BECOMING CREOLE: MATERIAL LIFE AND SOCIETY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY KINGSTON, JAMAICA

by

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(Under the Direction of Michael Kwass)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the relationship between material culture and the development of Creole identity in the eighteenth-century urban slave society of Kingston, Jamaica. Although economic and social historians of the British West Indies in this period have focused on the export of major crops such as sugar, they have devoted little attention to the construction of social and cultural identity. From Kingston's colonial architecture and urban design, to the interior of homes, white residents displayed their cultural attachments, social prominence, and racial superiority. But slaves also engaged in material acquisition. Through the clothing many domestic slaves were able to obtain from their masters, through purchase, or through other means, slaves blurred the racial lines that divided Kingston society. This study also examines Kingston's white women who were often caricatured as indolent and attached to excessive material consumption in contemporary sources. However, this portrayal is not accurate. Kingston's white women, by virtue of their prudent and economical management of domestic consumption and effective oversight of their domestic staff of slaves, carved out for themselves an arena of agency that historians have overlooked. By considering the material culture of Kingston and the circulation of goods within the complex social, racial, and cultural matrix that made up its urban landscape, this project illuminates how material objects acquired social meaning and helped fashion a Creole identity.

INDEX WORDS: Kingston, Jamaica; Material Culture; Creole Society; Urban Slavery; Women in Urban Caribbean; Slave Clothing; Gentility; Refinement

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DEDICATION

For Susi

And

Robert, Andrew, Margaret, and Jacob

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Atlantic world of the eighteenth century was an arena of intensive migration, markets and cultural interaction. Europeans and Africans, free and unfree, rich and poor alike crossed the Atlantic (willfully or un-willfully) to inhabit a new environment, and in the process of making a new world, they also remade themselves. Nowhere did worlds collide with such force as in the dense, thriving urban center of Kingston, Jamaica, the largest urban parish of the British Caribbean. In this dynamic urban society built on the forced migration and labor of Africans, cultural traditions from across Europe and Africa met, resulting in an extraordinary process that scholars call "creolization" – the cultural action of individuals responding to their new physical, social, and racial environment. Whether it was manifested in the purchase of a slave in 1756 by the recent immigrant and white overseer Thomas Thistlewood, the expression of genteel or refined behavior by urban merchants, or in the retention of their African names and musical traditions by slaves in Jamaica, creolization was a complex process of cultural synthesis and retention, appropriation and resistance.[1]

While research has focused on the growth and development of Caribbean plantation society, and the relationship between plantation slave societies and the metropolitan political and

[1] On the Creolization of Thomas Thistlewood see Trevor Burnard, "Thomas Thistlewood Becomes a Creole," in Varieties of Southern Experience, ed. by Bruce Clayton and John Salmond (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 99-118. On the life of Thomas Thistlewood see Trevor Burnard, Mastery, Tyranny and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). The best work on the process of Creolization in colonial Jamaican remains Edward Brathwaite's The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

economic institutions designed to support them,[2] little attention has been devoted to the formation of new social and cultural identities forged in the urban centers of Caribbean slave societies during the eighteenth century.[3] To what extent did a society dominated by slavery and situated at a crossroads in the British Atlantic world influence culture and integration of both Africans and Europeans? How did individuals and social and racial groups create new identities or sustain old world cultural attachments in a colonial urban and tropical environment?

This project sheds new light on the formation of social and cultural identities by examining the material culture of Kingston. Providing a window onto the social and cultural processes at work in the construction of the colonial world, the material cultural of Kingston reveals the city's steep social and racial hierarchies and the cultural divisions and intersections that marked urban slave society. Recovering and analyzing the material culture of eighteenth-century Kingston illuminates the construction of social identity and the processes of cultural transfer at the very heart of the Atlantic world.

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[2] On the political relationship between the British West Indies and metropolitan Britain see for example Andrew J. O'Shaughnessy, An Empire Divided The American Revolution and the British Caribbean Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000). For studies of the British West Indies that highlights the plantation complex and its impact on social and economic development see, Richard Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775 (Barbados, 1974); ; Richard S. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972); Orlando Patterson, The Sociology of Slavery (Rutherford, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1967); Elsa Goeviea, Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965); Lowell Ragatz, The Fall of the Planter Class In the British Caribbean (1928; Reprint, New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1971); or Frank W. Pittman, The Development of the British West Indies (New Haven, CT: Anchor Books, 1967). For an overview of the complex economic interaction between mainland North America and the Colonial West Indies as well as a review of social development of the West Indies see the important work by John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, The Economy of British America 1607-1789 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1985), 144-168. However, reflective of the primacy of plantation culture and economy in Caribbean studies, McCusker and Menard's review of the literature devotes only one paragraph to the development of colonial urban West Indian port towns. See p. 167 and n. 26.

[3] A notable exception to this is Pedro Welch's study of Bridgetown, Barbados under slavery. See Slave Society and The City (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Press, 2003).

The city of Kingston, now the home of close to one million inhabitants and a center of commerce and culture in the modern Caribbean, was at the commercial center of the Atlantic world in the eighteenth century. Following the destruction of Port Royal in 1692, residents moved the primary merchant center for Jamaica off the mile long sand spit of Port Royal to the Liguanea plains. Kingston's economic growth in the early decades of the eighteenth century was largely the result of the combined growth of plantation sugar production and the slave trade. The *Asiento* trade, whereby British merchants supplied the Spanish Main with slaves, and a continued illegal trade in manufactured goods with the Spanish Main continued to expand Kingston's economic influence as a commercial center within the Caribbean. The economic expansion of Jamaica attracted many fortune-seeking white immigrants to Kingston from Europe. By the latter decades of the eighteenth century these white immigrants, when combined with the already significant and growing slave population of the city made Kingston the third largest city in the British colonial empire of North America. As a center for commerce and immigration of both white and black, Kingston developed as a dynamic social environment with cultural traditions flooding into the area from across the Atlantic.

