**[Jib](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/" \o "Go to Jib's profile)**

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[Posted November 7, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412014) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412014)

I've read that the Triangular Trade brought wealth into the fledgling English Colonies. Luxury items however appeared to be limited and heavily taxed. Such items would encourage smuggling operations to appear. What types of things were considered luxury items or in great demand during the GAOP in the colonies?

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[Posted November 8, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412019) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412019)

Somewhere on this forum I seem to recall a link to a website that lists goods being imported and exported in England during this time period, but I can't seem to find it. (I'm not certain it would entirely answer your question, but I believe it listed some interesting items.)

I did find my own posting of list of commodities being imported into England in [this thread](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/15094-maritime-quarantine/#entry357891). Note that this is not a list of goods being imported exclusively from America, it is simply a list of imported goods.

Having no proof I can tangibly point to, I would say America was primarily a source of raw materials as far as England was concerned during the GAoP. Any goods that were not imported from England during this time period would be hand-made by craftsmen who had come to the Colonies to escape something or another in England or to pursue opportunities. This suggests (again, merely pursing logic as I see it) that certain areas would have craftsmen who were good at one thing or another and those things would not be considered as luxurious in that region as in places which there were few such craftsmen. This could include anything - fine tools, dishware, cooking implements, furniture, etc.

I would also think any non-necessity would might be considered luxurious in the formative years of the United States. Things might also be be prized due to their maker, craftsmanship, style or design. Non-local spices, which were highly prized in England, would probably be considered luxuries. All of which is vague, I know, but I have read the same thing and it seems to me it mentioned or hinted at a lot of this sort of stuff.

What I find interesting about the idea that the Colonists relied upon pirates to get them certain difficult to procure items is that when Johnson lists what the pirates took other than money, it is usually things like sails, wood, clothes, slaves, sugar, foodstuffs, cloth and similar, relatively practical things. Although it also seems to me that he also briefly mentions their rifling of trunks for jewelry and other miscellanea that could be sold on the black-market, so that may hold your answer as well.

[**William Brand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1471-william-brand/)

* Mercury Malefactor
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* Admin
* 8,884 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Logan, Utah
* Interests:My name is William Pace and I live and work as a graphic designer, illustrator and photographer in Northern Utah. I'm married to the lovely Tracy Pace and we have three children. In addition to all things art, I enjoy traveling and meeting new people from every walk of life. I've always been a fan of history, theology, and of course, Pyracy.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSkt-q-HihQ

[Posted November 8, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412021) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412021)

The only book I've seen that specifically discusses 'luxury items' is "Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods". The book mentions the selling of snuff boxes, books, watches, and jewellery both in high end, specialty shops and among street peddlers, because these items could be sold very easily for cash. They were often pawned at wildly varying prices depending on where you went, but they were considered a 'luxury' items, since books and jewelry are not necessities to most.

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[Posted November 8, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412022) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412022)

I'm fairly certain that I never read a mention of pirates stealing books from period, although that is an excellent observation. I find the whole book-making-selling process from this time period quite fascinating.

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[Posted November 8, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412023) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412023)

I agree with Mission, because I can think of no mention of books in pirate stores either, apart from navigational titles and the common bible found among so many sailor's personal items.

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

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[Posted November 8, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412024) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412024)

I had heard that pirate often threw over the side items they could not readily use. Smugglers however may find certain items of value in the colonies and elect to save such trade goods.

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[Posted November 8, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412025) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412025)

Actually, I think throwing things overboard was more of a punishment or cruel joke than a regular behavior. Even individual crews only appear to have done it rarely.

