

The War of the Spanish Succession

When: 1701-1714

Combatants: Great Britain vs Spain and France

Reasons: Disagreements over who should inherit the Spanish crown and the territories it controlled.

Other names: Queen Anne's War (in the Americas)

Key battles and places: St. Kitts, The Bahamas, Antigua

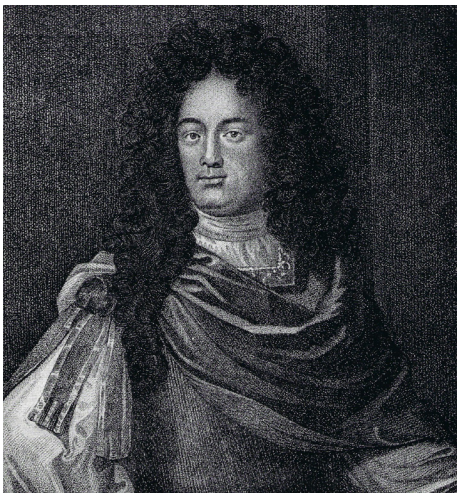
The War of the Spanish succession, often known in North America as Queen Anne's War, was caused by disagreements over the inheritance of King Charles II of Spain, the last Hapsburg monarch of Spain, who died childless. He had named Philip, grandson of Louis XIV of France, as his heir, whilst England and others favoured Archduke Charles, the second son of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II. The conflicting claims, and the influence that the choice of Spanish Monarch would have on the balance of power in Europe, led to war.



Charles II of Spain



Archduke Charles



Christopher Codrington
the Younger

In the Caribbean, conflict once again broke out amongst the colonies, with the English colonies in the Leeward Islands launching an attack against the French half of St. Kitts. They were led by Christopher Codrington the Younger, son of the man who had fought in the Nine Years War, and who had now been appointed to his deceased father's former positions of Governor and Captain General of the Leeward Islands. As the English volunteers outnumbered the French by about eight to one, the French governor was induced to surrender. Codrington then planned an attack on Martinique, but an expedition arrived from England under the command of Commodore Hovenden Walker and together they invaded Guadeloupe on 12th March 1703. The island's capital Basse-Terre was captured and the French defenders withdrew inside the local fort. This led to a siege and by 30th March, Codrington and his men had succeeded in breaching the fort's walls, but the French abandoned their defences and withdrew to the mountainous interior. The English spent the next two months destroying French plantations and crops before sickness took its toll. The increasing

levels of illness, a lack of provisions and French reinforcement arriving from Martinique meant that the expedition was forced to withdraw, re-embarking on 6th May 1703 and sailing for Jamaica. Although new reinforcements arrived, the whole force journeyed to Newfoundland in June, in compliance with the orders that had been issued when it left Britain.

The English colonies came under attack in the aftermath of this expedition; there was a Franco-Spanish raid on Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas in October 1703, which saw the capture of the local Governor and his soldiers and the collapse of organised government in the Bahamas. This led to the infamous buccaneer state of the Pirates' Republic of Nassau, which lasted until 1718. On 5th February 1706, the French were prevented by bad weather from landing on Nevis, which gave the local militia time to man the island's defences and drive them off by the 11th. The French then proceeded to St. Kitts, landing at Frigate Bay and Belle Tete Point. They

went on to destroy property and loot the English side of the island, whilst the defenders were forced to remain in their strongholds at Charles Fort and Brimstone Hill. The French eventually left St. Kitts when rumours of approaching English reinforcements reached them, but they returned to Nevis in March 1706 under the command of Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville. The English were forced to abandon their defences and retreat to the hills which, according to one account was the consequence of a Militia Colonel abandoning his post. The French again departed before reinforcements arrived.

In 1707, the Acts of Union between England, Wales and Scotland to form the Kingdom of Great Britain were passed. The same year, 300 men of Colonel Luke Lillingston's Regiment arrived in Antigua from Ireland, although the Colonel did not accompany them. Daniel Parke, Governor of the Leeward Islands, had them dispersed in detachments around the colony and they remained in the Caribbean for the next 57 years, eventually being numbered as the 38th Regiment of Foot. However, Parke's relationship with the regiment proved strained and there were many arguments between him and Colonel Jones, who took up command of the regiment. Jones, for his part, appears to have been a poor commander, and many of his men petitioned the Governor directly for both money and clothing, as they had not been paid or supplied by their officers. Both men complained of the other's conduct to the authorities in Britain, and relations between the two grew even worse. Parke's relationship with the leading members of Antiguan society was also tense, with the latter accusing him of both having affairs with the wives and daughters of various men, as well as corruption. Matters eventually came to a head and an uprising took place, in which apparently many soldiers sided against the Governor. Parke was killed by the mob, who had managed to break into Government House, Antigua and eleven soldiers were also killed during the insurrection. Three officers, Captain Joseph Rokeby, Lieutenant Thomas Watts and Ensign Harry Smith, were all implicated in the event, but Smith's trial collapsed in 1714 due to a lack of evidence and the others were not even tried.



Governor Daniel Parke

From 1710 the French launched several attacks on Montserrat, but the initial attack in 1710 was easily repelled, with the defenders even capturing prisoners and some French regimental colours. A second attack was repulsed in April 1711, thanks to reinforcements from the 38th Regiment, who also helped repel another attack in the June whilst serving as part of the crew of *HMS Newcastle*. The final attack was on 8th July 1712, when the French were again repelled, thanks to the efforts of the local militia and a detachment of the 38th under the command of Captain Marshall.

The Treaty of Utrecht at the end of the war saw British territorial gains, which included the ceding of Gibraltar and Minorca by the Spanish in Europe, but the French also agreed to relinquish their territory of St. Kitts, meaning that the whole of the island was now British territory and would remain so until the island achieved independence in 1967. The Spanish also made another concession, granting Britain's South Sea Company the *asiento*, the right to transport 4,800 slaves from Africa to Spanish South America a year. It would be British Spanish disagreements over the *asiento* and other economic matters that contributed to the next war that Britain fought in the Caribbean.