

Memorandum for Mess^{rs} Alexander & Co

from James Seagrave in Havana March 3rd 1783

12 34 years
old

As to the commerce from our country to this, as well as several Voyages which may be made from diff^t places with advantage to this Country, may not be fully understood, I wish to give you the following information on which you may rely

The Slave Trade appears to me very profitable and as yet but few have engaged in it, altho the advantage is great, beyond any Island in the west Indies

Slaves may be introduced here under certain Regulations, either from Africa, the neutral or French West India Islands, in American, Neutral, French or Spanish Bottoms, To accomplish this, permission must first be obtained from Government here, This I have accomplished for any number Schoes, paying a Duty of six p^{cts} on the valuation upon landing

The Duty paid unless there is special licence first obtained is 25 p^{cts} & very uncertain of admittance on any terms, some cargoes have been brot from St. Thomas & all of which have been sold on average at 400 L each clear of Duties — But as those Slaves are brot from y^e British Ships, who bring them from Africa at an advanced price, it will immediately appear how very profitable a Voyage from America, with Tobacco to France & Holland, & from thence to Africa, with

ms
room

Seagrove

a suitable barge would turn out, a ship to bring
immediately from the coast here 500 Slaves would
sell directly for 200,000 Doll^r, & the cash paid on
delivery of the Slaves, no danger of over stocking this
market, 50,000 Slaves will sell without lowering the
price, as much wanted, The rich planters employ their
vast wealth in these purchases, neutral flags should
suppose lost, untill their arrival off this Harbour
when Continental must be shown, and appear as
such — any vessel arriving under this circumstance
the Capt by applying to me will receive every information
& protection necessary & without any difficulty or
Danger to y^e Ship or barge.

I have also permission to ship money 26/6^d in
payment for Nigros, & on all other imports to 9/6^d
Several very profitable Voyages has been made from
diff^t parts in Europe to this port, & as far as off^{tly} still
prospects, should the War continue, I would advise one
from Holland or Ostend, with canvas of all sorts
cordage & sails of all sizes (chiefly 4 & 10") Iron hoops
for whets, Russia Sheetings, Drabs, or Duls Brown &
^{Irish} white, human Linens chiefly coarse, linen handkerchiefs
with red borders, a large qty of printed Linen for
Womens wear, gay & handsome patterns, But
observe Cotton prints will not answer, More white
than Blue, Beaver Hatts Men's Shoes, with an
assortment of hardware — Writing Paper

Enn (Pam)

In short a general assortment may be sold, but
most of the above will be wanted for the Navy & Army
& will cover the other articles, Sail cloth now worth 30 to
40 Doll^r / piece, Cordage 32 Doll^r / lb, Nails 40 S^d / lb
& a suitable Invoice of any goods, will bring 300/6^d for
y^e Coast in Europe, a vessel arriving with such a barge
must appear in distress, & bound either to the United
States or New Orleans, & only touch here to refit, as
the Laws of Spain, do not permit an open trade
of this kind, every matter I can settle without trouble

A Voyage from France may also be made pro-
fitable, ballast with good Bourdeaux Wine in the
also a qty in cases bottled, sweet Oyl, Butter Truck Beef
& pork together with a general assortment of Dry goods
such as Buttoners, Truck & human Linens, Silks &
prints for womens use, silk Hoses, fans, Ribbons
thread & blond Lace, Cambricks & Lawns, linnen
handkerchiefs well assorted, & every article that may be
gay, cheap & suitable for a warm climate, I would
observe that should any ships of force go on such a
Voyage, most of these articles may be reported upon
Arrival here as taken out of a prize at Sea, which
prizes have been sent to America, any vessel arriving
to me with such, will immediately on coming to
anchor give me information, when every necessary
shall be done, having already run against all
Danger of Disappointment

All American prizes admitted & sold here in return from
hence, we have Sugar, Rum, Coffee, Cocoa, Cotton,
Hides Indigo, Cochineal &c. & as low as any of the
Islands, should a peace take place immediately, still
I would advise a Voyage with negroes, as no doubt
they will be admitted after the War, it being the
Interest not only of the Spanish Court, but of every
person in this Country, the kind which answer
best are young Men & Boys from 12 to 24 years &
as few women as possible, Negroes from Africa
sell preferable to those bred in any other Country

If the War continues I am of opinion
a ~~Useful~~ two of force going on y^e Coast together
might make many prizes, as the British now
carry on an extensive trade that way

The advantage of which must appear
evident to any person who may have a useful
sustainable — The inclosed price list will
further shew the utility of such Voyages

22/10/17

1743

James Oglethorpe