



Enslaved women working in the field

## THE BARBADIAN CULTURAL HEARTH AND CAROLINA

It is estimated that in the early decades of settlement over half of the population of the Low Country of South Carolina was of Barbadian origin. Many of them were enslaved people of African descent. By this point in time, the cultures of the British Isles and West Africa had started to blend in Barbados. This emerging Barbadian creolized culture was taken to the Carolinas and manifested itself in various ways. One such was in architecture with the model of the single house. The core of historic Charleston preserves this linkage. Language was another area of cultural transfer. The Gullah spoken in the Low Country and Sea Islands provides another such example of shared origins. Words such as "juck" meaning to stab or "wunnah" (you plural) are still commonly used in Gullah and in Bajan.

Barbados' economic success was based largely on the labour of enslaved people. Various laws were put in place to control the slaves but in 1688, a series of repressive laws were passed, which were adopted by South Carolina and from there spread to other areas of North America.



Arlington House is a single model house located in Barbados

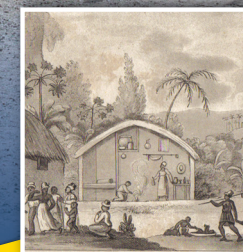
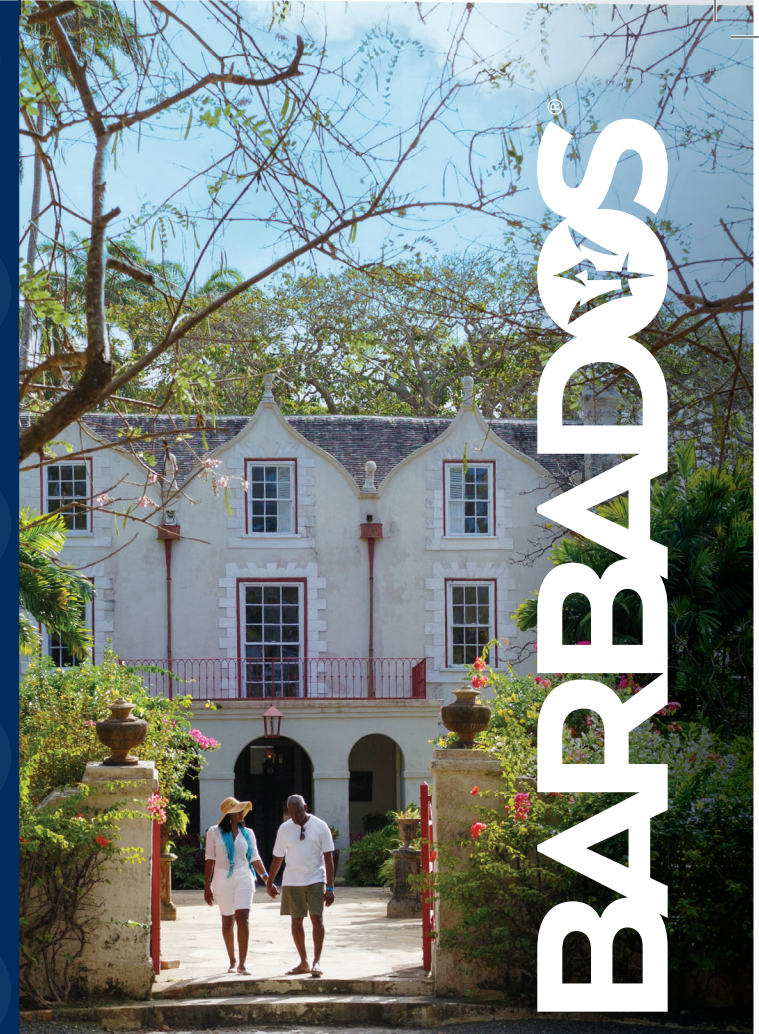
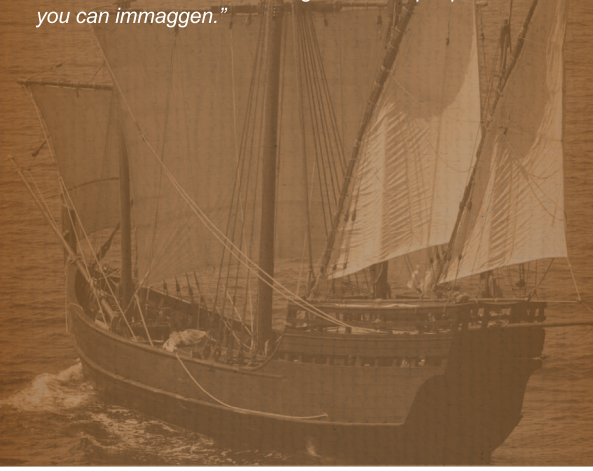


Photograph of Speightstown

## WILLIAM HILTON AND HIS VOYAGE OF EXPLORATION

A Corporation of Barbados Adventurers was formed in 1663 to promote exploration and settlement utilizing the experience of seasoned, knowledgeable Barbadians who had great practical advantages over settlers coming directly from the British Isles. They engaged Captain William Hilton to explore the area we now know as the Carolinas and he set sail in his ship The Adventure from Speightstown, the northernmost port of Barbados to reconnoitre the Carolina coastline and advise on a suitable place of settlement. His name survives in the place names of Hilton Head and Hilton Island. Cape Fear near present day Wilmington, North Carolina was the site of the initial settlement, which was abandoned. The second site, between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers of present day South Carolina was far more successful, blossoming into the beautiful city of Charles Town, later Charleston.

