 1:14). For Britt, the network that originally provided systems of support lost when members left the Church of England for Quakerism was reproduced in the British Virgin Islands, which had never had any such systems before, offering survival in an often difficult environment. No other organized social safety net would exist in the British Virgin Islands again for many decades.

Yet this kind of charity, which was often a focus for Quakers elsewhere, seems to have been rare in the British Virgin Islands, and no other cases of direct support are recorded. Even this case seems to have been complex, as a large portion of the money paid for Britt's support went directly into the hands of other leading (and probably wealthy [see chapter 8]) members of the meeting: Samuel Nottingham and his wife, Mary Hunt Nottingham. The sum of eighteen pounds, about half of what Britt received in total over several years, was paid in a lump sum to the Nottinghams for back rent owed by Britt. Thus, while Britt received money on which to live, it is also notable that much of her award also benefited another far wealthier member.

ANOTHER, ALBEIT INDIRECT, indication of how this Quaker support network worked in the Caribbean comes from the family relations of the members of the Tortola meeting. Members intermarried with great frequency, and in some cases whole families seem to have joined. Admittedly, a limited pool of culturally "suitable" associates was present in the British Virgin Islands (although the high numbers of mixed-race free people in the colony recorded in later censuses strongly suggests that "suitable" was flexibly interpreted by many BVI whites and blacks alike) and no comparable data about non-Quaker BVI planters survives. Nonetheless, the number of family connections between members of the Tortola meeting is notable. Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie relates that John Pickering, his wife (probably his first wife, Dorcas), and her sister (probably Dorothy Thomas, overseer for the women's meeting in Road Town) were all "near relations" to her, and Dorcas was ultimately convinced of Quaker principles by Dorothy (Lillie 1832: 202). Mary Hunt Nottingham's sister, Tabitha Madix, was one of the five remaining Friends in 1770, along with Isaac Pickering, nephew to John. Rebecca Zeagers Pickering, the second wife of John, was sister to Dorcas Downing Zeagers Thornton, wife of William Thornton Sr. and mother of the famous architect (Harris 1995; Stearns and Yerkes

1976). Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie also reports that John Coakley Lettsom was "a near relation" of hers (Lillie 1832), making either Mary or Edward Lettsom a part of this cloud of relations as well. Even John Pickering and John Coakley Lettsom are said to have been "distant relations," bringing the network even tighter (Lettsom 2003 [1804]: 18).

These relations were clearly part of how the community formed, with siblings and spouses converting each other, but they were also the result of Quaker practice. Quaker endogamy was a widespread and often-discussed part of Quaker life for much of its history and remained so elsewhere until the mid-eighteenth century (Davies 2000: 221). It was a particular focus of the "revival" of Quaker discipline that swept through North America in the mid-eighteenth century as well (Marietta 1984: xii). The minutes of the Tortola meeting suggest that marriages made up a major part of the business conducted: more than a third of the times a member is named in the meeting records, it is in relation to his or her own marriage or an inquiry about or vouching for the "clearness" of another to marry. Several members were also "dealt with" for "marrying out" to a non-Quaker or for allowing their daughters to do so. Two of the former were disowned, a rare penalty among BVI Quakers, suggesting that the maintenance of these relations was central.

One final note here is that the way marriages were carried out also provided an unusual level of agency to the female members of the society and the women's meetings. Two "respectable" women were to vouch for the bride to the men's meetings, but similarly two men were required to report on the groom to the women, and the marriage could go ahead only if both groups approved it. While perhaps falling short of gender equality (as discussed below), such a structure accords explicit roles to women who might not have had such power in BVI society otherwise.

The Lettsoms' Benefits: Architectural Changes and Access

It would be cynical in the extreme, and unjustified, to suggest that Mary and Edward joined the Quaker community only in an effort to use connections resulting from their membership for material gain or to establish for themselves the kind of social safety net provided for Rebecca Britt. Indeed, even after this network had failed her and Mary was expelled from the meeting, she "[de] Clared the truth having nothing to say against it" (TMM Minutes 7:53), showing that she was in agreement with Quakerism's theological principles as she understood them and more or less as they were recognized by other BVI Quak-

ers. Nonetheless, the Lettsoms had reason to believe that they would receive real, material benefits as a result of their membership, and they appear to have received them in some form.

Rather than receiving direct financial support as Rebecca Britt did, the Lettsoms may have gained access to influential people and a network of personal connections to the powerful. This would have been a matter of identity and class, but it also probably had tangible benefits. For instance, it may not be coincidental that the Lettsom properties were formally deeded when they were. After decades of settlement without a registered claim, the property was finally registered in the deed indexes, backdated to 1725, approximately the time of Mary and Edward's Quaker conversion (either in 1739, when the meeting was forming, or in 1748, or possibly both, as the surviving record is unclear). This conversion would have given Edward access to the most wealthy and powerful men of the colony, notably John Pickering, the lieutenant governor and the meeting's first clerk.

As discussed above, achieving an education for John Coakley Lettsom in England was a substantial feat for this family. As John himself describes it in his memoir (2003 [1804]), this opportunity was closely tied to the Quaker community: the captain of the ship that took him to England, William Lindo, as well as his guardians there, Abraham and Hatton Rawlinson, were Quakers, as were the woman he lived with and his schoolmaster. Even Lettsom's medical mentor, whose practice he inherited and therefore the person most directly responsible for his later success, John Fothergill, was a well-known Quaker and brother to Samuel Fothergill, one of the most noted Quaker ministers and writers of his day. Through these connections as much as his own skill he rose to fame, treating the Duke of Clarence (later King William IV) and cofounding the still-surviving Medical Society of London in 1773. It is hard to imagine that the young boy of six, born to at best middling parents on a small island far from even the local core of the Virgin Islands, could have caught the attention of so many wealthy and powerful people were it not for the connections afforded by his parents' involvement with the meeting.

Archaeology at the Lettsoms' home on Little Jost has produced an in-depth understanding of how the main building changed over time, and this suggests economic advancement as well. Data on the chronology of the site comes principally from two excavation units on each side of the main house foundations, one inside the main structure (A2) and one on the walkway that surrounded the house (A1). As noted above, the house is situated on a slope such that the southeast side (where these units were located) is raised about 1.5 meters from

ground level, even though the north corner is level with the natural surface. Therefore, these units were quite deep, unlike most of the other units on this sandy, shallow-soiled island, and they contained sealed stratigraphic deposits.

Both of these units contained substantial amounts of mortar fragments in most of their loci, suggesting earlier structures and several phases of rebuilding. For A1, in the walkway, the lower levels contain creamware but no pearlware, suggesting that the construction of this portion of the house dates to the 1760s or 1770s. However, the lower levels of A2, in the main house foundation, appear to date to a period before creamware, which spread rapidly across the Atlantic World soon after its initial marketing about 1762. The most likely

Figure 3.4. Oblique view of unit A1, in the terrace or walkway surrounding the Lettsom house, showing faced stones extending belowground to bedrock, suggesting that it had once been meant to be seen. Compare with the unfinished belowground opposite face of the same wall revealed in unit A2, shown in figure 3.5 (left side).

dating for the lower part of this unit and therefore the main house's major reconstruction is from the 1740s or 1750s, based on the presence of Jackfield and clouded wares.

The different dates for the two units, and thus the two portions of the house, are also suggested by the state of the foundation wall below ground. Unit A1 revealed the exterior of the inner wall as having been constructed from cut-faced stones all the way down to bedrock (figure 3.4), but the other side of the same wall, revealed by unit A2, is unfaced and was probably never meant to be seen (figure 3.5, left side). It seems unlikely that the effort to face the foundation wall below ground level on one side but not the other would have been made if the belowground portions of both sides were never meant to be seen. However, if the surrounding terrace had been added to the house sometime after the building's initial construction, the cut face revealed in unit A1 would be explained

Figure 3.5. Plan view of unit A2 in the downslope side of the main Lettsom house foundations showing (on the left) a highly irregular and unfinished wall face, never meant to be seen.

as, for a while, the exterior of the house. This is the most likely explanation and suggests that the house was expanded with the addition of the walkway sometime after it was built or rebuilt.

The ubiquity of crumbled mortar even in the lowest layers of the main house fill suggests that the house was built on the site of an earlier structure, parts of which may be represented by the trench and unmortared boulders at the bottom of unit A2 (figure 3.5, left half), which suggest a much simpler structure. Ceramics were used in construction as filler, suggesting some length of occupation before the mortar was mixed. Several large pieces of mortar with pieces of tin-enameled wares embedded were observed on the site, and a few ceramics recovered had traces of mortar on them. Thus, at least one phase of construction took place on the island after some time had elapsed following the initial settlement.

The archaeology, then, suggests a series of changes to the Lettsoms' home. A simple structure with an unmortared foundation may have first been built on the location sometime before the 1740s, perhaps about 1725, in keeping with the documentary record suggesting that the island was first settled by Jonathan Lettsom at that time. This structure was probably rebuilt and improved slowly in several phases, but there are indications of at least two major rebuildings: first as a more substantial but still modest structure in the 1740s or 1750s that stood without the surrounding terrace for some time; and second, sometime in the 1760s or 1770s, the addition of the terrace surrounding the house and the associated substantial main entry stair on the southeast wall (see figure 2.7). The mortar present in the lower levels of the terrace unit A1 suggests that this work was accompanied by some rebuilding of the main house as well. The very low levels of pearlware and other later-dating artifacts on the site suggest that the house was generally abandoned, except for transient visitors, by the 1780s. Until recent decades, residents of the British Virgin Islands commonly traveled to unoccupied out islands to gather wild provisions such as seabird eggs, to hunt feral goats, or even to farm small plots. A few more-recent artifacts, such as the remains of a tin can dating to the very early twentieth century, are evidence for such visits.

All of this dating corresponds with several important events in the documentary history of the site: initial settlement about 1725 is not directly indicated, but we cannot expect a recent arrival like Jonathan, probably a poor former indentured servant, to come with substantial numbers of datable wares, and overall the archaeology is compatible with such a beginning date. The conversion of Edward and Mary Lettsom to Quakerism in 1740 may be connected

to the indicated remodeling of the 1740s or 1750s. The second major reconstruction episode at the house on Little Jost van Dyke appears to have followed John Coakley Lettsom's return to the islands in the late 1760s, and it may have been paid for by his gift from his medical practice earnings, a direct result of his Quaker-enabled education. Thus, the archaeological evidence of architectural changes in the Lettsoms' home suggests that their financial stability increased markedly during the time they were members of the Quaker community.

AS THIS CHAPTER MAKES CLEAR, the Lettsom family came from more-humble origins than the surviving documents, associated with John Coakley Lettsom, at first suggest. They were concerned with economic advancement, but at times direct financial gain seems to have taken a back seat to advancement in terms of societal status and relationships. Appearances and connections to "social betters," not those to neighbors in a similar situation, were prioritized. This complex social strategy appears to have paid off in the long run, at least for John Coakley Lettsom and for Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine in the last decade of her life, when her son was able to provide for her and improve her home substantially. While we should not necessarily doubt the sincerity of the spiritual motivation, for some the development of the worldly "outward plantation" came in part from an association with those who had a concern for the internal plantation as well. As elsewhere, Quaker membership produced economic benefit, but simplicity also accommodated social improvement in the Caribbean.

The meeting also grew through (and supported) preexisting family ties. The emphasis on Quaker family relationships here is similar to that elsewhere: oversight of marriages and religious approval of prospective spouses ensured that children would be brought up within the meeting but also kept the network of mutual support small and strong. For the Lettsoms and perhaps other BVI Quakers needing access to wealthy neighbors and long-distance trading partners, such a network became an avenue of advancement both economically and socially.

Chapter 4

"FURNISHED WITH CONVENIENCE FOR A MEETING HOUSE"

Simplicity and Meetinghouses

THE LACK OF NEED FOR A BUILDING dedicated to worship is a central part of the surviving writings of George Fox, the most prominent of Quakerism's early leaders. Such buildings misled people away from the Inner Light, and Fox derogatorily refers to them as "steeplehouses": "And when I was at Ulrome before in the steeplehouse, there came professor [i.e., minister] and gave me a push in the breast in the steeplehouse and bid me get out of the church. 'Alack, poor man,' said I, 'dost thou call the steeplehouse the church? the church is the people whom God has purchased with his blood, and not the house'" (Fox 1952: 93–94). The provision of a building in which Quaker meetings might be held was deemed convenient but was far from necessary. "God did not dwell in temples made with hands" but instead "in people's hearts" (Fox 1952: 8), such that buildings were at best unnecessary. Truly simple Quaker practice dispensed with such structures except as a convenience, and they were to be minimal affairs. In the Virgin Islands, however, such buildings appear to have been a central feature of the Quaker community. While later chapters of this book highlight a diversity of views and dissension in the Quaker community of the British Virgin Islands, including disagreement about the meanings of these structures, the centrality of meetinghouse buildings appears to be one item on which most members were in agreement. Despite the explicit lack of their necessity in written Quaker theology and a climate suited to gatherings held outdoors, the building of meetinghouses appears to have taken on a disproportionate focus for BVI Quakers.

An Unlikely Focus

The presence of meetinghouses in Tortola at this time needs to be contextualized by the lack of any other public building in the colony. According to a

traveler's account by a Dr. R. Poole published a decade after the formation of the Quaker meeting, at the time of his visit to the British Virgin Islands, formal meetings of the Islands' council and court procedures as well as the occasional religious sermon all took place in private homes (Poole 1753: 373). There was no courthouse or even a prison until after there was a legislature in 1773 (Suckling 1780: 14–15). In Road Town, according to Poole, there were only "eight or ten" buildings in total, "at such considerable Distance from each other, as wholly to lose the Appearance of a Town" (Poole 1753: 370). Even a church was not built in Road Town until the early nineteenth century, yet the small community of Quakers (at most a fifth of the white population) went to great lengths to establish multiple houses for their community.

More context on the unlikely place of meetinghouses is provided by the actions of one former member some years after the meeting ended. Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie is introduced in chapter 1 as a young widow expelled by her father for joining the nascent Quaker community. She was later disowned by

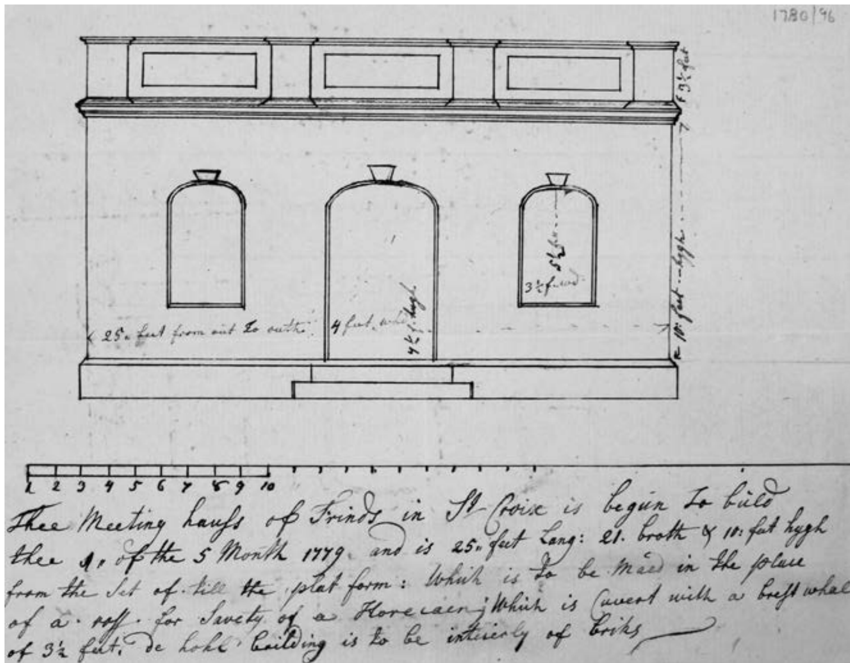

Figure 4.1. Plans dated 1779 for a meetinghouse for the tiny community of Friends on St. Croix led by former Tortola meeting member Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie. The original is in BYMFH, London Yearly Meeting Papers, 1780, Sufferings no. 93–98. © The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain.

the Quakers for marrying the newly arrived Anglican minister, John Latham, in 1744, then relocated to St. Croix, where she was widowed again and married a planter named Lillie (or Lilley in some records). Later in life when she returned to Quakerism, one of her first acts was to apply to the Danish colonial authorities for permission to build a meetinghouse on her land, which she did shortly afterward, even though there were only about eighteen members at the high point of the St. Croix meeting, which remained informal and has left us no records aside from a few letters held in the archives of the London Yearly Meeting. In 1776 this small community lost access to this meetinghouse because of the death of Dorcas's husband and the breaking up of his estate. At this time the group was reduced to only three members: Dorcas along with Henry and Mary Shayltz (also spelled "Shoultz" in some documents) (Lillie 1832: 220). Even so they asked London Friends for and received assistance in the amount of £60 to build a new meetinghouse in Christiansted on St. Croix. By 1779 plans were well under way, and a drawing of the meetinghouse, to be built on Lot #33 of that town, survives (figure 4.1). While not extravagant, in the marginal Virgin Islands in the late eighteenth century, such a building was substantial, made of brick, and elegantly designed. It was to be 25 feet by 21 feet: ample for a group that numbered only three!

MEETINGHOUSES ALSO RECEIVED special attention in the records of the Tortola meeting. For instance, the donation of the land for them was reinforced with a series of quasi-legal records. The deed for the land to the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse and burial ground is recorded as follows:

> Tortola
> Be it known unto all Friends that I John Pickering of the Island aforesaid for the Love which I have and do Bear towards the People called Quakers, Do give unto them for the Use of a Burial Place a Spott of Ground in the Division of Fat Hog Bay on the land which was formerly known to be my Fathers and adjoining to the place where he Lived Enclosed Round with a Prickle Pear Fence containing about a half an Acre of Land, also a House within the said Fence furnished with Convenience for a Meeting house, all which I freely and Gratisly Give for the use of Friends, meaning the people called Quakers as long as there shall be any of them sort of people in the said Island that will make use of it; Either the House or lands for the use it is Given, which I hope there will be as long as Tortola remains

Inhabited. Given under my hand and seal this sixth day of the first month called march 1741/2
Signed Sealed + delivered in the Presents off Wm Thomas, George Powe, John Lake, Thomas Humphreys
John Pickering [seal] (TMM Minutes 1:4)

A similar record follows on the next page, in which Townsend Bishop gives land and a structure in Road Town for the same purposes. Records like these exist even though the legal and land tenure systems of the British Virgin Islands at the time were somewhat informal and had no practical enforcement mechanisms. This informality was driven home when, in 1751, John Downing, the executor to the estate of Townsend Bishop, fell out with the meeting and was disowned. Downing simply chose to deny access to the building given by Bishop because of his disagreement with the organization. Downing was able to do this despite a formal, signed and sealed deed held by the meeting to that property. The meeting objected but eventually could do nothing about it (TMM Minutes 1:23).

But the main meetinghouse for the community was located at Fat Hogs Bay, on land donated by Pickering. This meetinghouse was apparently at least under construction a few months earlier than its 1741/2 formal donation, in October 1741, when the group reported to London that there was a "Plat of Ground given by John Pickering for a Burying Place, and upon which he is now Building a Meetinghouse for the use of Friends, as is Townsend Bishop another in the Division called the Road" (BYMFH Epistles Received 3:90).

The finances of these structures are occasionally recorded as well. Although they are relatively few (apart from records related to the charity given to Rebecca Britt), expenses for the meetinghouse itself are practically the only financial transactions recorded in the meeting minutes. The initial work of erecting the houses appears to have been the responsibility of the donors, as John Pickering and Townsend Bishop are each recorded as personally causing the meetinghouses to be built and no financial records survive from this process. From 1756 to the end of 1758, the minutes record the collection of between zero and ten pounds at each monthly meeting, averaging about two pounds and five shillings. Much of this money went to the support of Rebecca Britt (see chapter 3), but there are records of at least three expenditures on the meetinghouse itself: a pound and ten shillings to Jonas Lake "For Repeairing ye Gable End of ye meeting house," work he apparently did shortly before being removed as

treasurer in 1757 (TMM Minutes 7:29), six shillings to Christopher Fleming for "work done" in 1761 (TMM Minutes 7:71), and ten shillings for "hooks & hinges . . . being for the use of friends Meeting House" in May of that same year (TMM Minutes 7:75). In Fifth Month 1753, the meeting also directed that a "*Ruff* House for Shelter for Horses be as soon as Conveniently it can, be set about and Compleated [*sic*] at the expense of the Meeting, Thomas Humpherys + William Thomas is desired to undertake the same as directors of the Work" (TMM Minutes 1:27, emphasis in original). However, at the next meeting, these men reported that they did not have "nor can't get timbers to go on With the house" (ibid.), and the idea of a stable at the meetinghouse appears to have been abandoned.

The Meetinghouse after the Meeting

No record of the location of the meetinghouse in Road Town survives, and the structure was likely pulled down or repurposed by 1751, when its donor, Townsend Bishop, died and the meeting fell out with his executor, John Downing. The meetinghouse at Fat Hogs Bay, in contrast, still existed in workable condition in 1780, as historian Charles F. Jenkins reported that Isaac Pickering, son of John, had paid to repair the damage done to it in the hurricane of that year (Jenkins 1923: 55). This was noted in 1786 in the minutes of the London Meeting for the Sufferings, which appointed two members to ascertain the status of any property owned by Quaker meetings in the Caribbean, where several meetings had flourished following George Fox and his fellows' travels in the 1670s. The report notes of Tortola, "With respect to the Meeting House and Land, given to Friends by our late friend John Pickering, we understand it has been put in compleat [*sic*] Repair by order of Isaac Pickering his Son, and therefore we apprehend no application can be made to any other than himself who resides in this Nation [i.e., England]" (BYMFH London Meeting for the Sufferings Minutes, third of Second Month, 1786). This note was signed by John Coakley Lettsom, son of Edward, then a member of London's meeting, but no follow-up to it is recorded.

The BVI meetinghouses have been a subject of interest to historians and travelers since the eighteenth century. Several later visitors made the effort to locate the site and record what they found. In 1822, Quaker traveler Peter Priest wrote of Tortola that they once had "had a good meeting house & some Houses Built for the accommodation of any Friends that [might have] thereafter come there, and when I left the Island was under the protection of Bazil.

Hodge, I forget the Family's name that Patronized & formed this Establishment [this would have been the Pickerings], the survivor sent Over from St. Croix & Repaired the building &c, but I suppose it is now gone to decay" (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 39:14). Despite the reference to St. Croix, this probably refers to the 1780s repairs sponsored by Isaac Pickering, John's son, who was then residing in Fox Lease, in England. Priest's 1822 note suggests that the meeting-house ceased being used not long after Isaac's repairs. Bezaliel Hodge, who was not a Quaker, was the wealthiest planter in the colony when he died, and by coincidence his estates went to Edward Lettsom's son, John Coakley Lettsom, as Hodge's daughter and heiress, Ruth, married John's son Pickering Lettsom (whose namesake is clear), but the couple died childless shortly before John Coakley Lettsom himself died in 1815.

In 1840 the ruins of the meetinghouse were visited by Quaker writer and Orthodox leader Joseph John Gurney (Gurney 1840) and in 1841 by a trio of Quaker visitors: George Truman, John Jackson, and Thomas Longstreth, the

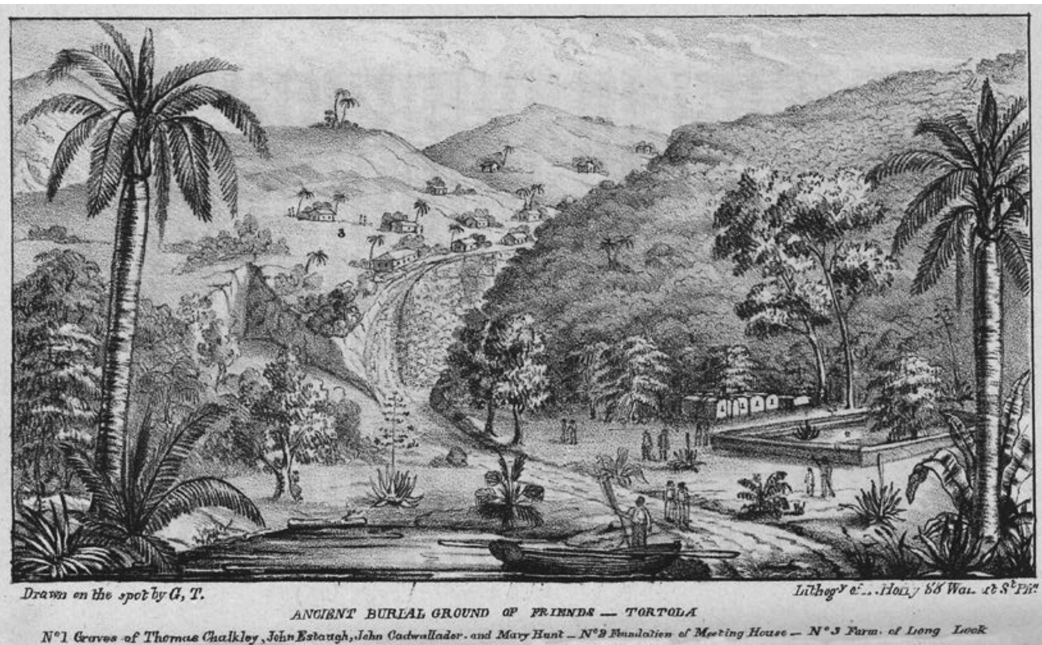

Figure 4.2. An 1844 engraving based on a drawing by George Truman showing the ruins of the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse and several graves. Note that the placement of the foundations by the water is an error, as they were located well inland from the nineteenth-century coastline. Scan by the author of an image in the public domain.

first of whom sketched them. The surviving print of this drawing (figure 4.2) is extremely inaccurate, depicting the ruins along the shoreline when in fact they are fully half a kilometer inland. The engraver may have taken liberties with Truman's sketch, or perhaps the sketch was made by from memory. Further visits by those with an interest in Quaker history are reported in 1913 by Philadelphia Quaker and amateur historian Charles Jenkins (Jenkins 1923: 66–70), in 1931 by the U.S. Virgin Islands governor Paul Pearson (Pearson 1931), in both 1969 and 1970 by George Vaux (SCFHL RG 5/238, George Vaux Papers, box 1), and in 1972 by historian Harriet Durham (Durham 1972: 68). Each reported a similar mortared-stone foundation and several graves with progressively fewer bricks, noting that these were frequently taken away by area inhabitants to build hearths with, bricks being in short supply.

Numerous visitors have also misidentified a burial ground at Bar Bay Inlet, just south of Fat Hogs Bay and to the seaward side of the main road, as the site of the Quaker meetinghouse and burial ground of the 1740s (e.g., Lembo 1997–98). The mistake is based on the presence of the graves of Pickering and Ruth Hodge Lettsom, the son and daughter-in-law of John Coakley Lettsom mentioned above, and a knowledge of the names "Pickering" and "Lettsom" being attached to the Quaker community. However, all marked stones at this site clearly postdate the Quaker community of the British Virgin Islands, and there is no associated ruin that could be the meetinghouse. Pickering and Ruth Lettsom were not members of any Quaker meeting. The confusion is furthered by Truman's engraving (see figure 4.2), which imaginatively shows the ruins near the shore. Most likely, this was a family burial ground for the Hodges, whose estates were in this area.

Archaeology at the Meetinghouse Site

The land where the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse was located is currently owned by a Mr. Dwight Pickering.[1] It is planted as a garden, although Mr. Pickering is aware of its history and has done his best to protect the site. It is not open to the public at this time. The site was relocated with the assistance of Nancy Woodfield of the BVI National Parks Trust, and many factors have confirmed the identification. The location fits the descriptions made by several of the visitors noted above, visible surface remains and artifacts point to a mid-eighteenth-century occupation, and its layout would be extremely unusual for a domestic structure of that time and place. The site lies on land that is shown in a 1798 map (UKNA CO 700/VirginIslands5) as the property

of Isaac Pickering, the son of John, who paid for repairs to the structure in the 1780s. Sources agree that John Pickering's house was at some distance from this location, suggesting that another use was intended for this structure. Finally, the association of graves almost immediately next to the structure would also be atypical for European-Caribbean peoples and thus likewise suggests a nondomestic use.

As they are visible today, the remains consist of low walls very similar to the walls of the foundations of the Lettsoms' house on Little Jost van Dyke: minimally worked (single-faced) stones mortared together with lime mortar standing about 10 centimeters above the current ground surface, which is there quite level (figure 4.3). In one area, a depression of up to 70 centimeters in depth exists just inside the foundation walls, showing that the walls extend some way below the surface. Openings for postholes have been left at what appear to be regular intervals along the inside edge of these walls, although not all of the wall is preserved well enough to allow determination of how many posts there were.

Figure 4.3. Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse walls.

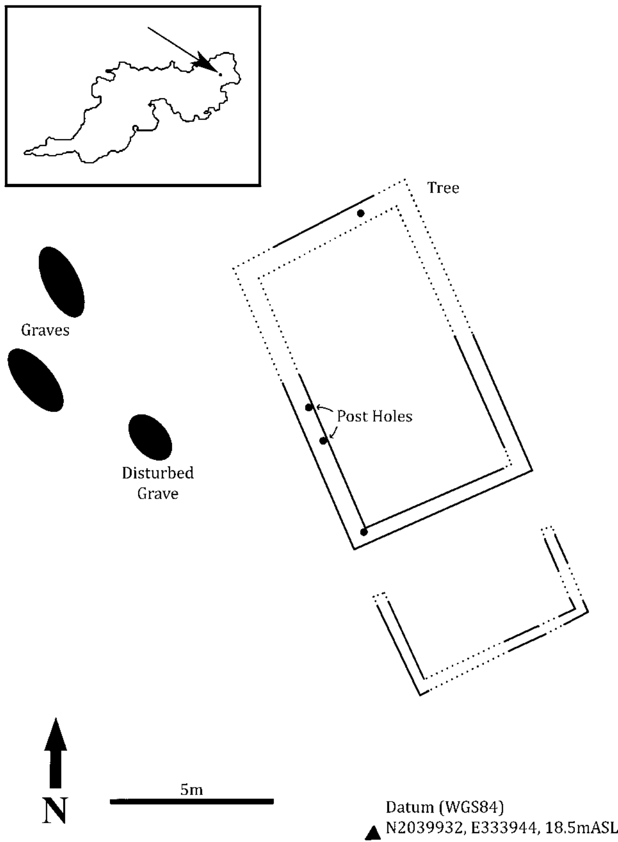

Figure 4.4. Map of the ruins of the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse.

The walls exhibit what appear to be two separate phases of construction (figure 4.4), aligned with and very close to each other: the northern one is approximately 6 meters by 9.5 meters (57 square meters), while the southern one is about 3 meters by 6 meters (18 square meters). The size of the latter area is less clear, as the walls are not as well preserved, partly because they appear to be somewhat thinner at about 25 centimeters in width. The two foundations are only a meter and a half apart and were probably integrated into a single structure, with the southern portion being an addition. When he visited in the first half of the twentieth century, Pearson (1931) also noted this and suggested that an addition might have been added to this structure at some point, perhaps indicating the growth and enthusiasm of members in the meeting's early years.