Despite its economic growth and dynamic social environment Kingston has garnered relatively little attention from historians. Similar to Gary Nash's observation in 1973 of North American urban slavery where "textbooks in colonial history and black history rarely mention urban slavery," studies of colonial life in the British Caribbean suggest an analytical bias towards plantation slavery that often leaves the urban context of white society and slavery unexamined or ignored.[4] Though important for their examination of the plantation slave society Elsa Goveia's

[4] Gary Nash, "Slave and Slaveowners in Colonial Philadelphia," William and Mary Quarterly 30 (1973), 223. On this point see Welch, Slave Society and the City, 1-2. Prior to Nash's comment Richard Wade's Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820-1860 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1964), was among the first to examine North American urban slavery in detail. More recent studies such as Ira Berlin's Many Thousands Gone

Slave Society in the British Leewards and Orlando Patterson's The Sociology of Slavery note only in passing the significance of urban society to the development of slavery.[5] Goveia's examination of the British Leewards finds that whites were concentrated in urban centers where slaves also enjoyed a measure of independence and "freedom of movement" but she fails to press her analysis of urban white social development nor suggest how urban slave society contrasted with slavery as it developed on the plantation.[6] Patterson's investigation of the foundations and structure of Jamaican slave society, heavily oriented towards plantation slave society and the stunting effect absenteeism had on Jamaican social development, notes only in passing urban slave society. Patterson writes of towns where "there were many white men having no authority over slave women," but he fails to explore the contrast between urban slaves apparent independence and slave society as it developed within Jamaican plantation culture.[7]

Edward Brathwaites' Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, which examines the process of creolization in colonial Jamaica, devotes some attention to how towns influenced Jamaica's social development. Noting in particular the urban community of merchants, Brathwaite records how the wealth of merchant elites contributed to the economic development of Kingston and helped sustain their elite social status.[8] Brathwaite also writes that despite the perception that Jamaica "was almost exclusively a planter society" a large middle class of urban

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(Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1998), and Philip Morgan's Slave Counterpoint (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) incorporate urban slavery into their discussions of the development of Chesapeake and South Carolina lowcountry slavery.

[5] Welch, Slave Society and the City, 3-6.

[6] Slave Society in the British Leewards, 146.

[7] Patterson, The Sociology of Slavery, 161.

[8] The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 111-117.

artisans and shopkeepers figured heavily into the structure of white society.[9] Despite his attention to the merchant elites and urban artisans of Kingston and his acknowledgment of the development of slavery in towns in his discussion of "jobbing," "hired out," and tradesmen slaves, Brathwaite does not adequately explore how slavery in urban areas developed differently than plantation slavery. Nor is there an extended or focused discussion of how urban slaves or urban whites contributed specifically to the formation of Jamaican creole society.[10]

Despite the general inattention to questions of urban slavery by historians of the Caribbean, there are several significant works that highlight town slave life and society. Barry Higman's examination of slavery in the British Caribbean during the first three decades of the nineteenth century pays particular attention to the significant differences between rural plantation slavery and urban Caribbean society as well as the general decline in urban slave populations after 1807.[11] This builds on earlier work by Higman which explored the structure and population of Jamaican port towns in the early nineteenth century and suggested how urban society in Jamaica served as both "barriers and portals to profits and progress."[12] Although Higman's quantitative analysis of slave populations is an extremely significant contribution to our understanding of the nature and organization of slave society in the British Caribbean just prior to the emancipation of slaves, his examination of urban slave society does not capture the full complexity and diversity of white urban social or cultural life. Nor does his study of the masters

[9] Ibid., 135-136.

[10] Ibid., 159-161. Brathwaite writes of black tradesmen, "From the point of view of the future development of the society, and also as individuals contributing to the development of creolization, this category of slaves was perhaps the most important."

[11] Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 93-99, 158-259.

and mistresses of early nineteenth century Jamaican society discuss white social formation in urban centers.

Colin Clarke's Kingston, Jamaica 1692-1962 is also a valuable source for the study of urban Caribbean society. Noting the demographic development and spatial organization of Kingston's slave population, Clarke explores how colonial era slaves in Kingston enjoyed a greater degree of social autonomy and economic independence than their rural counterparts. As Clarke's study encompasses the social, demographic and cultural development of Kingston over the course of 300 years, relatively little attention is given to the colonial period. In particular, Clarke mentions only in passing the structure of urban white society and fails to develop the dynamics of urban white social and cultural development.[13]

While Higman and Clarke fail to explore white social development in the urban Caribbean Pedro Welch's study of slave society in Bridgetown, Barbados between 1680 and 1834 seeks to capture the complexity and dynamism of white and black social development and cultural formation. Highlighting the "urban matrix" of Barbadian slave society Welch explores the changing demographic profile of Bridgetown and notes how its economic function as a port town influenced the social interaction between white and black. Writing of white social development Welch perceptively notes "To ignore the urban context of the slave plantation system is, therefore, to impoverish our understanding of a process of creolisation which was reshaping the nature of social interaction in plantation society."[14] Welch's study points to the growing attention of urban studies of slavery among historians who are examining the complex

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[12] "Jamaican Port Towns in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Atlantic Port Cities (Knoxville, TN: Universtiy of Tennessee Press, 1991), 117-148, quote p. 141. See also Higman, Slave Populations and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834 (Mona, Jamaica: The University Press of the West Indies, 1995, originally published 1976).

[13] Clarke, Kingston, Jamaica (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). On the colonial period see especially p. 1- 29.

nature of urban slave society and the variety of social and cultural responses whites and enslaved Africans made to their surroundings.[15] This study of material culture and social development in Kingston, Jamaica, seeks to complement this growing literature. Further, it suggests how the methodologies of material culture studies and cultural retention inform our understanding of white social development within the urban Caribbean context.

Methodology

This study is based on two interdisciplinary methodological approaches. The first is the work on material culture and consumption designed by historians of early modern Europe and colonial North America. The aim of this work is to capture the consumption habits of individuals and social classes, to track the circulation of material goods and to place material objects at the center of cultural life. The second methodological approach applies anthropological and historical inquiry to the transfer of cultures from one locale to another. The particular goal of this approach is to examine the colonial encounter of cultural traditions in an attempt to reveal areas of cultural retention. Neither of these traditions has been applied to a cross-section of Caribbean society, nor have they been combined in a study aiming to capture the formation of a colonial society and the cultural processes that were at work.

Historians of European material culture and consumption have produced a new picture of early modern society. The meticulous examination and cataloging of probate inventories expose patterns of consumption across early modern European society, and reveal how social boundaries

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[14] Welch, Slave Society and the City, 139.

