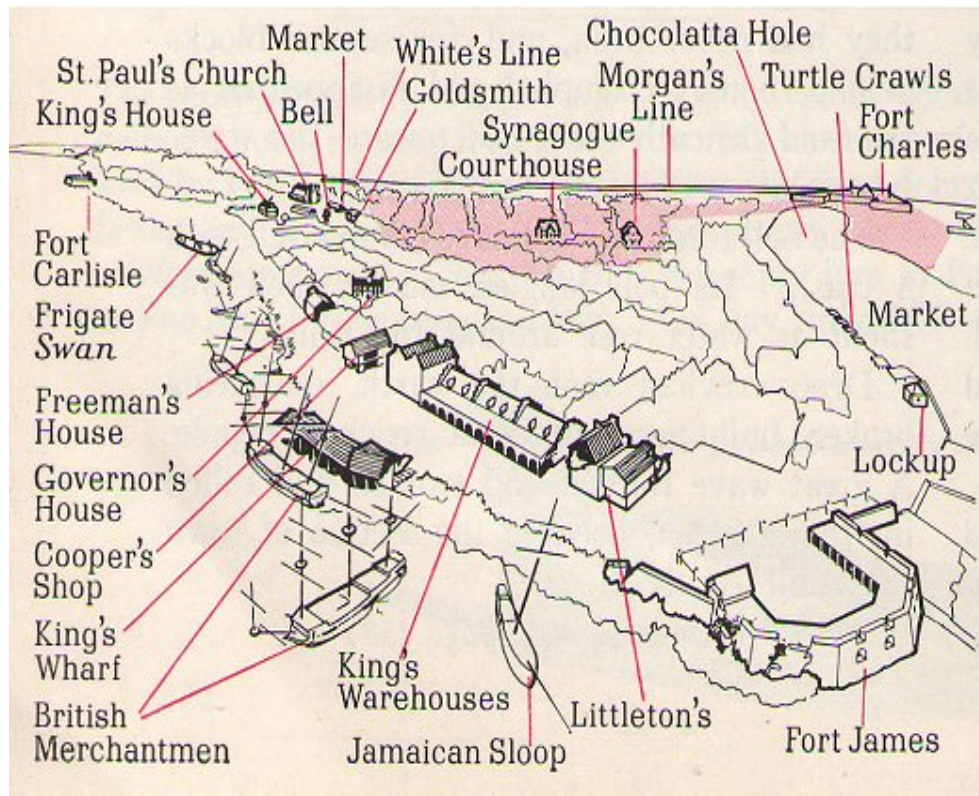


0. PORT ROYAL EARTHQUAKE - Story Preface
1. THE SPANISH MAIN
2. SPANISH PORTS FALL
3. TECTONIC PLATES and NATURAL DISASTERS
4. EARTHQUAKE!
- 5. PORT ROYAL EARTHQUAKE**
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7. TORTUGA and the PIRATES' CODE
8. PIRATE-AGE PORT ROYAL



Robert W. Nicholson created this artistic impression of events which occurred during the June 7, 1692 "Port Royal Earthquake." The scene recreates the destruction caused by the quake and resulting tsunami which sent much of Port Royal into the sea. Today the painting and many recovered artifacts, from what once was Port Royal—for a time the wealthiest city in the Western Hemisphere—are maintained at National Museum Jamaica. Click on the image for a much-better view.

It was calm in Jamaica the morning of June 7, 1692. According to Edmund Heath's eyewitness account, "there was no wind stirring" and nothing that made anyone suspicious of the calamity about to befall the island.



Based on the eyewitness account of Edmund Heath, Robert W. Nicholson was able to position buildings and vessels in his painting. This image correlates with the Nicholson painting, depicted above. The drawing is maintained, with the painting, at National Museum Jamaica.

Suddenly, the earth shook. Within "4 minutes," many Port Royal houses were "swallowed up by the gaping earth." Other homes fell. The church, where Henry Morgan was buried, fell into the sea. (Morgan had died four years before the quake.)

At least two-thirds of the pirate's haven at Port Royal instantly ceased to exist. The town was the victim of a massive undersea earthquake.

The speed of the devastation was shocking. Heath observed:

*I never in my life before saw such a day of terror...*

It wasn't the first time Port Royal residents had felt an earth tremor. In fact, as Heath worshiped in his synagogue, another person tried to calm him by suggesting that "after a little shaking it would be over." When the walls of the synagogue started to fall, however, Heath and his wife tried to flee to Morgan's Fort where they thought they would be safe. But on the way

...the Earth opened and swallowed up many People before my face...