West of these structures 5–6 meters are several piles of unworked stone, which commonly mark graves in the Caribbean, in this case also including

Figure 4.5. Fieldstone grave with bricks near the meetinghouse.

bricks and brick fragments (figure 4.5). These mark the graves of meeting members and the missionaries who traveled to the little community in its early years. Some of these were reported to be originally all of brick and are shown as half-rounded, full-length markers in Truman's engraving (see figure 4.2), probably closely resembling some surviving early graves in the Johnson Ghut planter's cemetery on Tortola (figure 4.6). However, over the years almost all the bricks appear to have been removed, in keeping with several sources both published (Jenkins 1923; Pearson 1931) and archival (SCFHL RG 5/073, Jenkins Papers, box 1, folder 1 [Cruikshank to Jenkins, 1947]), which suggest that all the relatively valuable bricks had been repurposed in local hearths. Because the area is currently under cultivation and the piles had been somewhat scattered, determining precisely how many graves were present was not possible. At least two survive relatively intact, and these have the same orientation as the structure, slightly north of northwest-southeast, suggesting association. In addition, this nonstandard orientation for Christian burials, which are traditionally east-west with the head to the west in Europe and colonial New World contexts, is a common and highly

Figure 4.6. Rounded brick graves from the Johnson Ghut planter's burial ground on Tortola (partially restored), probably of similar date and original appearance to some of the more elaborate graves at the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse.

charged aspect of Quaker burial in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Other BVI planters' graves, such as those at the Johnson Ghut planter's burial ground on Tortola, appear to have maintained the tradition of roughly east-west burial, which would allow Quaker nonconforming to this practice to be a meaningful marker of identity (Chenoweth 2009).

Only minimal excavations could be conducted at the meetinghouse site. One test unit was placed just inside the angle of the southwest and southeast walls of what appears to be the original structure, which was excavated down more than 60 centimeters to sterile soil. A judgmental surface collection was also made, based mainly on materials picked up by the landowner, encountered over the years during his farming work. Datable artifacts recovered from the meetinghouse were few. Five pipestems were recovered, all with 5/64ths-inch bore diameters, two from the surface of the foundations and three from excavations, along with two bowl fragments, both exhibiting burn marks from use. Although dating is not really meaningful with such low numbers, it is worth noting that these produced a pipe stem date around 1740.

Only three ceramic pieces (one redware, one tin-enameled, and one very large brick fragment) were recovered from excavations, and several large pieces of lead-glazed slipware along with some porcelain and tin-enameled wares were recovered in surface collections. These numbers are too small to allow for mean ceramic date calculations and too early to provide a meaningful terminus post quem to date the occupation of the site, but all of these types (except the porcelain) are early for the British Virgin Islands, being out of common use by the later part of the eighteenth century, strongly suggesting a mid-eighteenth-century date for occupation, consistent with association with the Quaker community. The lack of any creamware strongly suggests minimal use after this type's introduction and widespread adoption in the 1760s. One unusual find in excavation was a large gunflint (discussed in greater detail in the next chapter). It appears to have been used for firing a flintlock weapon, showing characteristic step-flaking along its working edge, and there is no sign of it being repurposed for general fire starting. It is of a type that would have been in use at the time of the meetinghouse's occupation.

The archaeology of the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse also suggests that members not only met together to worship and examine each other's affairs, spiritual and temporal, but also ate and drank together at the site. Members came from all over the Virgin Islands to congregate at the meetinghouse, and in some cases a round trip journey could last the entire day, depending on the distance and the winds. It seems reasonable that members would most likely have eaten together when they met. There is precedent for this archaeologically (Ward and McCarthy 2009), and the 1797 "Discipline" book of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting makes comments about how Friends should handle such communal meals.

The food remains recovered here take two principal forms: shell and bone. The meetinghouse produced a lower concentration of shell than was encountered on average in excavations from Little Jost van Dyke: 128.3 grams per square meter or 208.3 grams per cubic meter, compared to 366.1 grams per square meter and 1,103.3 grams per cubic meter. Almost all of the shell consisted of what are classed as primary food species: those most sought after as food resources and still eaten today, such as conch (*Strombus* spp.), West Indian top shell (*Cittarium pica,* locally called "whelk"), and *Codakia orbicularis,* tiger lucine (see appendix B). Lower amounts of secondary foods (those edible but not preferred) were recovered, on average, compared to most units on Little Jost van Dyke. The shells recovered were all fragments, suggesting some effort to keep the building clean, but the number of shells and the patterns in species imply that food consumption may have taken place.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the meetinghouse archaeology is the animal bone assemblage (see appendix B). The proportions of species recovered here are strikingly different than those at Little Jost, where fish remains made up the vast majority of the excavated remains. This is not surprising on Little Jost, as reef fish were abundant and easily accessible on the shores of the island. But the same is also true for virtually all of the British Virgin Islands, and local reef fish probably made up the majority of meat eaten by all residents (along with some salted provisions, which leave very little archaeological trace). At the meetinghouse, however, instead of bringing lower-cost (and lower-status) fish for communal meals, members brought substantial amounts of fresh domesticates—principally cow and chicken, evidenced by the recovered animal bones. This data is discussed in more detail elsewhere (Chenoweth 2014), but it may be summarized as suggesting that in presenting higher-status, higher-cost foods at meetings, members created a version of Quakerism wherein "simplicity" was enacted by showing industry—the effort needed to produce these more expensive foods—rather than by a version of simplicity equated with thrift, enacted in the presentation of inexpensive, common foods like fish. While perhaps unusual to the modern reader, and probably unrecognizable to contemporary Quakers elsewhere in the Atlantic World, this version of Quaker values made sense given local understandings of fishing and farming.

Such a performance of industry has other expressions in the material record of Little Jost. The bone assemblage recovered there is highly fragmented, which could be taken to represent efforts at efficient use of the resources by extracting marrow, an avoidance of waste. This is despite the fact that the shell assemblage suggests a lack of resource stress, as preferred food species were far more common there (though not as common as at Fat Hogs Bay). The Lettsoms, and from the limited evidence available, apparently other BVI Quakers when meeting at Fat Hogs Bay, made full use of their food despite not being particularly unable to acquire more. There is some precedent for this, for instance, a "highly fragmentary" bone assemblage noted in the Burlington, New Jersey, Quaker meetinghouse remains (Ward and McCarthy 2009). The almost complete removal of the building materials at the Burlington site for use elsewhere might also be interpreted as an avoidance of waste, an interpretation of the idea of simplicity. This further contextualizes the suggestion made in chapter 7 that the Lettsoms maintained older, more out-of-date ceramics rather than the fashionable newer ones that were acquired by their own enslaved people, perhaps as another gesture to this particular interpretation of frugality and simplicity.

Structure H

Though part of a population that was much smaller than that of Tortola, quite a few members of the meeting lived on the nearby island of Jost van Dyke, the fourth largest of the British Virgin Islands. Early Quaker missionaries made a point of visiting the island numerous times: Thomas Chalkley, John Estaugh, Daniel Stanton, and Samuel Nottingham (before he emigrated and settled in the British Virgin Islands) are all noted to have visited Jost in their travels (Jenkins 1923: 14, 21, 25), and Jenkins notes it as the third center of Quaker activity, after Fat Hogs Bay and Road Town (Jenkins 1923: 18). As early as 1741, enough members were present there to form two distinct meetings for worship: at their first formal meeting, the minutes of the women's meeting for business at Fat Hogs Bay note that the Friends had "Concluded to appoint two women friends at Josan Dicks to inspire friends walking according to truth & accordingly they have nominated ann Smith for the Eastend meeting and Cathoren George for white bay meeting" (TMM Minutes 4:1). These meetings for worship would have met together in private homes once or twice a week, perhaps more often, to wait in silence in the Quaker form of worship, even though members were expected to travel to Fat Hogs Bay on Tortola for the monthly meetings for business. Little Jost lies just east of Jost van Dyke, and so the Lettsoms would have been a part of the former group, while White Bay is the westernmost of the three major bays on Jost's south side. From an early point, then, a strong community of Friends met near Jost.

In 1753, though the British Virgin Islands still lacked other public buildings besides the two Quaker meetinghouses, efforts began to build a dedicated meetinghouse for the community at Jost van Dyke. This would be the third such meetinghouse in the British Virgin Islands, half as many as the much larger Quaker population of Barbados sustained fifty years earlier. During the meeting for business in Eighth Month 1753, Edward Lettsom was appointed by the meeting to "treat with David Brown concerning the Ground the Meeting house stands upon at the East End of Joes van Dyke and to make a Report to our next Monthly Meet^{g}" (TMM Minutes 1:27), suggesting that some sort of structure existed there already. The valley on Jost van Dyke just opposite the Lettsoms' house on Little Jost is today known as Brown Ghut, and it hosts a substantial eighteenth-century plantation ruin, almost certainly associated with the same David Brown. This land is just across the "crawl" (an area of shallow water connecting the two islands that can be waded even at high tide) from the Lettsoms' settlement on Little Jost.

However, the next monthly meeting report on the subject clarifies that the new meetinghouse was still in the planning stages rather than already standing. For the twenty-ninth of Tenth Month 1753, the minutes include the following statement: "From Edward Lettsoms intelligence to the Meeting we have David Browns ready concurrence in the disposing of the Ground treated of at Joes Van Dykes where upon the said Edward Lettsom is desired to make purchase of the same in Order to Erect a Meeting House thereon" (TMM Minutes 1:29). However, the issue was mentioned as being "continued" without further comment in several subsequent meetings, suggesting that Edward Lettsom was having difficulty coming to an agreement with David Brown. Evidently no building was ever erected on Brown's land for the use of Quakers.

Survey of the Lettsom site on Little Jost revealed an unusual building, labeled Structure H; this building was roughly formed, isolated, and without associated surface artifacts. Two excavation units in the area produced no artifacts, which is unusual compared to the relatively dense artifact scatter where the enslaved Africans made their homes and the artifacts associated with the Lettsom house. Structure H lies almost directly east of the planter house by about 100 meters (see figure 2.6) and is separated from the rest of the site by a line of large boulders. It would have been easily accessible from the western shore of the island, specifically, the area known as the "crawl," where one can safely walk across from Jost van Dyke's east end and the neighboring Brown Ghut site.

Structure H consists of unmortared, unshaped stones, including several very large ones that may have been used in situ rather than being moved to the building (figure 4.7). Three walls are moderately preserved, but the western wall, which is on the downslope side, has crumbled completely down the hill or originally was of a different construction. A stone alignment off this side may be remains of that wall or may represent the edge of a porch or shelter on that side. The walls are so rough as to suggest that the building may never have been finished or that this may have been another kind of enclosure and not a building at all. Nonetheless, it is clearly an artificial construction that took a great deal of effort, which prompts the question of its purpose.

Structure H is roughly aligned north-south, and one doorway is clear in the east wall. It is a very small structure, approximately 7 meters by 2.5 meters, enclosing an area of about 15 square meters. The complete absence of artifacts is extremely unusual, because all the other areas of habitation on Little Jost seem to have substantial quantities of artifacts both above and below the surface. This suggests a very different sort of activity here, one important enough to justify the building in the first place but requiring no artifacts. Despite the substan-

Figure 4.7. Students mapping Structure H, facing southeast from the northwest corner of the building.

tial stones in its foundation, the building was probably relatively ephemeral: the lack of any crumbled mortar suggests that the superstructure was wooden, wattle and daub, thatch, or even partially open, if it was ever finished.

Chronology is, of course, impossible to determine without artifacts to act as temporal markers, but Structure H does not appear to date to later than the Lettsom occupation of the site, when industrialization made materials of all sorts more readily accessible. It may be a very early occupation or a temporary structure associated with the nearby terraced fields, but the complete lack of artifacts makes any domestic habitation unlikely. It could be some sort of animal pen, but the location at such a distance from all the other inhabited areas and the construction using extremely large boulders make this doubtful as well.

While the real purpose of the building will probably never be proven, it is at least possible that the building was used or intended as a meetinghouse. Little Jost was certainly the site of at least some and probably regular meetings for

worship by members of the Quaker community from Jost. In November 1742, for instance, visiting Quaker missionary John Estaugh is reported to have gone "ashore to the house of Edward Lettsom, who seemed to rejoice at [Estaugh's] coming for he and his wife showed him more than ordinary kindness" (Abraham 1933: 11–12). No "signature" of a meetinghouse as lacking artifactual remains is suggested, as there are finds at Fat Hogs Bay and other meetinghouse sites, but the lack of any remains at all is at least consistent with this usage by smaller groups meeting close to their homes who would not have needed a place to eat communal meals during their gatherings.

Did Edward abandon his effort to strike a deal with David Brown and offer instead to allow the meetinghouse to be built on his own property? No record of such an offer exists, but neither is there a record of a meetinghouse being built on Jost van Dyke or a decision not to build one. Structure H is easily accessible by small boat or even by foot from the east end of Jost van Dyke where the meetinghouse was planned in 1753. It stands to reason that the Lettsoms may have simply allowed the structure to be built on their own land, echoing the donations of John Pickering and Townsend Bishop.

Polysemy in Meetinghouses

These structures were used for worship, but worshipping in groups created and reinforced a sense of community and social ties. Although the British Virgin Islands are small, their geography is isolating; even plantations in neighboring bays were sometimes not connected by paths because of the steepness of the terrain, and sailing was difficult in bad weather. Meetings broke up the isolation of these small, steep islands. Although Quakerism was about an individual, inward relationship with God, it also had a theological focus on community and gathering. Friends frequently quoted the biblical line "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20), in order to remind themselves of God's presence, of the need for community, and to argue that specialized buildings such as churches or meetinghouses were unnecessary. Yet the physical structure of meetinghouses took on a disproportionate share of the financial outlay and personal effort of Tortola Quakers. While the colony was without other public buildings, two and perhaps three meetinghouses served as gathering points for members from 1741 until well after the end of the formal meeting, as late as 1780 in Fat Hogs Bay. The material culture of these buildings suggests substantial effort, expansion in the case of Fat Hogs Bay, and it also speaks to the more social aspects of gather-

ings of Friends to eat and drink and visit, which must have accompanied their disciplinary meetings for business.

In addition to being religious and social gatherings, meetings were also opportunities to seek assistance, formally and informally. As discussed above, Quakerism in general and BVI Quakerism in particular incorporated a network of practical mutual support as well as providing a reason for neighbors to meet, renew relationships, and trade news. Also (as discussed in chapter 3), these communal gatherings were opportunities to make useful connections farther afield. Visiting Quaker missionaries and merchants alike were lifelines to the colonial cores of Philadelphia and London, as well as potential allies in efforts to acquire needed goods or get crops to market—both of which could be quite difficult in a colony sometimes not visited by ships for months at a time. As shown in chapter 7, the Quaker leadership in the British Virgin Islands was dominated by the wealthy, and so attendance at meeting also offered opportunities to connect with the local elites. The former governor, John Pickering, and the widow of his successor, Mary Hunt Nottingham, along with her second husband, Samuel, were well connected locally and abroad. The Lettsoms (as discussed in the previous chapter) probably benefited directly from such ties.

THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE BUILDINGS at which the Quakers of the British Virgin Islands gathered are more complex, however, revealing tensions and divisions within the group as well. Attention to the structures in which this group met suggests that the definition of this community was under dispute (a point taken up again later, primarily in chapter 8). This community was important, probably to all members, but the connections and access to the powerful it offered came with the price of obedience: those with political and economic power in the colony were those with spiritual power in the meeting, and they had the expectation of obedience to the will of the meeting—and its verification by attendance at meetinghouses.

The structure of monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings described in chapter 1 made all gatherings opportunities for oversight of the community by elders. Members could be questioned, informally or formally, and "treated with" to amend their behavior if necessary. For the present discussion of the meetinghouses, it is important to note that they became sites for the negotiation of class among BVI Quakers. The meeting community was one of mutual support, assistance, and religious fellow-feeling but also one deeply imbued

with the class concepts of the Caribbean, a sense of one's proper place, and obedience to social betters.

Not attending meeting is cited as one of the reasons for "dealing" with or disciplining a total of seven members, more than a quarter of the twenty-seven times a member was recorded as being disciplined (table 4.1). Five of these members were ultimately expelled from the meeting, accounting for more than 40 percent of the recorded formal disownments during the meeting's history. (The story of Thomas Smith is recounted in chapter 5, and one of the com-

Table 4.1. Offenses and disownments recorded in Tortola Monthly Meeting minutes

Offense[a]	No.	Not disowned	Disownments	% Disowned
Unspecified	10	George Chalwell, 1741 Christopher Downing, 1741 John Lake, 1746 Elizabeth Harris, 1748 Tabitha Madix, 1759 Bathia Block, 1760 Elizabeth Lake, 1760 Rebecca Brabston, 1760 John Pickering Jr., 1760	Peter Smith, 1760	10%
Marrying out	3		Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie, 1744 James Rawleigh, 1762 Mary Reynolds Bishop Balneives, 1760	100%
Not attending and other unspecified	3	Samuel Brabston, 1760 Jemima Powe, 1742	John Downing, 1751	33%
Not attending	2		Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine, 1759 William Thornton, 1760	100%
Not attending and dancing	2		Rebecca Eviret [or Evrit] Powe, 1754 George Powe, 1754	100%
Violence	2	John Vascraging, 1761	Thomas Smith, 1746	50%
Excessive drinking (and its results)	2	John Lettsom, 1747	Jonas Lake, 1760	50%
Allowing daughter to marry out	2	James Park, 1760 John Pickering Sr., 1760		0%
Having a child out of wedlock	1		Anne Lake, 1760	100%
Total	27	15 members	12 members	44%

[a] The offenses are those deemed serious enough that members were assigned to "treat with" others.

plaints against him is that he showed "Great Backwardness in attending Meeting" [TMM Minutes 1:6], but this is not specifically mentioned as a reason for his ultimate disownment so it is not included in these figures.) Surprisingly, for a group for which religious services can be anywhere and anytime, there are two instances of members being disowned solely for not attending meetings. In both cases, the record explicitly states that there was no other theological or moral complaint. On the twenty-eighth of First Month 1760, the minutes record, "It is reported to this Meeting that Wm Thornton [senior] Absenting + shewing slight + Contempt to Meetings [for] Worship, Notwithstanding being otherwise altogether According to good order, Friends are agreed for the Clearing of Truth to disown him" (TMM Minutes 3:5).[2]

Most relevant to this study is the case of Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine, the widow of Edward and mother of John Coakley Lettsom. Friends "visited" Mary in Eighth Month 1759

> for her Misbehaviour + Contrary walking Disagreable to Friends +Contrary to ye Church Discipline, + her Answer is that Friends Slited her + set her at Noat + she being Left as it where Destitute from human help not a Negro to asist her + thereby uncapeable of attending her Meetings being at a Distance from her, + thinking it hard to be slited by Friends in her Distress Resolv^{d} not to Attend Meetings til some Friend or Other should Visit her, but she [de]Clared the Truth having Nothing to say Against it, but wold not Resolve whether she wold Attend her Meetings hereafter yea or nea. But it seems to Appear that if some weighty Friend or Friends should be apointed from your Meeting to treat with her Might be of Great servis to her + Likewise to her husband who says his Mother was a weighty Friend in the Island of Barbados + he him self spakes well of Friends. (TMM Minutes 7:53)

While she appears to have been accused of other "Misbehaviour," it was her not attending meeting that was the focus of the proceedings. In the end, she was disowned not for religious differences, for "she [de]Clared the Truth having Nothing to say Against it," but rather for refusing to commit to coming to meetings. The fact that lack of attendance was an issue for so many disciplinary cases and that both Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine and William Thornton Sr. were disowned explicitly for not attending suggests that those in control of the meeting also put a great deal of weight on the gatherings, which afforded them an opportunity for direct oversight of the scattered flock.

THOUGH INTENDED ORIGINALLY to satisfy basic needs so that all members could freely pursue the Inner Light of God, in the British Virgin Islands the mutual support network discussed above and the communal aspects of Quakerism were repurposed to provide other benefits, including direct support for some but also access to power, the colonial core, and prospects for social advancement. Gatherings at meetinghouses also became social occasions for members who lived generally isolated lives in the rugged terrain of the British Virgin Islands: opportunities for people to meet neighbors they otherwise might not have seen for weeks on end. Meetinghouses were central to these processes and marked the presence of the group onto the landscape in stone. But like any artifact, the buildings came to have multiple meanings: representing both sociability and social control, both access to social power and domination by it. When Mary no longer felt the benefits of this network—when she was "slited by Friends in her Distress"—she no longer submitted herself to their oversight by attending meetinghouses, as perhaps did William Thornton Sr., John Downing, George Powe, and Rebecca Eviret Powe. These differing views on the meeting's assistance and oversight, and the place of these buildings in these processes, are taken up again in later chapters.

Chapter 5

PEACE AND WEAPONRY ON BVI QUAKER SITES

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF SLAVERY in Caribbean social and economic life, coupled with the other dangers faced by rural, marginal Caribbean planters (see chapter 7 for an elaboration of these), makes it only logical that weapons formed a major part of material life in the early British Virgin Islands. Despite the marginal economic and strategic place of the islands in the colonial system, as early as 1756 more than 70 cannon adorned Tortola and Virgin Gorda and 60 more were being requested, as was a doubling of the small arms present from about 260 to 550 (UKNA CO 152/28, no. BC83). Nonetheless, a chapter in an archaeology of Quakerism with a focus on weaponry is perhaps as discordant to the modern reader as the one that follows with a focus on slavery. The "peace testimony" of Friends has been a defining feature of the group, and its modern understanding by many as calling for complete pacifism led the group to receive the 1947 Nobel Peace Prize. BVI Quakers, too, wrote a great deal about the peace testimony in their letters to London, primarily related to fears of persecution, yet the archaeology clearly indicates that weaponry was a part of life. These Friends were also surrounded by thousands of enslaved Africans, who were made to work through—and against whom the white population was protected by—the ever-present threat of violence as well as its occasional execution. "Peace" was understood differently among the Caribbean Friends.

The peace testimony has had a substantial effect on the course of the Society of Friends and its members' lives, being the force behind the antiwar activism that has both brought them into conflict with governments and brought them recognition. Pacifism was one of the earliest elements of Quaker belief, a direct outgrowth from the idea that there was "that of God in everyone," since violence against any person could be cast as violence against God. Theological force for the idea came from the recognition "of the inconsistency of warfare with the perfectionist ethic of the New Testament" (Tolles 1963 [1948]: 9). George Fox argued, based on the Bible, that "wars come from inner desires

and lusts; the true struggle against evil is therefore within men" (Barbour and Frost 1988: 45). There also was a practical aspect to the peace testimony in the early days of Quakerism, as Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost also note that the political dangers in England during the tumultuous 1650s and 1660s made it extremely useful to claim that Quakers engaged in the military support of none.

But as with simplicity, modern ideas of pacifism are not always compatible with the Quaker view in the eighteenth century. Jack Marietta argues that during the complacent early part of the eighteenth century, a concern with avoiding or preventing violence against other people was replaced among Philadelphia Quakers by a mere concern with Quaker complicity with war (Marietta 1984: 170). That is, they were not concerned with wars occurring, merely with getting their hands dirty. The reformation of Quaker values that Marietta shows occurred at midcentury coincided with the French and Indian War, when Friends attempted to again redefine the peace testimony, producing a political backlash that led both to a pulling away from political power among Quakers and to a substantial increase in disownments. A substantial minority of members even felt warfare in a just cause to be consistent with Quaker ideals, and so many were disowned for supporting the American Revolution that they formed their own "Free Quaker" meeting in Philadelphia.

So eighteenth-century Friends everywhere debated what "peace" meant, and not all members of the group understood the idea in the same way. There were many influences on the idea of peace among BVI Quakers: the contested status of pacifism among eighteenth-century Friends in the "core" of Philadelphia negotiating their place in politics, those in London trying to avoid taxation to support wars, competing influences of Caribbean neighbors constantly requesting more military aid, the desire to secure one's tenuous wealth in a sometimes lawless marginal community always threatened with military invasion, and the constant fear of those held enslaved, to name a few. All these were influences that made the Quaker ideal of peace ripe for reinterpretation in the British Virgin Islands.

Pacifism and Weapon-Related Artifacts in the British Virgin Islands

Archaeological work at the Lettsom site and the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse produced several artifacts associated with weaponry. Three small fragments of scrap lead totaling 17.8 grams were recovered from the foundations of the Lettsom house on Little Jost van Dyke.[1] These pieces are all irregular and may have been curated for a variety of reasons, including use in making seals for bags of

cotton intended for export, although no such seals were recovered. Use as fishing weights is also possible, but these fragments are all quite small (averaging less than 6 grams) and none have holes or are shaped to attach them to lines. By contrast, a square of lead with a rough hole punched through recovered on a nearby, roughly contemporary site on Great Camanoe Island can be more clearly identified as a fishing weight; it weighs 10.4 grams.

The pieces of lead from the Lettsom site are highly unlikely to have been associated with windows, either. Flat, clear glass was extremely rare on the site (only 3.5 percent of the glass fragments recovered by count), and it generally occurred as small fragments that probably came from flat-sided bottles. Additionally, the historical record suggests that no buildings in the British Virgin Islands had glass windows until well into the nineteenth century (Anonymous 1843: 21; Poole 1753: 374). The most likely association for small fragments of amorphous lead is thus for use with firearms. Such scraps could be melted for musket balls, which were commonly made by individuals rather than purchased. Ivor Noël Hume (1970: 221) also notes that strips of lead were often wrapped around the base of gunflints to secure them in the hammer arm, and two of the pieces recovered here may represent trimmings from such strips.

More-direct evidence of weaponry comes from two unambiguous gunflints and several fragments of flint that may have been originally used in weapons and later reused as fire starters. One flint was recovered from the Lettsom house foundations (figure 5.1, *center*) and the other from the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse (figure 5.1, *right*). Although the term *flint* is used both in reference to the material and as a general term for these objects, they are both technically spalls, being wedge shaped in cross section. The Lettsom site example has a flat "heel" and measures 2.1 centimeters in width, 0.82 centimeters in thickness, and just 1.73 centimeters in length, suggesting long use in a gun, as this is perhaps half of the original length compared to examples depicted in publications (Durst 2009; Kenmotsu 1990; Peterson 1956: 228).

The Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse example was larger, in excellent condition, and well shaped, with present but minimal use wear (discussed below). It measured 3.46 centimeters in width, 0.97 centimeters thick, and 2.63 centimeters in length, with a well-rounded heel. Its size matches what Harold Peterson (1956: 228) illustrates as a flint for a Long Dane, a gun popular in the "triangle" trade between Europe, Africa, and the New World by 1750 (Kea 1971: 199). That some of these guns would end up in the Caribbean with the owners of some of those whose lives were purchased with similar pieces is not surprising.

Color has been considered an indicator of source for flint, with English flints

Figure 5.1. Gun spalls recovered from the Lettsom site *(center)* and from the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse *(right)* with another fragment of flint, possibly a former gun spall reused as a fire starter, recovered from the enslaved Africans' village on Little Jost van Dyke *(left)*.

and spalls being nearly black and French or other Continental sources producing lighter, tan-colored materials. However, Nancy Kenmotsu points out that the quarry producing the distinctive dark English flint at Brandon was not in regular use until 1790 (Kenmotsu 1990: 95), and recent sourcing work has also cast doubt on this formula (Durst 2009). Therefore, it should not be surprising that all flint pieces recovered in this project are of the lighter, tan color, suggesting not so much that they are French but that they date to before 1790. This date is narrowed down by shape, as spalls such as these were less-efficiently produced than later "prismatic" flints, which are trapezoid shaped in cross section. While prismatic flints were developed by the late 1600s, spalls probably made up the majority of flints in use until about 1750. Shape of the heel is a better indicator of origin than color, with round-heel examples being termed French or Continental and square-heel examples English (Kenmotsu 1990: 98; Noël Hume 1970: 220). The example from the Lettsom site is square heeled and thus probably English while that from the meetinghouse is quite rounded, showing Continental origins.

Kenmotsu's study of use wear on flints (Kenmotsu 1990) provides expectations for patterns of wear resulting from actual use in firing guns, as opposed to use for fire starting in general. The primary characteristic showing use in guns is

step flaking on the working edge, where it strikes the pan to create sparks, coupled with a lack of wear elsewhere. Pieces identified as "strike-a-lights," or fire starters, from European-era contexts in South Africa are described as having a "chunky" and "bruised" appearance and being amorphous in shape, with bruising and occasional step flaking all around their perimeters (Schrire and Deacon 1989). Both the piece from the meetinghouse and (much more extensively) that from the Lettsoms' home exhibit step flaking on their working edges and little wear elsewhere. All of this is to suggest that these gun spalls were used to fire weapons, came from diverse origins, and were roughly contemporary with the Quaker community in the British Virgin Islands. Thus, BVI Quakers in general appear to have made use of such weapons and likely often had them near at hand, even when attending meetings.

THE CLEAREST AND MOST NOTABLE association with weaponry from the Lettsom site is a copper-alloy butt plate to a musket, found in the west profile of an excavation unit inside the main house (figure 5.2). It was buried under a dense patch of decayed mortar probably associated with a rebuilding episode dated to the 1740s and was lightly encrusted with mortar itself, suggesting that it was buried with wet mortar. The butt plate appears to be in perfectly workable condition, unbent or damaged in any way. That such a piece was discarded is

Figure 5.2. Two views of a copper-alloy musket butt plate recovered from the foundations of the Lettsom house.

surprising, because such undamaged parts of a damaged weapon were commonly reused. This is particularly true in the British Virgin Islands, with manufactured items (weapons in particular) being difficult to acquire.

This piece resembles type 1 plates used in English Brown Bess infantry muskets of the first half of the eighteenth century, before the reign of George III (Peterson 1956: 161–67), being as long in the tang (the top or stepped end) as the butt end. The tang was shortened when the barrel was shortened, around the end of the reign of George II in 1760 (Peterson 1956: 167). Jonathan Ferguson, curator of firearms at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds, England, examined photographs of this artifact and suggested that it is likely of the "pre-pattern" Brown Bess, dating to before the 1730s, although the match is not precise and this suggests that it may have been a nonmilitary weapon (personal communication, December 9, 2009). It is likely not one of the commonly known later Brown Bess patterns, such as the "Long Land," "Short Land," or "India." It may also be a shorter-form weapon, such as a carbine or blunderbuss, but the suggestion remains for an earlier date of production, before the 1730s. The gunflint discussed above, which was found almost immediately above this piece on the surface, is of the type and date used in such a weapon.

The age of the butt plate is also interesting. Little Jost van Dyke was first settled by Edward Lettsom's father, Jonathan, about 1725, suggesting that the gun from which this plate came may have been a family heirloom, used by Jonathan before he settled on Little Jost. The precise reason why this apparently still perfectly good item was curated and presumably used for two decades or more before being deposited in such an unusual manner, along with or encased in wet mortar, may never be determined, but one could speculate that it is related to the Lettsoms' conversion to Quakerism. The fact that the difficult-to-replace metal butt plate was still usable and could easily have been added to a newly carved stock for reuse makes its deposition seem intentional, and the timing of the rebuilding episode in which it was deposited, dated archaeologically, suggests association with the Quaker community.

In any case, BVI Quakers, including the Lettsoms, seem to have had access to weapons and made use of them. In itself this does not necessarily mean that they participated in or condoned violence against fellow human beings; however, the rest of the archaeological and historical records give few other reasons for such weapons to have been present. Hunting would have been a possibility, but the faunal remains recovered on Little Jost suggest that this was not common. There were no wild land animals to hunt on the islands, and in any case almost all the mammals identified were domesticated species or probable

domesticates.[2] Only domesticates were recovered at Fat Hogs Bay. Guns are unlikely to have been used to dispatch docile domesticates such as these, given that powder and shot were in such short supply and the thoroughly worn-out gun spall from the Lettsom site described above suggests that the same was true for flints. Also, guns were almost certainly not used in acquiring the most common animals eaten in the British Virgin Islands: fish.

