



REPUBLIC OF PIRATES

BACKGROUND GUIDE

SSIC_{sim} 2018



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Welcome from the Dais

Dear delegates,

My name is Elizabeth Bobbitt, and it is my pleasure to be serving as your director for The Republic of Pirates committee. In this committee, we will be looking at the Golden Age of Piracy, a period of history that has captured the imaginations of writers and filmmakers for decades. People have long been enthralled by the swashbuckling tales of pirates, their fame multiplied by famous books and movies such as *Treasure Island*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and *Peter Pan*. But more often than not, these portrayals have been misrepresentations, leading to a multitude of inaccuracies regarding pirates and their lifestyle. This committee seeks to change this.

In the late 1710s, nearly all pirates in the Caribbean operated out of the town of Nassau, on the Bahamian island of New Providence. From there, they ravaged shipping lanes and terrorized the Caribbean's law-abiding citizens, striking fear even into the hearts of the world's most powerful empires. Eventually, the British had enough, and sent a man to rectify the situation — Woodes Rogers.

In just a short while, Rogers was able to oust most of the pirates from Nassau, converting it back into a lawful British colony. The pirates were forced to scatter and, with no established base to operate out of, the Golden Age of Piracy came to an end only a few short years later.

But perhaps we can change this.

You will be taking on the roles of Nassau's fiercest, most powerful pirates, a line-up which includes some of the most famous (or perhaps most infamous) pirates in history. Together, you will have to work together to save your Republic from being taken back by the British, and to keep your way of life alive in the Caribbean. This will be no easy task: the British are powerful, and they will be a difficult enemy to defeat. But if you cooperate, you just might be able to pull it off — while also potentially expanding your own influence over the rest of your fellow pirates.

It is my hope that you will find this committee as interesting (and informative) as I found planning it, and I look forward to meeting and working with you all this November!

Elizabeth Bobbit
The Republic of Pirates
Committee Director, SSICsim 2018



Introduction

In the year 1717, piracy reigned in the Caribbean. Gangs of lawless sailors, operating out of the Bahamas, prowled the trade routes, preying on English, French, and Spanish ships laden with goods being transported between the new and old worlds. At their most powerful, they succeeded in severing the metropolises of several empires from their colonies in the West Indies and were able to bring an entire region to a complete standstill.

Motivated by money and the promise of a better, freer life, sailors turned to piracy in droves. The period after the War of the Spanish Succession represents one of the most prolific and most infamous eras of piracy the world has ever seen. Sailors, escaping from under the thumbs of tyrannical captains, lived out lives that, though often cut short, were full of freedom.

None of this would have been possible without the town of Nassau, located on the island of New Providence in the Bahamas. Within a few short years, this small tropical town was converted from a backwater British colony to a pirate haven. By the end of 1717, Nassau was the home base of dozens of pirate crews who struck out, attacking ship after ship, leaving merchants and empires alike quaking in their boots.

Eventually, however, the British grew weary of this wayward colony and decided to send a man to remedy the situation: Woodes Rogers, famed author and privateer. Backed by a small fleet of three ships, Rogers left England with the singular goal of ridding the Bahamas of its pirate scourge.

It is in this moment that our committee begins.



Background Information

The Golden Age of Pirates

The War of the Spanish Succession began in 1701. King Charles II of Spain, inbred and infertile, had died a year prior, leaving the throne of the great Spanish Empire without an heir. His will, however, had designated a grandson of the French King Louis XIV as his inheritor, but the rest of Europe was unwilling to allow a union between the powerful nations of Spain and France, and war broke out in 1701.

By 1702, the war had reached the shores of North America.¹ Privateers, operating under letters of permission from their governments, prowled the waters, attacking any enemy ships they encountered. During the eleven years of the war, privateering became a lucrative business with sailors and other fit, young men turning to it in droves.

The war came to an end in 1713, and so too did the need for privateers. Men who had spent years raiding ships suddenly found themselves out of a job. Fed-up and destitute, many of these mariners decided to continue on in their wartime profession, attacking and plundering ships. Only this time, they would do so without a privateers' commission.

But it was not just the end of the war that led to the swell in pirates operating in the Caribbean. Spain was heavily dependent on its colonies for wealth at this time, shipping gold, silver, and other precious metals mined in the New World back to Europe in great treasure fleets. And while the galleons that made up these fleets were often well-armed, they were still big targets for pirates and privateers alike, meaning that they did not sail for several years during the war.²

The first fleet to set out for Spain after the conflict ended did so in mid-July 1715. Because it had been so long since the last treasure fleet had sailed, these ships carried an unusually valuable cargo, one worth an estimated £1,750,000.³ But only a few days out of port, the fleet was engulfed by a vicious hurricane. Most of the ships were pushed towards the Florida coast, where they struck reef and sank in shallow water or were washed up onshore and destroyed.⁴ By the time the storm cleared, ten of the eleven ships in the fleet had been wrecked and over 1,000 men had perished.⁵

A king's fortune was now scattered off the coast of Florida.

News of the wrecks spread through the colonies like the plague. It was not long before men across the region were clambering into vessels, eager to claim their piece of the prize. They needed somewhere out of which to base their operations, and the Bahamas provided just such a place — it was close to the area where most of the wrecked Spanish ships could be found and, though it was nominally British, there was no government or law, which made it perfectly suited to the needs of the raiders and pirates who came pouring in during the second half of 1715.

