

# Chapter 1.1

## *The Early Years, part II*

---

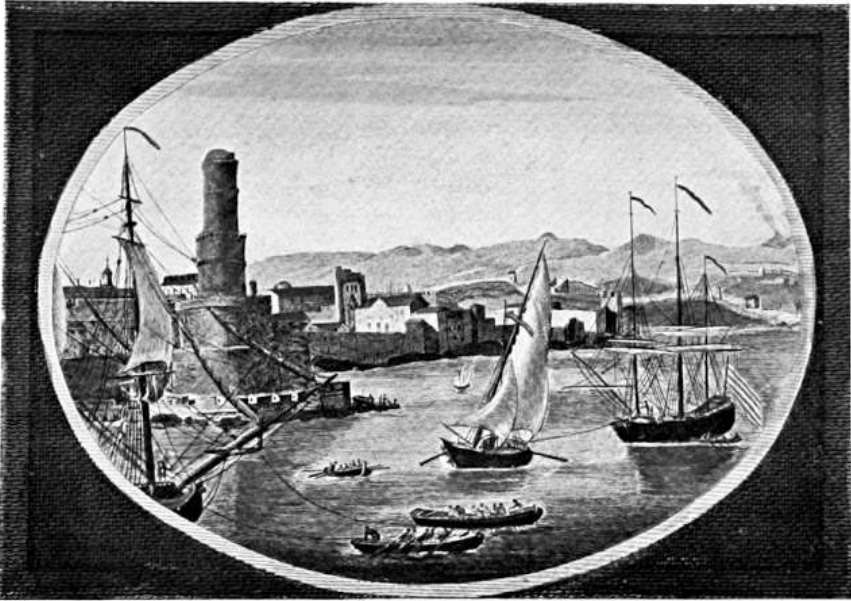


FIGURE 1 - OLD PORT ROYAL

**A**mong Henry Morgan's relatives of past generations who had distinguished themselves were Sir Thomas Morgan, General Sir Charles Morgan and Sir Matthew Morgan. All were knights who had held commands in the Low Countries during the Eighty

Years' War (1568–1648), which is also known as the Dutch War of Independence.

Sir Thomas Morgan, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, was the first to command Thomas Morgan's Company of Foot, later to become the famous English Army regiment known as The Buffs. Sir Thomas was the governor of the Dutch city of Bergen-op-Zoom in 1594. His nephew, General Sir Charles Morgan, who succeeded him, was a



FIGURE 2 - MAJOR-GENERAL SIR THOMAS MORGAN

greatly admired commander during the Eighty Years' War and became a member of the privy council of King Charles I. A brother of Sir Charles, Sir Matthew Morgan, served at the 1591 siege of Rouen and was wounded there.

As far as I can tell, Henry Morgan's father, Robert Morgan, was not a soldier, but he had two brothers who were.

Henry's uncles were Colonel Sir Edward Morgan (circa 1610–1665) and Major-General Sir Thomas Morgan (1604–1679). Both were knights who have been described as soldiers of fortune. They served with distinction in wars in Germany and Holland and nearer to home in

the English Civil War—Edward with the Royalists and Thomas with Oliver Cromwell’s Parliamentarians.

Edward Morgan fought in the Thirty Years’ War as a mercenary—an honourable profession in those times. He served in the Low Countries and in Westphalia, where he met and married Anna Petronilla, the sister of Johan Ernst, Freiherr von Poellnitz, governor of Lippstadt.

During the English Civil War, Edward returned to Wales and joined the Royalists. He received a commission in 1649 as captain-general in South Wales serving under the Earl of Carbery. Following the final defeat of the Royalists and the execution of King Charles I, Edward went into exile for several years, during which time he and Anna lived as guests of his brother-in-law on the family’s estates at Aschbach near Bamberg. After the restoration of Charles II, Edward returned to England, where he sought and received recognition for past services to the Crown. And, as part of his reward, he was appointed deputy-governor of Jamaica in 1664. We’ll hear more about Sir Edward later in our story.