[15] For Kingston see T. Burnard, "'The Grand Mart of the Island': The Economic Function of Kingston, Jamaica in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," in Jamaica in Slavery and Freedom: History, Heritage and Culture, ed. by Kathleen E.A. Monteith and Glen Richards (Mona, Jamaica: University Press of the West Indies, 2002), 225-241. See also N.A.T. Hall, "Slavery in Three West Indian Towns: Chriansted, Fredericksted and Charlotte Amalie in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century," in Barry Higman ed. Trade, Government and Society in Caribbean History 1700-1920 (Kingston, Jamaica: Heinemann, 1983). Mary Karasch analyses slave life in Rio de Janeiro in the nineteenth century in her Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro 1808-1850 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

and identities were distinguished by habits of consumption.[16] Historians and cultural anthropologists have expanded on these initial impressions of the value of probate records, and captured what Daniel Roche calls the "ordinary life of the popular classes," using them "[to] discover the standards and ways of living, daily habits and the cultural choices of the laboring classes."[17] This work and others like it examine how material life reflected social position and how material objects owned by individuals or collectively by social groups gave expression to different social values. Later studies have highlighted the processes of "cultural consumption" through an examination of contemporary novels, newspapers, art collections and images showing how high European culture was marketed and consumed by non-elites. Using probate records combined with visual images (paintings and prints) and literary sources (letters, journals, etc), scholars have captured the daily life and activities of European society and the mentalities of its members.[18]

The examination of material goods by historians of early modern Europe has developed alongside the research of social scientists of colonial North America whose use of probate records and visual images of the colonial environment have provided a fuller understanding of the values and ideals within that society. These studies illuminate income levels of colonists',

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[16] See e.g. Lorna Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760, (London, 1988); or, Daniel Roche, The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime, (Cambridge, 1994), Roche, A History of Everyday Things, trans. by Brian Pearce (Cambridge, UK: 2000), or Jennifer Jones, Sexing La Mode: Gender, Fashion and Commercial Culture in Old Regime France, (Oxford, UK: Berg Press, 2004), or Simon Schama, The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age, New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1987).

[17] Roche, The People of Paris, (Berkeley, 1988), 59

[18] Much of the literature that exploring the eighteenth century consumer revolution grows out of John Brewer, J.H, Plumb and Neil McKendrick, Birth of A Consumer Society, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982); See also John Brewer and Roy Porter, Consumption and the World of Goods (New York, NY: Routledge, 1993); Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, Consumption of Culture 1600-1800 (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995); Joan Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England (Oxford: 1978).

attitudes toward the consumption of their European counterparts, and colonists' attempts to create distinctly colonial social identities through the purchase or rejection of European-based material objects. Cultural historians using the same types of evidence argue that probate records shed light on the ordering of colonial life activities and social spaces, which were based on old world received traditions placed in a new world environment where they became a "means of emphasizing social differences. . .". [19] Of particular interest to several scholars of colonial British America has been the extension of metropolitan norms of gentility and polite society to British North America in major port areas where a significant community of merchants lived. Within the rising levels of material consumption of the eighteenth century colonial America, port areas such as Boston, Philadelphia and Charleston saw increased attention to metropolitan ideas of polite and refined behavior.[20] This was reflected not only in correct personal deportment, but also in the acquisition and display of fashionable dress and household furnishings. As "Town life

[19] Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake," in Of Consuming Interests ed. by Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 61. On colonial consumer culture see e.g. Carol Shammas, The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990), Lorena Walsh, "Urban Amenities and Rural Sufficiency: Living Standards and Consumer Behaviour in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1643-1770), Journal of Economic History 43 (1983):109-117; T. H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain' The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century" in Past and Present 119 (1988), 73- 104. Reflecting growing scholarship being devoted to colonial material culture, The William & Mary Quarterly devoted its entire January 1996 (vol 53) issue to "Material Culture in Early America." For an examination of colonial identity and gentility see the entries in Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds. Of Consuming Interest: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century. See also Richard Bushman, The Refinement of America (New York, NY: Knopf, 1992). For a study of the influence early modern consumer society had on eighteenth century colonial American revolutionary thought and political action see T. H. Breen, The Marketplace of Revolution (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[20] For example, see the construction of social and cultural identity among the merchant community within Boston and Philadelphia see Phyllis Hunter Whitman, Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic world: Massachusetts Merchants, 1670-1780 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001) or Thomas Doerflinger, A vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985). For Charleston S.C. see Breen, The Marketplace of Revolution, 125-126, 167. For merchant identity its relation to polite or refined culture in the British Atlantic world see esp. David Hancock, Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See also the works cited in n. 19 above.

encouraged a proliferation of supporting props," urban residents invested a great amount of their resources into obtaining the "social equipment" of fashionable society.[21]

Despite the richness of the literature which examines the material world and social identities of genteel and refined behavior among both European and colonial North American residents, and in particular those that inhabited the major ports of British Atlantic, these same methodologies have only been sparingly employed in the colonial Caribbean. A leading scholar of the colonial Caribbean, Barry Higman, noted this problem with the scholarship and wrote in 1999 that one of the primary directions for future study of the region will be in material culture, referring to it as "the raw material of heritage investigation."[22] This study investigates this material "heritage" in eighteenth-century Kingston, Jamaica and argues that the polite and refined tastes found within diverse segments of the British North Atlantic white population were also represented in urban Jamaican white society.

When the Philadelphia businessman William Pollard wrote to his contacts in Liverpool introducing Edward Barrett of Jamaica as "genteel", he gave expression to common themes of social etiquette and cultural values within the British Atlantic community. Pollard writes of the Jamaican Barrett "that he is a person . . . of very good character, he has his family here [Jamaica] and lives genteely."[23] However, Barrett's genteel life and refined behavior was not only a part of colonial elite white society. By the middle of the eighteenth century levels of refined behavior and its material trappings, normally seen only at elite levels of colonial American society, began

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[21] Carr and Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior," 102.

[22] Barry Higman, "The Development of Historical Disciplines in the Caribbean," in General History of the Caribbean, (ed) Barry Higman, (London, 1999): 17.

[23] William Pollard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Peter Holme, Liverpool, England, May 16, 1772, Letterbook of William Pollard, HSP.

to seep down to lower segments of Colonial American society.[24] This was seen particularly in urban areas where the levels of conspicuous consumption among virtually all levels of wealth were noticeably higher than in the countryside.[25] Within the socially and economically competitive urban societies of British Atlantic ports such as London, Boston, Philadelphia, and as I argue for Kingston, the consumption and display of objects culturally associated with genteel and refined behavior signalled entry into civilized society.[26]

However, these objects of gentility and polite society were appropriated within two different contexts that distinguished it from British North America and England. The first is Kingston's tropical location which influenced both the built environment of Kingston and the consumer choices of household articles in Kingston's white society. The tropical environment of Jamaica and the sweltering heat of the region often invoked both words of warning or scorn among metropolitan writers. The heat, so different from the more temperate climate of England, presented significant challenges to white immigrants to the island and many died failing to properly adjust to life in the tropics. Some, however, adjusted well and came to prefer the tropics. Rebecca Dolbeare, the wife of a Kingston merchant, returned to England yet she longed to return to her friends and home in Kingston. Writing from Devonshire, England, she commented to her brother, "I can hardly write to be understood, the weather is so cold, and dark, I am quite out of conceit of England, I am ready and willing to return to Jamaica, as soon as Mr.

[24] Bushman, Refinement in America, xiii; Carr and Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake," in Of Consuming Interest, 62, 66; and Carson, "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial America: Why Demand?" in Of Consuming Interest, 660.

[25] Carr and Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior," 91-102.

[26] Hancock, Citizens of the World, 280-281.

