

# Humphrey Walrond and the 1661 Barbados Slave Code

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## (2) Humphrey Walrond

Col. Humphrey Walrond was prominent in Barbados in the same period as Modyford during the time that the Slave Code was enacted. Records are less plentiful and more muddled and contradictory about Walrond than about Modyford. He appears to have been a violent, bigoted and divisive figure.

Colonel Humphrey Walrond (1600?-1670?) was already in Barbados when Modyford and Ligon arrived in 1647. Ligon<sup>1</sup> praises Walrond for helping him when he was sick, and for having a diet that included fish because Walrond's plantation was near the sea so he was able to send his slaves to fish. But Walrond also sounds quite savage in Ligon's account<sup>2</sup> because three or four of his 'best negroes' hanged themselves in the hope of re-awakening back in Africa so, to deter future suicides, Walrond had the head of one of them put on a spike to convince the others that they would not return to Africa.

### Political and religious affiliation and career

Walrond, like Modyford, had been a royalist commander in the English Civil War. The Walrond family had contributed £30,000 to the royalist cause<sup>3</sup>. He emigrated to Barbados after being defeated in the siege of Bridgewater in 1645 and taken hostage by the roundheads, along with other royalist emigres. He paid a £350 fine to obtain his release from the Gatehouse Prison in London and fled to Barbados.

He was one of a generation of rich young cavaliers who came to Barbados at that time, especially around 1650 after the defeat of the royalist cause and the execution of Charles I. Bridenbaugh describes how they came with their hidden wealth, with the intention of becoming rich and powerful again after loss of the Civil War. Among these were the Walronds. Bridenbaugh states: *"Two imperious brothers from a gentle family in Somersetshire, Humphrey and Edward Walrond, who landed late in 1645, immediately made a strong bid for leadership of the planters of Barbados"*<sup>4</sup>. They were intent upon presiding over a new English gentry in the Caribbean who would live in the luxury that they had come to believe was their birthright.

But unlike Modyford he continued the Civil War in Barbados in the face of the peaceful co-existence of cavalier and roundhead in the island at that time. After various machinations and by military force, he led the faction that established royalist rule in Barbados in 1650 by winning control of the Assembly. This was in spite of the parliamentarians having decisively won in England. Similarly, in contrast to the existing religious tolerance, he forced the governor to proclaim the Church of England as the only allowed religion. The Walrond faction made enemies of roundheads such as Drax, one of the wealthiest planters. To the consternation of more moderate royalists, the Walronds plotted against Drax, and had him tried and condemned on spurious evidence, fining him heavily<sup>5</sup>. When Francis Willoughby of Parham, a moderate royalist, took up the post of governor later that

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<sup>1</sup> Ligon p.35

<sup>2</sup> Ligon p.51

<sup>3</sup> Tree p. 31

<sup>4</sup> Bridenbaugh p.131

<sup>5</sup> Bridenbaugh p.159

year he dismissed and banished Walrond for having alienated the more moderate royalists by his violent behaviour. Walrond was clearly a divisive character in the way he turned the planter class against each other despite their many common interests.

The following year (1651), Cromwell sent his commander, Ayscue, to bring Barbados to heel as England was now under parliamentary rule. Willoughby was removed and the banished Walrond seems to have entered the service of Spain because in 1653 he was given honours including Marques de Vallado by Philip IV of Spain. His successors were to retain this title proudly for eleven generations. At the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Walrond returned to Barbados and, in recognition of his staunch royalist credentials, at the end of that year he was appointed acting governor in place of Modyford. He continued in this post for three years until he was removed on Willoughby's return (1663) because of complaints about his arbitrary conduct. Nevertheless, he achieved some satisfactory results during his governorship, and "numerous laws tending to the prosperity of the island" were passed<sup>6</sup>. Thus he was the man in charge when the Slave Code of 1661 was being enacted and was deeply involved in the establishment of its racist principles.

### **As planter**

In 1648, H. Walrond was recorded as owning 250 acres, with 10 servants and 29 slaves. This is the same size as the acreage owned by Modyford, with half of the 500 acre Hilliard plantation, but with many fewer enslaved (Hilliard's had 102 enslaved). Rank in Barbados was determined by the acreage owned, so this puts the two men on a par with each other<sup>7</sup>.

Walrond was at the forefront of the move among planters to build ostentatious houses. His house called Fontabelle was one such; situated just to the north of Bridgetown, it was commandeered by Willoughby in 1663 and became the governor's residence.

### **Future career**

Walrond did not retire with honour. After being accused by Willoughby of receiving money from the Spaniards which he had not accounted for, he resisted arrest by wandering the island with a band of armed supporters, then appealed unsuccessfully to the king and subsequently fled, probably to Spanish territory, where he died in about 1670. He did, however, leave descendants who flourished in Barbados and some who moved to Antigua where they prospered as sugar planters and consolidated their wealth through marriages.

### **Walrond family tree**

Marquis de Vallado is a Spanish title bestowed upon Humphrey Walrond on 5 August 1653, by King Philip IV of Spain. Fortunately this title makes it easy to trace the descendants of Sir Humphrey Walrond. The following table is based on the one given in Wikipedia for the holders of the title, Marquis de Vallado, with additional information from Vivian's Visitations.