Bird hunting is a greater possibility, but the archaeology suggests that this was not common for the Lettsoms either. Relatively few examples of birds were recovered during the work. Most of those that could be identified to the species level were *Gallus gallus,* domestic chicken (NISP = 6), although at least one example of *Pelecanus occidentalis,* brown pelican, was encountered. Eleven more specimens were recovered that could only be identified to the class level, as "Aves." Birds, whether wild or domestic, are little mentioned in BVI historic contexts and probably made up little of the diet. Nonetheless, these remains are interpreted to most likely be food related. Shortly before the end of slavery, Trelawney Wentworth described the life of a free, mixed-race man living on the shores of Fat Hogs Bay who had become well known for his skill in boatbuilding and also possessed a gun, which he used to hunt birds, reportedly catching plovers, ground doves, guinea birds, and any "common foul" that came close to his home (Wentworth 1835: 179–81). However, the single pelican bone found on Little Jost suggests that hunting of these animals was not a significant source of food for the Lettsoms. The most reasonable explanation for Mary and Edward to have had weapons, then, was the threat of their use on fellow human beings, either those held enslaved or those whom the British Virgin Islanders believed were on the edge of invading the territory.

Gun Loops and the "Quaker Guns" of Guana Island

In addition to the work carried out on the Lettsom site, more-limited excavation and survey work has been conducted at several related BVI plantations, sometimes as preliminary work for future projects. Some patterns from those sites are informative here for the discussion of pacifism and militaristic preparations.

Gun loops are a relatively common feature of many early BVI plantation houses. These are carefully constructed openings in masonry walls that are narrow on one side and widen out on the other, allowing a defender to fire a weapon across a wide range from the inside but making it difficult for anyone to fire into the defended building (figure 5.3). Examples surveyed on several sites in the British Virgin Islands are all for hand weapons. Their presence on a

Figure 5.3. Gun loop from a non-Quaker site on Norman Island (Phase II, a room to the immediate west of the original building [see figure 2.15]) viewed from outside the structure, obliquely from above, after the wall in which it was set was partially ruined.

site indicates both the availability of such weapons and an expectation of using them at close quarters against an attacking group of people. No gun loops were incorporated into the structure of the Lettsoms' house at Little Jost or the Lake family home on Guana Island, another plantation house that survives in relatively good condition and has been confirmed as belonging to an active member of the Tortola meeting. The construction of both of these houses would have made gun loops impossible or at least would have prevented their preservation, however: each had low stone foundations that rose only 10–20 centimeters above the ground level. Neither incorporated an open belowground space or full-height stone walls into which gun loops might be fitted.

However, the Park family site on Guana Island does provide one structure, near the modern orchard, that preserves an unambiguous gun loop (figure 5.4). Like the Lakes and Lettsoms, the Parks of Guana Island were active members of the Quaker community. We do not have enough information available to permit a determination of the date of this structure, so it could possibly date to after the Quaker period. However, at several other BVI sites with late eighteenth-century occupations—such as one on Great Camanoe and one on

Figure 5.4. Exterior view of a gun loop in a structure on the shore of Guana Island, possibly part of the Quaker Park family occupation.

Norman Island—possible gun loops have been identified for structures in the earliest phases of their construction, probably contemporaneous with the Quaker meeting, which were sealed up and made unusable by later construction. This tactic for defense may have been preferred earlier in the history of the British Virgin Islands, suggesting an association with the Parks for the gun loops on Guana. It is also notable that the gun emplacements in this structure face inland rather than toward the landing place on the beach, suggesting that an internal rather than external threat was most feared.

Another example of gun emplacements comes from work in 2013 at a substantial plantation site on Great Camanoe, which revealed gun loops in the early elements of the main house's construction. We know that at least one plantation on Great Camanoe was associated with a member of the Quaker group, as Mary Vanterpool of that island was found to be free to marry James Park of neighboring Guana Island at the meeting on the twenty-ninth of Eighth Month 1754. The size of Great Camanoe suggests that probably more than one eighteenth-century plantation existed on the island, so this site may not be the one associated with Mary Vanterpool, but future survey work and research are needed to confirm this. Journalist and local historian Florence Lewisohn's statement that Mary Vanterpool lived in "one of" the Quaker plantations on the island (Lewisohn 1966: 78) suggests that there was more than one Quaker-related site on the island, but Lewisohn cites no source for this idea.

The gun loops in this structure were built into the first phase of its construction but closed off by the second. Dating for this structure comes from an excavation unit in each of the two phases: an original two-room house, which produced a mean ceramic date of 1754 (*n*=97); and a two-room addition with a mean ceramic date of 1784 (*n*=83) (Mayer 2016). BLUE mean ceramic dating (MCD), calculated with a statistical technique that gives types with longer production periods less weight (see Chenoweth and Farahani 2015), were 1826 and 1831, respectively, and probably more closely represent the middle of the occupation of this site. Such dates must be taken with a grain of salt, as mean ceramic dating formulas are at best approximate, but they and the presence of some earlier types suggest some occupation in the eighteenth century and support the suggestion above that such gun loops were common in the British Virgin Islands during and shortly after the time of the Quaker meeting but seen as unimportant a generation later (thus indicating an association with the former time period). The site on Great Camanoe may or may not be associated with a member of the meeting, as noted above, but the blocking off of earlier gun loops has also been observed on other sites with no Quaker connection, such as on Norman Island, and so this is more likely to represent changing attitudes toward threats rather than being part of a Quaker rejection of violence. Instead, the dating here supports the association of the gun loops with the time of the Quaker meeting, suggesting that those found on Guana Island may be connected with the known Quaker occupation there.

PERHAPS MORE WELL-KNOWN to BVI visitors today are what have come to be known as the "Quaker Guns" on Guana Island (figure 5.5). Two probably eighteenth-century cannon have been found on the beach of the island below the Park house (GN17), not far from the structure with the gun loops just discussed.[3] Several other historic occupations exist in this area, including possible warehouse and dwelling structures and a substantial sugar works. Some of these structures have been the subject of archaeological evaluation by Edward Harris, Norman Barka, and Mark Kostro of the College of William and Mary. All these structures are thought to be associated with the Park family plantation, and the known association of this family with the Quaker community has led to the popular belief that BVI Quakers regularly had cannon mounted on their houses to attack enemy ships!

The cannon are too corroded to reveal specific dates or foundry or reign marks, but staff of the Guana Island resort kindly provided measurements of

Figure 5.5. One of the "Quaker Guns" of Guana Island in a modern stand.

these weapons, which provide some evidence of use and dating. The smaller of these weapons has a length of 4 feet 3 inches with a muzzle of 5 inches in diameter and a bore or opening of 3 inches. This probably represents a three-pounder gun, which took a ball with a diameter of 2.77 inches (Wilkinson-Latham 1973: 26), giving the shot a little room for expansion during firing, as well as manufacturing defects, and allowing it to be fired through a nearly 3-inch bore (with allowances in the measurements given for corrosion, painting, and so forth). The length is unusually short, even for such a small gun. The standard three-pounder approved by the Board of Ordnance in 1764 was 4 feet 6 inches, three inches longer than this, and it weighed 812 pounds (McConnell 1988: 92). Shorter examples, as short as three and a half feet, exist as well, however. McConnell writes that "Iron 3-pounders were undoubtedly obsolete by 1800" apart from a brief resurgence in the late 1850s (ibid.). This last time period is perhaps the high point of colonial disinterest in the British Virgin Islands, and weapons were unlikely to have been sent to the Islands at that time, suggesting an eighteenth-century date for this piece.

The second, larger gun found on Guana Island is 5 feet 6 inches in length with a bore or opening reported to be 4 inches in diameter, making this likely a nine-pounder. (The measurement more precisely matches the diameter for an eight-pounder, an earlier Dutch gun size [Lavery 1987: 101–2], which had a bore of 4.03 inches, but the nine-pounder is only 0.17 inches, or 4.3 millimeters, wider [see Gooding 1965: 18], and allowances must be made for corrosion, use wear, and measurements being approximate, coupled with the fact that nine-pounder guns were far more popular overall.) Nine-pounder guns fired a shot of 4 inches (McConnell 1988: 288). At only five and a half feet, this example is also relatively short for nine-pounders and was probably intended for use on land (being smaller in order to be more portable). Nine-pounders were little used by 1850, and those of five and a half feet were declared obsolete in 1865 (McConnell 1988: 87). The dating suggests that this larger weapon may be from after the period of focus here, although the smaller cannon may well be from the period of the Quaker meeting.

A 1756 report (UKNA CO 152/28, no. BC83) notes that no cannon were then present on Guana Island and recommends that two six-pounder guns be provided as part of an effort to fortify the British Virgin Islands at the onset of what would come to be called the Seven Years' War. This recommendation itself is important here, as the only two landowners on Guana Island in 1756 were both members of the meeting and yet the author of the report expected that they would welcome the weapons. The three-pounder weapon may be evi-

dence that the 1756 request was at least partially granted, a fact not recorded in the documentary record.

This cannon also suggests something about the relationship of the plantation owners on Guana and the enslaved people they held. A follow-up to the 1756 request for weaponry authored by "Several Gentlemen concern'd in the Trade of Tortola and the Virgin Islands" repeats the request and justifies it explicitly in terms of a fear of foreign invasion: "And as these Colony's are yet in their Infancy and in a defenseless Condition if not assisted by the government, particularly at this Juncture that we are at the Eve of a French Warr, We for our Selves and others interested in Trade of these Islands and for the Inhabitants of them, request of your Lordships to recommend to the government they send to them [i.e., the Virgin Islands] for the present, some Cannon, Ammunition, Small Arms for their Immediate defense" (UKNA CO 152/28, no. Bb71). Earlier colonial fears were directed at the Spanish, then the French, and the theme of fears of foreign invasion is ever present in the BVI documentary record. Both types of cannon on Guana Island are on the small side, in terms of both caliber and length for their particular caliber; the shortness of the guns reduces their weight substantially and makes them more maneuverable by fewer people. These are advantages for movement on land in the British Virgin Islands, which is steeply hilled, as well as for the prospect of only a handful of whites being able to effectively fire the guns at prospective crowds of rebelling enslaved people. This and the placement of gun loops directed inland suggest the true concern of BVI planters and the main reason they wanted weapons at hand, perhaps even during meetings at the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse, where they appear to have carried muskets. While these suggestions are speculative, when coupled with the evidence for weapons on Little Jost, an argument can be made that at least some members of the Quaker community saw fit to keep and maintain weapons and defenses in their homes and were prepared to use them to protect themselves, particularly against the enslaved people they held.

Persecutions for Pacifism, Real and Imagined

The previous two sections suggest a series of associations between BVI Quakers and weaponry that was probably mainly directed at fellow human beings. While there may have been some ideas of limiting or ending the use of weapons, as suggested by the intentionally buried butt plate, most of the evidence shows that guns were as omnipresent among BVI Quakers as they were among other planters. This ambiguous relationship of BVI Quakers with weaponry

contrasts sharply with the documentary record of the Tortola meeting and its discussion of the peace testimony, however. The goal here (as outlined in chapter 1) is not to simply catch these members in a lie. Rather, in this disjunction, we can see a way in which Quaker ideology was altered through its encounter with Caribbean slavery.

Throughout their correspondence with London, the letters from the BVI Friends represent them as vulnerable, persecuted, and threatened by their non-Quaker neighbors. When lobbying for a "public dispute" or debate over doctrine with the newly arrived Anglican minister John Latham in 1745, for example, they reported to London that they felt they could not press the issue, "we knowing our weakness" (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 28:38). Again in 1748, they reported that they were "but few, + weak, being Lessened by [the deaths of] Several of the most worthy in [their] Church" (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 29:147).

Yet these fears appear to be inconsistent with other records, which show little direct conflict. Although Quakerism occasioned some division in the white community, it was far less than the persecutions suffered by Quakers earlier and elsewhere, including elsewhere in the Caribbean (see Besse 1753). While they reported in their 1744 letter that that they "ha[d] been preserv'd from Suferings" at the same time, they stated that it was only God who kept them "from the Wills of creul Men" (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 28:38).

In particular, the peace testimony is the focus of the fears expressed by BVI Quakers. They wrote that they feared persecution over the issue of taxes for military preparations and being forced to bear arms and muster for the militia, both common sources of conflict between Quakers elsewhere and their neighbors. Indeed, the one confirmed case of violent punishment of a Quaker in the history of the Tortola meeting is of an unnamed member who refused to participate in military exercises. In 1743, the meeting wrote to London that there was "but one called a Friend that has Suffered Persecution amongst Us, which was for Refusing to bear Arms, he was Tyed neck + heels" (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 28:37). In general, though, the "Governour has often threatened us, but [he] has hither to been withheld" from harming them (ibid.).

These threats are particularly seen as coming from the two men who succeeded John Pickering as lieutenant governor (first John Hunt and then James Purcell) after Pickering was asked to step down because of his association with the pacifist Quakers. Before leaving that office, Pickering wrote to Friends in Philadelphia, "I find it a hard matter for a Man to be a Governor, + a Christian too, in such a place as this is. I would have acquitted my Self of the Government e'er this time, but I find if I do it will come into ye hands of a very Creul En-

emy to Friends [i.e., Hunt], a haughty, proud, Austere Man, whose wife [Mary Hunt Nottingham] has Suffere'd cruel Persecution on account of her being one" (BYMFH MS Vol. 335 [Gibson] 2:61).

However, other sources do not agree that Hunt and Purcell were enemies to Quakers at all. BVI member Dorothy Thomas wrote a private letter to Elizabeth Estaugh, the widow of John Estaugh, a minister from England who visited Tortola and died shortly after arriving in 1742. In it, she describes his trip to Jost van Dyke just before he took ill. Accompanying Estaugh were "John Pickering, John Hunt, Governor[,] Jonas Lake, Jeremy Martin[,] Dorcas Powell and myself" (Nicholson 1894: 41). If Hunt was such an enemy to Quakers, why would he accompany one of their leading ministers and most of their leading members on a religious visit to Jost van Dyke?

Another version of Tortolan Friends' relations with their government comes from a 1745 letter of James Birkett, who helped form the meeting but was a merchant ship captain working out of Liverpool and Antigua and never resident in the British Virgin Islands. He wrote that "their new Governor [i.e., Hunt] had been very indulgent to Friends wth regard to bearing Arms &c. although he had been very severe upon those of his own society [i.e., non-Quakers] when he thought they were deficient in their duty" (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 1:37).

The documentary record is similarly contradictory with Hunt's successor, James Purcell. When an act was passed calling for British Virgin Islanders, Quaker dissenters included, to keep arms and contribute money to pay for a fort, the Friends wrote to London in 1748 that there was no legal authority to force them to pay, but expressing concern nonetheless:

> Yet we expect no Less than Soon to have it taken by Force from us, + as far as we can perceive are quite Remedyless as to outward help or Countanance from any in these parts, so that we are greatly to be Pittyed, who are obliged to live under such arbitrary Power where our properties are Liable to be invaded and Violated, if the Governour be of a Dispostion so to Do, as ths our present one [i.e., Purcell], lately appointed for this Island Seems strongly to be of, and a great Enemy and Dispiser of Friends. (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 29:147)

By the next year, however, 1749, no trouble had been caused, and the Friends admitted that Purcell had "lately Carried himself in a general way pretty moderate to Friends, and in Respect of Compelling us to Carry arms is quite Silent, the Cause he says being taken away there is no more need for it"; nonetheless, "some can See the poison of Asps yet under his Lips" (BYMFH Epistles Received 3:242).

Again, a very different view of Purcell's attitude is offered from other sources. A 1751 dispatch written by Purcell to the Council for Trade and Plantations includes the following note: "I think it proper to inform their Lordships that we have had in the Virgin islands a great many of that profession who are commonly called Quakers who are not only very well affected to his Majesty's person but also persons of great industry a *[page torn]* would humbly recommend them to their Lordships as persons worthy of enjoying and well intitled to all th *[page torn]* may be claimed by any of his Majesty's subjects in these parts" (UKNA CO 152/27, no. Aa75). This evidence suggests that very few instances of persecution actually occurred in the British Virgin Islands and that any that did may not have been sanctioned by the government. In addition, the archaeological evidence presented above indicates that at least some BVI Quakers had an ambiguous relationship with weaponry, being willing to possess guns and possibly threaten their use on fellow human beings. There was a wide middle ground here, in which members saw leeway and in actual practice may have compromised over a strict interpretation of the peace testimony.

Yet if this is the case, why are their letters to London so frequently centered on fears of persecution over this very idea? A feeling of persecution, governmental oppression, and the appeals it occasioned them to make to Friends in London may have been part of how some members conceived of Quakerism and its expected relations with nonmembers. That is, despite their relatively trouble-free relationship with authority, they may have felt that suffering was a part of the Quaker faith. Martyrdom was an essential part of Quaker rhetoric in its early years. Sufferings of persecution make up a substantial part of George Fox's journal (Fox 1952). In the first dozen years of Fox's preaching, twenty-one of his associates or followers are known to have died in prison or otherwise as a result of their faith (Nuttall 1952: xix), and more than four hundred did so throughout the course of the seventeenth century (Davies 2000: 178). By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, Quakerism had changed significantly: the Friends had reined in their millennial claims and disruptive actions and had become more middle class and stable (Davies 2000; Vann 1969). Nonetheless, depicting themselves as "greatly to be Pittyed" may still have seemed to Tortolan Quakers an effective way to make connections with members living far away in an environment alien to many of them: the core of power, commerce, wealth, and religious enlightenment that was England. The fact that the first three missionaries to the BVI community—Chalkley, Estaugh, and Cadwallader—all died in their service on Tortola may have reinforced this ancient idea that to be a Quaker involved sacrifice.

The Saga of Thomas Smith of Jost van Dyke

Fears of being forced to contribute to military preparations and to bear arms as part of a militia lay at the center of Tortolan Quakers' worries and writings, but even this concern for peace may have been a very specific form of the peace testimony. Although war, forts, and militias were a frequent concern, interpersonal violence, such as that which underwrote all of the system of slavery either in fact or in threat, does not seem to have been an issue in the same way in the British Virgin Islands; violence of individuals against each other is mentioned only rarely in the records of BVI Quakers.

One informative exception is the case of Thomas Smith of the island of Jost van Dyke, and it is worth telling in some detail. While his offenses appear to have been violent and excessive and led to one of the rare instances of disownment—expulsion from the meeting—the way the tale unfolds in the minutes of the Tortola Friends is surprisingly measured considering the extremity of his actions. The first indication of a problem with Smith is in Fifth Month 1743, when the minutes note his "Disorderly behavior of + Great Backwardness in attending Meeting" (TMM Minutes 1:6), but in the next month "he had made a very just Acknowledgement" (TMM Minutes 1:7). Things seem to go well for a time, as he was even given two tasks by the meeting later that year, in Ninth Month and Eleventh Month; such assignments are sometimes used as a proxy for measuring involvement in or commitment to a Quaker meeting (Brown 1987; Chenoweth 2006).

However, a year and a half later, in Fourth Month 1745, Smith was reported as being "Quarrelsome + Neglecting Meeting" (TMM Minutes 1:10). The case was continued for a few months, went quiet, and then came to a head in the middle of 1746. The following excerpts from the Tortola Monthly Meeting minutes recount Smith's new offenses and efforts to "treat" with him over five months that year:

> At a Meeting at F.H. Bay the 6th of 8th Month 1746. The Overseers for Tortola report that things in General were pretty Well but from JVDyke report quite the reverse as Tho Smith notwithstanding the Acknowledgment reported at last Meeting had been run out into very extravagant excesses + breaches of Discipline very unbecoming a Professor of Truth in going Armed after a French Boat + firing ashore at friends in Guana Island + greatly abusing them. some friends not being satisfied that a Testimony should go out against him Requested further Endeavors might be Used. for which some friends were continued to use their exertion + Report same. (TMM Minutes 1:12)

Engagement in privateering against the French would itself have been a spectacular violation of the peace testimony according to most contemporary Friends, being violence not only as part of large-scale warfare but also for personal gain. Yet Smith's offenses apparently went much further. The extent of his "firing ashore at friends in Guana Island" is not spelled out, but in ordinary circumstances this would probably have resulted in a criminal complaint. Yet in this instance, his fellows were not even willing to expel him from the meeting, requesting "further Endeavors" to achieve a resolution.

> At a Meeting at Fat Hog Bay 3rd of 9th Mo 1746. The Overseers for Tortola report things were pretty Well but at Joes VDykes T Smith Continues of a very libertine Spirit + so Stiff + Obstinate to Condemn his Behavior, but having sent in a paper that being Read in no way Satisfactory. however as he promised to appear at the next Meeting, it was thought fit to defer giving a Testimony against him.
>
> At a Meeting at F. H. Bay Meeting House the 8th of the 10th Month 1746. The Overseers for Tortola report things in general very Well. The Overseers for Jos. V. Dykes not appearing some friends from thence told that T. Smith still continues to go on in Wicked unmanly Behavior having beaten Wm Clandaniel a friend since last Meeting, and not appearing as he promised to condemn his disorderly Conduct but persisting in the same friends were Concerned to Testifie against him and disown his being a Member of Our Community until he manifests his Sincere Repentance by sober and Virtuous Life and Conversation. John Pickering + Thos Humpheries were appointed to prepare a Testimony.
>
> At a Monthly Meeting in F.H. Bay Mg House 5th of 11th Mo 1746. The Overseers for JVan Dykes not appearing but those of Tortola report things in General pretty well. A Testimony prepared by the friends against T Smith was brought in + Read, Approved + signed + John Lettsom was appointed to deliver him a Copy, which was as follows[:][4]
>
> Whereas Thomas Smith of Joes Van Dyke has for some time made profession with us the People called Quakers and professed to be of Our Religious Society, hath Conducted himself very Imprudently + in many + most respects not consistently with our profession in going out Armed in a Coble with intention to retake a Boat that was thought to been taken by the Enemy + in firing ashore in the Night Amongst his friends at Guana + Grossly abusing them, his assaulting + Beating Wm Clandaniel a friend + Others, his Conversation and department [*sic,* deportment] evidently

> manifesting a slight and Contempt to the Simplicity + Plainness of the Truth we profess, And he having been labored with in Christian love and Tenderness in hopes of his Reformation but nothing appearing like we thought with Reluctancy, Declare our disapprobation to his Conduct + disown him to be in unity with Us until it may please God to awaken him to a Sincere repentance.
>
> At a Meeting at the M^{g} House 2^{d} Day of 12th M^{o} 1746 The Overseers for Tortola + Joes van Dyke agree that things in the General pretty well. . . . The friend appointed to give a Copy of the Testimony against Th. Smith acknowledged his having Given it to him. (TMM Minutes 1:12–14)

For a society centered on "that of God in everyone" there appears to have been a remarkable willingness to forgive Smith's episodes of personal violence, as extreme as they were, including beating one fellow Quaker and gunfire directed at others. Note also that at the Eleventh Month meeting, when the decision to disown Smith was finally taken, they listed his various offenses but summed up the issue as being that "his Conversation and [deportment] evidently manifesting a slight and Contempt to the Simplicity + Plainness of the Truth we profess." Despite the violence, the peace testimony was not explicitly mentioned, being subsumed into a general idea of "simplicity and plainness of truth." There was also a repeated expression of "reluctancy" and the idea that Smith might be forgiven, for he was disowned only "until it may please God to awaken him to a Sincere repentance," although such a sentiment is part of most (although not all) surviving documents of disownment from the British Virgin Islands. Smith's tale is anecdotal, but when combined with the archaeological evidence for weapons as a part of daily life for some members and even in the meetinghouse itself, it suggests that Tortolan Friends' ideas about pacifism were quite different from modern ones and probably from those in the contemporary core as well.

The Peace Testimony Reconfigured

John Pickering is often credited with the formation of the meeting, as he was a leading public figure, among the wealthiest planters in the British Virgin Islands, and because his father, Abednego Pickering, is credited with being the first to "own the way." Yet when one reads the record carefully, there is some question as to whether he ever considered himself fully a Quaker. Even as the community was forming, James Birkett, the Quaker merchant who visited Tor-

tola to trade, wrote in 1740, "The Governour [then John Pickering] is a very Loving honest man, but does not give up to the Rules of ffriends, Yet he has a tender Regard for them, and is a diligent Attender of Meetings" (Jenkins 1923: 10). Richard Vann (1969) argues that Quakers distinguished between full members and those who merely attended meetings.

What reservations Pickering may have had about Quakerism are not clear, but one strong candidate comes from one of his earliest letters, a 1741 description of how Quakerism came to the British Virgin Islands, sent to friends in London. This letter is often quoted as the most substantial account of the meeting's formation, but about a quarter of it is a summary of an exchange of letters between Pickering and his political superior, the governor of the Leeward Islands colony, over how his new faith would impact his role as lieutenant governor. Pickering's argument to be retained as lieutenant governor was that while Quakerism was the "Religion or Society [he] owned & Loved above all Others, and that [he] was Endeavouring with God's Assistance to Live up to" it, he "had not yet got over or seen beyond that [principle] of Self Preservation or defending [his] Country or Interest in a Just Cause" (Jenkins 1923: 8).

Pacifism as an absolute dictum was severely put to the test in the eighteenth-century Caribbean. As discussed in chapter 2 (and described in a different way in chapter 7), the British Virgin Islands were isolated places, far from help, and the planters were threatened by not only natural disasters but also dangers of human agency, such as rebellions by enslaved people and the invasion of foreign powers. Pickering's understanding of Quaker values, at least in 1741, did not see a necessary contradiction between the ideas of "that of God in every one" and resisting those dangers, with violent action if needed, for "Self Preservation or defending [his] Country or Interest in a Just Cause." Even for the man credited with founding the Tortola meeting, its first clerk, pacifism was a theological gray area.

SO JUST AS WITH QUAKERS in the colonial core, fears about being forced to muster for militia or taxed to pay for fortifications made a great theme in the letters of the Tortola meeting, yet there are significant differences between these views of Quaker pacifism. The Quaker peace testimony has grown and changed over its three and a half centuries, and the ideas and actions of the little meeting in Tortola provide a view into a transitional stage, a version of Quakerism wherein the violence of war was abhorred along with all military preparations, yet individual violence or its threat was far more negotiable, as members strug-

gled to maintain their wealth and power over those they held enslaved. Yet the idea of persecution over pacifism was still felt to be so important a tie to earlier Quakers and those who did suffer persecution elsewhere that at least some in the BVI community felt the need to imply more suffering than they probably actually experienced. Quakers were united by their trials, and so trials must be had. The isolation of the social and geographical environment of the Caribbean is paramount in the way the peace testimony took shape in Quaker practice.

A final note here is that these feelings of persecution and worries over the peace testimony are evidenced primarily by the documentary record. As discussed more in following chapters, this body of information is probably the product of a relatively small number of BVI Quakers, a group of literate and probably wealthier members in the core of Tortola's religious and secular society. These were the members of the meeting who most worried about the impression made on far-off London Friends. In contrast, the archaeological evidence comes from more-marginal out-island plantations: Quaker sites on Little Jost van Dyke and Guana Island and a site on Great Camanoe that could be Quaker. The archaeological evidence is equally complex but in a different way: these members may have thought about the peace testimony and worried about weaponry in their lives, perhaps even attempting to live without them for a time, but in the end weapons seem to have continued to be a part of their world. As with the burgeoning disagreement over whether meetings were primarily for oversight or assistance, mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, we may be seeing here the beginnings of disagreement and negotiation over what Quakerism was supposed to look like in the British Virgin Islands.

Chapter 6

DISCIPLINE, COMMUNITY, AND CONFORMITY

COMMUNITIES MUST BE CONTINUALLY created and re-created through the actions of their members, even though change often is the result of such efforts at maintenance. As the case of Thomas Smith in the previous chapter indicates, the Tortola meeting (like any other group) had mechanisms of enforcing conformity to local understandings of proper action. This chapter takes up the question of how community was created locally in the British Virgin Islands through the application of the Quaker "discipline" and how that community was tied (at least for some) to broader Quaker networks. The individual actions of conformity and objecting to others' nonconformity are fundamental parts of how religious groups are maintained and changed (Chenoweth 2009, 2014). As noted in chapter 3, the structure of monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings had this function (among others) for Quakers in general, although in the British Virgin Islands it also took on added meanings. The meetinghouses were central in the oversight of members (as shown in chapter 4), but the Tortola group had other areas of discipline as well. Proper, "Quakerly" behavior was very much a focus for meetings, but what this behavior ought to be was negotiated locally, and the context of the Caribbean was influential in several ways.

Archaeology on the Lettsom site offers a window into the place of two commodities often associated with religiously motivated discipline and widely used in the Caribbean but that have had a complicated role for Quakers: alcohol and tobacco. While commonly used by people of all statuses, free and enslaved, black and white, they are often understood in archaeologies of religion through the lens of Victorian-era ideas of propriety and sinfulness (for a detailed archaeological discussion of these Victorian ideals as they are expressed in their nineteenth-century context, see Kruczek-Aaron 2015). However, the notion that alcohol and tobacco are, in a straightforward way, sinful cannot simply be transported elsewhere without a close examination of the context in which they are contested. The attitude of Philadelphia Quakers toward alcohol, for instance, was complex: a waste of money for the poor and a breeder of sin for

the sinful but acceptable and good business for the wealthy and righteous if taken in moderation (Chenoweth 2006). In the British Virgin Islands, some members were disciplined for complaints that included alcohol, but the real focus for conformity and discipline was elsewhere. Alcohol and tobacco can be read as part of how a community of whiteness—beyond just the Quaker planters—was conceived and performed and was fit into concerns for the performance of Quaker ideals (as elaborated in chapter 7).

Alcohol

Free-blown green bottle fragments, commonly called black glass in archaeology, are almost ubiquitous on eighteenth-century sites and can prove useful in numerous ways, including informing chronology and consumption patterns. More than 3 kilograms of glass were recovered in surface survey and excavation on Little Jost van Dyke, totaling 675 pieces, mostly consisting of free-blown black glass round bottles, commonly referred to as "wine" bottles. While roughly equal amounts of clear glass (by excavated volume) were uncovered on the planter and enslaved areas of the site, substantially more green glass by excavated soil volume was recovered from the enslaved Africans' area, at 77 grams per cubic meter in the former, compared to almost 107 grams per cubic meter for the latter. The glass recovered from the Lettsoms' house was also unevenly distributed across the area, being concentrated in a probable storage structure behind the house. In both cases, free-blown glass "wine" bottles were the most common where identifications as to form could be made.

Certainly, many of these bottles could have been and probably were reused in many different ways over the course of their use life, for instance, for water storage or carrying. Nonetheless, the suggestion that bottles like those that make up the bulk of the assemblage on Little Jost are associated with alcohol at least in a general way is frequently made and is supported here. Reuse might well have been associated with alcohol, as in a colony that produced sugar, as the British Virgin Islands did, and rum was known to be manufactured regularly (for example, John Pickering, a founder of the Tortola meeting, had a distillery on his land; see House of Commons 1790: 288), bottles like these were available for alcohol transport regardless of their original contents.

Whatever other reuse might have occurred, most of these bottles probably arrived on the site containing alcohol. Olive Jones (1993) lists a variety of items commonly sold and transported in glass bottles but also notes that many of the nonalcoholic ones often had special-shaped or smaller containers not common

on Little Jost, and it is hard to believe that mustard, capers, snuff, or the other nonalcoholic bottle contents discussed by Jones were being purchased or produced in quantity on this site. Cotton is the only product indicated historically to be in general production on Little Jost van Dyke, and no cash crop grown in the area seems likely to have used such bottles for production, except rum. As discussed above, sugar almost certainly could not have been grown on the island, and there is no evidence of a works or distillery, which would have been necessary to produce cane juice and then rum, so the bottles are more likely associated with alcohol consumption than production. None of the nonalcohol-related reasons for large deposits of such bottles discussed by Smith appear to apply: marking planting beds, to aid drainage, in the production of tools for cutting, or spiritual or aesthetic uses (Smith 2008: 25–27).