¹ Hugh F. Rankin, *The Golden Age of Piracy* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg, 1969), 79.

² Colin Woodward, *The Republic of Pirates: Being the True and Surprising Story of the Caribbean Pirates and the Man Who Brought Them Down* (Boston: Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015), 103.

³ Woodward, *The Republic of Pirates*, 103.

⁴ Woodward, *The Republic of Pirates*, 105.

⁵ Woodward, *The Republic of Pirates*, 106.



The Golden Age of Piracy had begun.

A Pirate's Life for Me

The lot of a sailor in the late 17th and early 18th centuries was not a fine one. Though they earned decent wages and were provided food and shelter by their employers, they were often worse off than the labourers who toiled away on land.⁶ Captains maintained absolute authority on their ships, ruling by fear and doling out punishment as they saw fit. The food supplied to sailors was often spoiled, and their wages could go unpaid for months, or even years, at a time. They slept in cramped quarters, where diseases could spread easily, and the chances of injury aboard ships were astronomically high.⁷ As a popular saying went, “those who would go to sea for pleasure would go to hell as a pastime.”⁸

It is no wonder, then, that these sailors saw piracy as an escape. As pirates, they were free. To those in charge, the pirates were scoundrels and criminals, a dangerous scourge upon the seas. But to the ordinary people of the early 18th century, they were akin to folk heroes.

The True Pirates

Life aboard a pirate vessel was almost entirely democratic. While this may seem surprising at first, it becomes less so when one remembers that many pirates turned to this life as a way to escape the tyranny they experienced serving on “honest” ships. The crew considered themselves the collective owners of whatever ship they were sailing, as it was their collective effort which had procured it.

Nearly all decisions made aboard the ship were put to a vote, including whether to fight, what course to take, and how loot was divided up. There were also elections regarding the captain and other high-ranking officers, such as the quartermaster. The captain or quartermaster could face removal and replacement if the crew at any point became displeased with their leadership.

The captain was not held above the rest of the crew. Authority was absolute only in battle; at all other times, decisions were subject to voting. No obvious signs of hierarchy were allowed, with the officers wearing the same clothes and eating the same food as the rest of the crew. At most, captains were allowed one extra share of treasure, though some received only half a share more.

All of these rights were ensured in a document known as the ship's articles, which had to be followed by everyone on board. These pirates' codes typically included rules on how loot was to be divided, punishments for certain crimes, and compensation for injuries sustained during engagements.

These laws were most often enforced by a ship's quartermaster, particularly when the offense was minor. In the event of more serious crimes, the offender was tried before a sort of pirate jury.⁹ If found guilty, the crew would then decide on a fit punishment. Execution was used only for the

⁶ Frank Sherry, *Raiders and Rebels: The Golden Age of Piracy* (New York: Hearst Marine Books, 1986), 52.

⁷ Sherry, *Raiders and Rebels*, 54.

⁸ Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates*, 36.

⁹ Sherry, *Raiders and Rebels*, 125.



most serious offenses, and punishments for other crimes depended on both the ship and the crime. The famous punishment of marooning was typically reserved only for those convicted of treason.

Pirate Values

Personal liberty was of utmost importance to the pirates. To the ordinary pirate, this meant doing what they wished, when they wished. The only work done was what was necessary to maintain and handle the ship; otherwise, they spent their time doing whatever they wanted, whether it be sleeping, drinking, or simply lazing about the deck.

None of this is to say that life aboard a pirate ship was paradise. They had to deal with the usual discomforts and dangers of life at sea, stuck in crowded, damp quarters with unappetizing food. There were also the added dangers presented by combat. Though most pirates tried to avoid a fight when they could, it was sometimes impossible.

All of this, and it was still unlikely that the average pirate would ever obtain the riches of which they dreamed. And even if a pirate did manage to amass some amount of wealth, it was usually not long before it was all spent. One of the most prevalent pirate myths is that they buried their treasure, but there is little evidence of this ever actually happening; rather, they spent their money nearly as quickly as they acquired it.

At the end of it all, what awaited most pirates was an untimely, often gruesome, death. But despite this grim fate, piracy continued undeterred throughout the oceans of the world. For it was freedom that the pirates craved, and it was freedom they would get.

A History of Nassau

The Bahamas are an archipelago of approximately seven hundred islands, cays, and islets, located to the southeast of the Floridian coast and to the north of Cuba. Before the arrival of the Europeans, the Bahamas were inhabited by the native Lucayan people, but within a few decades, most had died of disease or been enslaved.

After the forceful departure of the Lucayans, the Bahamas remained uninhabited for over a century, until 1648, when a group of English Puritans settled on the island of Eleuthera, and Bermudan settlers established a colony on the nearby New Providence Island.¹⁰

Half a century later, the War of the Spanish Succession brought ruin to the Bahamas. New Providence Island was sacked a total of four times, by both the Spanish and the French, in the first few years of the war. Nassau, the main settlement on New Providence, was almost completely destroyed in 1703.¹¹ Many of the survivors fled after that, abandoning the island; those who remained lived poorly and fearfully in small, scattered huts.