D[olbeare] pleases. The children and my self are never without violent colds and coughs."[27] Mrs, Dolbeare, preferring to live in Kingston, had no doubt accommodated herself and her material world to life in the tropics. As this study suggests, the tropical climate influenced domestic architecture and helped shape desires for domestic consumables.

Second, the racial setting of Kingston, where a significant concentration of whites lived alongside a large community of slaves and free blacks, helped shape the social meaning and distinctions embedded in domestic material objects and suggest how racial divisions were displayed as well as blurred. From the organization of labor in Kingston and the power of the rural sugar economy, to the vast numbers of enslaved Africans present in the streets of Kingston and plantations of Jamaica, residents of Kingston never thought of slavery in the abstract. Its influence was embedded in the acquisition and display of material objects where the wealth and material extravagance of white society further reinforced the racial distinctions of Kingston society. Yet slaves, despite often being seen as material objects themselves, also challenged Kingston's social and racial divisions through their own expressions of material consumption. As this study argues in chapter six, the fluid and open nature of urban slave society, as well as the increased economic opportunities available to slaves in Kingston to gain excess capital, allowed some slaves to obtain and display clothing which was seen by whites as above their station. These challenges, expressed in the material acquisitions of slaves, served to blur and confuse racial distinctions and enabled slaves to challenge the social distance between slaves and free whites within Kingston society.

The second methodological foundation of this study focuses on the transfer of cultural traditions from one locale to another. In Caribbean academic literature, the primary focus of

[27] Rebecca Dolbeare, Devonshire, England, to Brother, (n.g.), 30 January 1781, Box 3, Folder 1780-1781, Dolbeare Family Papers, MHS.

these studies has been on the construction of African-American culture. Early studies analyzing the transfer of African culture from one locale to another posit the presence of two relatively complete cultural traditions (European and African) clashing in the new cultural area of the New World with the end result of an acculturated African slave. These studies search for evidence of African cultural retention in material artifacts that suggest African traditions, or slaves arrangement of their secular lives. [28] However, as Richard Price and Sidney Mintz convincingly argue, no social group (European nor African) is able to transfer its culture en masse from one locale to another. Focusing exclusively on African-American slavery, they argue that the heterogeneous nature of African cultural traditions, when combined with a social and political system designed to enforce slavery, hindered not only cultural transfer but also cultural retention. The model proposed by Price and Mintz suggests that attempts to locate specific cultural traditions and artifacts of African slaves should be only one part of the scholarship on "Africanisms." Rather, these authors propose to examine the remnants of West African culture at the level of shared values, which Price and Mintz speculate can be found in "cognitive orientation, phenomenological assumptions and interpersonal style."[29] Following the methodological path outlined by Price and Mintz, historians and cultural anthropologists, using many of the tools of material culture studies, demonstrate a preserved cultural tradition in slaves' retention of their African names, or elements of African heritage in the language of religious

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[28] Representative in this tradition is the important work by Melville Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, (New York, 1941). This emphasis on social and cultural continuity and retention is more recently presented by John Thorton who argues for a direct and compelling connection between Africa and the Americas in Afro-American slave culture and resistance. See, Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic World, (Cambridge, 1988 and 1992).

[29] Mintz and Price, An Anthropological Approach to the African American Past, (Philadelphia, 1976): 1-10.

expression and entertainment.[30] Essential to this study is the call for an examination of slaves shared values with their African heritage and the tools of material culture studies that are used to illuminate such common values. This project expands this model to also include the immigrant populations arriving from Europe in Kingston where, alongside slaves there also lived, Scots, Irish, English, Huguenots and Sephardic Jews. Mintz and Price's assumption of the relative homogenous cultural values and traditions of Europeans is now coming under closer scrutiny by historians of European migration who note the diverse social structures and peasant cultures that sent so many migrants across the Atlantic.[31] By including each social and racial layer of Kingston, this study captures the values and cultural identities, both shared and differentiated, preserved in the material culture of the area.

The utility of combining the approaches of material culture and cultural transfer studies becomes readily apparent in the context of urban Kingston. Systematically exploring and capturing the circulation of material goods through the colonial matrix of divergent cultural traditions, racial hierarchies, and economic strata sheds new light on colonial identity, cultural transfer and the nature of the colonial encounter between black and white. By tracing the circulation of material objects, we can write what Igor Kopytoff calls the "cultural biography of things." From this perspective we see how the material object of a slave among whites and free-

[30] Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African American Society in Mainland North America," in William and Mary Quarterly (1996): 251-88; Trevor Burnard, "Slave Naming Patterns: Onomastics and the Taxonomy of Race in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica," in The Journal of Interdisciplinary History 31 (Winter 2001): 325-46. Edward Brathwaite's, The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820 (Oxford, 1971) is an attempt to locate the retention of cultural forms from Africa in language and folklore that anticipates Mintz and Price's approach. The debate over "Creolization" within the Afro-American slave communities in the New World is by no means settled. This is reflected in Richard Price's overview of the current literature surrounding African cultural retention in "The Miracle of Creolization: A Retrospective," in New West Indian Guide 75(2001): 35-64.

[31] Mintz and Price, 1. For an excellent examination of early European migration to North America see, Alison Games, Migration and the origins of the English Atlantic world (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); see also Bernard Bailyn, Voyages to the West (New York, NY: 1986); and Bernard Bailyn and Philip Morgan, eds., Strangers within the Realm (Chapel Hill, NC: Chapel Hill University Press, 1991).

blacks contributed to maintaining the social distance necessary to preserve a slave society. Or, we see how imported luxury or fashion articles preserve social and cultural connections with England or colonial North America. In particular, we see how an imported object such as a hat or silver shoe buckles which, not only suggest wealth and fashion, but also served to further confirm racial boundaries.[32]

Sources for This Project and the Structure of the Study

The sources for this study are a wide assortment of letters, diaries, account books and historical accounts that detail life and society in eighteenth century Kingston. The probate inventory, a significant source for the study of seventeenth and eighteenth century consumption and material culture, is also a key element in this study. In Kingston, at the time of an individual's death two or three court appointed appraisers, often familiar with either the deceased or their occupation, itemized in detail the value of real property for the estate.[33] It appears that individuals were included in the probate process in Kingston for the same reasons that Holly Izard found for colonial New England where "without exception, persons were probated only if they met one or more of five criteria: if they had written a will; if they owned real property (land and buildings) at the time of death; if they left minor heirs; if there were outstanding notes due them; or, if they died in debt."[34] Though criticized for the biases that are a part of the process making them "rarely susceptible of direct, unqualified use," probate inventories remain the best

[32] Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things," in The Social Life of Things ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, 1986), 66-67.