In order to encourage Barbadians to move to Carolina, the Barbados Proclamation was issued in 1670 extolling the boundless possibilities of these new lands to the north. This was wildly successful as Thomas Colleton reported that in less than three weeks, "*wee have gotten more people's Hartes then you can immagen.*"



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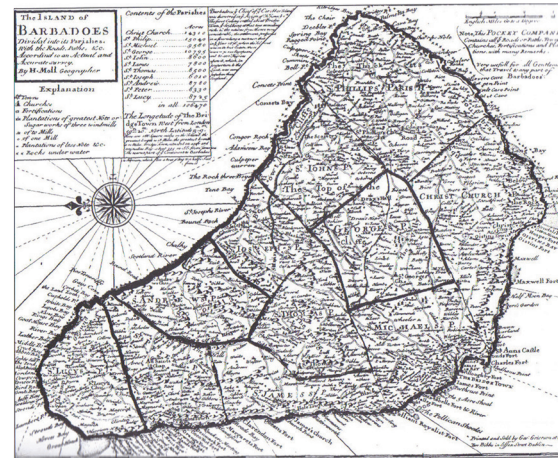


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## “THE COLONY OF A COLONY”

While Barbados was still a colony of Britain, the settlement of the Carolinas was planned from the Colleton Great House in Barbados, and then planters left Barbados to settle the Carolinas. This resulted in what is known today as South Carolina becoming a colony of Barbados, and Barbados became the first and only colony to have settled another colony. Here is the fascinating story!

By the 1660's Barbados had experienced quick economic and population growth as a result of her introduction of sugar cane, which was processed into sugar, rum and molasses. These by-products of this sweet grass had a ready market in England and in her North American colonies. Contemporary views held Barbados to be “*the richest spote of ground in the worlde.*” Great wealth had resulted in rapid population growth of English colonists and their Barbadian born descendants, enslaved West Africans and indentured servants from the British Isles. However, they did not produce enough locally to feed themselves. The finite space of Barbados limited opportunities for this growing population and the unsettled lands of North America beckoned. This was the impetus for the “colony of a colony” situation that developed as news of a new royal land grant to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina reached Barbados. To many elite Barbadian settlers it seemed that the boundless lands of Carolina would provide space for the landless of Barbados and necessary agricultural imports for the island.



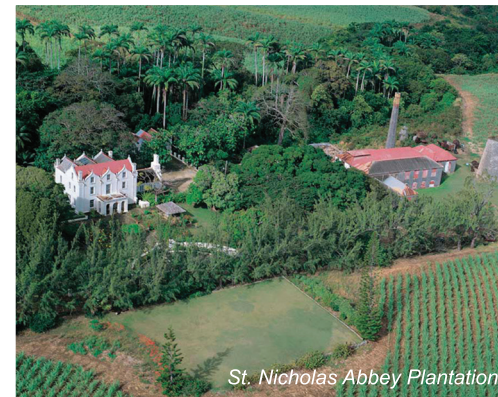
Map of Barbados from 1717



Colleton Great House

## THE COLLETONS

Many planter families from the north of Barbados were major participants in the early settlement of Carolina. Names such as Culpepper, Drayton, Gibbes, Middleton, Moore and Yeamans stand out. The Barbadian planters seemed to take over Carolina and aroused the widespread accusation of other colonists who said from their base of power at Goose Creek that “*the Barbadians endeavour to rule all.*” However, in the initial stages, the Colletons were the principal leaders. Sir John Colleton, whose family owned large plantations in Barbados, was one of eight Lords Proprietors to whom Charles II had given extensive land grants. It is he after whom Colleton County in South Carolina is named.



St. Nicholas Abbey Plantation

## MURDER MOST FOUL

Another Barbadian who was prominent in the early colonization venture and subsequently in the affairs of South Carolina was Sir John Yeamans. His name has been associated with scandal and intrigue, as it was alleged that he seduced the wife of a plantation owner in Barbados, Nicholas Berringer, poisoned him during the course of a dinner party and married his wife Margaret. This marriage allowed him to inherit the plantation known as St Nicholas Abbey on which the great house built c.1654 still stands in Barbados today. When he relocated to the Carolinas with his wife, they took servants and slaves, and built a house called Yeamans' Hall. He later became one of the first governors of the new colony, but did not last long in that position as he was disliked because of his aggressive, calculating disposition.



St. Nicholas Abbey

## RELIGION AND COLONIZATION

The Anglican or Episcopalian Church was dominant in Barbados and settlers to Carolina took their religion with them. The system of parishes, which formed the centre of local government in Barbados was replicated in South Carolina. Eight of the eleven parish names of Barbados were adopted by South Carolina. The Sephardic Jewish community of Barbados also established links with South Carolina as some members migrated there. The Barbadian Jewish community gave financial assistance to help with the building of the Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim synagogue in Charleston.



Nidhe Israel Synagogue



All Saints' Anglican Church