

# The Inter-War Years

With the signing of the treaty, matters did become more peaceful for a time and soon Garinagu traders sold their wares, primarily agricultural goods, in the Vincentian capital, Kingstown. Many Garinagu were not happy with their Chiefs making peace, and some moved back into territory which had been ceded by the treaty as little as three months after the signing. Few Caribs took the oath required by the treaty, whilst the Planters declared that the terms had been far too lenient, and the island's Assembly went so far as to declare the war a 'fruitless expense'. However, a new conflict was looming, not in the Caribbean but on the North American mainland. The ramifications of this conflict would spread far and wide, including St. Vincent. When the thirteen colonies of North America rose in rebellion against Britain, Britain's rivals, France and Spain, took advantage, and allied with the revolutionaries. In the Caribbean, this led to the French and Spanish attacking British colonies, including St. Vincent.

The Garinagu decided, despite the treaty, or possibly because they felt it had not been sufficiently honoured, to side with France in this conflict, allying with them and preparing to attack the British. In some cases, the ammunition and provisions they acquired were British. Governor Valentine Morris had provided them with both to search for runaway slaves, although they never seemed to find any. Morris was convinced that they were passing along information to the fugitives and it may be that these fugitives were welcomed amongst the Garinagu as warriors for the upcoming conflict. The French also supplied arms, with Governor Morris noting that the Garinagu had acquired muskets and bayonets of the sort used by French regular troops.



Governor Valentine Morris



Lieutenant Colonel George Etherington  
from the Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum

When the French landed on St. Vincent on the night of 15<sup>th</sup> June 1779, the Garinagu, along with a French ally, Percin La Roque, who had already arrived on the island to prepare for the attack, assaulted the British military outposts throughout Garinagu territory. The British Governor, Valentine Morris, wished to mount a resistance, but the military commander, Lieutenant Colonel Etherington, decided that to do so was impossible and opted to surrender the island. Negotiations began on 16<sup>th</sup> June, with the British receiving a shock when Chatoyer and other Garinagu chiefs entered the negotiations on the French side. Percin La Roque became the new French Governor, but had to act to prevent some of the Garinagu from attacking British settlements after the surrender. The Garinagu also helped the French to repel British attempts to recapture the island, when General Vaughan and Admiral Rodney

sailed from St. Lucia on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1780 to St. Vincent. However, seeing the strength of the French and Garinagu forces, the General and Admiral decided against an attack. Etherington was later court martialled for his refusal to mount a defence.

When the War ended, the ensuing Treaty of Versailles (1783) returned the island to British control, with no stipulation about what should happen to the Garinagu, although the rights of French settlers were guaranteed. Despite the violation of the Treaty between Britain and the Garinagu, no punitive action was taken against the tribe. French author Alexandre Moreau de Jonnés claimed in his memoir, although he was only six years old at the time, that the British had planned to send four regiments to the island for a punitive expedition, and that it was only by French insistence that Carib lands were protected as per the original 1773 treaty that the expedition was not launched. However, there are many issues with the accuracy of Moreau's memoirs, aside from his age, and the absence of other evidence that this was the case.

### **Treaty of Versailles 1783 Article VIII**

*Le Roi très Chrétien restitue à la Grande Bretagne les isles de la Grenade, et les Grenadins, St. Vincent, la Dominique, St. Christophe, Nevis, et Montserrat; et les places de ces isles feront rendues dans l'état où elles étoient lorsque la conquête en a été faite. Les mêmes stipulations inférées dans l'article précédent au ront lieu en faveur des fujets François à l'égard des isles dénommées dans le présent article.*

Following the American Revolution, the French and British Settlers and the Garinagu once again seemed to establish a rapport, and there was discourse between the leading planters and the Carib chiefs. Sir William Young the Younger wrote of welcoming Chatoyer and his brother, Du Vallée, as guests to his home and presented them with gifts. Two of Chatoyer's sons are



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reported to have lived with a British family on the island, whilst another was tutored by a Methodist missionary. Garinagu traders sold their wares in the market in Kingstown once again. Some Garinagu established their own plantations, with Chatoyer and Du Vallée acquiring loans from the settlers, allowing them to cultivate more lands and purchase their own slaves. Some Garinagu even owned property and settled in settler territory, such as the Barramont family who

had property in Ribishi in St. George's Parish. In addition, as attested by their old ally, Percin la Roque, like the Maroons of Jamaica, the Garinagu now actively helped the British to retrieve fugitive slaves, in return for a reward. According to one story, Chatoyer even met with Prince William Henry, the future King William IV, who served as a naval officer in the Caribbean for a time. The story claims that the future King presented Chatoyer with the gift of a silver Gorget.

However, the issues still remained, with some of the settlers reporting that the Garinagu had committed "outrages", likely the destruction of property, and complained about their lack of security. Likewise, the planters kept trying to acquire lands in the Garinagu territory. Another war between Britain and France, the French Revolutionary War, would once again see Britain and the Garinagu bear arms against one another, for what would be the last time.