"Of these Men they [Edward England's men] enquired concerning the Fleet, supposing they must have been in it; and altho' they protested they had not seen a Ship or Boat since they left *Goga*, and pleaded very earnestly for Favour; yet they threw all their Cargo over-board, and squezed their Joints in a Vice, to extort Confession : But they entirely ignorant of who or what this Fleet should be, were obliged not only to sustain this Torment, but next Day a fresh easterly Wind having split the Gallivats Sails, they put her Company into the Boat, with nothing but a Trysail, no Provisions, and only four Gallons of Water, (half of it Salt,) and then out of Sight of Land, to shift for themselves." (Johnson, General History, p. 126)

"On the same Day also, they [bartholomew Robert's men] took the *Flushing*, a *Dutch* Ship, robbed her of Masts, Yards and Stores, and then cut down her Fore-Mast; but what sat as heavily as any thing with the Skipper, was, their taking some fine Sausages he had on Board, of his Wife's making, and stringing them in a ludicrous Manner, round their Neck; till they had sufficiently shewn their Contempt of them, and then threw them into the Sea." (Johnson, General History, p. 258)

"Some Days afterwards [Captain Spriggs] in running down to Leeward, they took one Captain *Hawkins*, coming from *Jamaica*, loaden chiefly with Logwood; they took out of her. Stores, Arms, Ammunition; and several other Things, as they thought fit, and what they did not want they threw over-board or destroy'd, they cut the Cables to pieces, knocked down the Cabins, broke all the Windows, and in short took all the Pains in the World to be Mischievous." (Johnson, General History, p. 413)

(There are, however, a *lot* more accounts of throwing people overboard.)

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[Posted November 9, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412030) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412030)

I was curious as to trade good such as molasses, chocolate (coco beans), tea, coffee, and spices would be thrown over the side in favor of more useful or easy to trade items such as perfume, silverware, furniture, glassware, etc...

A cargo of indigo dye might not seem of value to a pirate unless he does do a little smuggling on the side. Of course the rope, sails, barrels and other materials on a captured ship would have value.

With the Navigation Acts the English Colonies may have a desire for such luxury items cheap.

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
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* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted November 9, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412031) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412031)

I will have to search again, but one of the articles I found while researching colonial smuggling a couple years back mentioned panes of glass. They were expensive to begin with, then taxed heavily on import, and then you were taxed again for the number of windows and doors your home had (figured into property taxes).

Bo

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[Posted November 9, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412032) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412032)

This thread may be of interest you if you're willing to put the pieces together, although it doesn't really answer your questions directly: [Price and Cost of Day-to-Day Items](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17246-price-and-cost-of-day-to-day-items/page__hl__dictionary#entry389110).

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
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* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted November 9, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412036) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412036)

anything of use would be of value.It's important to remember that region also led to the value of items, ie. Wool blankets wouldn't be of much demand in the islands... Also anything traceable such as fabric with the crown inked in or lines with a blue yarn was often scrutinized. Precious metals could always be melted into another form. Foods and liquids could be shifted to secondary containers, like ranchers branding a cow with an "O" into a "Q".

On the legal side. I have logs from Hampton that show some interesting events. A British inbound ran across a foreign neutral country ship and captured it without incident. Due to not being at war the British set the prize free after its hold was emptied and dumped over. The rationale for dumping was that it was possibly headed to a warring country and it prevented goods from reaching them. The crew and ship were not brought in as they were not at war. The British ship took onboard some rigging but dumped all else leaving enough on board for the prize to make it ashore. I'll have to look for the list of stuff dumped over. It's been a while since i've looked for those documents.

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[Posted November 13, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412068) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412068)

What about the cheap calico cloth? Could/ would the colonists risk the chance to have it smuggled to them?

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[Posted November 13, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412072) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412072)

This is mostly about clothing, with a little, tiny bit about cloth. (There are many, many references to pirates being in need of clothing which I didn't post since they aren't relevant here.) There is some info about what they took, though, perhaps helping with the original question.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

"[Captain Halsey] This ship fell seasonably in their way, she being bound for Achen, with butter, rice, and cloth, and the pirates, at that time, were in great straits both for provision and clothing." (Captain Charles Johnson, The History of the Pirates (the 2nd book he wrote), p. 97)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

"While they [pirate Captain Howard's men] lay.on the coast of Virginia, they made prize of several ships from England, out of which they took men, liquors, provisions, clothes, and whatever else they liked or thought necessary." (Johnson, The History of the Pirates, p. 144)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This is from a letter from Captain Mackra in 1720, talking about Edward England's crew:

"*They talked of burning one of their Ships, which we had so entirely disabled, as to be no farther useful to them, and to fit the* Cassandra *in her room; but in the End I managed my Tack so well, that they made me a Present of the said shattered Ship, which was Dutch built, called the* Fancy, *about three hundred Tons, and also a hundred and twenty nine Bales of the Company's Cloth, tho' they would not give me a Rag of my Cloathes.*" (Captain Charles Johnson, The General History of the Pirates, 3rd edition, p. 119)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This is actually an account of England's crew trading with the natives of Cochin, which might be of some interest to you:

They had not been long at Anchor again, before they had several Canoes on Board with both black and white Inhabitants, who continued, without Interruption, all good Offices, during their Stay; particularly *John Trumpet* brought a large Boat of Arrack [cheap wine], than which, nothing could be more pleasing (about 90 Legers,) as also 60 Bales of Sugar [presumably for making liquor]; an Offering, its presumed, from the Governor and his Daughter, who, in Return, had a line Table-Clock sent him [by the pirates], (the Plunder of Captain *Mackra*'s Ship,) and she a large Gold Watch, Earnests of the Pay they designed to make.

When they hid all on Board, they paid Mr. Trumpet to his Satisfaction, it was computed, 6 or 7000 *l*. gave him three Cheers, 11 Guns each Ship, and throw'd Ducatoons into his Boat by handfuls, for the Boat-Men to scramble for.

That Night being little Wind, did not weigh, and *Trumpet*, in the Morning, waked them to the Sight of more Arrack, Chests of Piece-Goods, and ready made Clothes, bringing the Fiscal [??] of the Place also with him." (Johnson, General History, p. 131)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

And this isn't really particularly helpful to your question, but I found it interesting in general terms as to how things were stolen and divided, so I couldn't resist cleaning it up and putting it in here.

"*Evidence*. We know that Magnes, Quarter-Master of the [bart. Robert's] Pyrate Ship, commanded the Men in this Boat that took us, and assumed the Authority of ordering her Provisions and Stores out, which being of different Kinds, we soon found, were seized and sent away under more particular Directions; for *Main*, as Boatswain of the Pyrate Ship, carried away two Cables, and several Coils of Rope, as what belonged to his Province, beating some of our own Men for not being brisk enough at working in the Robbery. *Petty*, as Sail-maker, saw to the Sails and Canvas; *Harper*, as Cooper to the Cask and Tools; *Griffen*, to the Carpenter's Stores, and *Oughterlauney*, as Pilot, baying shifted himself with a Suit of my Clothes, a new tye Wig, and called for a Bottle of Wine, ordered the Ship, very arrogantly, to be steered under Commadore *Robert*'s Stern," (Johnson, General History, p. 294)

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[Posted November 16, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412113) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412113)

My but the things I don't come across. This is from the book *Journal of the Voyage of the Sloop Mary, from Quebeck, Together with an Account of her Wreck off Montauk Point, L.I., Anno 1701* by E.B. O'Callghan, There isn't anything I'd call luxuries in here, though.

*"October ye* 7 1701

things delisard.[delivered?] out of ye slope Marey

to 166 Cheses

to 20 Rols of tobacko

to 81/101 [one over the other in the text] Rols of tobacko

to 9 barels of flower

to 2 square boxes marckt S.V.

to 1 flat box mart B 2

to 1 Lather tronke [leather trunk, I believe]

to 2 hogheds of botls marked SR

to 9 barles of flower

to 16 barles of flower

to 1 Grait hoghsed of Lines

to 1 Lather tronke

to 1 grait box TH No 1

to 1 smol chest markt D, I

to 1 smol hoghed of botils

to 1 flat box marckt SV

to 12 barels of flouer

to 70 bunches of arthen waire pots and muges

to 7 barels of tar

to 4 barels of flower and 2 barels of Rosom marked SV

to 2 bareles of flower and 2 2 barels of Rosom marked SV

to 1 Large hoged of earthen waire (No 2 and 4)