[33] This process was much the same across the British Atlantic world. See Gloria Main, "Probate Records as a Source for Early American History," William and Mary Quarterly 32 (January 1975): 89-99; Trevor Burnard, "Inheritance and Independence: Women's Status in Early Colonial Jamaica," William and Mary Quarterly 48 (January 1991), 93-114; and Pedro Welch, Slave Society and the City, 94-139. On the probate process see also Peter Benes and Jane Montague Benes, "Unlocking the Semantic and Quantitative Doors," Early American Probate Inventories ed. by Peter Benes , The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings 12 (1987):5-15.

source for "an approximation of the meaning of daily actions and the way objects were used."[35] For the purposes of this study the household items recorded in Kingston's probate inventories between 1750 and 1799 reflect not only "the cultural assumptions that guided their purchase," but also assumes that these "artifacts are integral to cultural behavior."[36]

The method of recording probate items from inventories remains a thorny issue given their potential biases. For this study I adopted a rather simple method for recording the information contained within probate inventories that enabled me to chart the presence and value of a select group of items and their relationship to wealth and social divisions within Kingston. First, for each probate inventory taken of Kingston residents between 1750 and 1799 I recorded the name, vocation, number and value of slaves and the net total estate value. The primary aim of this was to record slave ownership in Kingston and establish wealth levels. Over the course of the 50 years reviewed for this study 1,865 individuals were probated in Kingston averaging 37 per year. Probate inventories from Kingston Parish represented anywhere from 20 to 34 percent of the total inventories recorded for Jamaican parishes during this period and were by far the most represented.[37] To record the presence of selected material objects I employed the following

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[34] Izard, "Random or Systematic? An Evaluation of the Probate Process," Winterthur Portfolio 32 (1997), 147-167.

[35] Gloria Main, "Probate Records as a Source," 95. Roche, The People of Paris trans. by Marie Evans in association with Gwynne Lewis (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 128. Biases represented in the probate process include gender (most probated inventories were from males) and age (most appear to have been older individuals permitting a "greater degree of wealth accumulation"). See Main, "Probate Records as a Source," 96. For a further examination of the biases within probate inventories see Kevin Sweeney, "Using Tax Lists to Detect Biases in Probate Inventories," Early American Probate Inventories, ed. by Peter Benes, 32-40. On the value of the probate inventories for the study of consumption and material culture see e.g. Anton Schuurman, "Probate Inventories: Research Issues, Problems and Results," Probate Inventories: A New Source for the Historical Study of Wealth, Material Culture and Agricultural Development, ed. Ad Van Der Woude and Anton Schuurman (Utrecht, Netherlands: Hes Publishers, 1980), 19-31

[36] Ibid., 92. Ann Smart Martin, "Material Things and Cultural Meanings: Notes on the Study of Early American Material Culture," William and Mary Quarterly 53 (January 1996), 5.

[37] In 1750 and 1760 Kingston parish alone accounted for 34 percent of all inventories recorded (40 of 116 and 32 of 93 respectively). By the latter decades of the eighteenth century as the eastern and western parishes

method. As I worked through the inventories I sampled the entire inventory of every fifth document. This method of sampling recorded the entire contents of 21 percent of the probate inventories (391 of 1861). Also, as the aim of this study was to record the presence and value of material objects, if a sample inventory recorded only debts owed to the estates, I used the next available record. These records were entered into a database spreadsheet that I manipulated with various searches and formulas to obtain the statistical information that serves as the foundation for chapter 4 of this study.[38]

The structure of this work begins with an overview of Kingston and situates its social and economic development as a "Grand Mart" within the British Atlantic world. Chapter three explores the built environment of Kingston and records how urban white citizens adapted to its harsh tropical and racially divisive environment. Moving into the interior of white urban residents, chapter 4 examines the function and material world of domestic space in Kingston. Again, noting the adjustments white residents made to their tropical environment, "Kingston at Home" also explores the cultural attachments of white residents to metropolitan norms of genteel and refined society. From an examination of the material objects of domestic space and their potential meanings, chapter five shifts to exploring the world Kingston's white women created for themselves within the urban household. Despite metropolitan critiques aimed at indolent white women of British Caribbean slave culture, chapter five argues that urban white women in Kingston actively worked to carve out a sphere of influence and authority within the domestic space of Kingston where they managed household expenditures and supervised domestic slaves.

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underwent significant economic and social development (e.g. St. Thomas-in-the-East or Clarendon) Kingston share of probates declined to around 24 percent. In 1785 Kingston inventories numbered 40 of the 166 recorded for Jamaica.

[38] I am deeply indebted to Dr. Eric Popp of Eastern Kentucky University for his assistance in the statistical analysis of these records.

In chapter 6 we move to an examination of urban slave culture and the significant differences between urban slavery and plantation slave society. As this chapter argues, urban slave society presented increased opportunities for slaves to better their material world and in doing so they challenged the cultural and racial boundaries that divided urban white society from the society of enslaved black Africans.

CHAPTER 2

KINGSTON: THE GRAND MART AND MAGAZINE OF JAMAICA

On the morning of June 7, 1692, between eleven o'clock and noon, as the inhabitants of Port Royal, Jamaica went about their daily duties, two small earthquakes and a subsequent violent one collapsed two thirds of the city into the Harbor. After two minutes of vicious shaking and convulsing, more than 2,000 of the 3,500 inhabitants, and no less than 1,600 of the 2,000 structures, of the Port were destroyed. Following the initial reaction of confusion, fear, and looting among the survivors, town and colony leaders soon began to reorganize and plan for the future. Their first task was to determine the future of Port Royal, which up to this point had been the key port and commercial center for the fledgling British colonial island of Jamaica. Several city fathers desired to rebuild the port while others, led by Nicholas Lawes, a member of the Council and future governor of Jamaica, sought to move across the harbor to Liguanea Plain. Expediency as well as profit drove Lawes, who represented former Speaker in the Assembly William Beeston, now an absentee proprietor. Beeston owned property across the harbor, including the tiny village of Hogs Crawle, and as his representative on the island, Lawes suggested the sale of 200 acres for £2000. The Council agreed to this arrangement, and plans were soon underway for the construction of a new town. By July 22, 1692, one and a half months after the shock of the earthquake, the area already had a name. The council, meeting on board the merchant ship *Richard and Mary*, agreed that "the new towne [be] called Kingston."[1]

The area chosen for the new town was two miles to the north of the ten-mile Palisadoes Spit on which Port Royal, or what was left of it, rested. The spit forms a natural breakwater and

[1] J. P. Jacobs, A Short History of Kingston (Kingston, Jamaica: 1976), 9.

runs parallel to the Liguanea Plain. Kingston Harbor, situated between the spit and Liguanea Plain, is considered one of the finest natural anchorages in the world covering an area of approximately ten square miles. Silt flowing from the Rio Cobre and Salt Rivers of St. Catherine Parish and the gullies of St. Andrew Parish settles in Hunt's Bay and never reaches the harbor. This makes it unnecessary to dredge the Harbor, which naturally preserves deep water anchorage for entering ships.[2] This advantage was not lost on the foremost eighteenth century historian of Jamaica, who wrote that Kingston Harbor "is deep enough to admit ships of the greatest burthen; upwards of a thousand sail may anchor here in perfect safety, except in a hurricane; and the water is so deep at the wharfs, that vessels of two hundred ton lye along-side of them, to deliver their cargoes."[3]

The ecological and topographical environment surrounding the harbor of Kingston was of great interest to historians, naturalists and surveyors from across the Atlantic (Europe and Americas) during the eighteenth century. Early naturalists studied the natural wildlife and plants of the area.[4] A later study by George Gould calculated the height of the Blue Mountains at 7553 feet above sea level from observations made just off the coast of Port Royal.[5] Gould found that

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[2] Colin Clarke, Kingston, Jamaica (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 2.