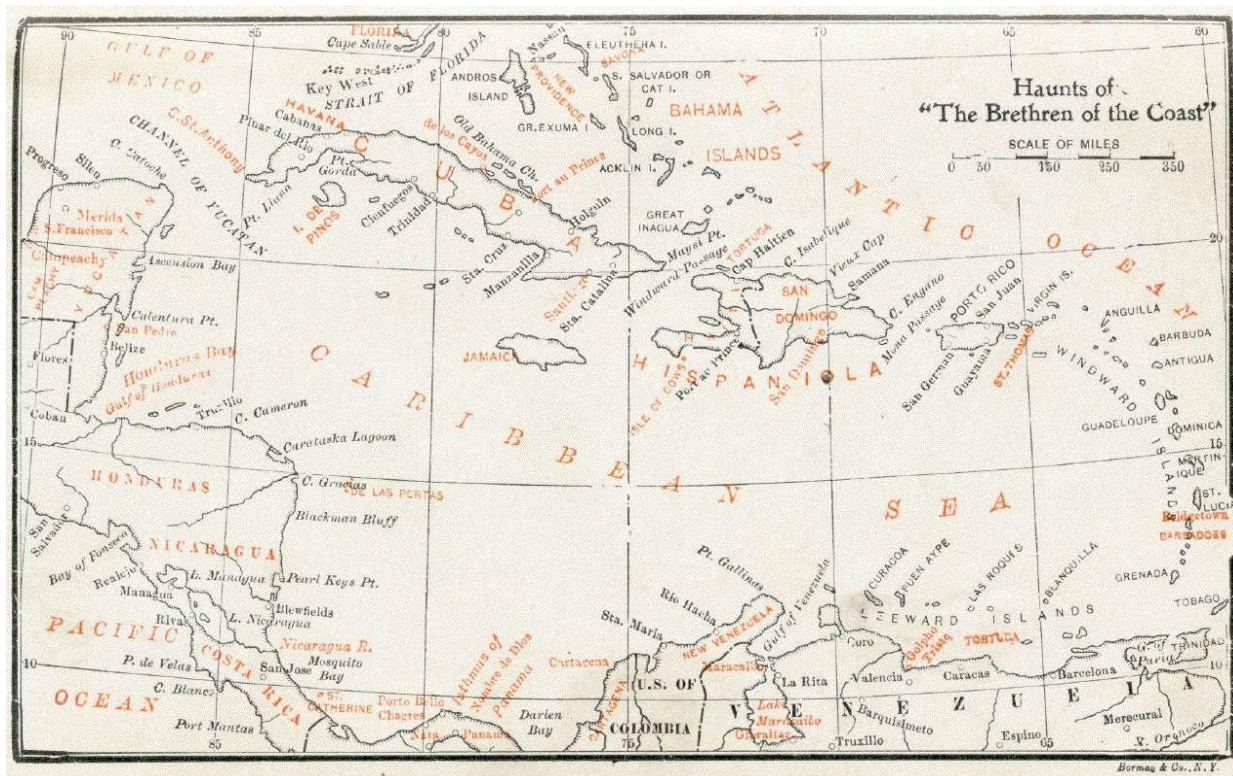
When the war ended and piracy came into fashion, it was not long before New Providence Island and the remains of Nassau attracted some unwanted attention. As previously mentioned, the island was perfectly situated to act as a base for those raiding the sunken Spanish treasure ships, and it

¹⁰ Sherry, *Raiders and Rebels*, 125.

¹¹ Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates*, 88.



was also located in the centre of some of the Caribbean's most heavily-travelled sea lanes.¹² The innumerable islands and islets provided plenty of resources and hiding spots. But the cherry on top was Nassau harbour, whose geography provided the perfect spot for the pirates to hunker down, outside of the eyes of the law.



A map of the West Indies, dated from the late 19th century but still showing many places as they were during the early 1700s. New Providence Island lies to the north, between Andros and Eleuthera islands.¹³

When Benjamin Hornigold and his men arrived in Nassau in 1713, the first of the pirates to make New Providence their home, they found some thirty-odd families struggling to survive in hovel-like houses.¹⁴ Within six months, Hornigold and his men brought in thousands of pounds worth of goods, which they sold to the inhabitants of Harbour Island, a short distance to the northeast; Richard Thompson, a wealthy Harbour Island resident, would soon become one of the leading black market traders of the age.¹⁵

By 1715, New Providence began to see an influx of new residents as the raiders and rogues seeking fortune in the sunken Spanish treasure ships began to use the island as a base. Rallying

¹² Sherry, *Raiders and Rebels*, 205.

¹³ “Haunts of the ‘Brethren of the Coast’”, a map of the time reproduced in ‘Buccaneers and Pirates of Our Coasts’ (1897),” Wikipedia, September 27, 2007.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy_in_the_Caribbean#/media/File:Hauntsofthebrethren.jpg.