Paul Farnsworth interpreted similar bottles on a Bahamian plantation as being for water storage, but this was based on a suggestion that the enslaved people there rarely had access to liquor, as well as the Bahamian preference for drinking stored rainwater as opposed to well water (Farnsworth 1999: 127). The same preference for rainwater is evident in the British Virgin Islands, but alcohol appears frequently in the historical record as being available to the enslaved here. Further, barrels, a more efficient and easily filled means of storing large amounts of water, would have been easily available to the residents of Little Jost for at least the last twenty years of its occupation, because Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine's second husband, Samuel Taine, was a cooper. The recovery of corroded metal straps that may have been barrel hoops in one unit in Area E suggests that barrels were present on the site.

Some of the glass bottles might have been used to carry water into the fields during the workday, although no glass was encountered in a judgmental survey of the fields; a few stoneware ceramic fragments were, however, encountered across the island, and these could have kept water cooler than dark-colored, translucent bottles, which the sun would have heated quickly. Finally, in an unpublished letter, architect William Thornton Jr. relates the most likely means of carrying water into the fields in use in the British Virgin Islands, as he describes how goat skins were seamlessly dressed by his enslaved people in Tortola in the 1790s to hold a great deal of water and provide convenient straps for carrying during the workday, after the fashion of West Africans (LOC, WTP ff. 2817–18).

The context of a particular concentration of glass remains behind the Lettsoms' home also suggests something other than generalized reuse for the bottle glass recovered here. In an area approximately 8 meters directly behind the Lettsom house there were many large, flat pieces of mortar, which were

interpreted as a storage structure, less substantial than the main house but the only structure on the island with a mortared floor as well as wattle-and-mortar walls. This structure was probably intended to protect valuable contents. Such precautions against moisture and infestation, probably to protect cotton, the Lettsoms' main cash crop, would have also made the building more secure against human entry, as would the location just behind the Lettsoms' house. If the bottles found there were used for storing water or other general purposes, such a concentration in the storage structure would be unlikely: if the bottles had little value, they would not have been so guarded, suggesting that their contents were in demand. The more even distribution of clear glass across the site, more often used for smaller and nonalcoholic containers and tablewares, also suggests that the uneven distribution of green or "black" bottles between the Lettsoms and the Africans they held, and across the different areas of the Lettsom site, is the result of an intentional practice.

Quite possibly, these bottles were used (and reused) for alcoholic beverages that were kept in the storage structure under close watch of the Lettsoms, and then distributed to the enslaved people, leading to the more generalized distribution of green glass across the area where they lived. The relatively low levels of bottle glass in the planter's yard in other contexts besides the mortared-floor storage structure, in contrast, suggests that the Lettsoms drank alcohol more rarely, although it was certainly present.

ALCOHOL IS KNOWN TO HAVE HAD an important social role among African-descended people in the Caribbean. Smith noted numerous cases of its use among the Caribbean enslaved people, for whom it was both religiously important and offered a social escape (Smith 2004, 2008). Similar cases can be found in the Virgin Islands, among both the free and the enslaved population. The wedding of a free African-descended couple on Tortola is described by an anonymous author in the 1820s as being catered with cakes decorated with the British flag and several kinds of alcoholic drinks (Anonymous 1843: 124–25). The same anonymous author also quotes a piece by another unnamed writer describing the burial of an enslaved person on nearby St. Croix in which the ceremony ended with the pouring of a small amount of new rum on the grave (Anonymous 1843: 271–72), and the theft of rum is also reported as a usual complaint against the enslaved people in the British Virgin Islands (Anonymous 1843: 152). All of these practices are well attested across the Caribbean.

Alcohol was a centrally important facet of life for white Caribbean peoples

as well. A doctor on a slaving ship that called at Tortola in 1803 noted that alcohol consumption was a primary pastime of the planters on the island. He was obliged to spend some time on Tortola and described it as being taken up with business of one sort or another during the day, but the evenings with the local planters seemed to him to be consumed entirely by dining, drinking, and finally gambling. "Late at night they retire to sleep off the effects of their debauchery, and prepare for the same routine to-morrow" (Anonymous 1843: 211). Rum was not only socially but also economically important in the British Virgin Islands, particularly early. In 1717, a report states that the planters there converted all their sugar into rum at that time (*CSP* [1716–17] 1930: no. 639.i). While this was moderated later, the production of alcohol remained as important to the economic life of the colony as alcohol consumption was to its social life.

Alcohol is mentioned several times in the written records of the Tortola meeting, always with negative connotations but also always with the phrase "drinking to excess" rather than simply drinking. In 1747, the probable brother of Edward Lettsom, another John Lettsom, is the target: "The Overseers reports that John Lettsom to the dishonor of the way he makes profession of [i.e., Quakerism] goes on in the evil Practice of Drinking to Excess. Ths. Humpheries + Alex[r] Balneives were desired to deal with him, to let him know if he continues to go on in that practice the Meeting will be under the Necessity of giving out a Testimony agst him" (TMM Minutes 1:15). At the next meeting we find that "the friends appointed to deal with John Lettsom report that he gave them tolerable satisfaction and shewed a sensible Concern for his Offence + promises to endeavor to Refrain from Drinking in future to Excess" (ibid.). Toward the end of the meeting, Jonas Lake, who had once served as treasurer, was disowned on the twenty-eighth of First Month 1760: "Nevertheless, his former acknowledgements & promises of amendment, has since Run out into Extravagent Excesses & Breaches of our Discipline Occasioned through his Excessive Drinking" (TMM Minutes 3:5).

But these notes do not mean that alcohol itself was anathema to BVI Friends in a simplistic way. John Pickering, the force behind the founding of the Tortola meeting, was (as mentioned above) known to have a distillery to produce rum on his own plantation. In contrast to Philadelphia, where the waste of good grain and money for those who could ill afford it was the reason behind the objection to strong drink (Chenoweth 2006), in the Caribbean, the production of rum was from sugarcane. This was, of course, a cash crop that provided a spectacular return and thus allowed one to provide for one's family, affording the freedom to live a Quakerly life (wealth being, as discussed in chapter 3,

welcomed by Friends as enabling Quaker practice, so long as wealth itself was not a goal). Making rum did not consume any resources better used elsewhere. Rum was success in the Caribbean. The objection to drink there was in the behavior occasioned by those who drank to excess: they might "Run out into Extravagent Excesses & Breaches of . . . Discipline."

The distribution of bottle glass on Little Jost van Dyke suggests that some attention was being paid to alcohol, with which such glass is probably associated at least some of the time. It was certainly present but was perhaps being managed. Mary, Edward, and later Samuel (whose mother was a Barbadian Quaker, although he never appears to have been involved in a meeting) may have avoided drinking or at least consumed less alcohol than many BVI planters. As noted in chapter 4, in Edward's day the house would have frequently been visited by Friends who would have seen plentiful alcohol as a problem, perhaps worthy of "treating with" in the meeting for business. No record of such action exists, and the Lettsoms appear to have kept their alcohol out of sight, stored in the structure behind the house.

Slavery is considered in the next chapter, and I argue there that the principal attitude of Quakers in the BVI "core" (as revealed in the documentary record) toward the enslaved Africans held by members could be described as paternalistic. Given this discussion of alcohol, we could expect it to be prohibited to the enslaved or more tightly managed than for the white inhabitants of the site for fear of occasioning "Extravagent Excesses." But the Lettsoms and, later, the Taines seem to have felt no compunction about using alcohol as a reward for their enslaved people, a practice common on Caribbean plantations. The archaeological record suggests that it was more plentiful among the homes of the enslaved than at the main house, and its concentration in the storage structure suggests that the landowners purchased and distributed at least some of it. In general, as discussed more below, the enslaved people of Little Jost lived outside of the regular view of the main planter's house and probably took their alcohol home, as suggested by the level of black glass remains from that area of the site. That Mary and Edward, and later Mary and Samuel, were not able to observe the enslaved people as they drank suggests that they felt little concern for the potentially sinful behavior that drinking might occasion in their enslaved people.

Clearly, at least Mary and her second husband, Samuel Taine, did not entirely prevent those they held from drinking. On the 1767 document listing John Coakley Lettsom's inheritance from his father, a note written in a second hand (probably by Samuel Taine) states that one of the enslaved people

of the estate, Tom, "proved such a Drunkard + Everything that was bad, I was oblidged to sell him for the above sum of £75" (MSL Lettsom Papers; see also Hunting 2003: 304). While this postdates Mary's formal involvement with the Quaker community and the community itself, Mary continued to practice her understanding of Quaker values even after her disownment. Despite the fact that the Taines evidently felt that Tom was overindulging, this incident shows that alcohol was available to the enslaved on Little Jost. It is telling here that Mary and Samuel's solution to Tom's drinking was not to appeal to him to practice "Christian ways," as George Fox once advised for dealing with enslaved Africans, or to seek to protect him against "extravagant excesses" but to sell him away from his home and be done with him.

For their part, the enslaved people appear to have embraced alcohol as they did elsewhere in the Caribbean: for their own ends. While specific religious ideologies are difficult to claim for the enslaved people, their apparent acceptance of alcohol fits closely with its role in social and spiritual practices (Smith 2004). There is no evidence that the Lettsoms attempted to exert any control over the spiritual activities of the enslaved people they held, any more than they tried to control their potentially sinful behavior by overseeing their use of alcohol. If the enslaved could freely travel to Jost across the low-lying "crawl" area, which lay beyond the Lettsoms' view close to Area E, they could, of course, trade for more rum as well. While Mary and Edward may have limited their own use of alcohol, they made no effort to encourage the enslaved people, for whom it may have had a much stronger spiritual meaning, to do the same. But neither does alcohol seem to have had a strong spiritual meaning for the Lettsoms in the way abstinence from drinking became an important element in religious identity-making in the Victorian era. Although modified by concerns for excess and sinful behavior, the Caribbean norm of providing alcohol to enslaved people and possibly consuming it socially appears to have been true for the whites on Little Jost.

Tobacco

A different but complementary picture emerges with another drug often lumped together with alcohol as "sinful" but rarely examined in depth: tobacco. Tobacco smoking was widespread in the eighteenth-century Caribbean, especially among enslaved people, and tobacco was, like alcohol, often used by the planters as a means of control via incentives and addiction. Jerome Handler comments that while some enslaved people produced it themselves on

their provisioning grounds, far more received it from "plantation owners or managers as a treat and as a reward or incentive for good behavior" (Handler 1983: 245). But he also notes that, based on his own work in Barbados, pipes were frequent grave goods for enslaved people. He specifically suggests that a unique pipe, probably of African manufacture, may have been associated with an Obeah practitioner (Handler 1983: 246). Laurie Wilkie and Paul Farnsworth (2005: 289–90) have also suggested connections between tobacco-related artifacts and African-derived religious practices, although in their case it is the decorations on pipes rather than the act of smoking that are interpreted as symbolically charged.

While whites in plantation contexts certainly smoked, archaeologists have tended to find more tobacco-related materials associated with the living and work areas of enslaved Africans. John Otto found nearly four times the number of pipes in the cabins of the enslaved people (*n*=83) as at the overseer (*n*=18) and planter (*n*=22) sites at Cannon's Point in the U.S. South (Otto 1984: 77), and nearly twice as many were recovered from enslaved as opposed to planter contexts at Drax Hall plantation in Jamaica (Armstrong 1990: 82, 205–6). Douglas Armstrong notes that tobacco pipes were widely used by enslaved people and were even referred to as "negro pipes" (Armstrong 1990: 187). Bioarchaeological work also suggests heavy use of tobacco by enslaved people. Mohammed Rakieh Khudabux (1999) examined a cemetery in the Dutch colony of Suriname on the Caribbean coast of South America and found that in addition to signs of trauma, infections, deficiency diseases, and other disorders during life, 100 percent of the examined adults showed tooth wear consistent with heavy tobacco use.

In contrast, on Little Jost van Dyke, pipes were found in much greater numbers at the planter's house. With roughly the same area excavated in each portion of the site, 85 pipe stems were recovered at the Lettsom house, compared to just 11 for the excavations across the area where the enslaved lived. Tobacco (apparently among both the enslaved and the free people) was also nearly absent at Windy Hill, on nearby St. John, which Armstrong found highly unusual and suggested that few people on this site chose to smoke (Armstrong 2003: 160). The enslaved people on Little Jost seem to have had some access to tobacco, because pipe remains were recovered, but it evidently was not a major part of their lives.

Pipes at Caribbean archaeological sites are often linked with specific activity areas, especially the kitchen and house areas (Armstrong 1990: 187). This appears to be the case on Little Jost, as excavation and surface collection work

yielded high levels of tobacco-associated remains near the oven. The concentration of pipes here suggests that someone whose daily work would have included tending the cooking was a habitual smoker, and this combined with the general lack of pipes in the homes of the enslaved people suggests that Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine was the one responsible for a major portion of the pipestems found on the site. Although conceived today as a primarily male activity, pipe smoking is historically linked with both males and females.

Another area of pipe concentration is at the front of the Lettsom house, as evidenced by surface collection and by excavation unit A3, located in the angle between the house's front wall and main staircase. The finds from this unit suggest that this area was kept clear of other refuse, being relatively few and smaller in size, but that same unit had a very high proportion of pipestems. Although this was the first view that visitors to the house, including Friends, had of the housekeeper's habits, smoking appears to have been tolerated and no special effort was made to disguise it. Considering this, and because Tortolan Quakers were known to have visited the site, probably frequently (as discussed in the preceding chapters), the meeting apparently did not consider tobacco scandalous.

Tobacco could have been grown in the British Virgin Islands and was grown elsewhere in the Virgin Islands prehistorically (Righter 1990: 14–15). It was grown at least to some degree early in the colonial history of the region, being mentioned in reports of 1701 (Labat 1724), 1711 (UKNA CO 152/10, no. 66), and 1715 (UKNA CO 152/10, no. 65); however, it is not discussed as a major crop in any of these documents. Likewise, it is not included in the 1815 or 1823 figures for production in the British Virgin Islands (appendix A), and there seems to be no sense of history to its production there when a 1928 pamphlet was issued by the colonial British government to encourage Tortola's twentieth-century production of tobacco. This pamphlet in fact states that cultivation of the crop began in 1921 as a result of efforts by the government agricultural experiment station (BL 10481.a). In short, tobacco seems likely to have been an import to the British Virgin Islands in the days of the Tortola meeting rather than being a significant local product.

The practice of providing tobacco to enslaved people in the British Virgin Islands was mentioned explicitly only rarely in the islands' documentary history. Thomas Woolrich had enslaved people belonging to others gather grass for his horse, usually paying them in tobacco, salt herrings, and sometimes in cloth such as "osnaburghs or coarse linens" (House of Commons 1790: 287). Woolrich was a merchant who was well connected to the trade with England,

and we know from the chance survival of a 1761 receipt for two pairs of "hooks & hinges" purchased from "Pickering Woolrich + Rawleigh" that he was in business with John Pickering. When Pickering died, he was one of the wealthiest men in the colony (Lettsom 1786: 67), and so one assumes that his business associate was reasonably successful as well. This suggests that perhaps only the wealthy and those well connected with trade in the British Virgin Islands could have afforded to provide tobacco to enslaved people. As discussed in chapter 2, trade was often difficult in the British Virgin Islands, and access to traded items was intermittent.

Despite modern associations of tobacco as sinful, the documentary record also suggests that the Quakers in the British Virgin Islands and elsewhere seem to have had little complaint about tobacco use. Tobacco is almost absent from Quaker writings in general. Although mentioned a few times in George Fox's journal as something that made one "light and loose" (Fox 1952: 79), neither of which was deemed strictly proper, it is not a focus of Quaker writings on proper conduct; it did not cause partakers to "run out into extravagant excesses" like alcohol might. The Tortola meeting records included only one mention of tobacco: a version of the "Queries" written by Friends in Philadelphia in 1743 (for a published version, see Anonymous 1858: 156). These were questions the yearly meeting intended each local group to ask its members regularly to ensure mindfulness of proper behavior. This 1743 version includes the question "do [members] refrain from sleeping in meetings or do they Accustom themselves to Snuffing or Chewing Tobacco in meetings?" (TMM Minutes 7:101). This document is the product of the Philadelphia Friends, however, and thus not indigenous to the Virgin Islands version of Quakerism, although it was found among their records. It also is a rather mild condemnation of tobacco: only a problem if a custom and actually during meetings for worship. The "Queries" themselves were seldom read in Tortola's meetings (they are specifically recorded in the minutes of only a half-dozen meetings during the two decades of records), possibly because the eleventh question asks whether Friends do "not . . . encourage the importation of negroes, nor buy them after imported" (ibid.). Finally, archaeology has shown that tobacco use in the meetinghouse itself was acceptable on Tortola: as detailed in chapter 4, limited work there recovered five pipestems and two fragments of pipe bowls, both exhibiting burning from use in smoking.

Several potential interpretations can be made from this evidence, but the most likely is that tobacco was difficult to acquire and moderately expensive in the out-of-the way Virgin Island group, because the historical record suggests

that it was not generally grown there in quantity. The difficulty of acquiring tobacco is suggested for a remote plantation examined archaeologically in the Bahamas (Farnsworth 1996; Farnsworth and Wilkie 1995: 46), and Armstrong also notes a lack of tobacco pipes on some contemporaneous sites near Little Jost van Dyke in St. John (Armstrong 2003: 160). Using rum, a local product, as an incentive for (and for the control of) the enslaved people may have been more cost-effective. Also, as discussed above, alcohol had a more prominent place in African-derived spiritual practices. For their part, the enslaved people were probably generally responsible for the acquisition of their own material culture, and thus the lack of tobacco among them may be seen as a result of their choice to limit their consumption of certain potentially expensive items, deploying their limited resources elsewhere. Nevertheless, the acceptance of the somewhat luxurious practice of smoking among BVI Quakers, shown by smoking-related evidence at the meetinghouse and at the Lettsom site, suggests that it may have been another way of drawing a line between those who had a small level of disposable income, such as even the poorest planters, and those Africans they held enslaved.

Finally, it is interesting to note that these finds suggest a certain level of agency and control over the family finances by Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine, despite the fact that Caribbean women often had limited control of their own household resources. The choice to acquire tobacco may have been the result of an addiction and a means of defining whiteness through conspicuous consumption, but because it was a relative luxury that may have been linked to Mary through association with the cooking area of the compound (and the lack of association with any enslaved people who might have assisted with the cooking), it may also represent an assertion of agency by a woman in a patriarchal society.

Discipline and Formality

Quakers everywhere gathered monthly to attend to the business of the community. In addition to collections for the poor and management of the meetinghouse structures, these meetings were also opportunities to examine each other's religious and social behavior, often quite deeply (Chenoweth 2013; Walvin 1997). This chapter has so far argued that ideas of what this discipline should look like varied both from modern expectations and between contemporary Quakers in the British Virgin Islands and elsewhere. Another major difference between life for Quakers in Tortola and those in London or Philadelphia can

be seen in the way this discipline was enforced and performed through the meeting for business. Although initially quite casual, this disciplinary structure became more and more formalized over time, and those in leadership positions increasingly made use of what they perceived as their religious authority. Ultimately, however, these actions also changed how the community saw itself, and disagreements over this vision led to rifts.

In their early days, the monthly meetings, or "Meetings for Discipline," in Tortola appear to have been semiformal, with months often being missed, but over time, the regularity of the meetings seems to have increased markedly. Despite the lack of business at many meetings, each meeting is marked with a brief record in the minutes. In 1743 alone, between the men's and women's meetings, fifteen of the expected twenty-four dates have no record and appear to have been simply missed, with no gathering occurring. During the first three full years of the meeting's existence, 1742–44, a total of twenty-three scheduled meetings did not occur, out of the seventy-two there should have been, almost a third of the scheduled meetings.

Despite the intentions of the newly formed flock, the actual record of these events also appears to have been updated only irregularly in the early years, reflecting a certain informality in the organization of the community. Several composite entries, like the following, describe several meetings at once:

> At a meeting at Fat Hog Bay the 5th of the 7th Mo 1742 was Read an Epistle from John Bringhurst of Phil[adelphia] date 14th of 5th Mo And James Brown declared his Intention of Marriage with Elizabeth Bacon, she declaring her Unity so Friends were Appointed And at the next Meeting in the Road the 3^{d} day of the 8th Month 1742 James Brown again appeared, but full satisfaction not appearing was put off [until] the next meeting at Fat Hog Bay the 7th of 9th M^{o} 1742 when John [James] Brown + Eliz^{h} Bacon again declared the Continuation of their Intention of marriage, their free Liberty was given to proceed + Solemization was held in this Meeting. (TMM Minutes 1:6)

There are no specific complaints of members missing meetings and no messages being sent apologizing for or explaining an absence. But over time the expectation for holding meetings, individual attendance, and record keeping all seem to have become more formal and consistent. From 1745 until 1759, when either the meeting or its records (or both) began to break down in advance of the end of the meeting in 1762, only a few meetings for business did not occur when they were supposed to (12 out of 336 [or 3.5 percent] of the scheduled

dates being missed, compared to the third of meetings missed in the first few years). More than just an increased regularity in holding meetings, members were expected to attend without fail. This is suggested by the survival in the records of a few notes from members apologizing for or explaining their reasons for missing meetings. At one point, for example, even John Pickering, a principal founder of the group, had to write to explain his absences to the group (Jenkins 1923: 36). Another example is a note from William George of Jost van Dyke late in the life of the meeting:

> Jos Vandiks, 7th 8 Mth. 1759
> Friend
> William Strong. Inclosed I send thee an Answer to the Request of the Mthly Meeting held at your Meeting house ye 26 6th Mth 1759 In which I Desire thee May Read to Friends Next Mthly Meeting. I shoul[d] have sent it thee last Mthly Meeting but Finding no Opertunity by + I myself very sick + still Continue Aleing. + as for Friends thinking Much of my not Attending Meetings for business I asure thee it is with no Bad intent wich I desire thee may let Friends know for my Distemper is not agreeable to Ca[t]ch Cold upon + for to tarry it after Noon would be Raining great Risk + for that Reason am Anchous [anxious] to get a way in the fore part of the ye Day.
> Rem[aining] thy Friend William George (TMM Minutes 7:51)

Even while the meetings were becoming more formal and consistently held, there seems to have been less and less business for those attending to conduct during each session. After 1747, fully half of the entries for each meeting report no business being accomplished. Many entries simply read in a variant of the following: "in the General things were pretty well, the Meeting Ends in Love" as for Fourth Month 1748; "Overseers Report things in General were pretty Well their Constant [care] was required" for Fifth Month 1746; or, as for First Month 1750, "the Necessary Inquiry being made the Overseers report things to be in general pretty well, no further Business, the meeting ended in Love." By the end, even these notes were sometimes shortened. For instance, for Twelfth Month 1759 the entire entry reads "No Business was Done + being a Rainy Day." The count of such notes increased to eighteen in 1755 and in 1761 constituting fully three-quarters of the scheduled meetings. By contrast, during the first three full years of the meeting, 1742–45, only ten such short entries appeared.

Over time, therefore, such gatherings became more and more important at least to those members who kept the records and were in leadership positions.

Rather than demonization of alcohol or tobacco (as modern expectations might hold) or slavery (opposition to which united Quakers half a century later), the Quaker community in the British Virgin Islands was, for some at least, centered on physical gatherings and the formal procedures of the meeting for business, including its written records.

In chapter 4, I argue that the meetinghouse took an unusually important role in the production of Quakerism in the British Virgin Islands, anchoring the community and also offering opportunities for oversight as members gathered to worship and for business. That chapter also includes data on disownments, the greatest punishment Friends had for erring members (see table 4.1), which indicates that not attending meeting was a factor in at least seven of the twenty-seven times a member was "dealt with" (26 percent) and five of the twelve instances of disownment (42 percent). (As noted in chapter 4, these figures exclude the case of Thomas Smith, who, if added, would make it nearly 30 percent of disciplinary actions and fully half the disownments.) In two of these cases, a sixth of the disownments from the entire history of the meeting, not attending meeting is explicitly recorded as the only complaint. Both Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine and William Thornton Sr. were disowned despite recorded, specific acknowledgment in both cases that the offender was otherwise largely still in agreement with Quaker principles. Quaker principles hold that God is in everyone and everywhere, leading to George Fox's disdain for "steeplehouses," as he called churches. The disowning of members simply for not attending meetings for business at the meetinghouse suggests that those in leadership positions in the British Virgin Islands saw things somewhat differently. In some ways, they appear to have been more interested in enforcing the structure of meetings and their social control over members than they were some of the other aspects usual to Quaker ideology, such as the ability to commune with God everywhere and the lack of hierarchy in church structures.

Out Island Discipline: Disagreements with Jost van Dyke

Though some divisions have been suggested, by and large, this discussion has so far referred to "the Quaker community" as a unitary entity in the British Virgin Islands. This discussion of discipline, however, can also reveal points of contention not only between individuals and the group—those who wander from the proper path and are "treated with" to return to the fold—but also between whole segments of the group. In particular, the meeting minutes suggest some tension between Friends on the more peripheral island of Jost van Dyke

(roughly a sixth of the group) and those on Tortola, where the core of both the meeting's and the colony's economic and social lives were located.

Charles Jenkins remarks on an "almost continuous plaint of the shortcomings of the Friends on the island of Jost Van Dykes" (Jenkins 1923: 31), but this assessment, implying un-Quakerly behavior on the part of Friends from Jost, takes the written record at face value and is probably unfair. A conciliatory note was struck early on, when the meetings—which formerly alternated between Fat Hogs Bay and Road Town—were moved to being held exclusively at Fat Hogs Bay "for the Convenience of Joes Van Dyke Friends" on sixth of Tenth Month 1743 (TMM Minutes 1:7). However, overall this does not seem to have encouraged more Friends from Jost to attend the meetings for business on Tortola. Friends from Jost seem to have had a much more difficult time attending the meetings for business, or were less inclined to do so. Certainly some of this has to do with the distance and difficulties of travel by sea, but other lines of evidence also suggest other tensions.

The records make specific mention of there being no Friends from Jost present on many occasions: during the seventeen years from 1744 to 1760 there are eighty-three specific mentions of meetings occurring on Tortola with none of the appointed overseers from Jost or no members at all from Jost van Dyke (almost a quarter of the 370 meetings known to have occurred during that time). By Ninth Month 1760, the minutes for the women's meeting record, with an air of finality, "having no Return as yet to this Meeting from Josvandik we leave them" (TMM Minutes 4:58). There is no further mention of Jost van Dyke's meeting or any Friend known to be from Jost in the records of the meetings, either men's or women's, after this date.

It is not just the frequency of Jost van Dyke Friends attending or being included in the records of the meeting's activities that suggests a split between the "core" friends on Tortola and those on Jost: Friends from Jost are mentioned in different ways as well. To assess this quantitatively, I counted the number of times any individual was specifically mentioned in the records: the seventy-eight individuals named in the minutes are mentioned a total of 452 times collectively. These "mentions" are not evenly distributed, it should be noted, with four members (William Strong, John Pickering, William Thomas, and Thomas Humphreys) accounting for fully one-third, mostly to do with the creation and forwarding of correspondence with London (a theme discussed more below) but also with their being sent to "treat" with various members for misbehavior. The average member was mentioned just

under 6 times in these records. Friends from Jost are mentioned much less often than their counterparts on Tortola. Twelve Friends, or 15 percent of the membership, are known to be from Jost van Dyke, and these members collectively receive just 27 mentions, only 6 percent of the mentions of specific people made, and only 2.25 per Jost Friend, well below the average for the rest of the members.

Mentions of Friends in the records could also be classed as positive (such as being appointed to an office and accompanying a member seeking marriage to speak to their character and "clearness" to marry) or negative (such as being "dealt with" or "treated with," being admonished, and being disowned). While only 11 percent of all the mentions made in the records were negative, 44 percent of those involving Friends from Jost were negative. Put another way, while making up only 15 percent of the membership, Friends from Jost were the target of fully one-quarter of these negative mentions.

In these disagreements with Friends from Jost, we can start to see a division in the membership over what this community should be. As meetings for discipline became more and more the focus of the community's life for some members (despite little business for them to transact), others—notably, those from Jost—became less and less interested in being involved in the formal structure. The benefits of assistance and connections discussed in chapter 3 may have been more obtainable in the early years of the meeting, and these may have been more important to members from the poorer parts of the British Virgin Islands, such as the out islands, including Jost van Dyke. But over time the emphasis of the meeting came to rest on oversight (often through meetings at the meetinghouse) rather than opportunity, and instead of an avenue for social climbing the structure of the meeting came instead to replicate preexisting social inequalities among whites, in which wealthier individuals (the meeting core, as discussed in chapter 8) had greater control over not just economic but also social life.

The leadership reacted against resistance to this new emphasis with a suite of disownments and negative records. While there were only three disownments in the first decade of the Tortola Monthly Meeting, there were seven (more than half in the group's history) in just the last three years (table 4.1). The physical buildings of the meetinghouse were at the center of this discipline, and attendance was enforced with the threat of expulsion. Another mechanism for the cultivation of a particular kind of Quaker community that also fostered division is the written record itself.

Writing and the Imagined Quaker Community

If meetings and meetinghouses were a means by which the BVI Quaker community was regulated and envisioned locally, it is worth considering how members did or did not feel connected to the broader community of Quakerism across the Atlantic World. Connections to this world would have been somewhat tenuous for British Virgin Islanders in general, considering the frequent difficulty of travel, shipping, and communication, as discussed in chapter 2. The previous chapter shows that for some in the Tortola meeting, this relationship was envisioned as centering in part on perceived persecutions (particularly over the peace testimony), even if these were sometimes more imagined than real, as well as appeals for sympathy and assistance from more-powerful Quaker communities. More broadly, BVI Quakerism seems to have been intimately tied up with writing, and this too suggests the fracturing of the community along the lines discussed in the previous section, between core and peripheral, wealthier and poorer.

As noted before, the documentary record of the Quaker community in Tortola begins as a story of visitors from abroad. In subsequent years, the arrival of further visitors was often noted by the group's first historian, Charles Jenkins, as providing a great boost in the meeting's activity and membership. Peter Fearon's 1746 arrival, for example, is described "as a cloud full of rain upon a thirsty land" (Jenkins 1923: 24). A decade later, Thomas Gawthrop's visit "gave them encouragement and resulted in bringing back many who had become lukewarm, and some new accessions were made to the meeting" membership (Jenkins 1923: 40). Even those who were not Quakers would often come to hear traveling ministers speak. In the isolation of this marginal colony, without regular shipping or communications abroad, such visits were important social as well as spiritual affairs. More than just providing opportunities for sociability within the community, connections of any kind between Tortola and the broader world, particularly an imagined community of Quakerism, were as important as they were rare.