[3]Edward Long, The History of Jamaica, vol. II (London: Printed For T. Lowndes in Fleet-Street, 1774), 103.

[4] See e.g. Hans Sloane, M.D. A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica, with the Natural History of the Herbs, and Trees, Four-Footed Beasts, Fishes, Birds, insect, Reptiles, &c. on the last of those Islands (London, 1707); Charles Leslie, A New and Exact Account of Jamaica . . Together with the most remarkable and curious animals, plants and Trees &c are Described (London, 1740); and Patrick Brown, The Civil and Natural History of Jamaica (London: 1756).

[5] George Gould, Kingston, Jamaica, to Dr. Williamson, Philadelphia, 15 February 1773, American Philosophical Society (hereafter APS), Philadelphia, PA. His survey of the height of the Blue Mountains, which he calculated at 7553 feet, is communicated to Dr. Williamson and was to be reported to the American Philosophical Society. Gould is perhaps best known for his mapping of the coast of Florida which he presented in published form in An Account of the Surveys of Florida. &c. With Directions for Sailing from Jamaica or the West Indies, By the West End of Cuba, and through the Gulph of Florida (London, 1790).

the highest point of the Blue Mountains was nearly a mile and half above the surface of the sea. What must have struck Gould, as it becomes apparent from the drawings of his observations, was the impressive and towering Blue Mountains. As modern travelers approach the island, the mountain range appears to rise out of the sea in a sharp ascension. However, after docking in Port Royal or on the wharves of Kingston, one realizes the gradual incline of the Liguanea plain to the foot of the Blue Mountains. The gradual descent from the foot of the Blue Mountains to the harbor was put to good use by the designers of Kingston, as several historians have noted. From the foot of the Liguanea Mountains to the Harbor is a gradual descent of about four and half miles. This "convenient slope" prevented the stagnation of water in the streets of Kingston. But given the heavy rains that often visited the region, "vast torrents, which sometimes rush with such impetuosity down the principal streets . . . render them almost impassable by wheeled carriages."[6]

When the city fathers of Port Royal established Liguanea Plain as the site for the new town, a small village was already in existence. The area, known as Hogs Crawle, had at least one substantial structure—the "house of Mrs. Ann Lowder"—where lots were drawn to determine ownership of the new freeholds.[7] Despite the presence of a small village, much of the area had to be cleared, a project initially overseen with much vigor by Nicholas Lawes. As clearing and building continued during the summer and fall of 1692, the residents' efforts met with serious set-backs. With only tents to protect them from the summer heat and mosquitoes and little in the way of what may be called sanitary conditions, terrible sickness and disease ruled the day. After the devastating earthquake, another 3,000 inhabitants died of cholera and yellow fever during the

[6] Thomas Cole, History of the West Indies (London, 1808), 355. See also Long, History of Jamaica, II, 104.

[7] J. G. Young, "The Founding of Kingston," in The Capitals of Jamaica, ed W. Adolphe Roberts (Kingston: Pioneer Press, 1955), 40.

preparations for the new town. One local writer recorded, "almost half the people that escap'd upon Port Royal are since dead of a Malignant Fever, from Change of Air, want of dry Houses, warm Lodging, proper medicine, and other conveniences."[8] The historian Edward Long recorded that five hundred graves were dug in a month's time, with two or three buried in each one.[9]

Though the heat was oppressive for these early residents, the Liguanea Plain is an area recognized for variations in temperature. At the lowest point nearest the harbor, temperatures reach at least 3° higher than areas to the north at the foot of the Blue Mountains. Later residents in the eighteenth recognized this variation and built retreats at the cooler outskirts of the city, a phenomenon characteristic of Kingston's modern development.[10] Despite higher temperatures near the harbor – the chosen site of new settlement – residents and contemporary chroniclers have noted that the area temperature is modified by a welcome sea-breeze, "which generally begins to blow" about 9:00 a.m. "Were it not for the kindly Effects of the constant Winds, . . . no creature could inhabit here," wrote Charles Leslie in 1740.[11] Leslie vividly described the sea breeze known as "the Doctor" by local residents:

> [the breezes] are seen gently to approach the Shore in a fine, small, black Curl upon the Water, while the Sea, not yet reached by it, is smooth and even as can be imagined: in half and Hour after it has reached the shore, it fans pretty briskly, and so increases gradually till about Twelve, when 'tis commonly strongest, and lasts till Two or Three, when it begins to die away, and withdraw its Force by degrees till quite spent (which is about Five o'Clock) and returns no more till next morning.[12]

Anne Storrow, a resident of Kingston in 1792, wrote to her sister living in the more temperate climate of New Brunswick that "the climate affects me . . . strangely, not that the heat is so very

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[8] Ibid., 41-42.

[9] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 143.

[10] Colin Clarke notes the average temperature of modern Kingston to be 79° F. See Clarke, Kingston, 2.

[11] Charles Leslie, New and Exact Account of Jamaica (London, 1740), 20-21.

[12] Ibid., 21.

oppressive for there is a instant breeze blowing from 10 o'clock in the morning which makes it perfectly bearable, and in many situations in the town these and few days in the year that you would not find yourself comfortable."[13] "The Doctor" might have cooled or at least alleviated the effects of the oppressive heat for long-standing residents of Kingston, but the stifling and humid heat of the "Torrid Zone" always made a dramatic impression on first time travelers to the region. Carl Philipp Steuernagel, a 20-year-old Hessian corporal from Waldeck, Germany serving during the American Revolution, noted on a journey to Jamaica in 1778 that "soon the heat was unbearable, even though it was the end of the month of November, which caused us to remove our woolen clothing and most wore only a shirt."[14]

Despite the breezes that regularly cooled the Liguanea Plain from the stifling heat, the early inhabitants of Kingston were subject to devastating disease. This threat, combined with some shifty dealings in the allotment of land by Colonel Beeston, induced some early settlers to return to Port Royal.[15] In spite of this desire, plans for the town continued, lots were sold, and the Jamaican Assembly recognized it as a Parish in 1693. In that same year, Kingston was allowed to send three Representatives to the Assembly, while the Receiver-General and Island Secretary were instructed to keep offices there, as they had in Port Royal.[16]

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[13] Anne Appleton Storrow, Kingston, Jamaica, to Sister, St. Andrews, New Brunswick, 23 March 1792, Anne Appleton Storrow Papers, Folder 1790-1792, Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter MHS), Boston, MA.

