

## **A Convenient Relationship: Portuguese-American Trade before Independence, 1700-1775**

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Abstract: According to the Navigation Acts that Britain attempted to enforce in British North America, direct trade between the colonies and nations and merchants outside of the British Empire was strictly forbidden. The reality, however, was far different from the mercantilist ideal that, up until recently, the historiography accepted was largely the case. New data instead shows a different story. This paper explores the surprisingly large and important economic relationship between the British American colonies in North America and the Portugal and its empire. We discuss how the trade began, and why it was so important to both parties. Utilizing new data compiled from the archives on both sides of the Atlantic, we argue and show that the trade between Portugal and British America was far larger than current estimates show, and we make some early estimates of how much smuggling occurred in North America.