When the sea came "mounting in over the wall," caused by an earthquake-produced seismic sea wave, Heath believed he was a dead man. Miraculously, he survived to describe the "sad spectacle" of "the whole Harbour covered" with death and destruction.

Port Royal, a town which had prospered on the "booty" of pirates, would never fully recover. Its importance was replaced by Kingston across the bay, which itself was nearly leveled by a terrible earthquake in 1907.

As for pirates of the Caribbean, their heyday was also approaching its end. Although famous men like Edward Teach (more commonly known as "Blackbeard") continued to terrorize ships in the vicinity for a time - including commandeering the La Concorde (a French ship) and turning it into his own Queen Anne's Revenge (now a pirate ship) - even he was defeated.

In 1718, members of the British Royal Navy - led by Lieutenant Robert Maynard - encountered Blackbeard at North Carolina's Ocracoke Inlet. By the time the battle was over, Blackbeard's head was mounted on the bowsprit of Maynard's ship.

Captain William (sometimes called "Robert") Kidd, who had originally received a privateer's license - this is his Letter of Marque from King William III - to protect ships owned by the East India Company, met a different fate.

He was sent back to England, accused as a murderous pirate himself, where he breathed his last at the end of a hangman's noose. (See page 178 of The Pirates Own Book - Authentic Narratives of the Most Celebrated Sea Robbers, by Charles Ellms, originally published in 1837.)

What, exactly, was the East India Company? How much power did it really have over Caribbean trade?

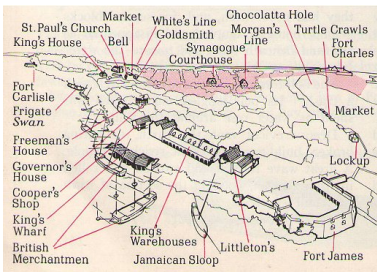
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PORT-ROYAL-EARTHQUAKE-Pirates-of-the-Caribbean>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

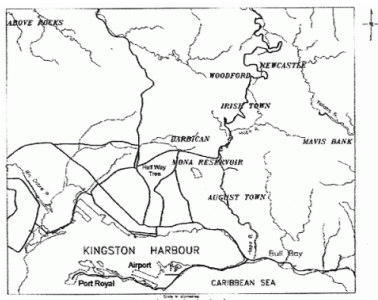
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/PORT-ROYAL-EARTHQUAKE-Pirates-of-the-Caribbean>

## Media Stream



### 1692 Painting Detail

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>



### Port Royal - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy [oas.org](http://oas.org) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Port-Royal-Map-Locator>



### Kingston, Jamaica - Earthquake Damage

Image online, courtesy the [jamaicans.com](http://jamaicans.com) website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Kingston-Jamaica-Earthquake-Damage0>

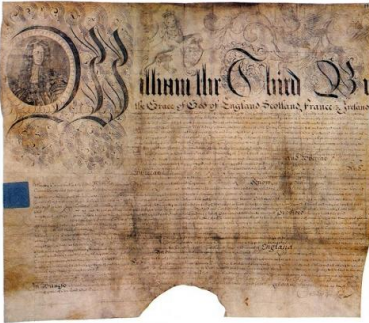


### Edward Teach

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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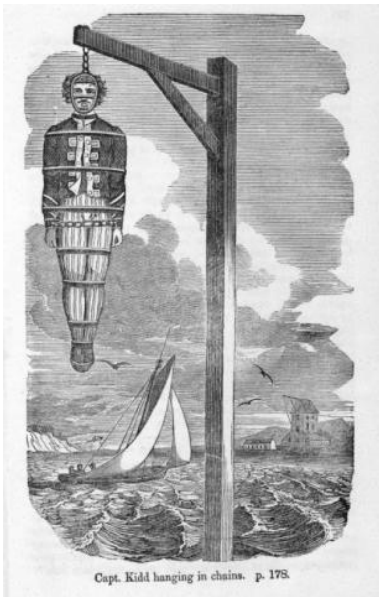


### Letter of Marque

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### Captain Kidd is Hanged

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### PORT ROYAL EARTHQUAKE

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### Blackbeard - Story of Edward Teach

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### Blackbeard and the Queen Anne's Revenge

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