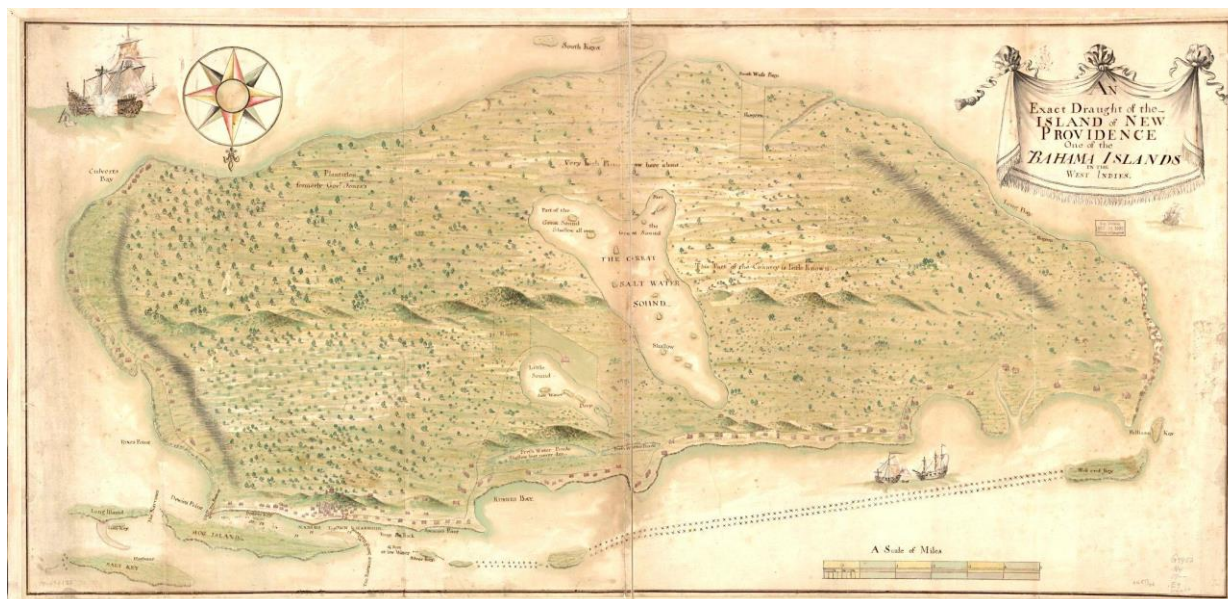
¹⁴ Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates*, 88.

¹⁵ Woodward, *The Republic of Pirates*, 90.



them together, Hornigold declared them all to be under his protection as members of the Flying Gang.

Nassau was theirs.



A map of New Providence Island in the early 18th century. The map is oriented so that the northern point of the island is at the bottom. Nassau, which lies on the northeastern side of the island, can therefore be found in the bottom left corner.¹⁶

Near the beginning of 1716, they were joined by a small flotilla of privateers-turned-pirates, captained by one Henry Jennings. He clashed immediately with Hornigold, the two becoming fast rivals, and much of the island quickly joined sides, dividing Nassau into two main factions.

Realizing how vulnerable they were, Hornigold began repair on the town's old, dilapidated fort, determined to keep the pirates safe from any attacks by the English, Spanish, or French.¹⁷ In late 1716, a large Spanish ship was armed and placed in the harbour entrance, a good addition to the town's defences.¹⁸ All the while, Nassau's population continued to grow. They received all necessary supplies and provisions from warehouses on Harbour Island, overseen by men friendly to the pirates.

One might wonder why the British Royal Navy, the most powerful naval force in the world, did nothing to stop the Flying Gang from ravaging Caribbean trade. The answer is quite simple — there was very little they could do. There were only a handful of Royal Navy ships in the Caribbean at the time. One, HMS *Shoreham*, was in such poor condition that it was practically incapable of leaving harbour, while the other, HMS *Scarborough*, was manned by a crew “all but

¹⁶ “When New Providence was Old: Mapping Bahamas History,” Rolling Harbour, December 9, 2016, <https://rollingharbour.com/2016/12/09/when-new-providence-was-old-mapping-bahamas-history/>.

¹⁷ Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates*, 141.

¹⁸ Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates*, 159.



incapacitated by disease.”¹⁹ This meant that, in all of the West Indies and New England, there were perhaps two or three ships to patrol the waters. In short, the Caribbean belonged to the pirates.

Enter Woodes Rogers.

Woodes Rogers

Woodes Rogers was born in 1679, to a father successful in the Newfoundland fishing business.²⁰ He became a privateer in 1708, leading an expedition of two ships down around the tip of South America into the Pacific, to raid and attack Spanish treasure vessels. They sailed from Bristol, England in August of that year.

The journey lasted three years, with Rogers returning to England in October 1711. He and his crew had successfully circumnavigated the world, having captured a number of ships along the way, including a French slave ship and a Spanish treasure galleon. Shortly after returning home, Rogers published his journal, titled *A Cruising Voyage Round the World*, which became a fast success.

In 1713, he began planning for his next adventure, this time to Madagascar, where he would attempt to rid the island of its nefarious pirate plague. He made only one trip out to the island, to gather intelligence, but he never returned. Instead, he decided to turn his attentions to the much more pressing issue of piracy in the West Indies. He spent most of 1717 building support for his venture, and in September of that year, the king decided that Rogers would be appointed governor of the Bahamas.