But such visits by traveling ministers were few and far between, and most religious and secular contacts with those abroad would have come through letters. Writing seems to have had a privileged place in the meeting's social and religious life, at least as viewed from the meeting minutes. The last section suggested the importance of the meeting minutes to some members, who maintained them more and more assiduously over time even though they recorded less and less business. Writing was also a means of connection to fellow Quakers

in London who continually instructed the BVI group in their newly found faith. In the earliest days of the Tortola meeting, theological books, which circulated widely in Quaker circles, arrived in the British Virgin Islands as well. In explaining the beginnings of Quakerism in the British Virgin Islands, John Pickering wrote in 1741 that it had been "about 14 years Since One Joshua Fielding a friend Visited us, as he did all the English West India Islands, his Stay here was but about a week or ten Days, in which time he preached Several times, & twice at my house, And after he got home he Sent me but three Books, Namely Barclay's Apology, The Mite in the Treasury, and No Cross, No Crown, in which I found great Satisfaction" (Jenkins 1923: 7).[1]

Quakers had always emphasized the written word, including keeping records of their communal activities as a testimony to their "historic mission" in the world (Davies 2000: 1), and meetings kept in touch with a "fine web of literate contact" across the Atlantic World (Walvin 1997: 46). Some of those in the British Virgin Islands seem to have attached a great deal of importance to this aspect of Quakerly practice, acquiring separate books for various elements of the meeting's records even when one could have served several purposes: for instance, the recording of certificates had a book despite the fact that only eight were recorded.

Throughout the existence of the meeting minutes, writing was also closely tied to the power structure of the meeting and its framework of "discipline." A document included at the end of the miscellaneous documents volume of the meeting records provides some insight on this (TMM Minutes 7:88–98). These pages contain what at first appear to be minutes of regular meeting business, with a few dates from the mid-1750s scattered in the content, without headings. The names all appear as initials and are unfamiliar, not corresponding to any of the known members most often mentioned. This section begins with the note, "Those Lines May Serve as helps to the Clark of the Meeting," and it contains entries like "The Certificate for Our Friend TB Directed to Friends in such a place" and "At this meeting was Read a Certificate of such a one from the Monthly Meeting of such a place." These pages thus appear to be intended as example minutes, serving as a guide. Around this time, at the end of 1753, John Pickering requested to be relieved as clerk of the meeting and of the responsibility of creating its records, and so he seems to have created this document as a guide to assist William Strong, the new clerk. The great length of this document, which contains variations of entries for almost every event that had occurred or might occur in the meeting, suggests the personal dedication John Pickering had to the idea of the record. It even includes a hypothetical

appeal to London in a matter of a disagreement between two members "about their Interest in a worldly affair . . . for Determination of their Case" in a very legalistic fashion, suggesting an interest in the hierarchical nature of the meeting structure and its powers in the secular lives of members.

A MAJOR THEME IN THE RECORDS of the meeting is correspondence: the formal reading of letters from abroad and preparing answers to them. The importance of letters to BVI Friends was in part practical: this was the means by which they had become familiar with their new religion. But more than this, the writing of letters, primarily to London, seems to have been regarded as a quasi-religious exercise for the Tortolan Quakers. On discovering that their letters of 1744 and 1745 had not arrived in London in time for the yearly meeting, the members from Tortola wrote that they hoped it would "be no cause for any to be jealous of [their] Diligence in maintaining [their] Christian and Brotherly Correspondence" (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 28:34). In 1752, when the meeting found it had no good news to report to London, the members wrote, "was it not out of a Sincere Desire we have of preserving a Christian Correspondence with you, we would Choose to lay our Mouths in the Dust" and not write at all (BYMFH Epistles Received 3:308).

The power of the written word to bring people together was also noted in the creation of the imagined community of nationality, described by Benedict Anderson (1991), which also centered on the written (in his case printed) word to spread the feeling of national unity broadly. Something similar seems to be at work here, although on the scale of handwritten letters between much smaller communities. But a community created in this way was also an exclusive one: access to it was open only to those who were able to read and write, and the records suggest that there was a significant variability in proficiency with this skill among BVI Quakers. Most members of the Tortola meeting seem to have been literate (only William Clandaniel signed documents by making his mark), but only a few appear to have had enough education to be able to write well. In 1749, the meeting laments the death of a member "most knowing amongst us and a Serviceable member this way of helping out with Epistles as he wrote well and good English" (Jenkins 1923: 39).

To see the variability in writing, we can compare one of the more informal, intrameeting communications with a letter sent to London. The former is the only surviving item written by Edward Lettsom himself, addressed to the meeting in 1746 and touching on the saga of Thomas Smith described in chapter 5:

Josvandicks y[e] 27th day of the 7th mth 1746
Friends
As We W[m] George + Edward Lettsom Was Chusen By the Last monthly meeting to treat with Thos Smith conserning of his Disorderly Walking as hat Been Repor[ted] uppon him, Which most of the Report he Decleared was Lieys Which he made a very Great Acknolwedgemt to us that he had not Beheaved as Well as he ought at many times, and very much hoped to Come to See a good Day with himself in ways of Truth renu'd and Seem[d] to be Prety much Tendered and Cast Down of his Long [illegible] life that he Perhaps had now Seen not much Good in it But Confessing Pashion to be very hard to over Come, at all times, Which he Reackoned Was his failing haveing too much or a Large Stummick. The mans Acknowledgement So Very mildly and Sattisfactory Case Joy Between us Both So as I am not well to Come my Self have Rete [written] These Lines as I hope will be of Sum Comfort to Friends in Genarel.
I remain Your Sensar Friend,
Edw[d] Lettsom (TMM Minutes 7:10)

While able to communicate his point effectively, his writing does not measure up in mechanics or elegance to the official letter received by London from the Tortola meeting in 1741. That letter begins,

To Our Friends + Brethren of the Yearly Meeting in London,
Dear + Well Beloved Friends
In the Love + Fellowship of Our Lord + Saviour Jesus Christ we tenderly Salute you and Joyfully Embrace this Opportunity to Inform you that we have Received your kind and Brotherly Epistle signed by the Meeting for Sufferings in London the 17th of 5th month 1741, which was Read in this meeting to the Universal Satisfaction of all Present, and we hope the same hand and arm that raised us up to be a People in this Remote part of the World, will Still Enlighten our Understandings more + more by his holy Spirit, to the Enabling of us, in the Discharge of our Duty to him + one to another, as we are diligently Concerned to wait upon him in the Silence of all Flesh, and we can say by Blessed Experience that he hath been found of us, and has broke in upon our hearts, to our Great Comfort and Edification, + to the Glory of his great House. (BYMFH Epistles Received 3:90)

Writing was thus an important social tool for British Virgin Islanders, connecting them to less-marginal parts of the world, but not evenly. Some members were poorer and less educated and may have felt excluded from the more literary world across the Atlantic. Archaeology can produce only negative evidence here, which is hardly conclusive, but the lack of any writing-associated artifacts from the site on Little Jost is consistent with this assessment, and this can be compared to finds on nearby Great Camanoe, where 2013 test excavations (far more limited than the work on Little Jost) produced writing slate fragments. For the Lettsoms, the meeting may have been something they envisioned as local, such that writing took a smaller role compared to face-to-face interaction with neighbors. Those members who were in the social and economic core of Tortola, in contrast, seem to have been on average wealthier and better educated and seem to have had greater access to the "fine web of literate contact" that connected them to Quakers abroad. These were also those in positions of leadership in the community who took their charge to be the oversight and discipline of the community, as well as record keeping.

In the British Virgin Islands, writing took on importance as part of a God-given mission, as it did for Quakers elsewhere, but was also particularly linked with the disciplinary power structures of the meeting and the economic powers and inequality of secular life. The last chapter of this book, in part takes up the question of economic inequality in the BVI Quaker community and suggests that many of these more-educated members in positions of religious leadership also were those with economic advantages over other members. Those members who were from generally poorer areas, such as Jost van Dyke, may have chafed under this control, in which the religious structure came over time to replicate the economic and social structure in which they were already at a disadvantage. But before this internal division is considered in full, we need to touch on two other communities with which BVI Quakers had to be concerned: the non-Quaker planters whose properties surrounded them, and the enslaved Africans who worked their lands.

Chapter 7

EQUALITY, RACE, AND SLAVERY IN BVI COMMUNITIES

EQUALITY IS A CONCEPT that to the modern reader seems self-evident, yet for eighteenth-century Friends there were different kinds of equality: a spiritual one that was uncontestable and a temporal one that was sometimes little considered. Equality is a logical implication of the proposition that there is "that of God in every one," but it was actually less stressed by early Friends than by modern ones (Barbour and Frost 1988: 43). The famed Quaker leader and founder of the colony of Pennsylvania, William Penn, wrote that "tho' [God] has made of one Blood, all Nations, he has not ranged or dignified them upon the *Level,* but in a Sort of subordination and Dependency" (quoted in Tolles 1963 [1948]: 110, emphasis in original). God might speak through any person, regardless of gender, social status, or education, and this was emphasized by some early Quaker leaders, such as Margaret Fell, but when the early radical period ended, the equality testimony was "transformed . . . into a more secular concern, shallower but broader, regarding the poor" (Barbour and Frost 1988: 44). There was thus a sense of spiritual equality, wherein all people might speak to God, but in practicality this was largely limited to expressions of charity.

The most relevant issue for this study's understanding of equality is, of course, slavery. Until abolition became a major goal for the Religious Society of Friends in the very late eighteenth century, there existed a virtually deafening silence about the topic of slavery in the writings of most (though not all) Quakers, at least compared to other topics. Much has been written about early Quaker abolitionist activists, but the authors of those works have had to admit that abolitionists and antislavery activists were the exception among Quakers, not the rule until much later (McDaniel and Julye 2009). Many Friends, including those outside the British Virgin Islands and the Caribbean, owned enslaved people and profited directly from the slave trade, and meetings rarely took a clear stand on these matters until the late eighteenth century.

What this means for the present discussion is that consideration of the pres-

ence of enslaved people on Little Jost van Dyke takes an unexpected tack, as it concerns the creation of Quakerism in the British Virgin Islands. Rather than an uplifted group of "unfortunates," better treated by Quakers than by other slaveholders (a popular trope for which there is little evidence), the enslaved people of Little Jost van Dyke came to serve more as an Other against which Quaker identity could be constructed as inherently white, affording ties between Quakers and non-Quaker white planters. This chapter considers these two other communities with which the Lettsoms and other BVI Quakers had to concern themselves—the enslaved people they held and the non-Quaker whites who surrounded them—and the place of the concept of equality in the negotiations of relations between them.

Slavery and Quakerism

Despite Quakerism's association with the abolition movement against the slave trade and the eventual movement to end slavery itself, the earliest Quaker ministers did not condemn slavery. George Fox, the principal founder of the group, witnessed Caribbean slavery firsthand when he and other Quaker leaders traveled to the Caribbean and North America in 1672. Yet in his writings, he merely advised slaveholding Friends to teach those they held "Christian ways," to be merciful, and to "study their consciences as to this practice" (Durham 1972: 18, 79–80). Many Quakers in the Caribbean owned enslaved people while the group briefly flourished there in the late seventeenth century (Durham 1972; Gragg 2009), and in America "Quakers . . . embraced slavery as a natural part of the social system" (Durham 1972: 82). Until the twentieth century, Quaker meetings generally excluded people of African descent except in isolated cases (Cadbury 1936). The enslaved people held by Quakers were regarded by some paternalistically, as inferior members of the Quaker community, in need of protection, but they were not seen as members of the meeting or as equals in any real way (Soderlund 1985: 181). Even as late as the 1770s, leading Quaker abolitionists sometimes held enslaved people themselves, while at the same time they lobbied against the institution, doing so under the cloak of paternalistic care for those who were legally their property (Smith 2014).

Philadelphia was a center of the early antislavery movement. The first recorded formal objection to the practice by a Quaker group that is usually cited is a 1688 petition of the Germantown Monthly Meeting (now within the city of Philadelphia) to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, but this was not acted on (Durham 1972: 82). Even in Philadelphia, attitudes varied from vocal opposition to a self-fo-

cused desire to "purify the society" because "slavery—and perhaps the enslaved people themselves—polluted their religion" to complete acceptance of slavery and a view that it was compatible with Quaker teachings (Soderlund 1985: 174).

The year 1758 seems to have been a watershed in the relationship of Quakers and slavery in the larger meetings of Philadelphia and London. In that year, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting agreed that Quaker slave traders should be "dealt with" or spoken to about their involvement in the trade and punished if they did not reform (Soderlund 1985: 4). London had long tended to view slavery as a colonial problem and, apart from a rather anemic statement in 1712 that the slave trade (as distinct from slaveholding) was "not commendable nor Allowable" (Jennings 1981: 99), made no statement on the matter and certainly did not consider it an offense worthy of "dealing with" members. This changed in 1758 with the printed epistle of that year. This letter, sent to all monthly meetings affiliated with London, including Tortola, where it was read on the first of Fifth Month 1758 (TMM Minutes 1:39), reads in part,

> We also fervently warn all in profession with us, that they be careful to avoid being any way concerned in reaping the unrighteous profits arising from that iniquitous practice of dealing in negroes and other slaves; whereby, in the original purchase, one man selleth another, as he doth the beast that perishes, without any better pretension to a property in him, than that of superior force; in direct violation of the Gospel rule, which teacheth every one to do as they would be done by, and to "do good" unto all; being the reverse of that covetous disposition, which furnishes encouragement to those poor ignorant people [Africans] to perpetuate their savage wars. (London Yearly Meeting 1818: 313)

Notably, the complaint here is not founded on equality but instead relies on the argument that the slave trade and thus slavery are based in violence, since the people so subjected were usually captured in war or other violent attack. It is also clear that the issue is not the existence of the institution of slavery but merely Quaker involvement with it. More explicitly, London Friends wrote to Tortola in particular in 1760, "We take the liberty at this time to refer you to this Meetings Caution against being anyway concernd in dealing in Negroe Slaves in our Printed Epistle in the year 1758, and hope you pay due regard thereto" (BYMFH Epistles Sent 4:117). Again, the problem is not the holding of enslaved people, setting them to work, or appropriating the fruits of their labor, but merely the act of buying and selling, which supported the violent acquisition of enslaved people. Thus, echoing the discussion in chapter 5, the con-

cern is a violation of a particular understanding of the peace testimony but one based on large-scale institutions and operations such as warfare and the slave trade, not the interpersonal violence of daily life on a slavery-based plantation.

Slavery in the Records of the Tortola Meeting

Likewise, when slavery appears in the records of the Tortola meeting, a consideration of the inequality at the heart of slavery is not what is at issue. Historian Charles Jenkins states that the only mention in the meeting records that relates to slavery is a dispute over ownership of two enslaved people between two members (Jenkins 1923: 31); some Friends are appointed to mediate the dispute, but the people in question seem to be regarded only as property. There are some additional mentions missed by Jenkins, and one suggests that the personhood of enslaved Africans was an issue considered by at least some Quakers in the British Virgin Islands. A remarkably inclusive passage begins the 1746 letter from Tortolan Friends to London, invoking "that wonderful Love, which Unites into one Body whether Jew or Gentile, *whether Bond or Free*, Whether Male or Female, All the Children of God everywhere throughout the World, however distant in the Flesh" (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 28:34, emphasis added). It is difficult to conclude much from a single line like this, but the author of this passage certainly seems to include the enslaved people in the Quaker community in some way. Still, it is the uniting love of God that places both white and black in the same spiritual realm, not a temporal equality; as William Penn wrote in the passage quoted above, these groups are not "upon the *Level*."

One other mention of slavery in the BVI records, authored by London Friends, is both oblique and equivocal, actually seeming to imply that the state of slavery was spiritually deserved by the enslaved. In 1757, the London meeting wrote to BVI Quakers instructing them to "neglect no opportunity of uniting in the Worship + Service of God, + in ardently seeking the Good one of another, + of mankind in general, not forgetting the deplorable situation of those amongst you, who, thro' the prevalence of an unchristian Spirit, have been deprived of their Liberty and reduced to a State of Slavery: but let it be your pious care & Endeavour, by good Example + Instruction, to promote their Spiritual Interest" (BYMFH Epistles Sent 4:32). Again, there is a focus on a paternalistic care for the enslaved, but they are not seen as full members of the meeting.

The Tortola meeting does suggest in their 1759 letter that their condition as slaveholders is a problem, but primarily for themselves and their own spiritual state and not for the enslaved people they held. They wrote, "Our hinderance in a Divine Progress may be attributed as much to that of Dominion over such

our Servants or rather Slaves, where our Authority is not stamped with the impressions of the true fear of god with it" (BYMFH Epistles Received 4:27). The issue for them is neither the injustice of holding others in slavery nor even the violation of the peace testimony but the danger to them that was posed by exercising a power over another being that should be reserved for God. Echoing the Bible, they wrote that "the Apostle James moreover adds, My Brethren be not many Masters, Experience teaches all the followers of Christ, that to Suffer is better than Reign" (ibid.).[1]

The women's meeting minutes in 1760 also include a warning that Friends are "costiend [cautioned] against to grate [too great] an indulgence to those of whom they have the over Sight as Children +c which careys [carries] the appearance of conformity to tat arey [that airy] Spirit that raines [reigns] in the children of pride" (TMM Minutes 4:59). The inclusion of "+c" shows that the authors had another group in mind over whom they saw themselves as having power as adults do to children: presumably the enslaved people. Here the worry is again for harm to themselves—that the power they possessed over others might occasion the sin of pride—but also that they may be too lax in exercising that power, presumably allowing the enslaved people to become, in their estimation, sinners. Although the enslaved people were not members of the meeting, at least some BVI Quakers (the authors of these letters and records) did seem to see themselves as having a paternalistic responsibility for the spiritual well-being (as they defined it) of those they held, echoing the sentiments of Friends in London starting in the late 1750s.

A year earlier, Tortolan Friends had written, "Solomons Choice may become ours; for nothing less than true Wisdom can direct to Walk Circumspectly and furnish us with such a Fellow feeling that our Moderation may be known and Exercised in a Godly fear towards all such over whom we are placed in Authority" (BYMFH Epistles Received 4:27). Their main suggestion at that point was moderation and ruling over their enslaved people in a godly manner, but the reference to Solomon's choice does imply that they were considering difficult and even radical action as a solution.

Slavery, then, was a point of consideration for BVI Quakers, but it did not in and of itself constitute a meaningful violation of the peace testimony or any other Quaker ideal. For eighteenth-century Friends in general, and for some BVI Quakers, there seems to be some paternalistic concern for the spiritual welfare of enslaved people, but the focus is at least as much on other concerns, particularly a concern for pride and vanity in themselves occasioned by their power over others. Nonetheless, by 1758 London had begun to meddle in the

"colonial problem" and pushed the small meeting in Tortola on the topic of slavery. Those they corresponded with did not see the problem as one of equality but recognized a problem of pride and possibly some broad-scale violation of the peace testimony. But this is the view from the written record, the instrument of creating a trans-Atlantic Quaker community and an element of the centralized discipline that began to become a point of contention in the Quaker group (as discussed in the previous chapter). Archaeological work on Little Jost van Dyke offers us a view, albeit a clouded one, into the attitudes of more-peripheral Friends toward equality and slavery.

Equality and Community on Little Jost van Dyke

As noted in chapter 3, despite being slaveholders the Lettsoms were probably not among the most wealthy planters in the British Virgin Islands, and the material culture of their home is not starkly different from that recovered from Area E, the part of the site identified as the village of the enslaved people. There was a concern at the Lettsom site not only with economic improvement but also with social standing (as argued in chapter 3): if, as Penn wrote, God had arranged people "in a Sort of subordination and Dependency," the Lettsoms seemed to wish to change their place in this subordination. The social stratification of the eighteenth-century Caribbean was first and foremost a racial one, in which all people who could claim pure European ancestry, whatever their actual wealth, were able to also claim a higher status.

On Little Jost van Dyke, the concern for the spiritual oversight of the enslaved expressed in the written record is absent, and in fact the emphasis is placed on differentiation and separation. I have discussed this in greater detail elsewhere (Chenoweth 2014) but will outline the data here. Caribbean plantations were laid out based on many factors, including topography, the crop being produced, and even wind direction. The enslaved people, too, are far from being pawns in this process; although often limited by the plans of their enslavers, they created their own understandings of space and reworked it to suit their own ends (Battle-Baptiste 2011; Fellows and Delle 2015; Hauser 2008; Singleton 2001; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005). Nonetheless, surveillance and control of the enslaved population were often primary factors in plantation organization: plantation houses were built to impress and show power, the material culture of daily life spoke to inequality, and houses for owners and managers were placed to permit surveillance of the enslaved laborers at work, in transit, and at home (Armstrong 1990; Armstrong and Kelly 2000; Camp 2004; Delle 1998; Delle 2011: 132–33; Higman 1998; Singleton 2015: 66).

On Little Jost, we see a strongly different pattern. Archaeological evidence (discussed in chapter 3) shows that the Lettsoms' house was carefully and intentionally placed, and yet it was placed in such a way that surveillance of the enslaved people of Little Jost would have been impossible under ordinary conditions. The area where the enslaved people lived was situated around a curve in the topography, making it invisible from the Lettsoms' home, even as both the house and the village of the enslaved people would have been readily visible from passing boats or neighboring Jost van Dyke. To confirm this, a viewshed analysis was conducted using ArcGIS (figure 7.1) to assess the areas that would have been visible (if vegetation was cleared) from the Lettsom house, from the storage structure in the yard, or from the oven behind the house: the areas where the Lettsoms most likely spent a good portion of their time. While the approaching seaways and an apparently little-used hillside were clearly visible from the Lettsoms' house and yard, the approaches from their neighbors' plantations on Jost van Dyke and the entire settlement of the enslaved people were not.

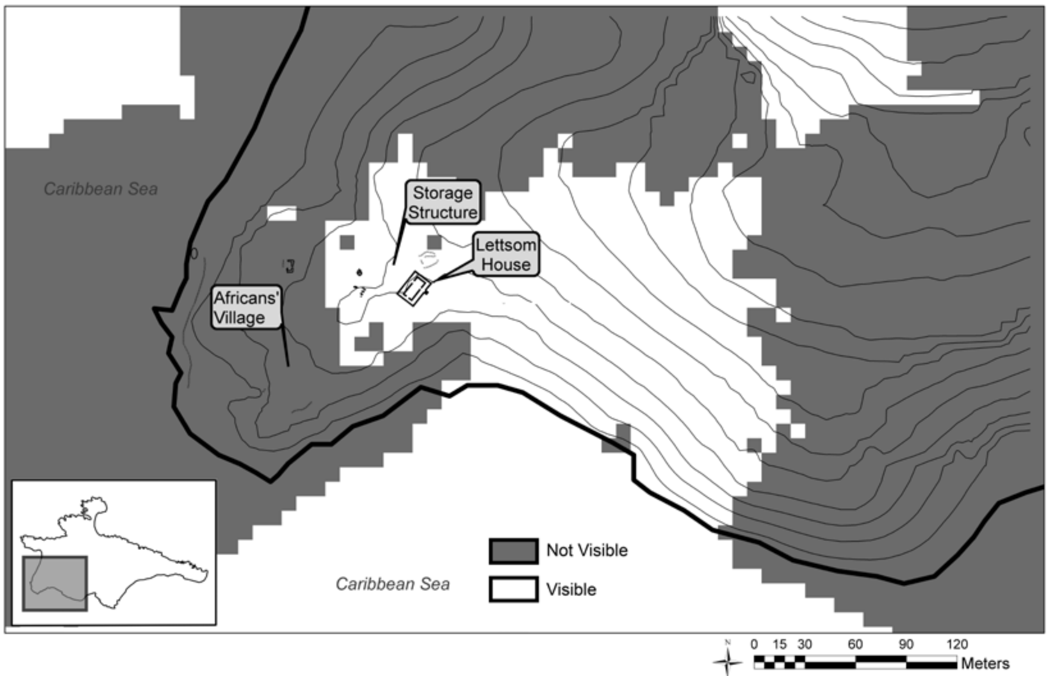

Figure 7.1. Viewshed analysis of the Lettsom house. Areas visible from the house, yard, and oven areas of the Lettsom house are shown in white, while areas not visible because of the topography are shown in gray. The contours are 5-meter intervals.

Although the Lettsoms were unable to see the enslaved people in their homes (and vice versa), those passing by the site by boat would have been able to clearly see both. Another viewshed analysis (figure 7.2) shows that the enslaved Africans had a view of much of the surrounding sea and of the hillside, as well as Jost van Dyke (off the map to the left), but could not see the house of those who held them. It was almost as if the expanded house and the enslaved population were on display, proving the Lettsoms' wealth and success to passersby and neighbors on Tortola. But this display was at the expense of control or oversight from the main house: the enslaved could come and go across the "crawl" area to Jost van Dyke more or less at will. Lack of any evidence that the enslaved repaired to the nearby cave (as discussed in chapter 2), in contrast to some other contexts of enslavement (e.g., Smith 2008), also suggests either extremely strict control of the enslaved Africans or, as here, a lack of particular oversight.

The physical arrangement of the site, then, promoted separation between free and enslaved rather than oversight, either economic (as was common on plantations) or spiritual (as was implied by the written record). Theresa Singleton writes of a very different manifestation of similar desires in another context: a coffee plantation in Cuba where a substantial stone wall was used, in part, "as a way of 'othering' enslaved people by concealing their living spaces in order to create and maintain distance between the enslaver and the enslaved" (Singleton 2015: 60–61). In Cuba, coupling differentiation and distance with a plan for economic control was made possible by greater economic resources: the money to build an impressive, prison-like wall. In the British Virgin Islands, the Lettsoms did not have the resources for such a wall, but additional religious concerns were also at play. The previous chapter suggests that there was a division in the Quaker group based on the importance of connections to the wider Quaker world and the written word. Here we see another crack in the unity of BVI Quakerism, in which the written record (mirroring the ideas of London and Philadelphia) implies a paternalistic concern for the spiritual welfare of enslaved Africans held by members—"that wonderful Love" that unites "Bond or Free"—but the archaeology suggests that the Lettsoms were more focused on separation. This separation can be seen as racial and economic, as in Singleton's Cuban example, but here identity is created as much religiously as racially and economically, and the three are tightly intertwined.

When we combine this with the evidence for alcohol and tobacco use in chapter 6, we begin to gain a picture of the relations between free and enslaved people on Little Jost. The use of these drugs marked distinctions between the

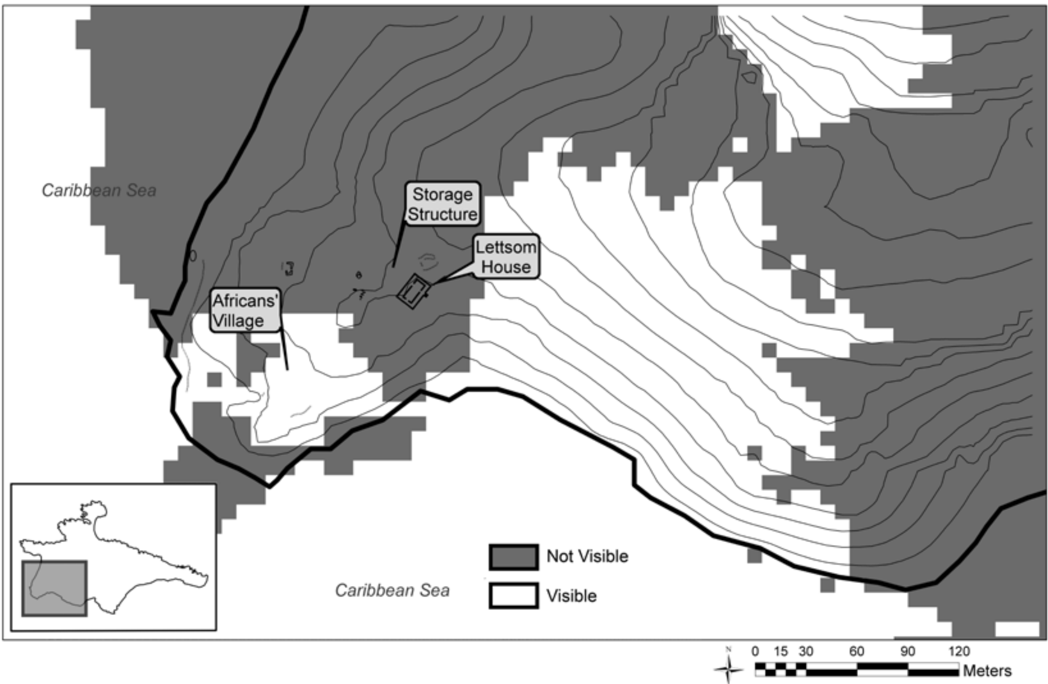

Figure 7.2. Viewshed analysis of the village of the enslaved Africans. Areas visible from the grid of test units excavated across the area of this settlement are shown in white, while areas not visible because of the topography are shown in gray. The contours are 5-meter intervals.

free and the enslaved on Little Jost. Tobacco was consumed by the inhabitants of the main house but not by the enslaved Africans, who chose to use their economic resources elsewhere, allowing both sides to mark and make difference in daily practice. The Lettsoms appear to have limited their consumption of alcohol but did not attempt to oversee its use by those they held. Such oversight might have been suggested by some meeting members, influenced by London and the writings of George Fox, who saw the proper relationship between free and enslaved people as paternalistic. The Lettsoms may have enacted Quaker ideals in limiting their own drinking, but they showed none of the paternalistic concern for the actions of those they held that communications from London seem to have suggested. Indeed, when the enslaved man Tom was seen as overindulging in alcohol, instead of showing concern for his behavior and redemption, Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine and Samuel Taine simply sold him away from his home.

It has long been understood that identity takes shape, in part, through opposition, and this has been suggested by historians of Quakerism in particular.

William Frost, for example, argues that some common Quaker practices were directed in part at creating difference between Quakers and non-Quakers, creating a "hedge" around Quakerism (Frost 2003: 25). But this Quaker separateness was performed and created in a very different context in the British Virgin Islands. Moreover, difference in the British Virgin Islands was not simply a matter of religion, that is, opposition to the non-Quaker whites on the far side of the "hedge," as it was in London or Philadelphia. Rather, Quakerism was being created in the context of racially based slavery, and the Others in daily interaction with the Lettsoms were the enslaved people to whom they provided alcohol even as they limited their own consumption. No member of the Tortola meeting would have listed tobacco use as a particularly "Quaker" habit, but the archaeology suggests that it was not irrelevant to the process of identification on this site, as the enslaved refrained from smoking even as the Lettsoms partook. Quakerism was created as much as a division between free and enslaved, white and black, as it was between godly and ungodly, and the somewhat unlikely distinctions of drinker/nondrinker and smoker/nonsmoker were also woven into the version of the "hedge" built on this site in ways probably unique to the Caribbean.

Performing Inequality: Whiteness and Safety

The extent to which equality may have affected the understanding of slavery among BVI Quakers is also connected to another kind of equality: that among members and non-Quaker planters. Planter society in the Caribbean was strikingly hierarchical, but a race-based sense of commonality, if not strict "equality," was also important (Clement 1997). While whites were separated by class and wealth, a practical sense of community encompassing the rest of the white population was necessary.

In 1756, the total white population of the British Virgin Islands is given at 1,168 (UKNA CO 152/28, no. BC83), including children, who probably made up at least half this number. Over the period of 1740–62, the minutes of the Tortola meeting mention 78 adults as being members. Membership in Quaker communities was not always carefully defined (Chenoweth 2013: 197–98), and the meeting records often make general reference to "attenders" who took part in meetings for worship but never formally joined and thus would never appear in the records. Nevertheless, it would be hard to argue that more than about a fifth of the adult, white population of the British Virgin Islands was ever associated with the meeting. The vast majority of planters did not see themselves as

a part of this community and were sometimes inimical to it. Although there is some question as to the extent of persecutions BVI Quakers experienced (as discussed in chapter 5), there were certainly some conflicts with nonmembers, such as the member who was "Tyed neck + heels" for refusing to bear arms. The non-Quaker planters appear to have hired the first recorded resident Anglican minister, John Latham, around 1744 to counter the formation of the meeting (Dookhan 1975: 88),[2] also suggesting disapproval on the part of some.