[14] National Library of Jamaica (hereafter NLJ), Ms. 2006, "Description of the journey of the Prince of Waldeck's 3rd Regiment from North America to the West Indian Island of Jamaica and from there to West Florida," Hessian Accounts of America (typescript), 31.

[15] Colonel Beeston attempted to double his money by maintaining control over the more than 66 acres between Harbour street (the southernmost plot of land originally sold) and the water shoal. This would have allowed Beeston to control access to the wharves. Later, and after threats and some violence, Beeston relinquished on this claim. See Young, "The Founding of Kingston," 44-45.

[16] James Minot, A Digest of the Laws of Jamaica, from 33 Charles II to 28 Victoria (Jamaica, 1865), 511-512. See also Young, "Founding of Kingston," 43.

The layout of the town, designed by John Goffe in 1692, resembled a parallelogram: Harbor Street marked the south side, and North, East, and West Streets marked the remaining sides. At the center was a parade into which the central east-west Queen Street and the central north-south King's Street emptied. This efficient layout often impressed longtime residents as well as new arrivals. Edward Long, a long-time resident and historian of Jamaica, commented in 1774 that "in propriety of design [Kingston] is, perhaps, not excelled by any town in the world."[17] Colonel Adam Gordon, sent to Jamaica with the Sixty-Sixth Regiment of Foot, commented in 1764 that "it is large and very well inhabited, the streets spacious and regularly laid out, cutting one another at right angles, – and in the upper part of town, called the Savannah, are many sumptuous houses, with Gardens, and offices in proportion."[18] With its efficient layout and steady increase in lots sold, Kingston was gradually overtaking Port Royal as the principal port and commercial center of Jamaica. The devastating fire at Port Royal on January 9, 1703 cemented Kingston's position as the central port of the island and established its final dominance over Port Royal. From this point forward, Kingston served as the principal entrepôt of the island. With the sugar boom of the 1720's and 1730's, Kingston joined the ranks of the principal ports of the British Atlantic world. Slaves and British manufactures for the islands growing white and black population entered the island, largely through Kingston, while sugar and other raw materials were exported through the port. By 1750, Kingston's merchant elites were powerful enough to seek increased power within the island's political structure, launching a furious debate over the rightful place for Jamaica's capital.

[17] Long, The History of Jamaica II, 103.

[18] "Journal of Lord Adam Gordon" in Travels in the American Colonies, ed Newton D. Merenes (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), 377. For a more extensive analysis of the design of Kingston see chapter 3 below.

Kingston: The Grand Mart and Magazine of Jamaica

In a 1757 letter to the Board of Trade in London, Samuel Dickens of Council Street, London, encouraged Board members to recognize Kingston as the rightful capital of Jamaica. Two years earlier in 1755 Jamaica's royally appointed Governor Charles Knowles named Kingston as the capital at the insistence of powerful local merchants. In moving government offices and official business from planter-controlled Spanish Town to merchant-dominated Kingston, Knowles incited a contentious political feud between Kingston's resident merchants and the island's planter elite that reverberated across the Atlantic to London.[19] Writing from London and in support of Kingston merchant interests, Dickens maintained that Kingston was the best location for the island's capital. His argument highlighted Kingston's development over its first 50 years as a judicial and commercial center for the island as well as the readily apparent material opulence of its residents. Dickens stated initially that

> Kingston is, and has been for a great many years past, the Grand Mart, and the Grand Magazine of that Island, altogether as much as London is the Grand Mart, and the Grand Magazine of England; and notwithstanding the opposition that is made by some gentlemen of the landed interest in that Island; I think merely for opposition sake, and from a spirit of Indignation resentment and contempt of merchants and trading people, which the landed gentlemen in that Island have always shown.[20]

As a "Grand Mart and Magazine" within the region, Kingston, as Dickens argues, brought in much of the revenue arising out of the judicial arm of Jamaica's government. From port fees to decisions rendered by the Vice-Admiralty court, Kingston provided, at least as the merchants argued, a significant amount of island revenue. But beyond the obvious importance of Kingston

[19] For an account of this event see, George Metcalf, Royal Government and Political Conflict in Jamaica 1729-1783 (London, 1965), 109-138.

[20] Samuel Dickens, London, to Board of Trade, 16 November 1757, CO 137/30 folio 30-32, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), Kew, England.

as a revenue-producing urban center, Dickens recommended that it be the capital for its self-sufficiency and more modern material affluence:

> Kingston is well supplied materially with food [and] in contrast the inhabitants of St. Jago [Spanish Town], [who] must be supplied by Kingston or Port Royal. I don't remember to have known a pane of glass in the whole town [Spanish Town], saving at the Governor's house, nor saving in that House, I don't remember any upstairs room, whereas the Town of Kingston is a regular modern well built town; I think I may say as any town in England.[21]

For Dickens, even the mansion of Spanish Town's Governor, which was by all accounts a magnificent structure, could not surpass the material wealth so obvious to visitors and residents of Kingston. Dickens is perhaps embellishing his view of Kingston in an effort to curry favor in London for Kingston's merchants.[22] The political and economic rift between planters and merchants was quite deep at midcentury, and Dickens clearly sided with merchants who hoped to gain political control of the island and thus gain more control over island revenue and tax policies. Despite these motives, his description of Kingston as a "regular" and "modern" town in 1757 reflects the dramatic rise of Kingston in little more than half a century as a commercial center in Jamaica and the British Caribbean.

The commercial prosperity of Kingston and of Jamaica in the eighteenth century reflected its importance as the most valuable jewel in the British Imperial Crown in the Atlantic world. Jamaican plantations produced the most important export of the island—sugar—and absorbed a vast number of slaves who produced this crop. Kingston played a crucial role in the economic fortunes of Jamaica. From the acquisition of sugar or other plantation products to the sale of slaves, Kingston merchants, factors, Esquires, and various support personnel developed and maintained Kingston as the dominant commercial center for Jamaica and the British Caribbean

[21] Ibid.