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<sup>6</sup> Schomburgk, R.H. (1847). *History of Barbados*. Longman. p. 286

<sup>7</sup> Dunn p.95

Name	Born	Died	Spouse	Place	Notes
Sir Humphrey Walrond	1600?	1670?	Elizabeth Napier	Sea, Ilminster, Somerset; Barbados;	1st Marques His grandfather, Humphrey Walrond of Sea, was cousin to Humphrey Walrond of Bradfield
George Walrond		1688 Barbados	Frances Coryton (d.1665)		2nd Marques, son of the 1st
Theodore Walrond		1706	Elizabeth Smith	of Barbados	3rd Marques, son of the 2nd
Theodore Walrond		1748 or 1750 or 1766?	Elizabeth Wills	Of Antigua	4th Marques, son of the 3rd
Maine Swete Walrond of Antigua	1725 Or 1731?	1790 or 1764?	Sarah Lyons (1731-1764)	b. Chardstock, Dorset d. Antigua	5th Marques, son of the 4th
Joseph Lyons Walrond	1752	1815	Caroline Codrington (d.1833)	Of Antigua Dulford House (bought 1802), and Grosvenor Place, London	6th Marques, son of the 5th
Bethell Walrond	1802	1876	Lady Janet St. Clair-Erskine (1800-1880), daughter of 2nd Earl of Rosslyn	Dulford House, Cullompton, Devon	8th Marques, son of the 6th; Member of Parliament 1826-32
Henry Walrond	1841	1917	Caroline Maud Clark (d. 1915)	Of Dulford House	9th Marques, son of the 8th
Henry Humphrey Walrond	1862	1940	Gertrude Gordon Hill (1873-1970)		10th Marques, son of the 9th
Henry Ernest Walrond	1896	1972	Imogene Fletcher (1893-1972)		11th Marques, nephew of the 10th

The table shows the sequence of father to son from the Sir Humphrey Walrond who first went to Barbados to the last Marques, a nephew who died in 1972.

There were many other Humphrey Walronds before ours whose relationships can be traced through Vivian's Visitations. The Walrond family (formerly Waleran and, before that, de Bradfell; sometimes also known as Waldron) were Normans. They can be traced back to the twelfth century at their residence, Bradfield Hall, in Uffculme, to the west of Tiverton in Devon, near to the Somerset border. The family were eminent in the wool trade and closely associated with the woollen industries of Tiverton. At some point a branch of the family set up home at Sea, near Ilminster, just across the border in Somerset, and our Walronds came from this line.

As can be seen from the family tree, in 1802 a descendant (Joseph) bought Dulford House, Cullompton, and it became the family home for three more generations. Henry Walrond sold it in 1894. The house was demolished in 1930 and a new house built on the site<sup>8</sup>.

## **Marriages**

The table also shows the marriages of the Walronds. The marriage of Maine Swete Walrond to Sarah Lyons was a notable one; the Lyons family were Antigua owners of a 563 acre sugar estate. A later marriage was that of Joseph Lyons Walrond to Caroline Codrington. The Codringtons were large scale slave-owners in Antigua and Barbados and endowers of the Codrington Library of Oxford University. These marriages must have increased the Walrond wealth.

## **Slave compensation**

Did the Walronds keep their wealth and plantations over the centuries? The UCL compensation records give us some idea. They show that claims were made by 25 individuals with the name of Walrond. Most of these were small claims in Barbados while the only large claims were by Bethell Walrond of Antigua. He claimed £3,626 for 233 enslaved on the Lower Walrond and Upper Walrond estates, and £2,588 for 190 enslaved on the Rooms estate. But, unfortunately for him, the larger claim was unsuccessful because the estate was held in trust by his father-in-law, the Earl of Rosslyn, under the marriage settlement between Bethell Walrond and Janet St-Clair Erskine. He did, however, receive a one-third share of his claim on the Rooms plantation, with his uncle Admiral Sir Edward Codrington and his aunt Anna Maria Bethell. So this would have been about £890, not a vast amount.

## **Assessment of Walrond's role in the slave plantation system**

Walrond's role is somewhat less clear than Modyford's. While he bought in early to the sugar/slave plantation system in its infancy in mid-seventeenth century Barbados, in some ways he tended to undermine the planter class but in another, essential, way he set it on a firm legal foundation because he was the man in charge when the 1661 Slave Code was formulated. One wonders whether his particular ideology and character played a crucial role here. He was described as a violent and bigoted royalist. Such a person would tend to have a hierarchical and authoritarian view of society, and this was certainly embodied in the slave code with its different laws, rights and punishments for different groups in Barbados society, most notably between black slaves and the white planters and servants. This would have fitted with his world view. One wonders why the more moderate royalists, like Modyford and Willoughby, or the parliamentarians, did not enact this Code during their times as governor. Did they have a more democratic view of society which may have balked at the harshness of the slave laws? Or was it just the passage of events which led to the passing of the Act under Walrond's tenure?

Walrond did not spend all that much time in Barbados, as he was twice dismissed for his aggressive and confrontational conduct; just nine years altogether. During that time he managed to alienate the influential supporters of parliament and most of the moderate royalists. This made it harder for a society to develop, tending to make Barbados an unpleasant place for the planters to live. The consequent rise in absenteeism would not have been conducive to the profits of the plantations or the welfare of their enslaved Africans. Nevertheless, his descendants continued in the island, and later in Antigua, making a profit from sugar, and later returning to Devon to live in style at Dulford House.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.struttandparker.com/properties/dulford>

All in all, we can say that Walrond with his ideology was certainly a key player in the beginning of the slave/plantation system, along with Modyford, and especially in the formulation of the Slave Code.

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