Rogers immediately set about gathering a fleet to sail against the pirates, with the 460-tonne *Delicia* as flagship and the 135-tonne *Samuel* and 75-tonne *Buck* as support, both with six guns. A fourth ship, the 300-tonne *Willing Mind*, armed with twenty guns, would carry much of the cargo.²¹

Woodes Rogers set sail for the Bahamas on April 11, 1718, determined to bring the wayward colony back into line.

¹⁹ Woodward, *The Republic of Pirates*, 195-196.

²⁰ Woodward, *The Republic of Pirates*, 44.

²¹ Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates*, 167.



Outline of Topics

Topic One: Fortification of Nassau

Work has been done in recent years to ensure that Nassau is protected against any attacks, but more still needs to be accomplished to make sure the island remains in pirate hands.

The main source of defence is Fort Nassau, which sits atop a hill overlooking the harbour. Though Hornigold and his men have put some effort into restoring it, there are still improvements that could be made. Many of the resources needed are not available on New Providence Island, and there remains the question of who will man the fort, and with what weapons. The fort is currently armed with four cannons and is overseen by Hornigold, which puts him and his crew in a powerful position on the island.

There is also the Spanish vessel that guards the harbour entrance. Renamed the *Sudden Death* and armed with thirty-two cannons, the ship is far too large and cumbersome to serve as a pirate vessel, and so it fills a dangerous hole in the island's defences. Hornigold has placed his trusted ally Edward "Blackbeard" Teach in charge of the *Sudden Death*, and he keeps it manned around the clock, ready at any moment to attack.

While these recently-added defences have made Nassau much safer than it was before, they will be less effective if the pirates of the island do not cooperate to defend their city. Hornigold and Jennings lead the two largest rival factions, each backed by other captains and crews. And while they all wish to see Nassau continue as a pirate haven, they also want to be the ones who come out on top at the end of it all, by whatever means necessary.

Topic Two: Expulsion of the British Threat

The British have had more than enough of the pirates of Nassau, and it will not be long before a small fleet arrives on the shores of New Providence Island, determined to reclaim it for England and its king. They will do whatever necessary to rid the island of its roving inhabitants, and it will be up to you, the pirates of the Flying Gang, to protect your home and your livelihood. This will be achieved by fighting off the British and making sure they do not return.

As such, strong fortifications will be absolutely necessary. But the British will not be deterred by mere firepower; negotiations will be held and deals will be attempted, and politics will play as much a part as gunpowder in saving Nassau. You must be prepared to work together to save your republic, while also keeping your own interests in mind. The chance may arise to get rid of a rival and increase your own influence, and individual deals can be cut with the British to ensure personal survival. You must be careful not to give in to in-fighting and rivalries, however, which will make you more susceptible to take-over by the British.

Getting rid of Rogers and his fleet will be no easy task. There will be skirmishes and battles, but Rogers will not give up easily. He will need to be convinced that any attempt to rout the pirates from their island will be futile, and that you have the numbers, firepower, and cohesion to keep him at bay.



Topic Three: Ensuring the Future of Piracy in the Caribbean

Even if you are successful in repelling Rogers from the Bahamas, that does not guarantee that piracy will remain safe in the future. The empires of the New World will not tolerate such terror on their waters forever, and the pirates of Nassau may soon find themselves on the receiving end of more unwelcome attention. As such, you must take care to ensure that the Republic of Pirates will be able to continue on as it has.

There are many ways that this might be accomplished, and it will be up to you as a committee to figure this out, if it is even possible. You must work together to create a nation that can stand up to the militaries and governments of three powerful states. In short, you must make the Republic more than it currently is, merely a grouping of dozens of disconnected crews and ships, each with their own leaders and rules. It must become a true player on the game board of the New World if there is to be any hope of it surviving beyond 1718.



Character Guides

Though all the characters presented here were real people, some of the information has been embellished or altered. The characters of Bartholomew Roberts, Anne Bonny, and Mary Read in particular have had their timelines adjusted to better line up with the events of this committee. A name in orange represents those allied with Benjamin Hornigold, while a name in blue represents those allied with Henry Jennings.

Benjamin Hornigold: Benjamin began his career in piracy in 1713, just months after the end of the War of the Spanish Succession. Because of his years as an English privateer, Hornigold refused to attack English ships, only ever taking French and Spanish vessels as prizes. He was the first to begin using New Providence Island as a base of operations, alongside a crew of men which most likely included a young Edward Teach. Hornigold served as a mentor to Teach, who went on to become Hornigold's most trusted right-hand-man.

Hornigold was the unofficial leader of the pirates of Nassau until 1716, when privateer-turned-pirate Henry Jennings arrived on the island. The two captains immediately sparked a rivalry which divided Nassau into two factions. Still, Hornigold maintains a large amount of influence over the pirates of Nassau, aided by his control of the town's fort. His flagship, the *Bonnet*, is a well-armed sloop-of-war and one of the most powerful vessels in the region.

Henry Jennings: Originally a wealthy merchant captain, Henry Jennings began his career as privateer in 1715 when, under the orders of the governor of Jamaica, he sailed to the wrecks of the Spanish treasure ships intending to loot them. Instead, he raided the nearby Spanish salvage camp, walking off with thousands of pounds worth of gold and silver. His intention was not to become a pirate, but when he seized a neutral French merchant vessel in March 1716, King George was quick to brand him as such, ending his life as an honest man. Jennings moved to Nassau, where he quickly became a leading figure on the island, creating one of the two factions that developed amongst the pirates. The leader of the other faction was Benjamin Hornigold, Jennings' near-immediate rival.