\_\_

to 1 barel of beaire and 10 barels of aples mustard

to 6 barels of flower and 1 pipe of wine

to 5 barels of flower and 1 pipe of wine, on Long Cask of portr

to 9 big Caske of shot and 7 smol Caske of shot

to 1 long Caske of puter [??] SV

to 7 barels of beare DI

to 3 big caskes of shot

*October ye* 16 1701

things Resesd [received?] on bord ye slup Marey

to 4 barels of brandy

to 4 hogsds of Claret

\_\_

*October ye* 17 1701

things Resesd on bord ye slope Marey

to 2 brandy peses

to 10 smol barels of brandy and 1 pes of Lining [Linen?] Cloth: and 2 bolts of Cansis

to 8 smole caske of bradye

to 2 bondls of syle skns and stons

to 1 Caske of brandy

to 2 Lather trunks and 2 squaire boxes

and 1 box otor stons"

(O'Callghan, p. 5-7)

Wen she wrecked, the "Acct was taken" which listed:

The Sloope wth her standing Riging

The Sayles and runing Riging

1 hhd of Brandy

18 Quarter Cask of Brandy

4 hhds of Claret

60lb of Beaver stones

200 seale skinns

\_\_

3 Beaver skins & a Papoose

1 Doz of Catt skins: 2 Otters

1 Boult of hollands Ducke

1 ps of Broad Canvas

18 ps of Two remnants of severall sorts of stuff

7 peeces of Cullerd Demity

8 ps of stript Kentings

4 ps of Remnants of Alligars

3 Remnants of Dyed callica

4 Ps of musling or Remnants

4 Printed Callico Carpetts

2 bundles of Beads

9 Ps of Printed lining or callico and a Remnant

\_\_

A Remnant of Light Colored Broad cloth 14 yards

12 ps of Stuff and two Remnants

A parcel of tobacco

1 Ps of Light cullered shaloone

The Eight ps of Kenting and three ps or Remnants of muslin remain in possession of Coll William Smith"

(O'Callghan, p. 30-2)

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[Posted November 19, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412146) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412146)

I would imagine that the colonies would not need tobacco since it was locally grown. Curious about spices since that would be limited.

[**corsair2k3**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/82-corsair2k3/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 167 posts

[Posted November 20, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412174) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412174)

According to "The Letter of the Law", most colonial produce was *supposed* to be sent back to England before it could be re-shipped to another colony during the 17th and first part of the 18th-century.

This obviously was honored more in the breach than in the observance.

Nonetheless, Virginian tobacco could be "run" into New England. Other fairly mundane commodities as well--sugar, cacao, any kind of manufactured cloth.

There was export smuggling as well--some New Englanders made an awful lot of money running wool up to French Canada, even in wartime.

Pirates were just one conduit in moving contraband from point A to point B

And smugglers could likewise be a nice target for an enterprising pirate.

Corsair2k3

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[Posted November 24, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412219) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412219)

This is Edward Cooke's account what was captured out of the Spanish treasure ship *Nuestra Senora de la Incarnacion Disenganio* during Woodes Rogers' privateering voyage in the arly 1700s. I have translated the things I could figure out in the list. There are some spices listed at the bottom and gum elemi, which is a plant resin used in some medical prescriptions. But mostly there's cloth - lots and lots of cloth.

*"The Cargo of the* Acapulco *or* Manila *Ship, taken in the* South *Sea by the* Duke *and* Dutchess, *private Ships of War belonging to* Bristol, *and call'd the* Batchelor *Prize.*

ALlejars [cotton muslins, made in plain weave, also mixed with silk or other fibers] - 82 Pieces

Atlasses [silk, often with a cotton back - used to make dresses] - 52 Pieces

Basts [long, strong fiber contained between the outer bark and the inner woody core of various plants and trees] - 188 Pieces

Cottoneas - 291 Pieces

Calicoes colour'd - 6603 Pieces

*Ditto* white - 4372 Pieces

Counterpoints, divers Sorts - 206 Pieces

Coffaes [some type of muslin] - 206 Pieces

Chints [chintz], divers Sorts - 24289 Pieces

Chint Sashes - 24 Pieces

Chelloes [coarse cotton cloth] - 362 Pieces

Charradorees [possibly cacharado - a plain woven linen fabric from Spain] - 18 Pieces