In short, the Lettsoms and their fellow Quakers had to walk in two separate worlds: the religious one of the Quaker meeting but also a second important community of all the other whites of the British Virgin Islands. Despite the importance of the former to many, it would have been dangerous in the extreme for them to have ignored the latter. Statements of identification in either world sometimes had to straddle the line between these two communities: equality between whites had to temper any sense of religious exceptionalism, and this racialized equality was best created through a race-based performance of inequality with those held enslaved. In this context, it is interesting to note that most of the claims to social status and efforts at social climbing described in chapter 3—those efforts that I have argued are not necessarily incompatible with Quakerism but are nonetheless at best a secondary aspect of it—were decidedly public. Meanwhile, those more specifically Quaker statements of identity that would have been most unusual to non-Quaker planters were often private.

Dangers in the Marginal Caribbean

The position of many BVI planters in the middle of the eighteenth century was a precarious one. As with those of other residents of the Caribbean, the historical accounts of life in the British Virgin Islands are replete with mentions of hurricanes and earthquakes, which frequently destroyed houses and crops and took lives, and long droughts. But human factors were probably of more day-to-day concern. Although not as outnumbered by their oppressed enslaved people as Jamaican planters or those in many other colonies were, by the time Little Jost van Dyke was settled in the 1720s whites were outnumbered nearly two to one, 760 to 1,430 (Burns 1965: 461), and by the heart of the Quaker period, 1756, by more than five to one, 1,168 to 6,121 (UKNA CO 152/28, no. BC83).

In general, Isaac Dookhan argues that whites were at all times forced to consider the limits of their power in the British Virgin Islands (Dookhan 1975: 74). Theoretically, order was to be maintained by the militia, there being no regular army posting or police force at that time, but such a force existed only during

times of war or revolt, and attempts to muster it were irregular and often unsuccessful (Dookhan 1975: 170). Even later in the colony's history, militias seem to have only been irregularly maintained, and in 1839, a year after emancipation, a law was passed that repealed all previous laws establishing and regulating militias in the British Virgin Islands (probably out of a fear of the newly emancipated population, which, following pre-emancipation laws, would have constituted most of the militia). No further action was taken after that point to establish any replacement force, and so the infrastructure for maintaining public order was reduced to "only a number of rural constables" who were "inadequa[te] to deal with even a minor disorder" (Dookhan 1975: 155). During a major upheaval, such as the unrest of 1853, forces from other colonies were dispatched to restore British colonial control, but these could take weeks to arrive and rarely remained long.

In addition to threats from within, colonists worried about attacks from the Spanish, French, and other European powers with which their mother country was often at war. In 1740, several of the islands' residents petitioned London, suggesting that "being destitute of Forts and of any of your Majesty's Land Forces and ships of War, and too far removed from the other Leeward Islands to expect Assistance from them, That two of your Majesty's twenty Gun ships, or even Sloops properly Stationed at those Islands [i.e., the British Virgin Islands] would not only prove a great security thereto, but would likewise protect the Navigation of them and all the Leeward Islands" (UKNA CO 314/1, no. 9). No action was taken by London or the Leeward Islands government, however. The response of General Fleming to the request was directed at London; he wrote, "If we have the misfortune to have a War with France it [Tortola] Probably will be Desserted for it is so full of bays and Landing Places that there will be no Defending it against an Invasion" (UKNA CO 152/23, no. 78), and the islands were generally seen in 1755 as indefensible because of their scattered nature (UKNA CO 152/28, no. Bb65).

THE ISOLATION OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS could be fatal in the event of a violent attack by foreign powers or by those held in bondage, but it must also have weighed on the planters in other ways. Although the majority of Tortola's white planters during the colony's early years were born in the Caribbean, some certainly had grown up in England or other parts of Europe very different than the land they came to in the Virgin Islands (see table 2.1 and UKNA CO 152/12, no. 67.viii). Months would pass without the ability to even

send letters to these places, and travel was extremely difficult. For example, in 1756, the Tortolan Friends reported that they had delayed even bothering to write a letter to London, since "Opport^{y} [was] but seldom happening from Our Isle to Europe" (TMM Minutes 1:34). Those missionaries who helped shape the meeting in its early years were not immune, and two Quaker ministers were detained on Tortola for four months longer than they had intended while trying to find passage to Europe (Anonymous 1787: 284).

Perhaps as threatening was that the colony contained no social institutions that brought its residents into regular contact with each other. Although some plantations may have been separated by less than a mile, the topography of the British Virgin Islands made travel between them quite difficult. There were few real roads in the islands until the 1950s, when one connecting the southern coasts of Tortola to Road Town was finished, and until the twenty-first century some of the bays on the northern coast were inaccessible by car. Travel between even neighboring plantations was usually by boat before the twentieth century, and this could be a difficult prospect in the event of bad weather or contrary winds.

Religion has long been a major structuring factor in British social life, but on the margins of the British colonial world, it was not always an early development. In the British Virgin Islands, no formal religious institutions (other than the Quakers) were present until quite late in the islands' history. Governor Park's 1709 report (as noted in chapter 2) relates that the people of the British Virgin Islands "have neither Divine [i.e., minister] nor Lawyer amongst them, they take each others words in marriage; they think themselves Christians because they are descended from such" (*CSP* [1708–9] 1922: no. 597.i). In 1740, a report to the Council for Trade and Plantations stated of British Virgin Islanders, "As for Religion[,] that sits very light on them, when they have fifty or Sixty Children to baptize, they send for a Clergyman to some of the other English Islands, who comes down to make them Christians, and so returns back to his own Care" (UKNA CO 152/23, no. 77). This practice was common in the rural Caribbean.

John Latham was appointed minister in Tortola before 1744, evidently "to combat the growth of Quakerism" (Dookhan 1975: 88). Quaker meeting members wrote that their non-Quaker fellow "Islanders have hired [him] among them" and that this effectively dampened conversions to Quakerism (BYMFH Portfolio Volume 28:38), suggesting that for at least some members, Quakerism may have been turned to because no other religious option existed. Latham had no church, and so we are informed by a traveler named Poole that it was

Latham's "Custom . . . to preach in private Homes, one Sabbath in one Place, and another in another, and extend his Attendance by Rotation to four parts of the Island" (Poole 1753: 373). This itinerant preaching seems to have continued even after a church and Methodist meetinghouse were built in Road Town in the 1810s, as it is noted as late as 1820 (Anonymous 1843: 89). Apart from the appointment of a lieutenant governor, there was no government until 1773, when a legislature was granted (Dookhan 1975: 18), and so religious and civic life were virtually nonexistent for BVI planters during the time of the Quaker meeting.

So BVI planters could have perceived threats to their property and lives from within and without, had a diverse background in terms of national and geographic birth, and were far from the centers of power and commerce with little contact or protection. If they could not have formed a community, they would have been socially as well as geographically and economically marginalized. Considering the imbalance between white and black British Virgin Islanders in terms of both numbers and political power, any loss of support from one's neighbors might have proved fatal.

Walking in Two Worlds: Public and Private Quakerisms

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, for eighteenth-century Quakers the idea of equality did not run as far as modern notions of the erasure of difference. Society was highly stratified both racially and economically—people were not "upon the Level"—and there is no indication that Quakers in Tortola or elsewhere had an inclination to upend this status quo. Rather, as chapter 3 makes clear, there were practical benefits to membership and connections to powerful networks of Quaker merchants elsewhere in the world: Mary and Edward Lettsom, for example, wanted to improve their status, not do away with status.

But while Quakerism offered a social and spiritual community where little else did, it also could have threatened to divide the larger community of whiteness that offered protection from the precarious nature of life just described. Eighteenth-century Quakerism was based, in part, on a feeling of exceptionalism and the building of a metaphorical hedge around their communities, while planters needed cooperation, a sense of shared identity, commonality, and the implicit promise of mutual support. The creation of racial whiteness—understood as an inherent commonality separating planters from those they held enslaved—was key to this commonality. Efforts to create Quakerism as distinct and different were important, but no identification as Quaker could threaten the racial ties with other planters too deeply.

The result was a public emphasis on inequality—the differentiation of free white and enslaved black persons, which was not incompatible with eighteenth-century Quakerism and supported efforts at social climbing—that served to create a community of white planters in opposition to those they held. More privately, Tortolan Friends had an opportunity to show and emphasize their Quakerly customs as these were locally understood, marking themselves as religiously distinct and creating the community of Quakerism in the process.

THE LETTSOMS' CHOICE TO "LIVE APART" on their own island and their choices for the location, orientation, and viewscape of their home all made statements (as described in chapter 3) that would have been addressed to the broader community and not just to Quakers. With no small amount of extra effort, the house was placed very specifically to view and be directed toward Tortola rather than toward the nearer but poorer neighbors of Jost van Dyke, which would have also permitted surveillance over the enslaved people. The choice used a vocabulary of country mansions and gentlemanly prospects common to the English-descended world and even evidenced among Philadelphia Quakers (Reinberger and McLean 1997).

Christopher Clement (1997) discusses the importance of a sense of shared identity for planter families in Tobago, suggesting that they constructed their homes in part for intervisibility as a way of creating this sense of community and safety. Such intervisibility was found in Jamaica as well (Delle 2011: 133–34). Something similar but perhaps more extreme was probably at work in the British Virgin Islands, but for the Lettsoms, at least, the community cultivated was that of the local elites on Tortola, not just any neighbors. This need for a white community also modified the suggestion from the Quaker core that enslaved Africans be incorporated (on an inferior level) into the group, and the group to which architectural statements were addressed by the Lettsoms excluded the enslaved.

A performance of inequality and power over the enslaved people through architecture and material expression (and thus the supposed hopelessness of resistance) is a well-accepted undertone of whites' ideas about plantation architecture and layout (Camp 2004; Delle 1998; Hauser 2011). Taking part in this common trope would have been familiar to the other planters in the British Virgin Islands: a statement of palpable racial inequality between the enslavers and the enslaved and thus of commonality and fellow feeling among the supposedly superior whites. A comparison of the architecture of the homes

of the enslaved people on Little Jost and that of the Lettsoms fits well into this picture. The Lettsoms' home was built with a mortared, cut stone foundation and wattle-and-mortar walls, much more substantial than the remains of the enslaved peoples' houses, for which only one wattle-and-mortar wall and only the most ephemeral suggestion of stone foundations were found. This material inequality would also have been decidedly public, played out in the houses' visibility from Tortola and the channel north of it and south of Jost and Little Jost.

In contrast to most other Caribbean planters, however, most statements of inequality on the Lettsom site seem to have been directed more at the planters of Tortola than at the enslaved people of Little Jost. As shown earlier in this chapter, the latter would not have been able to see the main house from their homes or many of the island's fields. Though of course some enslaved people on Little Jost would have worked at the house, and all would have been familiar with it, this arrangement is unusual. It is notable that the highly intentional positioning of the Lettsoms' house and those of their enslaved people would have made both clearly visible to passing ships and even from Tortola. The statement of superiority over the enslaved people made by the architectural differences between the two was a very public one but directed at Tortolans, not at the enslaved. Yet the more private material assemblages of the Lettsoms and those they held enslaved were more comparable: while the Lettsoms had more higher-status materials such as porcelains, neither had much (3 percent porcelains for the Lettsoms and 1 percent for the enslaved village). The one piece of higher-quality table glass was recovered from the village, not the main house.

SO STATEMENTS OF RACE-BASED INEQUALITY (and thus a broader community of whiteness) were often quite public on Little Jost, even if the private material assemblages suggested greater economic equality between those held enslaved on the island and those who were free. Negotiations of Quakerism and performances of religious commonality among the Quakers, in contrast, were more often private on the Lettsom site and for the group in general. It has already been suggested that the choice to limit alcohol consumption by the Lettsoms would have thrown some barriers between them and their white neighbors, for whom alcohol was a central part of social life. Yet this choice would have been mainly private, with the act of nondrinking going on behind closed doors.

Marriages seem to have been among the major activities recorded by BVI

Quakers in their meeting minutes. Roughly 35 percent of the times individuals were mentioned in the minutes were related to a wedding in some capacity. The form of the Quaker wedding is rather informal and varies, but the preparations include formal requests for the permission of the meeting. The first step is for the bride to visit the men's meeting along with a member or two of the women's meeting, and the groom to do the same at the women's meeting. Friends are then appointed by each side of the meeting to inquire into the "clearness" of the couple to marry, and they report back at the next meeting. When the marriage is "solemnized" after approval, Friends also often bear witness to the marriage, and the names of the witnesses are frequently recorded in the minutes. The practice of Quaker endogamy is one often pointed to as creating insularity in the Quaker community (Isichei 1967). While public in a sense, this particular practice was not likely to cause substantial rifts with non-Quakers, and the choices of partners and wedding ceremonies were certainly private on the scale of the entire colony. The community that grew in the British Virgin Islands appears to have been a tight one with deep connections, especially those of marriage, which appear to have tied many members into an intricate web of "near relations," as described in chapter 3.

The orientation of the burials at the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse (as noted in chapter 4) is nonstandard, aligned nearly north-south. I have written elsewhere about the importance of burial orientation for Quakers, who used nontraditional alignment as a way of rejecting the "superstitious" practice of orienting the body in preparation for physical resurrection on Judgment Day, facing Jerusalem (Chenoweth 2009). This rejection only served to establish Quaker identity when east-west burial was a religiously motivated norm, as it tended to be in England in the eighteenth century. In Tortola, the main planter burial ground in Johnson Ghut more closely matches this traditional east-west alignment, suggesting that north-south orientation would be symbolically charged among BVI Quakers. Funerals and burials were, like marriages, not strictly private but would have been attended mainly by friends and family—many of whom would have been members of the meeting as a result of the insularity just noted. The orientation chosen for a particular grave seems unlikely to spark outrage and conflict with non-Quakers. Few would have traveled to the burial ground of Friends at Fat Hogs Bay in any case, as it was apart from any plantation house or town and, while most travel would have taken place by sea, the burial ground was inland. This performance of Quaker difference was aimed at other members of the community: those who came to the meetinghouse regularly. The only others who would have regularly seen the relatively substan-

tial brick vaults over at least some of the graves would have been the enslaved people, those who most likely did the digging and hard work of building these monuments and attended their Quaker enslavers as they traveled to meeting. For them, such graves would have been another marker of social (and thus racial and religious) difference.

Another, more clearly private, way in which Quaker values were expressed and Quaker identity was performed is evidenced through ceramic choice and use. This data is discussed in more detail elsewhere (Chenoweth 2012), but the most significant aspect may be summarized as the fact that ceramics were not evenly distributed across Little Jost van Dyke by date. Despite their higher social status and presumably greater economic resources, the Lettsoms had consistently older ceramics than did the enslaved people they held. The historic record suggests that both parts of the site were occupied approximately contemporaneously, and pipestem dates, providing an independent comparison, are more closely the same for the two sides of the site. Both of the dating techniques used here, pipestem dates and mean ceramic dates, are not unproblematic and cannot be taken at face value (Chenoweth 2016). Nonetheless, in this case they are calculated in multiple ways to account for fragmentation (the preferred method of calculating them based on minimum vessel counts instead of piece counts is impossible because of the fragmentation of the sample), and both techniques are used for intrasite comparison rather than to suggest an actual occupation date.

Use wear can also be noted in numerous examples recovered from Little Jost. Because the artifacts recovered from Little Jost were highly fragmented and dispersed in sheet middens, no systematic evaluation of wear was possible, and in any case such wear is difficult to quantify. Therefore, only general comments can be made, but the differences observed are so stark that they are thought to be meaningful nonetheless. Of the twenty-five recovered ceramic sherds exhibiting noticeable wear likely to be the result of prolonged use, only one came from the area where the enslaved Africans of Little Jost had their homes. By contrast, edge and base wear consistent with use was present on twenty-four pieces of ceramic of several types coming from the Lettsoms' area. More than half of these were tin-enameled wares, known for their lack of durability, and also tending to be older than many other types encountered. This difference appears to preclude any substantial number of "hand-me-downs" moving from the planters to the enslaved people, the Lettsoms apparently preferring to continue using wares as long as possible rather than replacing them with newer ones, and the enslaved Africans preferred less-worn items.

So it is clear that the Lettsoms and those they held enslaved were both making choices in the ceramics they had in their homes. Ceramic choice can index social status (Miller 1980, 1991) and express identity (e.g., Wilkie 2000), and newer, more fashionable materials may be seen as being higher in status (Deetz 1996). Ceramic choice on other small Caribbean islands has been suggested to be limited by the way traded materials arrived at these isolated places (Farnsworth 1996), but in this case a variety of traded items were clearly available, as evidenced by the goods recovered from the homes of the enslaved people on Little Jost, although these goods were certainly more difficult to acquire than in London. But the higher-status Lettsoms appear to have consistently chosen older ceramics than did those they held in bondage.

In such a location, the scarce, newly arrived, fashionable items may have taken on an aura more significant than in London or Philadelphia, where each day may have brought a new shipment from the factories of Staffordshire. Ceramics may have been a key and private means of creating a particular understanding of simplicity through thrift: using ceramics longer than their neighbors, despite wear and fashion. Jillian Galle's suggestion that enslaved people were using ceramic choice to signal their own economic fitness and success in their own community (Galle 2010) opens the possibility that this distinction was negotiated from both sides. That is, while the Lettsoms were performing thrift and Quakerly simplicity, those they held may have been performing economic success, both using the same materials in opposing ways.

Other archaeological evaluations of Quaker-related sites have sometimes suggested that Quakers should be expected to have less-decorated ceramics as an expression of simplicity (Gray 1989; McCarthy 1999; Samford and Brown 1990), but the discussion here has shown that we cannot use this as a "signature" of Quakerism in every context (not that all these authors suggest this). The slave Caribbean is an extremely different place from the sites of studies focused on the northeastern United States. No strong pattern exists on the Lettsom site in terms of ceramic decorations, and the free and enslaved occupants had plain and decorated materials in approximately equal amounts. Undecorated ceramics, rather, may in some places and times have been used to negotiate religious, class, and other identities. In the context of the eighteenth-century British Virgin Islands, other distinctions may be drawn between Quaker and non-Quaker. There, the luxury of new, fashionable items could have been what seemed counter to the "simple" lives they were striving for: the rare thrill of new goods arriving at this relatively distant colony may have been more important than the particular decorations they bore (or their lack of decorations). When

converts in this place thought of "worldly" fashions they could reject as a performance of simplicity, a newly arrived set of ceramics may have been the first item to go, and this may have outweighed a desire for a particular decoration scheme, resulting in the generally older ceramic types recovered at the Lettsom house.

It would be close friends (and Friends) who would enter the homes of the Lettsoms, eat off their ceramics, drink their water, celebrate a marriage, and be invited to Quaker burials. Thereby a Quaker identity was created that, while it marked members as being distinct from other whites, did not threaten relations in this broader important community. Members could be Quakers and planters simultaneously. But for them to do this, Quakerism in the British Virgin Islands had to be racially marked, that is, one could not be Quaker and black, and the performance of Quakerism we see in the archaeology on Little Jost van Dyke and in the documentary record draws a line between black and white, enslaved and free, just as much as between Quaker and non-Quaker.

Gender and Inequality

Gender has been considered in a number of contexts in this discussion so far but perhaps not as explicitly as it deserves. Because Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine effectively takes center stage in this story, since she is the constant throughout at least forty years of occupation on Little Jost, it is worth considering how her position as a woman in a quite explicitly patriarchal and sexist society influenced the way Quakerism was constructed. The Quaker perspective on women's religious role (mentioned in chapter 1), for instance, understanding them to be spiritual equals with equal access to God's speaking, was quite unusual, yet it was built into Quaker thought from its earliest days in the 1660s (Schofield 1987). Women represented precisely half the Quaker community in Tortola, judging by the names of those listed in the records, and had a substantial and active role in the social and spiritual life of the group. Women had half the responsibility and power to approve marriages, the most common activity of the meeting recorded in the minutes, and the women's meeting had the same trappings of formality and authority as the men's in terms of records, although the brevity and quality of the writing in these betray an unequal access to education. As another example, among the missionaries who visited Tortola in the 1740s were two women who traveled apparently without male accompaniment: Phoebe Smith and Mary Evans. Such a phenomenon was probably rare in the British Virgin Islands, and their public preaching may have put Quakerism's

qualified gender equality very much on display to potential converts (they were not, themselves, locals concerned also with a community of whiteness).

This position, recognizing the agency and authority of women in some ways, may have been part of the appeal of Quakerism to potential female converts in the British Virgin Islands, including Mary. Edward seems to have taken a more active role in the Quaker community than his wife did, judging by the number of times he is mentioned in the minutes, but Mary is as active and visible as the records (with their very partial view) are able to suggest, taking part in the procedures for another's marriage twice, as compared to her first husband's three times. The story of Mary Hunt Nottingham also suggests an element of agency for women Quakers in the British Virgin Islands, as she apparently suffered for her Quaker inclinations at the hands of her first husband (although there is some reason to doubt the extent of these persecutions, as discussed in chapter 5) and most clearly asserted herself while traveling in the ministry with her second husband, Samuel Nottingham. She was also given the responsibility of "treating with" another member at least four times. As yet another example, the resilience evidenced by Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie (described in chapter 2) also speaks to assertiveness of the women who joined this group: her conversion led to her expulsion from her father's house, but she did not give up her new religion for some years after that. Later, after returning to Quakerism, she apparently single-handedly created a community in St. Croix, caused one and perhaps another substantial meetinghouse to be built (including raising the funds to pay for it from London), and traveled alone on a religious visit to Philadelphia.

And yet the Quaker community as it was played out in the British Virgin Islands certainly did not offer gender equality in a modern sense. As with the worldly inequalities of class, economics, and race, the spiritual equality of gender came with strings attached. The story of Rebecca Britt, although incompletely seen in the documents, is an example of how the meeting structure reinforced patriarchy even as it offered assistance. She received her £1.2.6 each month, providing an extremely meagre living in a rented house belonging to the Nottinghams (who received at least half of the money she was awarded by the meeting). As the only person to receive this direct aid from the meeting, she likely was in truly dire straits, left a widow in a society with few opportunities for women to make a living. But the restrictions discussed above for all poorer members—the need to submit themselves to oversight, to conform to the version of Quakerism understood by the meeting leadership—would have applied doubly to her, who had no other options and most likely had to attend

meetings physically each month to receive the assistance promised her, as well as being subjected to examination.

Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine was in a similar situation when Edward died in 1758, but she chose to assert her agency more explicitly in her marriage to Samuel Taine. Quaker endogamy was a long-held practice in most Quaker groups, but there is a possibility of a particular patriarchal motivation to the objections raised to Mary's remarriage. At least, we know the objections were not spiritual, for Samuel Taine "spake well of Friends" and was the son of one. The lack of assistance coming from the Quaker community of which she had been a part for almost two decades may have been punishment for Mary's assertion of will in her choice of a new partner. The historical record is too partial and the archaeological one too jumbled to say much with authority about Mary's personality, let alone her potential nascent activism, yet archaeology was able to suggest that she may have been the person most responsible for the tobacco consumption on the site, a relative extravagance. Clearly she had control of some expenditures and the agency to decide where to spend some of the household money, at a time when women's authority even in their own homes was legally limited. She asserted herself in choosing to remarry as well, as she could have remained, like Britt, a widow and perhaps could have gained assistance from the meeting. Yet she was unwilling to subject herself to the oversight that would have required and was expelled for asserting herself in these ways. As with race and class, gender roles in the Quaker meeting on Tortola were much influenced by those in broader Caribbean society, and the group reproduced more inequalities than it challenged.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY QUAKERS in general had a different idea of "equality" than a modern understanding of the erasure of difference, and women could be spiritually equal but still expected to subject themselves to patriarchal oversight. In the same way, the worldly inequality underlying slavery could be seen as compatible with Quaker ideology. Concerns over slavery grew instead—where they grew at all—out of its basis in violence and, particularly for the authors of the written record in the British Virgin Islands, out of fears that it might occasion the sin of pride in the slaveholders. Still, by the last years of the Tortola meeting, the London and Philadelphia meetings were beginning to make statements against slavery. For the Lettsoms and other poorer Quakers, this may have been cause for concern, as the majority of their worldly wealth was held in the bodies of those they kept on their island. It is in the written re-

cord that we see suggestions of a paternalistic concern for the enslaved, but the analysis of Little Jost itself suggests more of a need to separate from them, hinging both Quakerism and status in the white community on a racialized differentiation from the enslaved. The Lettsoms' efforts at improving their status in the acceptable worldly hierarchy, after all, would have been entirely contingent on the continued exploitation of Africans in bondage. Another concern would have been the relations with and support they could ask from their non-Quaker white neighbors. A particularly racialized version of equality and communality among planters was performed with public statements of inequality between black and white, while Quaker difference was created more privately in items like ceramics, tobacco and alcohol consumption, and grave orientation. Central to Quakerism, this version of "equality" was complex, and parts of it may have been strikingly different from that of non-Caribbean Quakers.

Chapter 8

RECONSIDERING SIMPLICITY, EQUALITY, PEACE, AND THE END OF THE MEETING

SIMPLICITY, PEACE, AND EQUALITY are defining themes of Quakerism, but any analysis of religion cannot take such contested words at face value. One needs to examine religious groups as identities that are not static but are created and continually re-created through the practices of their members, as discussed at the outset of this volume. What is done by those who are seen as members (though this is itself often contested) continually defines and changes what it is to be a member. This is not a new idea in anthropological archaeology, but it has mostly been applied to the social construction of race, gender, and class and less often to religions, which are still sometimes approached as static sets of beliefs that members do or do not enact correctly.

A practice-centered view such as this also allows for variation, the inevitable result of individuals' interpretations of what a particular group should be. Through an analysis of the Lettsoms and the BVI Quaker community, this study highlights such variation, since the way the Lettsoms understood and enacted Quakerism was often quite different than the way Friends in the contemporary cores of Philadelphia and London did, and there were even differences between those on Tortola and those on the out islands such as Little Jost. And yet we have no reason to privilege one or another of these understandings of religious ideals such as simplicity, peace, and equality any more than we can project our modern ideas about them back into the past. Each must be taken on its own terms.

In some parts of the world, written records give us much good information about how these ideas were carried into practice (although material evidence still can and should add to this information, as discussed earlier). In others, such as the British Virgin Islands, we have relatively little documentation about what life was like, particularly for the poorer, out-island plantations such as the Lettsom site. Here archaeology is key to understanding the emic viewpoint: how those in the Tortola meeting saw their world and created their idea

of Quakerism. Even as we can, must, and do condemn the epic crime of slavery (as discussed in chapter 1), we cannot understand this time period or the mechanisms by which this crime was carried out without also assessing the emic, insider's perspective. This does not excuse the crime, but perhaps it helps to diagnose the societal disease that allowed it to persist for three and a half centuries. At the same time, it can offer a window into how religions are built and rebuilt, contested, and enacted in daily life. So how was BVI Quakerism seen and created by those inside the community?

Quakerism Re-created

In the Quaker community of the British Virgin Islands, members were pulled in multiple directions, even as they worked to unite themselves into a single group. Some of the competing influences of social status, wealth, racial hierarchy, education, access to markets and the imperial "core," safety and geography, and others would certainly have caused rifts within the group, as members came to differing individual conclusions about how best to enact Quaker ideals in this matrix of demands. Not all of the different practices that resulted—those which together created "Quakerism"—were compatible. Rather than agreeing, communities actively contested the practices that defined them. For two decades and more, a community existed in the British Virgin Islands, but it was negotiated every time members met to worship or to conduct business, when they rebuilt their houses, cooked a meal, or engaged in other small-scale, mundane acts of daily life.

Some practices of Quakerism appear to have existed in the British Virgin Islands much as they do elsewhere. For instance, meetinghouse and burial orientation at Fat Hogs Bay were not east-west, as would have been traditional for mainstream Christian burial in Britain and was common for BVI planters (as discussed in chapter 7). Rather, BVI Quakers echoed those practices of Quakerism elsewhere in the eighteenth century and earlier by eschewing what they saw as a vain and superstitious concern with religious symbolism in place of actual religious feeling. Another example can be seen in the economical use of food resources suggested by bone fragmentation, which may suggest thrift (as discussed in chapter 4), another expression of simplicity that would have been familiar beyond the British Virgin Islands. The Lettsoms also appear to have made efforts to avoid waste in the long-continued use of worn ceramics and avoidance of fashion in purchasing new ones (as noted in chapter 7).

The Lettsom house was relatively small, its construction relatively simple,

especially in the earliest phases. The archaeology of their modest plantation on Little Jost van Dyke shows a family using less in the way of the elegant stemwares needed to present a formal "table" than even the enslaved Africans they held. This could be taken for a mark of poverty, but the comparison with the enslaved people they held suggests that there were choices being made here. Poverty may have been a contributing factor, but material culture does not have single, simple "causes" (Chenoweth 2014: 95). Even aspects of the house and material possessions were influenced by economic limitations, but this does not mean that they did not also come to have religious meanings to the Quaker community. Since material culture is polysemic, actual poverty would not prevent such objects from having religious meanings as well.

MANY OF THE CHOICES MADE by BVI Quakers would thus have performed a version of Quakerism familiar to Quakers elsewhere. Yet in many ways the actions and attitudes of Quakers in Tortola were strikingly different from those of their contemporaries: Quakerism changed in its encounter with BVI society, economy, and geography. One element of this is the suggestion that the Lettsoms were a family interested in bettering their station and, in particular, how they were viewed publicly. Architectural elements were used to display what wealth there was, and Mary and Edward made choices about where their house was located and how it was oriented, choices that reveal efforts at social betterment. Quaker communities existed for religious reasons, but Quaker meetings as formal organizations took on many practical responsibilities for members, including providing welfare and business oversight. In the British Virgin Islands, the meeting also provided social and civic connections that did not exist elsewhere, both locally, among the often isolated planters of the islands, and abroad, to the trading and religious centers of Philadelphia and London. The meetinghouses, the only public buildings in the British Virgin Islands at the time, were central to the community's sense of permanence and stability, even though they were not necessary under broader Quaker ideology. Further, the presence of members at these buildings was associated with control and led to contestations about membership, authority, and oversight.

Perceptions of class, wealth, and morality (clearly linked, in the views of the day) were also active in the expression of Quaker simplicity. As outlined in chapter 4, while the Lettsoms appear to have mostly eaten wild fish and a wide variety of shellfish at home, domesticates and some higher-status shellfish appear to have been almost the only food eaten at gatherings at the Fat Hogs Bay

meetinghouse. While not all members were wealthy, they put their "best foot forward," presenting what were clearly higher-status foods to each other. The choice of domesticates to show off access to resources, however, has been suggested to be not-coincidental, being charged with symbolism of honest and godly productivity and opposed to an image of indolence associated with fishing, an interpretation of living a simple, productive life that made sense in the British Virgin Islands but would have been unfamiliar elsewhere. Yet this difference is not incompatible with Quakerism elsewhere: simplicity does not mean poverty, as a number of Quaker historians have argued. In the Caribbean, though, a performance of status that was earned through godly work might have served to perform both Quakerness and "planterness."

Other Quaker ideas changed in their encounter with BVI society, economy, and geography as well. When John Pickering wrote that he "had not yet got over or seen beyond that of Self Preservation or defending [his] Country or Interest in a Just Cause" (Jenkins 1923: 8), he was expressing a version of the peace testimony that would be quite foreign to modern and contemporary Quakers but made sense to many in the British Virgin Islands. The gunflint and hardware at the Lettsom site, the flint at the meetinghouse, and defensive features such as gun loops at one or possibly more Quaker-associated sites in the British Virgin Islands all show that pacifism was negotiated to fit with the threats of isolation, oppressed and angry enslaved Africans, and potential invasions by Britain's sometimes enemies. Violence among members was acted against, as in the case of Thomas Smith, but the delays in doing so suggest that such acts were common enough to the marginal Caribbean, which lacked a police force or military outposts, that they were more easily understood and potentially forgiven by members from Tortola. Smith certainly had many opportunities to amend his behavior, and the delays in his disownment suggest that any request for forgiveness would have been granted.