Jennings is one of Nassau's most violent and merciless pirates, traits which can also be found in his mentee, Charles Vane. His ship, the *Bathsheba*, is an 80-tonne sloop, and no one on New Providence besides Hornigold wields more power than him.

Charles Vane: Charles joined the crew of privateer Henry Jennings in 1715, shortly before Jennings set off on a raid of the wrecked Spanish treasure ships near Florida. When, in March 1716, Jennings attacked a neutral French ship and was branded a pirate, the rest of his crew was branded alongside him, including Vane.

Jennings is something of a mentor to Vane, who has acted as his right-hand. Both are violent and merciless, and Vane in particular is known for his hot-headed temper. He joins Jennings in Nassau, where Jennings has gained enough influence to become the leader of one of two main factions on the island (the other being led by Benjamin Hornigold, Jennings' rival). Though the two are still aligned, Vane left Jennings' crew sometime in 1717 to start one of his own with the sloop the *Ranger*, a venture which has enjoyed immense success. Vane is one of the most powerful pirates on New Providence Island.



Edward “Blackbeard” Teach: The infamous Edward Teach, later to be known as Blackbeard, was born around 1680 in Bristol, England. He served as a privateer during the War of the Spanish Succession, after which he joined the crew of Benjamin Hornigold. Hornigold was something of a mentor to Teach, and the two worked together for many years. Teach was given control of various prizes captured by Hornigold’s crew, and he eventually received his first independent command post in the fall of 1717 when he was given control of the *Revenge*, originally belonging to Stede Bonnet. It was with this ship that he captured the 250-tonne French slaver *La Concorde*, which he promptly renamed the *Queen Anne’s Revenge*. With two ships under his command, he proceeded to terrorize the eastern Caribbean. This helped foster his intense reputation, making him one of the most ferocious pirates in Nassau.

Pausgrave Williams: Paulsgrave came from a background very different from that of most pirates — he was a wealthy silversmith from an affluent family, married with two children. But this did not stop him from partnering with Samuel Bellamy and setting off for the Spanish wrecks in 1715. They arrived to find very little of the sunken treasure galleons remaining. Unwilling to return home empty-handed, they turned to piracy. At some point in spring 1716, they encountered both Henry Jennings (then still a privateer) and Benjamin Hornigold. After stealing a large sum of treasure from Jennings, they joined Hornigold’s fleet, sailing with him for several months before setting out on their own.

Within a year, they had a crew of 250 men and two ships under their command. Williams captained the sloop-of-war the *Marianne*, while Bellamy captained the galley the *Whydah*. In March 1717, they became separated by fog, and Williams headed for their rendezvous point. But Bellamy never arrived — he had perished in a storm shortly after their separation, alongside all but two of the crew of the *Whydah*. Williams promptly returned with the *Marianne* to Nassau.

Olivier “La Buse” Levasseur: Born in Calais, France, Olivier Levasseur is the leading French pirate in Nassau. He served as a privateer on the French side during the War of the Spanish Succession, but instead of returning home at the end of the war as ordered, he became a pirate, joining Benjamin Hornigold. They raided together for several months, alongside Sam Bellamy and Paulsgrave Williams, before Levasseur, Bellamy, and Williams decided to go out on their own in late 1716.

Levasseur parted ways with Bellamy and Williams in early 1717, but the three remained close allies. Shortly after, he came into the possession of a 26-gun sloop, which he crewed with 200 men, making him one of the most powerful pirates in the Caribbean. His nickname, La Buse, means “the buzzard” in French, and he was so named because of the viciousness and speed of his attacks.

Bartholomew “Black Bart” Roberts: Born John Roberts in 1682 in Wales, Bartholomew became a pirate in 1716 after the slave ship on which he was serving was captured off the coast of West Africa. Roberts was forced to join the pirates’ crew, and though he was at first unwilling, he soon realized the advantages of the lifestyle. Less than six weeks after his capture, he was elected captain of the pirate vessel, a feat largely attributed to his skill as a navigator and his outspoken personality. He then sailed for the West Indies, where he captured numerous ships before making his way to Nassau in spring 1717. He has used the island of New Providence as a base while continuing to



raid throughout the Caribbean, sailing alongside a number of Henry Jennings' gang, including Charles Vane.

Stede Bonnet: A most unlikely pirate, Stede Bonnet was born in 1688 into one of Barbados' wealthiest families. He inherited a 400-acre estate after being orphaned as a child and, despite not knowing the first thing about sailing, decided in 1716 to commission the construction of a ship, which he named the *Revenge*. After hiring a crew, he sailed from Barbados in 1717, intending to seek out a livelihood as a pirate.

It was not long before he encountered trouble. After foolishly ordering an attack on a Spanish warship, he found half his crew either killed or injured, including himself. The *Revenge* limped to Nassau, where they were given refuge. Still injured, however, Bonnet lost control of his ship when Hornigold placed it under the command of Edward Teach. Bonnet regained command a few months later, when Teach captured the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, but he remains under Blackbeard's close supervision, untrusted as a captain and pirate.