China flower'd Silks - 5 Pieces

Damasks - 120 Pieces

Dimities [probably wool and silk fabric].- 460 Pieces

Diapers [no, not what you think - white cotton or linen fabric patterned with small, duplicative diamond-shaped figures] - 77 Pieces

Elatches [Elatche - East Indian cotton and silk cloth with check patterns] - 3106 Pieces

Fans - 5806 Pieces

Gurrahs [plain coarse India muslin] - 1180 Pieces

Ginghams - 263 Pieces

*Guinea* Stuffs - 235 Pieces

Humhums [coarse cotton cloth] - 105 Pieces

Handkerchiefs Pieces — 38

Ditto single - 157 Pieces

Long Cloth - 2577 Pieces

Mulmuls [fine, soft muslin] - 55 Pieces

Neck-cloths - 123 Pieces

Nillaes [striped blue cloth of cotton, silk or a blend] - 580 Pieces

Niccaneas - 8020 Pieces

Photees [fine variety of Indian cotton] - 152 Pieces

Pelongs [possibly 'Pellon' - a sort of baize] - 1236 Pieces

Paunches - 16561 Pieces

Palampores [hand-painted (stenciled) cotton fabrics] - 4053 Pieces

Petticoats - 265 Pieces

Quilts - 14 Pieces

Romols [probably Romal - East Indian plain silk taffeta] - 548 Pieces

Ribbons, divers sorts - 6823 Pieces

*Ditto* flower'd with Gold and Silver - 481 Pieces

Silk Stockings - 4310 Pair.

Silk raw of *China* - 28502 Pounds.

*Ditto* thrown - 11990 Pounds.

*Ditto* sewing - 1370 Pounds.

*Ditto* Bengal - 61 Pounds.

*Ditto* sleve - 6581 Pounds.

*Ditto* Fringes - 194

Sooseys [mixed cotten and silk, striped] - 115 Pieces.

Stockings Cotton - 1084 Pair.

Sannoes [white calico] - 425 Pieces.

Sattins and Tafvaties, divers sorts - 7008 Pieces.

*Ditto* flower'd with Gold and Silver - 192 Pieces.

Silks divers sorts - 511 Pieces.

Silk Sashes - 341

*Ditto* of Calico - 544

Silk Gowns - 37

Tanbes [copper plates?] - 454

Musk - 5957 Ounc.

Cinnamon - 9719 Pounds.

Cloves - 1182 Pounds.

Benjamen - 3300 Hund.

Bees Wax - 152Pounds.

Gum Elemia - 120 Pounds,

*China* Ware, several Chests and Jars,

Several Parcels of odd Things." (Edward Cooke, *Voyage to the South Seas*, Volume II, p. vii - ix)

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,081 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted December 29, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412725) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412725)

Here's an amusing bit about selling contraband to the Spanish from Père Jean-Baptiste Labat's Memoires 1693-1705 (Translated from the original French by John Eaden, 1970):

"Now according to their law no nation is allowed to trade with the Spaniards under any pretext whatever. Any ship they find within a certain distance of their coasts is confiscated if they catch her, for it is taken for granted that she is only there for trading; and to condemn her [so they can legally claim and remove the contents], it is considered sufficient proof if Spanish money or articles manufactured in their countries be found on board.

This is their law, but it is easily evaded.

For instance, if you wish to enter one of their ports to trade, you say that you are short of water, fuel [wood], or victuals, or that you have a split mast, or a leak which cannot be plugged without removing the cargo. An officer is sent to explain all these things to the Governor, and, by giving him a good present, makes him believe what you wish him to believe. His officers can be made blind in the same way if necessary, and then permission is granted to enter the port and unload the ship in order to repair her. All formalities are carefully observed. A seal is placed on the door of the warehouse by which the cargo is brought in, but equal care is taken that there is another door left unsealed by which it is taken out

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at night, and replaced by cases of indigo, cohenille, vanilla, cacao, tobacco, etc., etc., and silver in bars and specie. As soon as this has been done one finds the mast repaired, the leak plugged, and the ship ready to sail.