At the same time, the burial of the reusable and scarce musket butt plate in wet mortar in the Lettsoms' house foundation suggests that some members may have struggled with how to reconcile pacifism with Caribbean slavery. Mary and Edward may have even considered a broader application of this idea by attempting to live as slaveholders without weaponry. In the end, however, a gunflint higher up in the stratigraphy at their house and another within the walls of the Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse suggest that Pickering's more measured version of pacifism—where "Interest" could be defended with violence or its threat, presumably including against the four hundred enslaved people he held at his death—prevailed among BVI Quakers. Given contemporary

Quaker views of pacifism (discussed in chapter 5), however, this was not as much of a stretch as modern understandings of pacifism might suggest, and (as described in chapter 7) many mid-eighteenth-century Quakers saw no problem with slaveholding, trading with slavery-based plantations, and even trading in human beings themselves, despite the fact even then it was understood that slavery was based on the constant threat of violence. Broader ideas of Quaker pacifism during the first half of the eighteenth century were contested, and British Virgin Islanders aligned themselves with views that most fit the social and economic foundation of their world: enslavement.

Rather than opposition to individual violent actions, the possession of weapons, or the threat of their use against the enslaved population, the peace testimony took a different shape in the British Virgin Islands: one more to do with community identity formation. The surviving writings sent to London paint a picture of how the authors wanted to be seen by other Quakers. As noted in chapter 5, the potential for persecution and harassment by non-Quakers makes up a disproportionate part of the content of the letters sent from the British Virgin Islands to London, although other sources suggest that this fear was largely unwarranted. While the letters contain fears of persecution by hateful and godless governors bent on destroying the community, the governors were accompanying visiting Quakers on religious visits and reporting to their superiors nothing but positive things about the group. In particular, the feared harassment is centered on worries that members would be forced to violate the peace testimony by mustering for militia or contributing to the construction of forts.

Suffering on behalf of their beliefs is something that has united Quakers in various ways throughout their history, and being seen as enduring hardships for their membership was apparently a goal of the authors of the meeting's communications. Persecution of early Friends is accounted by some modern adherents as one of the reasons for the strong sense of community in the group's early days (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1997: 3), and it would have been a part of the creation of a common Quaker experience among very distant communities. For those who left the written record of the Tortola meeting, at least, difference from (and persecution by) other planters was key to their entry into the worldwide community of Quakerism—a kind of dues paying for membership in the community of the godly. These dues were centered on this particular understanding of pacifism: against wars and preparations for defense. But this same kind of differentiation was also dangerous, potentially driving a wedge between other planters and members of the meeting, who might have been seen

as shirking their responsibilities for collective defense. Moreover, most planters, Quaker and non-Quaker alike, probably saw the same need for military preparations. Some members, perhaps those less involved in the written record, may not have wanted to focus on the persecutions of the group or connections to the Quaker martyrs of the past, having more interest in living networks locally and abroad. In fact, the Lettsoms seem to have wanted to avoid conflict with non-Quaker British Virgin Islanders.

This difference in perspective among members of the Quaker community is discussed in chapter 7, which considers how ties between BVI whites as a whole played into the creation of the Quaker group. The Lettsoms made material statements addressed to both their fellow Quakers and the larger community, but the overall pattern suggests that they walked a line between these groups, trying to improve their position in both and alienate neither. Their most public statements—those made with the placement and display of their house as a country seat oriented toward the economic core, the display of the enslaved people they held, and the enlargement of and improvements to their house—were roughly compatible with Quaker ideals but accessible to all BVI planters and similar to the kind of statements made by Caribbean planters elsewhere. These displays built ties between whites and differentiated them from those they held enslaved. Many other statements that appear to have grown out of Quaker ideology (though not in a simplistic way) were more private: personal relationships, such as those celebrated in weddings, burial orientations, and a creative understanding of simplicity and industry in ceramics or food choices, for example.

In the slavery-based economy of the Caribbean, the distinctions of class were also intimately tied up with race. Another group to which these statements were addressed was, of course, the enslaved Africans who lived on Little Jost and were frequent visitors to the Lettsoms' home. Like all identities, Quakerism is created through opposition as much as inclusion. In a way unusual among Caribbean planters, the Lettsoms emphasized separateness and difference from their enslaved people, living so far apart (despite sharing a tiny island) that there was little oversight and having material worlds distinct in ways that are different from the usual performances of power and inequality. The process of differentiation between Quakers and Others took place for the Lettsoms in opposition not to white Anglicans but to the enslaved people on Little Jost, and so Quakerness was created along with and mapped onto both whiteness and the potential for social mobility.

Fractured Community

The Tortola Quaker community was a group of up to a hundred individuals and was also diverse. An undercurrent through this discussion thus far is the fault lines that developed over the last decade of the meeting and set the stage for its end. A careful analysis of the minutes of the Tortola meeting, along with information from the archaeological and geographic analyses, suggests that two distinct groups of members emerged, each holding a different view of what the religious community should look like and how equality, peace, and simplicity should be performed.

Inequality among Tortolan Quakers

The makeup of this community was economically diverse to begin with. This is far from abnormal for Quaker groups, but some discussion of the nature of this divide in the British Virgin Islands is necessary. On average, the wealthiest members of BVI society and of the meeting probably lived and owned lands on Tortola, the economic heart of the colony and the island with the best agricultural potential. Based on an 1815 estimate, which can provide a rough proxy for the overall agricultural potential of different lands, Tortola's lands produced £5.86 per acre, while Jost van Dyke yielded just £1.33; the average yield of eighteen out islands (excluding those that had zero produce in this report) was just £1.09 per acre. Little Jost van Dyke produced just £0.32 per acre. With two exceptions (the aberrant Little Camanoe, which yielded £4.34 from what was then estimated at 35 acres, probably because of the surprisingly high population of sixteen people, and the fishing-focused Frenchman's Cay, which produced about half of Tortola's figure at £2.98 with a population of sixty), no other island was even half as productive as Tortola (see appendix A, table A.5).

We can therefore expect that, in addition to whatever other sources of inequality there might have been, on average those members from Tortola would have been wealthier than those from the out islands such as Jost van Dyke and Little Jost. What is more, these wealthier members seem also to have been those with leadership positions in the religious structure of the meeting, such as clerk and overseer. These members are also those most frequently assigned tasks for the meeting, a measure of standing and involvement in Quaker communities. Many aspects of meeting life went unrecorded or are otherwise lost, but much of the available surviving documentary evidence seems to be entirely the product of a very small minority of the members. Indeed, just four people—William Strong, William Thomas, Thomas

Humphreys, and John Pickering Sr.—account for almost a third of all the times Friends were named in the record.

The financial status of only two of these members is known clearly, but both appear to have been very wealthy. John Pickering, the first clerk of the meeting and a major force in its founding, died one of the richest men in the colony (Lettsom 1786: 67). We have no direct evidence of the wealth of Thomas Humphreys, second only to Pickering in how many times he is mentioned (always favorably) in the records of the meeting and an extremely devoted member, signing the first and last items of meeting business ever recorded. We do know, however, that one of his two sons, Richard, was sent to Philadelphia and apprenticed to a goldsmith (Jenkins 1923: 62), a position usually requiring a substantial outlay whatever religious connections are at work. On Richard's death in 1832, he left $10,000 (merely a tenth of his vast estate) to found the Institute for Colored Youth, the first historically black college in the world (still in existence as Cheyney University of Pennsylvania).

Other members frequently mentioned and with a particularly strong religious influence were clearly wealthy as well: Mary and Samuel Nottingham, for example, traveled extensively, and Mary was the widow of a former governor, John Hunt (Pickering's successor). The Nottinghams famously freed at least some of the enslaved people they held when they left the British Virgin Islands, giving them Long Look plantation (or at least allowing them to remain there). At the time, these numbered twenty-five people (BYMFH Box 315/4), but they probably were not field workers (Anonymous 1843: 113), which suggests a much greater number of other enslaved people also owned (and quite possibly sold rather than freed) by the Nottinghams. That they could give away a plantation and free twenty-five enslaved people and still retire to the north is another measure of their wealth. Their influence in the social and religious life of the meeting was particularly strong. When Peter Smith was disowned by the meeting in 1760, the letter sent to him specifically mentions that the return of Samuel Nottingham from one of his travels had sparked a religious self-examination by the community and produced a series of disownments: "Since the arrival of Our Friend Samuel Nottingham among us Upon Examenation, The Discipline of the Church has been much Neglected & we have been greatly Blamed by him for our Indifferency in such an Important Matter, So that Friends is now Stiffed up to put it in force, & there has been Several Lately Disowned by the Meeting: Jonas Lake, Wm Thornton, The Widdow of Edward letsome & others, and thou art Included" (TMM Minutes 7:63).

A final indication suggesting that the meeting was directed primarily by

those of wealth comes from the day-to-day affairs of managing a communal building, the meetinghouse. On the twentieth of Fifth Month 1753, the minutes record, "It being considered in this Meeting, and is Ordered that Convenient *Ruff* House for Shelter for Horses be as soon as Conveniently it can, be set about and Compleated at the expense of the Meeting" (TMM Minutes 1:27, emphasis in original). In 1813, some sixty years later, there were only 230 horses in the entire colony, although there were over 1,400 free inhabitants (appendix A, table A.3). Clearly, horses were the preserve of the better-off, and this shelter would have been for the benefit of those who lived on Tortola exclusively, as members from the out islands would have arrived by boat and not by horse. Despite the fact that the "Ruff House" was never actually built (because of difficulties in getting supplies), the expense of building a stable to shelter the few horses brought to meetings seems not to have served the interests of all members.

In short, where there is any evidence, those most involved in the meeting's formal structure were Tortola based and wealthy, part of the social establishment. They created the meeting's records and correspondence with Friends abroad and were the members most interested in these broader connections. Those who were from the out islands were less wealthy in general, and (as discussed in chapter 6) they were the ones who bore the brunt of the meeting's disciplinary effort.

Differing Imagined Communities of Quakerism

BVI Quakerism was created through actions like those summarized in the first part of this chapter, but it was also contested, and these contestations seem in part to map onto the wealth-based division just noted. There has always been a tension inherent in Quakerism between individuality and communality, between creativity and conformity. The split of wealthy versus poor was also not new, but in the particular environment of the Caribbean, where unity among whites was a necessity of survival (particularly for those who had no option to pick up and move to the economic core), this split developed as one over seeing the meeting's secular purpose as being oversight versus support, and this may have become fatal to the group.

Meetinghouses were central to this community oversight and control. All or at least many members saw them as important as physical markers on the landscape of the existence of the Quaker community, a sign to all that it was solid and real, especially in a land where no other civic or religious structures would exist for two generations. A substantial amount of time, energy, and money was

dedicated to at least two meetinghouses and efforts for a third, which may or may not have come to fruition. But as is true of any material object, these buildings held multiple meanings. While the sacred aspects of Quakerism could and did take place anywhere, members were also clearly expected to physically attend the meetings for business, particularly toward the end of the meeting. This group gathered money that supported at least one member in need, Rebecca Britt, but it was also the center of oversight, particularly of the poorer members of the meeting by those in the leadership who tended to be wealthier.

Because writing was a class-privileged ability that few in the British Virgin Islands could do well, it may have also had an effect on social relations. Both London Friends and the core members of Tortola's meeting regarded letters as not just a practical but almost a religious necessity. Writing, through the sharing of books and sending of letters in what has been called "a fine web of literate contact" (Walvin 1997: 46), was a central part of how Quakerism was formed and maintained throughout the Atlantic World. Through annual letters, the sending of certificates, and the sharing of books (all arranged through meetings for business), BVI Quakers were connected to London and other places far beyond their own shores. But writing also may have been a divisive factor, a facet of community life in which many poorer members could not have participated fully. For some it may have been a reminder of their lower status compared to those in the meeting's leadership positions. That the Lettsoms prioritized the education of their son John Coakley Lettsom speaks to the perception of education in BVI society. There are few surviving written documents by poorer members of the meeting, and these (like Edward Lettsom's note, quoted in chapter 6) betray a much lower level of literacy. Writing is also intimately linked to oversight through the records kept by the meeting. Over time there was an increasing emphasis on formality and procedure centered on these documents (as discussed in chapter 6), and an element of economic hierarchy overlaps this structure of overseer and overseen as well (as discussed above).

It has also been suggested that the Lettsoms received some material advantages from their membership in the Quaker community, marked, for instance, by the expansion of their home and education of their son. This support, while not the only reason a person probably joined the meeting, does seem to have held an important place in the minds of some members. Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine, at least, resolved not to attend meeting until some Friend offered her help after she was widowed. Both because they were in positions of authority within the meeting and because they provided most of the funds for it, the wealthier members of the meeting would have been the arbiters of meeting-centered as-

sistance, deciding who was worthy of what. This was part of a broader pattern of social control and oversight by meeting leaders. As discussed in chapter 1, this control was both religious, to ensure that members practiced Quaker values in their daily lives, and secular, to ensure the welfare and separateness of the Society of Friends as a whole. In the British Virgin Islands, oversight appears to have been centered on members' physical attendance at meetings. Despite the theological position that God was everywhere, not attending meeting was a (and sometimes the only) factor in nearly half the recorded disownments (see table 4.1). In the two cases where it was the only factor, the record indicates that the disowned were otherwise in agreement with the ideas of the group. The support offered by meetings came at a price.

So class hierarchies and social standing were as much under negotiation in this community as were religion and race. Social climbing is not, of course, a (specifically) Quakerly trait, but here elements of Quaker practice such as the network of mutual support and the practice of communal meals became entailed in this very Caribbean effort to negotiate social standing. For the Lettsoms it provided an avenue toward advancement and access to power, but for those powers, the wealthy in meeting leadership positions, Quakerism was another venue for solidifying a standing they already held. The complementary systems of mutual support (put in place in England to ensure that Quakers retained the ability to put their beliefs into practice, a religious necessity) and oversight (also a religious necessity, since members had the responsibility to each other and to the community at large of preventing "contrary walking," as they understood it) become in the British Virgin Islands the machinery of creating whiteness and contesting class.

ALONG THESE FAULT LINES, a picture of two differing ideas of how the Quaker community was defined over its twenty-year history begins to take shape. Some members of the meeting saw Quakerism as something that united them into a close but very much local community of mutual support, giving them a reason to visit and care for each other and providing assistance unavailable otherwise so that each could maintain stability in the home and freely seek God. If the Lettsoms were typical examples, these members appear to have been interested in ties to both Quakers and non-Quaker BVI planters, and they attempted to declare their Quakerness more privately, such as through limiting drinking and opposition to the enslaved people they held—ways that would not threaten their ties to other planters. For them, Quakerism was a means

of creating community, of accessing the wealthy and powerful, of attaining a steady secular as well as spiritual life. Assistance like that Rebecca Britt received and Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine expected was a part of this Quakerism. Quakerism for these members was the lived reality of a godly existence expressed in a variety of different ways, which included the use of older ceramics and the industrious production of domestic animals. For these members also, a darker side of Quakerism can be seen, in which the group was defined in opposition to enslaved people, excluded from most of God's Inner Light. Other whites were still important to these members, as they might one day offer vital assistance in the event of an emergency, and ties to these planters were both enabled by and enabled slavery and the construction of racial inequality.

Yet other members—particularly those already in the most stable positions socially, economically, and in terms of connections abroad—saw Quakerism in a somewhat different way, ritualizing aspects of life that tied them to the broader worldwide Quaker group. We see this in the written record, created more by the meeting's leadership and wealthier members, which betrays an interest in a Quakerism more homogenous and more separate from the non-Quaker world, but also in the investment in the physical fabric of the group's meetinghouses, the centers of oversight. Meeting together was for them an opportunity to ensure that each member was representing the Society of Friends as a whole in the proper way. Non-Quaker whites close by became a persecuting Other against which Quaker identity could be defined. For the generally wealthier members, ties to the economic and social core of London were much more central, and in this light, they focused on how Quakerism marked them as different from local non-Quakers. It is interesting that in at least some ways the Lettsoms had a material world far more similar to that of the people they held enslaved than to that of wealthier planters throughout the Caribbean, and perhaps the wealthier planters did not feel the need to differentiate themselves as actively from those they held because the inequality of their material lives was more evident—at least one author saw the BVI Quaker community as embracing "bond and free" alike. Instead, for them, the local non-Quakers were the ones who formed the Other. This latter group of members emphasized their fears of persecution even if there was little actual persecution to report, and in this way they created bonds of fellow-suffering with Quakers abroad. The written records, the formal procedures of the meeting to disown a member, the demands to meet in person to conduct business and oversight, and this emphasis on suffering for their faith may have proved divisive within their local community, as others chafed under the structure imposed on them and feared divisions with neighbors.

The End of the Meeting

While the slaveholding by the Quakers of Tortola has long occasioned comment by historians and has aroused the curiosity of more modern Quakers, the end of this group has not seemed to most to be particularly mysterious. It has generally been suggested that Quakerism was simply incompatible with the slavery-based economy of the colonial Caribbean and that this friction was behind the end of the Tortola meeting (Dookhan 1975; Jenkins 1923). This conclusion, however, is not supported by the fact that Caribbean slavery and Quakerism coexisted for nearly a century, from the time of George Fox's Caribbean travels, which spread the movement into the region in the 1670s, until the end of the formal Tortola meeting in 1762. Throughout that time, Quakers met not only in small pockets like that discussed here in the British Virgin Islands but also in prominent groups. For instance, many Quaker merchants lived in Port Royal before the 1692 earthquake, which reportedly destroyed their meetinghouse there (Cadbury 1971). The center of Caribbean Quakerism was Barbados, where a sizable group had as many as six meetinghouses at one time (Cadbury 1941; Gragg 2009), and there were other groups on Nevis and on other islands at various times (Durham 1972).

In general, as discussed in chapter 7, Quaker attitudes toward slavery were highly varied. Many Quakers owned enslaved Africans or profited directly from the slave trade, and there was no widespread sense that the idea of equality should entail an opposition to enslavement until perhaps as late as the nineteenth century. London treated the question as a "colonial problem" (Jennings 1981: 99), and some Quakers were paternalistically concerned with the welfare of those they held, as suggested by some early Quaker writers, including George Fox, while others were not.

I suggest, then, that Quakerism did not end in the Virgin Islands because of an incompatibility with slavery. In fact, the enslaved people appear to have been an integral part of the creation of Quaker identity, at least for the Lettsoms (as discussed in chapter 7). Differentiation from the enslaved people helped to create BVI Quakerness and tie it fundamentally, in the minds of at least some members, to whiteness, Britishness, and higher social standing. Racial identities were also called on to cement alliances with non-Quakers in the public sphere, even as some members were also concerned with creating Quaker difference in more-private acts.

The end of the meeting was probably the result of several factors, including a generational shift in the membership and the deaths of many of the found-

ing members, whose children did not always seem to continue to identify as Quakers. The last few entries to the men's meeting minutes suggest that illness or death may have been the last straw for the recorded history of the meeting. There is no record for the Fourth or Fifth Month of 1762, but the entry for the Sixth seems to pick up in the middle of things, referring to "the yearly Epistle sent from London" (TMM Minutes 3:37). The context is that this letter has not yet been answered because the person appointed to write it has fallen sick. The persons almost universally appointed to respond to such letters are William Strong, the clerk and person primarily responsible for keeping these records, and John Pickering. After the next entry, Seventh Month 1762, the record ends, suggesting that clerk William Strong may have passed away (we know that Pickering died in 1768).

Even without the formality of meetings for business and minutes, the few remaining Friends occasionally carried out some of their functions, despite their small numbers. At least two certificates—letters issued by meetings as a sort of recommendation to be carried by traveling Quakers—were written, one for Samuel Wyley in 1768 and one for Thomas Humphreys in 1770. In the latter, the remaining Friends wrote that they were "surrounded with" many "bad examples" and that they lived in a land "where pride and vanity almost universally prevail[ed]" (Jenkins 1923: 54).

A final letter from Friends in Tortola was sent to London in 1770, after an eight-year silence. It relates, "We still continue to keep up our Little Meeting on first days, and although our Numbers are but few, we comfort ourselves together in that most gracious Promise of our blessed Saviour that where two or three are gather[ed] together in his Name He'd be in the midst of them; the verification of which we are earnest for, & I hope in measure experience" (BYMFH, London Yearly Meeting Papers, 1770, no. 8 Misc.).

Yet slavery may have still had a role in the demise of the Tortola meeting. The enslaved people of members are nearly invisible in the meetings records, but (as discussed in chapter 7) there are a few indications that at least some felt both "bond and free" to be included in the community on some level. The rumblings that represent the nascent antislavery movement among Quakers abroad, at the time more expressed as paternalism compatible with this inclusive sentiment, must have been heard by BVI Quakers, as they received the 1758 and 1760 printed epistles from London, which contain explicit antislavery sentiments, although not particularly strident ones or ones demanding immediate, specific action.

However vague, those letters suggest an interpretation of Quakerism not

compatible with slavery and may have even hinted at the idea of abandoning slavery. Even the mention of such an idea would have pulled violently and differently at the two factions in BVI Quakerism described above. For some of the wealthiest—who had other resources, owned productive (thus salable) lands, and had connections abroad—such a sacrifice would have seemed onerous, but it would have also connected them to the historic martyrs who had suffered losses for their Quaker faith in a way directly supporting their vision of a disciplined Quakerism of the godly separated from the world. It would have drawn them closer to the community of Friends elsewhere in a way their focus on persecutions suggests they would have wanted. It would have at least been thinkable.

That the wealthy Quakers would have at least considered freeing their enslaved people as a possibility is suggested by the fact that Samuel and Mary Hunt Nottingham, wealthier members of the core meeting leadership, actually did so, freeing at least some of those they held, leaving them their Long Look plantation on which to live and retiring with other wealth first to Long Island, New York, then in 1778 to England (Harrigan and Varlack 1975: 24–25; Jenkins 1923; Truman et al. 1844: 36–40). John Coakley Lettsom, a child of but not a member of the Tortola meeting, is also said to have freed those he held, although (as discussed in chapter 2) this may not have been as straightforward as his memoir suggests.

While it is doubtful that many of the wealthy Quakers seriously considered putting this idea into effect, it is more likely in their case than it is for the poorer members of Caribbean society. Without their enslaved people, they had little or no capital (as evidenced by John Coakley Lettsom's inheritance from his father, Edward, which consisted entirely of enslaved people) and nothing to fall back on. If John Coakley Lettsom did really forgo any economic advantage from this inheritance, he did so only after benefiting from it in other ways, receiving an education equipping him to earn a substantial living independent of owning people. But the danger of ending slavery would have been more than economic for the poorer members of the meeting, more than the loss of any social advancement they had achieved. The above discussion of how Mary and Edward Lettsom constructed their Quakerness (along with their whiteness and what social privilege they did possess) through a particular kind of differentiation from the enslaved people also clarifies how distasteful, indeed frightening, the antislavery ideas coming from London must have been to the poor BVI Quakers. Not only did the enslaved embody their own economic well-being but also the end of the distinction around which they had built their identities would be

a threat on another level entirely. Just as the wealthier members' Quaker identities were global and tied up with sacrifice, so too were the Quaker identities of poorer members tied up with slavery.

So perhaps the final split in the meeting, the one that led to the end of the formal meetings for business in 1762, was occasioned, ironically, by the consideration of equality with the enslaved people in a more modern sense than the poorer members of the group were able to accept. If emancipation was a possibility for the wealthy, who could sell their valuable lands and move to somewhere they had connections in family or trade, defining themselves as Quaker in opposition to the other planters, it was not so for the poor. For them, Quakerism was explicitly formed in opposition to the enslaved. If the Quakerism of Tortola's wealthy came to represent social control, perhaps even to the extent of suggesting that members free their enslaved people, this may have given rise to a fundamental contradiction for those members who saw the identities of Quaker, white, and slaveholder as mutually constituted. If connections abroad started to come with the strings of reconsidering slavery, they no longer offered an advantage.

Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine provides an example; in her time of need, because no support was offered, she was quick to reject meetings for business taking place at the meetinghouse, the main instrument of direct control, even while she maintained her own ideas of living a Quakerly life. It may not be a coincidence that Mary was first "treated with" for avoiding meetings in June 1759 (TMM Minutes 7:53), a year after the first printed letter from London with a warning against the slave trade was read in the Tortola meeting, in May 1758. When London began, in the late 1750s and early 1760s, the long process that would lead to true antislavery agitation a generation later, the suggestion of any interference may have been too much for some—who had not only vested all of what wealth they possessed in the bodies of the enslaved Africans but also built their religious, racial, and social identities on their backs—to accept.

Mundane Ritualizations and the Archaeology of Religion

In the historic era, we have books that explain what it is to be a member of a religious group—the Bible, the Quran, and for Quakers a book called the *Rules of Discipline* or, later, *Faith and Practice* (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1797, 1997). I argue that understanding of a religion can begin with these written works but must be complicated and extended by a focus on the context in which people live their daily lives (the site where they interpret these books) and the choices

they make. Evaluating the actions of the inhabitants of Little Jost and neighboring islands in the context of the British Virgin Islands and the history of Quakerism suggests not only many ties to Quaker practice elsewhere but also new interpretations of it.

At the outset of this volume, I suggest that one goal is to interrogate the nature of religious groups through the example of this community of Quakerism and this focus on context and individual action. What happened when Quakerism was lived in the eighteenth-century British Virgin Islands? In short, it became reinterpreted in a local context and recast to fit into the spaces left by other concerns. This is not inconsistency or hypocrisy but a function of the fact that religious communities are social creations, understood, performed, and brought into being by individual action, which must vary.

This view is built in large measure on the ideas of Catherine Bell (1992) and my interpretation of her notion of "ritualization." As I discuss in more detail in another work,

> Bell's approach to ritual—a concept fundamentally related to religion, although different—is to focus on action, discussing not "ritual" but "ritualization," the production of an unequal difference between sacred and secular ways of acting. For her, it is not the actions so differentiated—what have been called "the rituals"—that should be studied but rather "how such activities constitute themselves as different," as these differences are "strategic" and "value-laden" for members of a group (Bell 1992: 90). The focus becomes not a particular action but a quality of being "ritualized" that some actions possess. (Chenoweth 2014: 96)

While Catherine Bell saw ritualization as a strategy "for the construction of a limited and limiting power relationship" (Bell 1992: 8), this can give an impression of a more coherent and agreed-upon practice of ritual than is always the case. If we apply her understanding of ritual as more flexibly practiced and not set aside from daily life to the specific historical and archaeological evidence of a particular context, we are also invited to include the more contested, ephemeral, and even fleeting efforts to evoke strategic, value-laden distinctions. Not all participants in a religious community will be in complete agreement about what values are to be emphasized and how they ought to be enacted. In fact, these actions are almost certain to be differentially performed, because efforts to "cite" (*sensu* Butler 1993) previous religious practice (key to uniting these various practices together and allowing them to make the same religious community) are never perfect. After all, all practical action can have unintended

structural consequences (Sahlins 1981). Importantly, even "imperfect" performances with unexpected consequences are no less a part of ritualization, and these actions contribute to the shape of the religion that results whatever the actor's intentions.

The differentiation of actions as sacred thus happens not only in important ceremonies in the church, mosque, or temple but also whenever religion is involved in a decision, an action, or an object in daily life. Religious groups are created not only in worship services but also in daily moments of community making or difference marking. Religion is thus a part of daily life and thus has a material aspect that is archaeologically accessible, so archaeology is needed to give us a window into these variable acts of group creation and their relations to the local contexts in which these ritualized differentiations are drawn.

In this case, the local social, economic, and geographic context of the British Virgin Islands appears to have had a central role in determining how Quaker identities were constructed and contested. Clearly the context of Caribbean slavery affected the Lettsoms' and others' interpretation of Quaker values. Simplicity, equality, and peace were constructed as important features of Quaker identity but not in the same way they were enacted elsewhere. Simplicity and equality coexisted with a need for differentiation from the enslaved and a desire for social climbing among the planter class. Among members, simplicity took shape as industry and thrift, while equality was understood differently by different social strata. In the eighteenth-century Caribbean, economics were racialized, and so this negotiation served to create Quakerness, whiteness, and economic status all at once. The peace testimony became the ground on which to build connections to Quaker martyrs of the past and therefore to Quakers in London, but weapons continued to be a necessity for "Self Preservation or defending . . . Country or Interest in a Just Cause"—including, apparently, enslavement.

Concern for a Quaker community was important, and this was set in stone in the fabric of the group's meetinghouses, which received disproportionate focus. Community was reinforced through actions as substantial as marriage partner choice in the long-running practice of Quaker endogamy, but also in mundane moments of choice in food, drink, and ceramics. Although the specific forms of ritualization differed in the Caribbean, the focus on Quaker community was much like that elsewhere. But in the British Virgin Islands, concern for this community was balanced, particularly for the more vulnerable members of the group, with a concern to maintain a different kind of equality: connections to other planters. In turn, this community was accomplished via inequality, en-

forcing a racial identity that for some turned out to be more important than a religious one. One Quaker community certainly did exist in Tortola—why else would we be discussing it two and a half centuries after its end?—but that community (like any other) was not one of agreement: a recapitulation of ritual forms or a following of prescribed rules. It was actively created and argued over.

Not only is religion visible in the archaeological analysis of daily life but the consideration of religion is vitally important for understanding archaeological results on sites like Little Jost van Dyke. What was the Quaker community to these different players? It varied tremendously: for Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine, it was a community of support and assistance as well as religious fellow-feeling, while for the enslaved people of Little Jost it was another reason for distance and difference from those who called themselves "owners." (The evidence, not discussed at length here, suggests that they benefited from this distance, building a level of material well-being independent from and not substantially lower than that of the Lettsom-Taines.) For some in the core of the meeting structure, the meeting was a community of benign guidance and paternalistic control even within the exclusive community of whiteness, and as this study suggests, the Lettsoms and perhaps other poorer and out island residents were expected to play subordinate roles, obeying the commands from those who were their religious as well as social "betters." For a time, Mary and Edward Lettsom did, at least in some ways, make the proper performances to gain membership and access to government, trade, and other connections that directly benefited them. In the end, however, Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine—in what might be seen as a very Quakerly spirit by some—chose her own interpretation of the meeting's role in her life over that of the economic and social core, propelling herself out of the meeting organization and at the same time out of written history. Her death is not recorded, even by her famous son, educated through Quaker connections and money appropriated from the enslaved people with whom she shared Little Jost van Dyke.

Ultimately, as I suggest above, the way religious groups define and create themselves on the local scale (through archaeologically accessible daily interactions) is a fundamental part of the larger thing we refer to as a "religion." These are the means by which ritualization occurs and moments, places, and things are made sacred, in and through the profanity of daily life. Local interpretations and mundane enactments are not "variations on a theme" or incorrect versions of a real, larger thing—usually assumed to be from written works. Local religious practice is *all there is* under the heading of religion, and anthropologies of religion can and should look to daily life to form our picture of it.

In this work, exploring the fault lines of religious, racial, and class identities in the British Virgin Islands has enabled me to trace the impact of local context on religious practice. Under a practice-centered perspective, we can have no illusions of grand unified theories of human social relations; this discussion does not attempt to explain religion in every context. Instead, the goal is to show how Quakerism was created and contested locally in one place and time in the hope that the complexities of this process will be of use in understanding other contexts. Quakerism was changed in the Caribbean, even as it changed the lives of all the people considered here. Charting these changes has, in turn, provided a different view on the nature of religions and religious identities. Rather than being a static pigeonhole into which people can be placed, a religion—like any other social grouping—is, in the words of Bruno Latour (2005: 31), the "provisional product of a constant uproar made by the millions of contradictory voices about what a group is." We can seek those voices in material culture as much as elsewhere.