John "Calico Jack" Rackham: Next to nothing is known of Jack Rackham's life before he became a pirate. He was one of many rank-and-file members of Charles Vane's crew, operating out of Nassau aboard the *Ranger*. Known for his habit of wearing brightly-coloured Indian Calico, he was nicknamed "Calico Jack" by the other pirates.

He became quartermaster of Vane's crew in late 1717, seemingly trusted by Vane and well-liked by the crew. His new position gives him much greater influence than he had previously enjoyed, and he intends to use it to the fullest. He was, like many pirates, self-serving, and remained loyal only so long as he could see profit. Though charismatic, he was also reckless, and these two characteristics often combined to dangerous effect.

Edward England: Originally from Ireland, Edward England was born as Edward Seegar. He served as a privateer during the War of the Spanish Succession and became a pirate after being captured and forced to join a crew. This is when he adopted the alias of Edward England, a common practice for many pirates. After his capture, he made his way to Nassau, where he took part in the salvaging of the wrecked Spanish treasure ships.

He joined Henry Jennings' crew sometime after, becoming a trusted confidant of Charles Vane. When Vane set off on his own aboard the *Ranger*, England went with him, serving for a time as his quartermaster. Though he was forced into a life of piracy, it was one for which England found he was well-adapted, and it is a way of living that he enjoys.

Anne Bonny: The famous female pirate Anne Bonny was born around 1700; her exact place of birth is unknown, with claims varying from County Cork, Ireland to South Carolina. Some believe she was born to an influential family, the daughter of lawyer William Cormac. At 16, she married small-time pirate James Bonny, and moved with him to Nassau.

There, she met and fell in love with Calico Jack Rackham. She joined him as a member of Charles Vane's crew in 1717, leaving behind her husband to go raiding aboard Vane's ship the *Ranger*. Bonny is known for her hot-headedness and temper, as well as her ferocity in a fight, which often outmatches that of her male crewmates. Though she dresses as a man, she serves openly as a woman, and makes no efforts to hide the fact.



Mary Read: Mary was born out of wedlock in 1685 in England. Her mother dressed and raised her as a boy, and later in life Read joined the British military. She supposedly fell in love with and married a fellow soldier, but after his early death, she headed for the West Indies. Her ship was captured by pirates on the way, and Read joined them willingly.

This brought her to Nassau in 1717, where she met Calico Jack Rackham and Anne Bonny, two members of Charles Vane's crew. Read and Bonny quickly became friends, and Read joined Vane's crew shortly thereafter. At this point, she stopped attempting to hide her gender and began living openly as a woman, though she continued to dress in men's clothes. She is known to be vicious both in and out of battle, with courage that often surpasses that of the men with whom she serves.

Christopher Condent: Born sometime in the 1690s, little is known about Christopher Condent's early life — even his true name is uncertain, with numerous aliases appearing in records across history, including the nickname Billy One-Hand. It is unsure how or when Condent became a pirate, but one story from his early career has him killing a fellow crew member who had threatened to blow up the powder magazine.

Shortly after this event, the pirate crew captured a merchant ship known as the *Duke of York*, of which Condent assumed captaincy. Splitting from the rest of the crew, Condent took his new ship and his men and sailed for New Providence in early 1717. There, he became fast allies with Henry Jennings and his protégé Charles Vane; he is particularly loyal to Vane, and the two cruised together for a time in the first half of 1717.

Black Caesar: Like many pirates of the era, very little is known about Black Caesar's beginnings, though many rumours abound. The most famous has him as an African chieftain who managed to evade capture by slavers for many years but was eventually tricked onto a slave ship and brought to the Americas. Before their arrival, however, a hurricane shipwrecked them; Black Caesar and a sailor were the only survivors. The pair managed to amass a large fortune as pirates by posing as shipwrecked sailors and attacking those vessels that offered help. Eventually, Black Caesar was able to hire a crew and attack ships on the open water.

He joined Blackbeard's crew in early 1717, serving as his quartermaster and right-hand. Black Caesar is a large and cunning man, able to both overpower and outwit his enemies.

Thomas Barrow: Thomas first appears in the historical record as the captain of a ship running supplies for the Royal Africa Company in 1702. Sometime later he served on a ship sailing out of Jamaica, perhaps a privateer during the war; in any case, he was removed from his post for assaulting a fellow officer. In 1715, he led a crew on a salvage mission to the wrecked Spanish treasure galleons, and shortly after he made his way to Nassau, his crew following along after him. He joined Blackbeard's crew in early 1717, serving as his There, he allied himself, if somewhat uneasily, with Benjamin Hornigold. Their relationship remained tenuous, particularly after Barrow arrogantly declared that he would be Governor of New Providence. For one reason or another, however, Barrow found himself without a ship, and was thus unable to go raiding. Despite this, he has still managed to rob two vessels in Nassau Harbour and retains some amount of influence on the island, mainly achieved through the threat of violence. This includes the extortion of money



from the few remaining non-pirate residents of the island, which ensures that all those around him know to fear him.