Henry Morgan’s other uncle, Sir Thomas Morgan, was known as The Warrior. He had also seen service in the wars of the Low Countries. Thomas served with Sir Horace Vere’s Protestant volunteer expedition and with the army of Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar in the Thirty Years War. Sir Thomas married De La Riviere Cholmondeley, the daughter and heiress of Richard

Cholmondeley of Brame Hall in Spowford, Yorkshire, and they had nine sons, including John, the eldest, and one daughter. (see *The English Baronetage – Baronets Created by King Charles II – Vol. 3, Pt. 1 (1741)*, pg. 224.)

In 1642 or 1643, Sir Thomas sided with Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentarians and fought under Thomas Fairfax in the English Civil War. In 1645, he was appointed governor of Gloucester. From 1651 to 1657, he served under General George Monck (1608–1670), the future 1st Duke of Albemarle, during his subjugation of Scotland. Sir Thomas rose to the rank of major-general and Monck's second in command in Scotland.

In 1657, Cromwell appointed Sir Thomas second in command of an expedition to assist the French against the Dutch in Flanders. There Sir Thomas is said to have acted as the de facto commander in chief. He distinguished himself in the battle of the Dunes near Dunkirk, and for that, he was lavishly praised by Richard Cromwell who knighted him on 25 November 1658.

Note: Richard Cromwell was the son of Oliver Cromwell. After his father died on 3 September 1658, Richard succeeded him as Lord Protector.

Sir Thomas rejoined Monck in Scotland and supported the latter in the pivotal role he played in the restoration of Charles II to the English throne in 1660, for which King Charles rewarded Sir Thomas with a baronetcy and

retained him in the Royal army. In December 1665, King Charles named Thomas governor of the island of Jersey, which was under threat of invasion by France. Thomas died on 13 April 1679.

THOUGH WE KNOW LITTLE for certain about Henry Morgan's youth, we can surmise with some confidence that he would have known and been influenced by his uncles and their military careers. Henry was about seven years old when the English Civil War began in 1642, so his childhood would have coincided with several years of turbulent times. And who knows what amount of stress his family had to endure because of his uncles' decisions to fight on opposite sides of the conflict. We do know that—perhaps because of the war—he did not receive much in the way of formal education, for while he was acting as governor of Jamaica, Morgan himself gave us a glimpse into his past when he wrote:

The office of Judge Admiral was not given to me for my understanding of the business better than others, nor for the profitableness thereof, for I left the schools too young to be a great proficient in that or other laws, and have been more used to the pike than the book.

The English Civil Wars ended in 1651 so Henry Morgan, who would have been about 16 at the time, was unlikely to have participated in a direct way. It is not totally out of the question that he did, however. His uncle, Sir Thomas, is said to have enlisted in Sir Horace Vere's expeditionary

force at the age of 16. Sir Henry Percy, son of the 1st Earl of Northumberland, led his first siege at Berwick in 1378 at the age of 14. Christopher Monck, who would become a great friend of Henry Morgan, entered politics at the age of 13, having been elected Member of Parliament for Devon in 1667. So Henry might very well have enlisted at an early age.

Whether or not he had previous military experience, the military tradition of his family does seem to have influenced young Henry, for it was an army rather than navy career he chose when he joined General Venables' expeditionary force. Had Henry preferred the navy, I think we can assume his Major-General uncle—who was a favourite of the Duke of Albemarle, who was himself a favourite of Cromwell—could easily have obtained a berth for him on one of Admiral Penn's ships in the naval contingent of the same expedition.

I find it odd that Henry Morgan has been so closely associated with maritime adventure, for he became far more a soldier than ever he was a sailor. As has been noted by others, there do not exist descriptions of him being involved in blue-water actions. The Battle of the Bar of Maracaibo for which he is so famous was forced on him and is alone as a naval action in which broadsides and boarding were involved. Besides, as noted by Adolphe Roberts, had engagements at sea “meant anything to his vanity, he would have boasted about” them “and scribes like Esquemeling would have made some reference to

them.” As we will see later, Morgan’s theatre of action was land, and it was on land that he would distinguish himself, using ships for transportation and as artillery platforms in support of assaults he led against the Spanish.