Means must now be found to enable the purchasers to sell their merchandise. *To do this you go again to the Governor, and explain that you have not sufficient money to pay for provisions, or the repairs which have been done, and ask him to allow you to sell enough cargo to pay for these things. The Governor and his Council pull the long faces they consider necessary for the occasion, and permission is given to sell a few cases. A few cases are sold, in fact the whole cargo is sold publicly, and in all probability to the agents of the Governor and his officers. no on can complain, for each purchaser pretends that his share is the portion of the cargo which had to be sold to defray the cost of the repairs, etc. In this way the largest cargoes are disposed of.*

*With regard, however, to the smaller cargoes which are more frequently carried by the English, French, and Dutch ships, they are generally disposed of at places some distance from the towns.*

*A few cannons are fired to warn the Spanish settlers in the neighborhood of the arrival of the ship and they come in their canoes to buy what they require. This trade is mostly done at night, and the captain must be careful never to allow more people to come*

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*to the ship than his crew can tackle. The word 'Credit' is never mentioned in this business, which is called trading a la Pique, and nothing is accepted in payment but cash, or produce actually delivered on board the ship.*

*A table and barricade are generally placed under the poop to serve as a counter on which samples of the cargo are displayed. The merchant and a few men, all well armed, stand behind the counter, and are guarded by armed members of the crew on the poop. The captain and the rest of the crew, all armed to the teeth, remain on deck to welcome the visitors, give them drinks, and see them politely into their canoes as soon as they have made their purchases. A few cannons are fired to salute people of distinction or persons who have made large purchases when they leave the ship. This compliment pleases them very much, and certainly nothing is lost by it.*

*But above all it is necessary to be on your guard, and also to be always the stronger; for if the Spaniards see a chance of seizing the ship it is seldom that they fail to do so. They will then first pillage her, and then send her to the bottom with all the crew, so that no one can complain of their treachery; for if a case of the kind should be reported to the Governor or the King's officers they would insist on complete reparation, not as one might imagine to the owners of the ship, but to themselves.*

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*What I have just related is not fancy, but the common practice on the coasts of Hispaniola, Caracas and Cartagena, and has been the fate of many French, Dutch, and English sailors." (Labat, p. 170-3)*

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[Posted December 30, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412727) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412727)

Hey, I happened to be looking for something else and I found some really good listings of shipments posted by Iron Jon in the [Barrels, Bales and Bags Thread](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/14759-barrels-bales-and-bags/). Check 'em out!

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,078 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

[Posted December 31, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412737) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412737)

Thanks Mission! Some great stuff! I knew a little about ships in distress and making emergency landings. I also recall that Drake (long before GAOP) did a brisk business selling slaves to the Spanish but was forbidden by the Spanish government. Spanish coins where used in the English colonies long before and established currency was created.

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[Posted January 8, 2013](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=findComment&comment=412826) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18970-smuggling-and-luxury-items/&do=reportComment&comment=412826)

Some more from Labat related to this subject:

"After the prize had been manned we made for St. Thomas in order to sell her. She was an old ship of 200 tons, with a cargo of rum, syrup, and sugar, a few bales of cotton and hides, and two cases of chocolate. She was bound for Virginia, where she would discharge her cargo, and then load with salt, fish, peas and lumber for the settlers in Antigua." (Labat, p. 246)

"our consorts had arrived during the night and we anchored near them and another ship of fifty cannons.

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This ship had come from Cartagena and was loaded with cacao from Caracas, conchenille [Cochineal - A red dye extracted from insects. "Produced almost exclusively in Oaxaca, Mexico by indigenous producers, cochineal became Mexico's second most valued export after silver. The dyestuff was consumed throughout Europe and was so highly prized that its price was regularly quoted on the London and Amsterdam Commodity Exchanges." from ["]http://cochenille.eu/EN/cochineal.htm](http://cochenille.eu/EN/cochineal.htm) ],vanilla,, and other produce, to say nothing of gold and silver in specie [coins] and in ingots." (Labat, p. 260-1)