Christopher Moody: Christopher Moody, born in 1694, began his pirating career in the early 1710s, like many of his fellow mariners. Having been a privateer during the War of the Spanish Succession, he took up piracy after the end of the war as a way to continue making a living as a mariner. He quickly gained a reputation for his ferocity and soon became feared throughout the Caribbean. He sailed for a time alongside the French pirate Olivier “La Buse” Levasseur, and the two enjoyed much success before parting ways. Afterwards, he worked in tandem with fellow pirate captain Howell Davis, and the two were later joined by the crew of Bartholomew Roberts. The three pirates continue to work closely together; Moody and Davis in particular are close allies. Moody is known to be somewhat arrogant and flashy, as showcased by his distinct red-backed flag.

Howell Davis: Howell Davis was born in Wales around the year 1690. He spent much of his youth at sea, becoming a mate on a slaving ship, the *Cadogan*. He was serving upon this ship when it was captured by the pirate Edward England. Joining the pirates, Davis’s intelligence and slyness quickly made him a captain. He and England continued to sail together for a time before parting ways; shortly after, Davis came into the acquaintance of Christopher Moody. The two were later joined by Bartholomew Roberts.

Davis is known to be less violent than many other pirates. He does not rely as much on weapons and power as other captains, instead utilizing bribery, disguises, and trickery to achieve his goals.

Richard Worley: Richard Worley was born in the American colonies in the mid-1690s. He served as privateer during the War of the Spanish Succession, gaining many valuable skills as a sailor and leader, and like many mariners after the war, he turned to piracy. Unlike many other new pirates, however, he did not begin on the sea—rather, he began his career in piracy on the Delaware River, where he was able to capture a small sea-faring vessel. With this, he sailed down to the Caribbean, where he continued his thievery on the high seas as a member of the Flying Gang, achieving a good amount of success.

He has no strong loyalties to either faction in Nassau, though he has, for the moment, thrown in his lot with Benjamin Hornigold, as he currently holds more power over the pirate haven.



Committee Mechanics

Resources

Every member of this committee either captains a ship or is part of a ship's crew. These ships will be the main source of resources, collected through attacking and plundering other vessels. The most important of these resources are coin, crew, and armaments. Coin is procured by fencing plundered goods, and armaments such as cannons can be bought or (more likely) stolen from captured ships. Crew members are necessary to man your ship, and the more crew you have, the more powerful you are. To keep things simple, you will not be able to press men from captured ships into service. Instead, the number of sailors in your crew will be determined by a fourth resource: influence.

The wealthier and more powerful you are, the more influence you will have. Large, valuable prizes will increase your influence, and men will flock to your crew to get in on the action. There is also, of course, the question of who controls Fort Nassau and the *Sudden Death* — with either the fort or the Spanish ship (or both) on your side, your influence will increase tenfold.

Just as it can increase, however, influence can also decrease. If you make choices or take actions that reflect poorly on you, you will begin to lose the respect of your crew and your fellow pirates. If you are a captain or hold some other powerful position, this can result in you being relieved of your duties by an irate crew.

Plundering

As mentioned above, attacking and raiding ships will be the main way to accrue resources. In order to go on a cruise, you will need at least one ship and enough armed crew members to man it. Cannons are not necessary but will make it easier to take a prize. You will state your intentions to go cruising through a private directive, which will also include your destination. This will determine how long you are away; while cruising, you cannot participate in the committee or communicate with your fellow pirates. The time will vary based on where you choose to sail; for example, sailing to Cape Cod will take you away from the committee for up to fifteen minutes, while sailing to Cuba will only take you away for five. The longer you are away, however, the more likely you are to capture a better prize.

For simplicity's sake, you will only be able to capture one prize per cruise. What ships cross your path will be determined both by chance and by where you choose to sail. Be warned, however, that larger prizes with valuable cargo will be more likely to put up a fight. As such, it is not recommended to stray too far from the Bahamas if you do not have a well-armed vessel at your command.

At the end of your allotted time away, you will be told whether or not you encountered any ships and, if you did, what size they were. If the ship is small, it will be automatically assumed that you have captured it, and you will be told how much its cargo is worth. You will then be able to decide what you want to do with the captured ship and its crew, whether that be releasing them or keeping the vessel for yourself. This will be the same for larger ships that surrender immediately, though these vessels will typically not have very valuable cargo.



If you do come across a ship that has valuable cargo and decides to put up a fight, you will be given the option to engage in battle. The outcome of the battle will depend solely on how large your ship is, what armaments it has, and how many crew members you have. If you are successful in capturing it, you will be told how much its cargo was worth and will be given the choice of what to do with the ship and its crew. If you are not successful, you will have to return immediately to Nassau and will lose a percentage of resources you had with you, be it men, weapons, or even coin. If you do not wish to engage at all with such a vessel, you can simply decide to retreat, though this will send you straight back to Nassau.

You are limited in the frequency and scope of your cruises only by your resources. You also have the choice of joining together with another crew and combining your resources. This will make it more likely that you will encounter a large, valuable prize, and it will also be easier to capture such ships. Both parties must agree to such a venture before it is undertaken.

Battle

Inevitably, there will be clashes between the pirates and the British. You will be able to work together as a committee to draw up battle plans, either as a first strike against the British or as a response to an attack. The effectiveness of your strategy, along with the number of crews and ships involved, will help determine the outcome of the skirmishes. These will most likely be put forward as public or group directives, though not every member of the committee needs to take part.



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