APPENDIX A

Statistical Tables for the British Virgin Islands in 1815 and 1823

THESE FIGURES WERE PUBLISHED in 1826 in a report on "Captured Negroes"—people taken by force to the Caribbean for slavery but whose trade was deemed to be illegal by British Admiralty courts because of the Abolition Act ending the slave trade in 1807. Some of those people were settled in Tortola, but there was much debate about this practice. The data are presented here as published except that some capitalization has been altered to modern usage, the data for the two separate years and on different topics have been separated into multiple tables for clarity, and a few errors have been fixed (these are indicated with notes). Some additional data, calculated using the original figures presented here, are also included and indicated with notes. The contemporary estimates for all the islands' sizes are substantially off from modern measurements, but the charts nonetheless provide rare if somewhat rough insight into land use and economic life in the British Virgin Islands in the early nineteenth century, particularly for the smaller islands, and in some cases this can be informative for our period of focus three-quarters of a century earlier.

Table A.1. Land use in the British Virgin Islands in 1815, by island

Island	Extent of the islands (acres)[a]	Canes in cultivation (acres)	Cotton cultivated (acres)	Provisions cultivated (acres)	Pasture land (acres)	Forrest and brushwood (acres)	Barren land (acres)	Salt ponds (acres)
Anegada	21,200	—	90	55	12,000	4,500	3,700	655
Tortola	13,300	3,125	95	1,100	6,458	1,800	700	22
Spanish Town [Virgin Gorda]	9,500	—	145	230	6,500	1,523	1,100	2
Jos. van Dykes	3,200	—	140	112	1,800	748	400	—
Peter's Island	1,890	—	125	75	1,290	155	245	—
Beef Island	1,560	—	110	67	980	270	120	13
Guana Island	1,120	—	120	56	750	104	90	—
Norman's Island	950	—	58	22	655	165	50	—
Cooper's Island	930	—	25	32	520	185	168	—
Great Camanoe	850	—	35	15	350	290	160	—
Ginger Island	740	—	5	7	435	198	95	—
Great Thatch	670	—	3	6	435	120	106	—
Scrubb Island	650	—	—	—	25	575	50	—
Salt Island	450	—	45	16	160	55	151	23
Prickley Pear	450	—	2	5	15	375	53	—

Moskitio Island	280	—	—	—	254	25	1	—
Little Jos. van Dykes	222	—	3	7	94	106	12	—
Little Thatch Island	130	—	—	—	—	123	7	—
Frenchman's Key	125	—	5	17	45	42	16	—
Necker Island	66	—	—	—	30	27	8	1
Great Tobago	54	—	2	3	7	35	7	—
Brick Island	50	—	1	3	11	17	14	4
Little Camanoe	35	—	6	13	12	3	1	—
Dead Chest	32	—	—	—	29	—	3	—
Great Dog	30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Tobago	23	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Seal Dog	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eustasia	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dog Island	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sandy Island	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Round Rock	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Dog	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Witch, or Great Pelican Isle	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puppy Island	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

(*continued*)

(Table A.1.—*continued*)

Island	Extent of the islands (acres)[a]	Canes in cultivation (acres)	Cotton cultivated (acres)	Provisions cultivated (acres)	Pasture land (acres)	Forrest and brushwood (acres)	Barren land (acres)	Salt ponds (acres)
Green Island	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flannegan Island	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Broken Jerusalem	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marina Island	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nanny's Island	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Green Island	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whistling Key	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jos. Van Dyke's Key	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Pelican Key	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seal Dog	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Seal Dog	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wickham's Key	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paraqueta Island	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dildo Key	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bellamy Key	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	58,653	3,125	1,015	1,841	32,855	11,441	7,257	720

Source: HCPP 1826 (no. 81) XXVII:110–15.
[a] These estimates are substantially off from modern measurements.

Table A.2. Land use in the British Virgin Islands in 1823, by island

Island	Extent of the islands (acres)[a]	Canes in cultivation (acres)	Cotton cultivated (acres)	Provisions cultivated (acres)	Pasture land (acres)	Forrest and brushwood (acres)	Barren land (acres)	Salt ponds (acres)
Anegada	21,200	—	110	60	12,200	4,475	3,700	655
Tortola	13,300	2,400	86	1,170	7,122	1,800	700	22
Spanish Town [Virgin Gorda]	9,500	—	115	200	6,560	1,523	1,100	2
Jos. van Dykes	3,200	—	110	120	1,822	748	400	—
Peter's Island	1,890	—	110	70	1,310	155	245	—
Beef Island	1,560	—	96	72	989	270	120	13
Guana Island	1,120	—	136	64	726	104	90	—
Norman's Island	950	—	60	23	650	167	50	—
Cooper's Island	930	—	30	40	507	185	168	—
Great Camanoe	850	—	50	40	310	290	160	—
Ginger Island	740	—	—	—	—	645	95	—
Great Thatch	670	—	36	48	368	112	106	—
Scrubb Island	650	—	—	—	25	575	50	—
Salt Island	450	—	63	26	132	55	151	23
Prickley Pear	450	—	10	30	20	356	34	—

(*continued*)

(Table A.2.—*continued*)

Island	Extent of the islands (acres)[a]	Canes in cultivation (acres)	Cotton cultivated (acres)	Provisions cultivated (acres)	Pasture land (acres)	Forrest and brushwood (acres)	Barren land (acres)	Salt ponds (acres)
Moskitio Island	280	—	—	5	249	25	1	—
Little Jos. van Dykes	222	—	5	9	90	106	12	—
Little Thatch Island	130	—	—	—	—	123	7	—
Frenchman's Key	125	—	—	2	65	42	16	—
Necker Island	66	—	—	—	30	27	8	1
Great Tobago	54	—	—	—	—	47	7	—
Brick Island	50	—	2	4	12	14	14	4
Little Camanoe	35	—	6	15	10	3	1	—
Dead Chest	32	—	12	2	15	—	3	—
Great Dog	30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Tobago	23	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Seal Dog	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eustasia	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dog Island	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sandy Island	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Round Rock	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Dog	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Witch, or Great Pelican Isle	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puppy Island	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Green Island	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flannegan Island	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Broken Jerusalem	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marina Island	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nanny's Island	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Green Island	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whistling Key	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jos. Van Dyke's Key	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Pelican Key	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seal Dog	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Seal Dog	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wickham's Key	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paraqueta Island	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dildo Key	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bellamy Key	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	58,653	2,400	1,037	2,000	33,212	11,847	7,238	720

Source: HCPP 1826 (no. 81) XXVII:110–15.

[a] These estimates are substantially off from modern measurements.

Table A.3. Livestock and population in the British Virgin Islands in 1815, by island

Island	Horses	Mules and asses	Horned cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs	Poultry	White inhabitants	Free colored	Slaves
Anegada	10	—	65	220	126	54	705	12	14	115
Tortola	156	631	750	4,325	860	1,650	33,710	296	681	5,765
Spanish Town [Virgin Gorda]	31	6	225	1,200	150	167	3,695	102	130	507
Jos. van Dykes	12	—	273	624	123	63	2,140	25	32	371
Peter's Island	5	—	61	170	43	47	900	23	25	132
Beef Island	5	—	22	150	21	17	710	12	—	130
Guana Island	2	—	16	145	22	13	620	7	12	105
Norman's Island	8	—	2	44	12	5	170	—	—	34
Cooper's Island	1	—	3	21	12	31	125	—	—	25
Great Camanoe	—	—	9	8	7	5	95	1	6	12
Ginger Island	—	—	26	37	3	1	25	—	—	5
Great Thatch	—	—	51	143	11	2	20	—	—	4
Scrubb Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Salt Island	—	—	26	12	111	17	155	3	12	16
Prickley Pear	—	—	2	3	2	1	15	—	—	3
Moskitio Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Jos. van Dykes	—	—	—	4	2	2	25	—	—	5
Little Thatch Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frenchman's Key	—	—	7	12	8	9	290	3	21	36
Necker Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Tobago	—	—	2	4	2	1	25	—	—	5
Brick Island	—	—	—	16	6	—	30	—	3	3
Little Camanoe	—	—	2	6	4	—	80	2	2	12
Dead Chest	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Tobago	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Island	Horses	Mules and asses	Horned cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs	Poultry	White inhabitants	Free colored	Slaves
Eustasia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dog Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sandy Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Round Rock	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Witch, or Great Pelican Isle	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puppy Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Green Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flannegan Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Broken Jerusalem	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marina Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nanny's Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Green Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whistling Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jos. Van Dyke's Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Pelican Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wickham's Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paraqueta Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dildo Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bellamy Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	230	637	1,542	7,144	1,525	2,085	43,535	486	938	7,285

Source: HCPP 1826 (no. 81) XXVII:110–15.

Table A.4. Livestock and population in the British Virgin Islands in 1823, by island

Island	Horses	Mules and asses	Horned cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs	Poultry	White inhabitants	Free colored	Slaves
Anegada	14	—	78	1,100	130	60	800	22	29	109
Tortola	174	526	1,720	6,230	2,200	1,340	32,550	326	985	4,845
Spanish Town [Virgin Gorda]	27	3	270	1,500	180	200	5,775	98	221	435
Jos. van Dykes	15	—	320	1,200	150	70	2,550	34	76	396
Peter's Island	3	—	65	240	56	42	805	13	32	116
Beef Island	3	—	30	360	32	16	700	8	2	148
Guana Island	2	—	12	280	30	5	930	5	17	164
Norman's Island	3	—	31	205	34	11	205	6	—	35
Cooper's Island	2	—	7	51	18	12	290	—	3	45
Great Camanoe	—	—	10	22	9	3	205	6	6	35
Ginger Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Thatch	—	—	38	160	12	3	260	3	3	46
Scrubb Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Salt Island	—	—	—	—	340	45	575	5	55	49
Prickley Pear	—	—	4	6	5	2	70	3	—	11
Moskitio Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Jos. van Dykes	—	—	—	6	5	3	50	—	3	7
Little Thatch Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frenchman's Key	—	—	8	21	9	13	95	1	11	7
Necker Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Tobago	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brick Island	—	—	—	21	8	—	30	—	2	4
Little Camanoe	—	—	4	10	7	—	105	3	3	15
Dead Chest	—	—	—	30	—	—	35	—	—	7
Great Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Tobago	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Island	Horses	Mules and asses	Horned cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs	Poultry	White inhabitants	Free colored	Slaves
Eustasia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dog Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sandy Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Round Rock	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Witch, or Great Pelican Isle	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puppy Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Green Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flannegan Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Broken Jerusalem	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marina Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nanny's Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Green Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whistling Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jos. Van Dyke's Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Pelican Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wickham's Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paraqueta Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dildo Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bellamy Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	243	529	2,597	11,442	3,225	1,825	46,030[a]	533	1,448	6,474

Source: HCPP 1826 (no. 81) XXVII:110–15.

[a] Originally given as 44,030 because of a typographical error.

Table A.5. Productivity and exports in the British Virgin Islands in 1815, by island

Island	Sugar produced (cwt.)	Rum produced (gal.)	Cotton produced (lb.)	Salt made (bu.)	Fish caught (lb.)	Estimated annual value of the preceding produce (£)	Estimated value of exports (£)	Exports per acre (£)[a]
Anegada	—	—	15,600	4,200	154,336	2,473	1,320	0.12
Tortola	25,000	112,000	15,000	—	365,008	77,955	55,750	5.86
Spanish Town [Virgin Gorda]	—	—	18,300	—	269,696	4,989	1,215	0.53
Jos. van Dykes	—	—	21,000	—	312,368	4,249	1,960	1.33
Peter's Island	—	—	18,600	—	98,560	2,103	1,195	1.11
Beef Island	—	—	22,800	130	51,744	2,023	1,177	1.30
Guana Island	—	—	25,500	—	45,248	1,941	1,297	1.73
Norman's Island	—	—	7,500	—	24,640	669	426	0.70
Cooper's Island	—	—	3,300	—	9,072	417	165	0.45
Great Camanoe	—	—	4,300	—	6,944	357	229	0.42
Ginger Island	—	—	600	—	1,792	160	30	0.22
Great Thatch	—	—	350	—	1,456	261	220	0.39
Scrubb Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Salt Island	—	—	3,500	3,300	21,616	734	472	1.63
Prickley Pear	—	—	300	—	1,120	54	15	0.12
Moskitio Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Jos. van Dykes	—	—	450	—	1,792	71	26	0.32
Little Thatch Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frenchman's Key	—	—	950	—	43,000	372	157	2.98
Necker Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Tobago	—	—	350	—	1,792	51	20	0.94
Brick Island	—	—	200	—	2,240	48	15	0.96
Little Camanoe	—	—	900	—	5,824	152	57	4.34
Dead Chest	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Tobago	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Island	Sugar produced (cwt.)	Rum produced (gal.)	Cotton produced (lb.)	Salt made (bu.)	Fish caught (lb.)	Estimated annual value of the preceding produce (£)	Estimated value of exports (£)	Exports per acre (£)[a]
Great Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eustasia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dog Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sandy Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Round Rock	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Witch, or Great Pelican Isle	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puppy Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Green Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flannegan Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Broken Jerusalem	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marina Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nanny's Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Green Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whistling Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jos. Van Dyke's Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Pelican Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wickham's Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paraqueta Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dildo Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bellamy Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	25,000	112,000	159,500	7,630	1,418,248	99,079[b]	65,746	—

Source: HCPP 1826 (no. 81) XXVII:110–15.
[a] Additional data based on original numbers but not in original chart.
[b] Originally given as 99,088 because of an error in addition.

Table A.6. Productivity and exports in the British Virgin Islands in 1823, by island

Island	Sugar produced (cwt.)	Rum produced (gal.)	Cotton produced (lb.)	Salt made (bu.)	Fish caught (lb.)	Estimated annual value of the preceding produce (£)	Estimated value of exports (£)
Anegada	—	—	21,000	4,000	188,281	2,413	985
Tortola	22,000	98,560	13,500	—	338,728	40,043	22,249
Spanish Town [Virgin Gorda]	—	—	14,000	—	281,376	3,711	625
Jos. van Dykes	—	—	17,000	—	365,658	3,711	625
Peter's Island	—	—	16,300	—	88,756	1,317	675
Beef Island	—	—	20,000	120	57,574	1,270	625
Guana Island	—	—	27,000	—	67,871	1,408	757
Norman's Island	—	—	8,000	—	29,713	570	251
Cooper's Island	—	—	4,000	—	17,418	376	116
Great Camanoe	—	—	6,900	—	14,984	403	197
Ginger Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Thatch	—	—	5,400	—	18,928	528	232
Scrubb Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Salt Island	—	—	2,300	2,700	80,220	814	392
Prickley Pear	—	—	1,200	—	5,226	173	31
Moskitio Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Jos. van Dykes	—	—	750	—	3,584	74	27
Little Thatch Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frenchman's Key	—	—	—	—	15,616	100	28
Necker Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Tobago	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brick Island	—	—	300	—	2,240	44	12
Little Camanoe	—	—	800	—	7,644	107	41
Dead Chest	—	—	1,800	—	2,500	77	45
Great Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Island	Sugar produced (cwt.)	Rum produced (gal.)	Cotton produced (lb.)	Salt made (bu.)	Fish caught (lb.)	Estimated annual value of the preceding produce (£)	Estimated value of exports (£)
Little Tobago	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eustasia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dog Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sandy Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Round Rock	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Witch, or Great Pelican Isle	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puppy Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Green Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flannegan Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Broken Jerusalem	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marina Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nanny's Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Green Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whistling Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jos. Van Dyke's Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Pelican Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Seal Dog	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wickham's Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paraqueta Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dildo Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bellamy Key	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	22,000	98,560	160,250	6,820[a]	1,586,317[b]	57,139	27,913

Source: HCPP 1826 (no. 81) XXVII:110–15.

[a] Originally given as 5,820 because of a typographical error.

[b] Originally given as 1,585,717 because of an error in addition.

APPENDIX B

Artifacts from Excavated Contexts

Table B.1. Shellfish remains recovered

	Enslaved peoples' village			Planter house and yard			Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse		
	MNI	NISP	Weight (g)	MNI	NISP	Weight (g)	MNI	NISP	Weight (g)
Gastropods									
Astraea tecta (American star shell)	1	4	2.92	4	24	88.52	—	—	—
Astraea tuber (green star shell)	4	4	23.99	16	29	174.05	—	—	—
Charonia variegate (Atlantic triton)	—	—	—	1	1	63.31	—	—	—
Cittarium pica (West Indian top shell, locally called "whelk")	54	671	812.11	199	1,570	2,970.16	1	15	74.67
Columbella mercatoria (common dove shell)	1	2	1.69	—	1	1.24	—	—	—
Cyphoma gibbosum (flamingo tongue)	—	—	—	1	2	2.03	—	—	—
Cypraea sp. (cowry)	1	1	0.66	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cypraea zebra (measled cowry)	—	1	7.57	—	2	2.31	—	—	—
Leucozonia nassa (chestnut latirus)	—	—	—	1	1	2.4	—	—	—
Nerita sp. (nerite)	2	8	2.34	33	87	66.98	—	—	—
Oliva sp. (olive shell)	3	5	5.85	9	11	18.74	—	—	—
Polinices lacteus (milk moon shell)	1	1	1.2	4	4	3.84	—	—	—
Purpura patula (wide-mouthed purpura)	1	2	2.81	1	1	0.99	—	—	—
Cerithiidae (Cerith family)	16	19	5.09	33	46	13.68	—	—	—
Fissurellidae (Keyhole Limpet family)	6	7	3.39	29	34	10.67	—	—	—
Acmaeidae (Limpet family)	17	23	3.46	29	32	8.14	—	—	—
Muricidae (murex, large)	—	—	—	1	11	85.69	—	—	—
Muricidae (murex, small)	1	1	0.61	—	2	0.48	—	—	—

Strombus sp. (conch)	3	40	212.97	5	64	403.06	—	1	30.59
Thais sp. (rock shell)	—	3	11.02	—	2	0.98	—	—	—
Tectarius muricatus (beaded periwinkle)	4	4	1.66	26	26	22.83	—	—	—
Littorinidae (Periwinkle family)	1	1	0.39	—	—	—	—	—	—
Trivia sp. (trivia)	1	1	0.35	4	4	1.78	—	—	—
Turbo castanea (chestnut turban)	1	1	0.42	2	2	2.63	—	—	—
Vermetidae (Sea Worm Shell family)	n/a	1	0.53	n/a	4	0.96	n/a	—	—
Bivalves									
Acar domingensis (white miniature ark)	—	—	—	1	6	1.16	—	—	—
Arca zebra (turkey wing ark)	—	—	—	4	11	8.49	—	—	—
Codakia orbicularis (tiger lucine)	2	13	23.05	19	98	192.66	1	2	4.09
Cyrtopleura costata (angel wing)	—	2	0.97	—	1	0.19	—	—	—
Isognomon alatus (flat tree oyster)	—	—	—	4	8	0.96	—	—	—
Lucina pensylvania (Pennsylvania lucine)	—	—	—	1	2	4.41	—	—	—
Tellinidae (Tellin family)	4	7	3.13	9	16	15.31	—	—	—
Class Bivalvia (unidentified bivalve)	—	146	59.22	1	571	290.04	—	14	10.4
Other									
Chitonidae (Chiton family)	1	6	6.58	19	145	85.85	—	—	—
Assorted coral species	n/a	232	313.34	n/a	414	1,182.24	n/a	2	1.63
Barnacle cluster fragments	3	213	59.17	7	311	83.08	—	2	0.45
Class Echinoidea (sea urchin)	—	—	—	—	10	0.88	—	—	—
Unidentified shell	3	749	346.54	7	1,663	913.25	—	21	6.5

Table B.2. Animal bones recovered

	Planter house and yard		Enslaved peoples' village		Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse	
	NISP		NISP		NISP	
Fish						
Rhizoprionodon porosus (Caribbean sharpnose shark)	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Clupeidae (sardines)	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Scorpaenidae (scorpionfish)	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Serranidae (groupers)	30	5%	1	3%	0	0%
Carangidae (jacks)	10	2%	1	3%	0	0%
Lutjanus sp. (snappers)	11	2%	2	6%	0	0%
Haemulidae (grunts)	11	2%	2	6%	0	0%
Archosargus sp. (seabream)	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Calamus sp. (porgies)	7	1%	1	3%	0	0%
Bodianus sp. (hogfish)	6	1%	1	3%	0	0%
Scaridae (parrotfish)	12	2%	13	39%	0	0%
Acanthurus coeruleus (blue tang)	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Sphyraena barracuda (great barracuda)	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Scombridae (mackerel)	4	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Balistes sp. (triggerfish)	7	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Diodon sp. (porcupinefish)	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Unidentified bony fish	192	34%	5	15%	0	0%
Reptiles						
Alsophis portoricensis (Puerto Rican racer snake)	20	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Geochelone sp. (tortoise)	6	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Cheloniidae (sea turtle)	4	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Birds						
Pelecanus occidentalis (brown pelican)	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Gallus gallus (chicken)	1	0%	0	0%	5	10%
Large bird	2	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Medium bird	4	1%	0	0%	3	6%
Unidentified bird	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

	Planter house and yard		Enslaved peoples' village		Fat Hogs Bay meetinghouse	
	NISP		NISP		NISP	
Mammals						
Bos taurus (cow)	7	1%	0	0%	4	8%
Capra hircus (goat)	6	1%	1	3%	0	0%
Sus scrofa (pig)	6	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Bovidae (sheep, goat, or cattle)	10	2%	0		0	
Probable domesticates (Artiodactyla, large and medium mammals)	115	20%	1	3%	27	53%
Unidentified mammals	84	15%	3	9%	10	20%
Rattus rattus (black rat)	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	564		33		51	

Table B.3. Ceramics recovered

	Planter house and yard				Enslaved peoples' village			
	Count		Weight (g)		Count		Weight (g)	
Agate, coarse	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	4.2	1%
Astbury	1	0%	0.4	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Brick	8	2%	9.3	1%	1	0%	3.1	1%
Creamware	65	15%	78.2	11%	147	55%	246.7	44%
Jackfield	5	1%	4.4	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Lead-glazed slipware	34	8%	100.5	14%	11	4%	23.6	4%
Low-fired earthenware	40	9%	197.3	27%	0	0%	0	0%
Pearlware	14	3%	16.4	2%	68	25%	180.68	32%
Porcelain	18	4%	24.7	3%	4	1%	2.5	0%
Redware	3	1%	3.1	0%	3	1%	4.2	1%
Stonewares (except white salt-glazed)	8	2%	24.3	3%	2	1%	50.6	9%
Tin enameled	165	38%	215.43	29%	7	3%	13.1	2%
Whieldon	3	1%	5.6	1%	1	0%	0.6	0%
Whiteware	3	1%	1.6	0%	8	3%	9.6	2%
White salt-glazed stoneware	69	16%	56.31	8%	14	5%	20.61	4%

Table B.4. Glass recovered

	Planter house and yard				Enslaved peoples' village			
	Count[a]		Weight (g)		Count[a]		Weight (g)	
Clear glass								
Demijohn	1	1%	6.9	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Flat/case	8	6%	6.3	2%	15	17%	4.5	2%
Round	8	6%	6.9	2%	1	1%	1.3	1%
Small round	8	6%	24.7	6%	0	0%	0	0%
Stemware	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	14.9	6%
Unknown form	29	20%	11.1	3%	8	9%	4.1	2%
"Black" or green glass								
Case	4	3%	17.2	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Flat/case	2	1%	2.8	1%	1	1%	1.6	1%
Round	52	36%	310.3	75%	16	18%	177.2	70%
Small round	1	1%	0.4	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Unknown form	32	22%	28.9	7%	47	53%	49.1	19%
Total	145		415.5		89		252.7	

Note: Form is identified where it could be determined from the fragments.
[a] Counts reflect fragments, not minimum number of vessels (MNV), because the scattered and fragmented nature of the deposits made reconstruction impossible.

NOTES

Chapter 1. Introduction: "In the Bowels of Our Lord"

1. Methodism became a major force in the British Virgin Islands after 1789, when the first missionaries arrived in Tortola, and these missionaries were friendly with Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie, a former member of Tortola's Quaker community then living on St. Croix, but there is not enough evidence to clearly ally BVI Quakers with one or another of these divisions of Quakerism, both nascent during the time of the Tortola meeting.

Chapter 2. Contexts: The History and Archaeology of the British Virgin Islands and Their Meeting

1. The documentary record of the British Virgin Islands is fragmentary and often opaque, as noted above, and some confusion is also provided by the fact that women are generally subject to name changes upon marriage or remarriage. There are also some very popular names in this community, such as Edward, John, Mary, and Dorcas, resulting in frequent repetitions of both given and family names. Wherever necessary, therefore, I use the somewhat unwieldy extended form of a woman's name, incorporating her maiden name (if known) and all her known later husbands' names, not to indicate (as such a practice may have in the eighteenth century) that her existence is a function of her husband's but simply for clarity.

2. The records of the Tortola Monthly Meeting are in a poor state of repair and thus were consulted via microfilm (Haverford College Library Quaker Collection, Microfilm Box 128) for this project. They consist of seven separate but unnumbered volumes, and reference to them is made in the order in which they appear in the microfilm, as follows. The records of the men's meeting exist in three sometimes overlapping books, numbers 1–3. Book 1 is a photostat in negative of forty-three large, rectangular folios, beginning with a very partial index and containing minutes from Ninth Month 1741 to Second Month 1762. The originals are held among William Thornton's papers at the Library of Congress. Book 2, microfilmed in the positive, contains a difficult-to-read copy of the minutes from 1750 to 1753 on only sixteen folios. Book 3 contains the minutes from Eighth Month 1759 to Ninth Month 1762 on thirty-five folios. Book 4 contains

the minutes of the women's meeting from the seventh of Twelfth Month 1741/2 to the twenty-fifth of Seventh Month 1762. The top two lines of many pages are damaged. Book 5 contains an incomplete listing of births and deaths, while book 6 is a record of "certificates," recommendations issued by the meeting for traveling Friends, although it contains only eight, mainly related to Samuel Nottingham's travels. The final book, book 7, contains miscellaneous items arranged by Gilbert Cope and includes documents received by the meeting, receipts, and copies of letters sent and received, including disownments.

3. The name "British Virgin Islands" did not come into regular use until later, and the colony is often referred to simply as "Tortola" without implying that all residents lived only on this now-most-populous island in the group.

4. As with days of the week, many Quakers refused to use common names for months of the year because of their origins celebrating pagan gods or pagan Roman emperors who claimed divinity. In general, in this book, I cite the dates as they appear in the original sources, which in the case of most Quaker records uses numbers rather than names.

Chapter 3. "Two Plantations" on the Plantation: Simplicity, Wealth, and Status

1. Jenkins (1923: 48) states that Edward Junior, like his father, had died by the time of John's return to the British Virgin Islands in 1767, but Jenkins does not provide his reason for this conclusion, and it may not be true. An Edward Lettsom signed his name as a witness to a deed in 1768 (Abraham 1933: 14), in which John Coakley Lettsom purchased the mixed-race Sam and Teresa from his stepfather, Samuel Taine. A handwritten copy of this deed is housed at the Medical Society of London (Lettsom Papers). John's brother would be an obvious candidate to witness such a document. However, there was at least one other Edward Lettsom in the British Virgin Islands: John and Edward Junior's first cousin, son of Robert and another Mary Lettsom, who was born in Tortola in 1730 and baptized in St. Christopher's in 1732 (see Chenoweth 2011: 87). In any case, the assumption made here is that Edward Junior was alive in 1767, and so John Coakley Lettsom's inheritance was half of his father's estate; if this is incorrect, then the overall point being suggested here would be reinforced, suggesting that Edward Senior's estate was even smaller than is assumed here.

Chapter 4. "Furnished with Convenience for a Meeting House": Simplicity and Meetinghouses

1. The name Pickering is common in the British Virgin Islands, and Mr. Pickering does not know of or claim any particular connection to the Quaker family of that name that once owned the same land.

2. This William Thornton is the father of William Thornton, the architect of the first U.S. Capitol building, who is discussed elsewhere in the present volume.

Chapter 5. Peace and Weaponry on BVI Quaker Sites

1. Some additional small balls of lead, probably twentieth-century shotgun pellets, were recovered as well, but these are excluded from this analysis because they are probably associated with the more recent hunting of feral goats.

2. Of the 229 bones that could be identified as mammal, 19 were clearly cow, goat, or pig; 10 were Bovidae (cattle of some sort); and 115 were Artiodactyla, even-toed ungulates. This latter group includes more than 200 species, including deer, giraffes, and llamas, but none are found in the British Virgin Islands except domesticates, so these 115 have been classed as "probable domesticates." Only 1 mammal bone, that of a black rat (*Rattus rattus*), was identified as a nondomesticate. See appendix B.

3. The gun loops observed in the British Virgin Islands are for hand weapons, however, and there is no suggestion that a cannon was mounted in any of these structures.

4. This John Lettsom was probably a brother of Edward Lettsom of Little Jost van Dyke, and thus he is not to be confused with John Coakley Lettsom, Edward's then-infant son, or with Edward's nephew John, son of Robert, who would have been only thirteen years old (see Chenoweth 2011: 87).

Chapter 6. Discipline, Community, and Conformity

1. These would be *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity: Being an Explanation and Vindication of the Principles and Doctrines of the People Called Quakers* by Robert Barclay (1678) and *No Cross, No Crown* by William Penn (1669). The third title, *Mite in the Treasury,* is less easy to identify, as the phrase is a relatively common biblical reference. The more well-known texts with similar titles, such as David Cooper's *A Mite Cast into the Treasury: or, Observations on Slave-Keeping . . .* (1772) and David Hall's *A Mite into the Treasury; or, Some Serious Remarks on That Solemn and Indispensable Duty of Duly Attending Assemblies for Divine Worship* (1758), were published after this letter was written. The most likely candidates are Elizabeth Hincks's 1671 *The Poor Widows Mite, Cast into the Lord's Treasury: Wherein Are Contained Some Reasons in the Justification of the Meetings of the People of God Called Quakers with an Approbation of Several Truths Held by Them, and the Ground of Dark Persecution Discussed* and Thomas Lawson's 1680 *A Mite into the Treasury: Being a Word to Artists, Especially Heptatechnists, the Professors of the Seven Liberal Arts; Shewing What Is Therein Owned by the People Called Quakers, and What Denied by Them.* Other possibilities are Martin Mason's *One Mite More Cast into God's Treasury, in Some Prison Meditations; or, Breathings of an Honest Heart Touching England's Condition Now at This Day* (1665) and Richard Waite's *The Widdow's Mite Cast into the Treasury of the Lord God, and Given Forth to the Upright-Hearted* (1663). If the book in question were Hincks's, it would be a notably rare occurrence to read and share a theological treatise written by a woman. It is worth considering if this might have had an impact on conceptions of gender roles within BVI Quakerism and the choices of the women Friends in Tortola, such as Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie or Mary Coakley Lettsom Taine, who asserted their will in religious and secular matters.

Chapter 7. Equality, Race, and Slavery in BVI Communities

1. This line probably references two separate biblical verses: James 3:1, in the King James version, reads "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation," while the second half may be a reference to 2 Timothy 2:12, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us."

2. Dookhan (1975: 88) provides the date of arrival for Latham as 1745, but his marriage to Dorcas Powell Latham Lillie must have taken place before her disownment, recorded in Fourth Month 1744, which was explicitly caused because she had "Intermarried with her now husband John Latham a Church Parson" (TMM Minutes 1:8).

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