[22] Dicken's goes on to write that he had lived in Jamaica for a time, mostly in Kingston, but as he did not currently own land in Kingston, he did not feel this influenced his opinion.

and contributed to its ethnic, racial, and social diversity. Furthermore, as the largest urban center in the British Caribbean, Kingston not only had a vibrant commercial life but also maintained a lively social and cultural life. Fernand Braudel's description of the early modern European town as "electric transformers" also applies to Kingston. "They increase tension, accelerate the rhythm of exchange and ceaselessly stir up men's lives . . . They had the finest foods, the luxury industries, brisk currencies."[23] The commercial dominance of Kingston as the "Grand Mart" of Jamaica was largely due to its economic function, which was the foundation of Kingston's social and ethnic diversity.

As Jacob Price has argued, not all ports of the Atlantic commercial community where mercantile activity took place performed the same economic function. The economic function of a port largely derived from and reflected the character of its trade with other geographical areas and the socio-economic institutions designed to support and promote it.[24] In order to develop a more sophisticated or complex economic function that was less dependent on outside influences, a port needed to establish multiple forward-looking trading links. These links would promote growth in the service, industrial (manufacturing), and maritime sectors of the local economy where local goods were processed and finished goods (locally produced or internationally imported) were exported. Central to Price's argument was the location of entrepreneurial decision making. If, according to Price, entrepreneurial decision making was centered in ports (e.g., Boston or New York) "the port could attract entrepôt business that enabled it to transcend

[23] Fernand Braudel, Capitalism and Material Life, trans. Miriam Kockan (London, UK: Harper and Row, 1973), 373.

[24] Jacob Price, "Economic Function and the Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century," in Perspectives in American History 8 (1974), 139.

the limits of the activity arising from its immediate hinterland."[25] Price and Richard Pares correctly pointed out that entrepreneurial decision making was largely removed from West Indian merchants early in the eighteenth century by commission agents who took their directives from London counting houses, thereby limiting growth in industrial and service sectors of the economy. [26]

However, it is misleading to suggest that the port of Kingston lacked a merchant class able to function somewhat independently of metropolitan influence. Richard Pares argued that while eighteenth century metropolitan merchants supplanted most resident West Indian merchants, making them mere commission agents, Kingston retained a merchant class that operated independently in the slave trade to Spanish America.[27] Furthermore, as Richard Sheridan's research suggests, leading London sugar merchants were often former West Indian resident merchants who had simply transferred business activities to London counting houses.[28] While decision making was perhaps removed from the factors who remained in the West Indies, this "return diaspora" of successful island residents controlled metropolitan counting houses

[25] Ibid., 173. Price outlined several types of ports including (1) those that operated as shipping points or processing centers, (2) receiving centers for ships or shipping centers where ships might be built and sent out, (3) limited marts with restricted range of goods or general marts supplying a large variety of local and international goods, (4) limited communication centers or communication centers linked with Atlantic world and, (5) those ports with limited complexity in capital accumulation or (6) those with sophisticated financial and credit institutions. Ibid., 140-43.

[26] Richard Pares, Merchants and Planters (Cambridge, 1960), 33. On the commission system see Richard Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery (Barbados, 1974,1994), 328-332, and K.G. Davies, "The Origins of the Commission System in the West Indian Trade," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 2 (1952): 89-107.

[27] Ibid., 33.

[28] Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery, 299. Sheridan's research found that of the 25 leading commission firms of London dealing in sugar, 23 of 57 partners in these firms were of West-Indian familial origin, 20 partners had married into a West Indian family, 25 were former residents of the Islands, and 12 were former merchants in the island colonies.

trading with the West Indies. This control indicated an extension of island counting houses as opposed to distinct and separate economic roles between island and metropole.[29]

The internal trade of Kingston also facilitated the development of entrepreneurial decision making, particularly in the last half of the eighteenth century up to the emancipation in 1834. Internally, Kingston served as the central market for distributing manufactured goods to the plantations. As such, it attracted a larger variety of goods from a more geographically diverse area than other Jamaican out-ports. By 1832, imports into Kingston were still dominated by Great Britain (77%) while areas outside of the control of English merchants also contributed (23%).[30] While it is difficult to establish precise numbers of local merchants and shopkeepers involved in the distribution of manufactured goods, evidence suggests that shopkeepers, retailers, and local wholesalers comprised close to 25% of the vocational structure of Kingston in 1784.[31] Beyond the circulation of manufactured goods and Kingston's role in their distribution, other avenues for local merchant initiative remained. In the second half of the eighteenth century local merchants could still be involved in the sugar and slave markets, while the internal movement and export of rum, coffee, and pimento were controlled by local merchants usually located in Kingston.[32]

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[29] Trevor Burnard, "'The Grant Mart of the Island': The Economic Function of Kingston, Jamaica in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," in Jamaica in Slavery and Freedom, ed. Kathleen E.A. Monteith and Glen Richards (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002), 232.

[30] Barry Higman, "Jamaican Port Towns in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Atlantic Port Cities, ed. Franklin Knight and P. Liss (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 128-131,136. Canada and the North American colonies comprised most of the trade outside of the control of English merchants.

[31] See Appendix A.

[32] On local merchant involvement in rum, coffee and pimento see Higman, "Jamaican Port Towns," 128. On the development of the coffee industry in Jamaica see Kathleen E.A. Monteith, "Planting and Processing Techniques on Jamaican Coffee Plantations, during Slavery" in Working Slavery, Pricing Freedom, ed. Verene Shepherd (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 112-132 and S.D. Smith, "Coffee and the 'Poorer Sort of People' in Jamaica during the Period of African enslavement," in Sugar Without Slavery, ed. Verene Shepherd (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2002), 102-128. On opportunities for Kingston merchants to operate independently of

Kingston's role in illegal trade with Spanish Colonies, which lasted into the 1760's, also gave the city a forward-looking nature and entrepôt quality, involving it in commercial relationships with numerous ports in Spanish America. Trade with Spanish America consisted primarily of the exchange of English imported slaves for Spanish bullion and livestock. Between 1700 and 1760, two-thirds of Cuba's slaves came illegally from Jamaica which proved a more convenient location for Spanish traders who lacked African stations of their own.[33] In return for slaves, Kingston merchants imported Spanish bullion, which enabled the local merchants to avoid the practice of using sugar or other plantation products to pass for currency, a common practice in other Caribbean islands.[34] Jewish merchants were particularly adept in the Spanish contraband trade; they utilized their extensive network of Caribbean contacts to average £25,000 per annum in profits between 1700 and 1750.[35]

The development of a forward-looking entrepreneurial class of merchants and factors and the subsequent rise of Kingston to commercial dominance in the eighteenth century came largely as a result of the ascendancy of Jamaica's sugar and slave industry. Buccaneering and piracy had long been Jamaica's chief industry since its discovery by Columbus. Port Royal was both a favorite launching point and a safe haven for pirates while under the control of Spain. Following the capture of Jamaica by the English in 1655, buccaneering and piracy remained a prominent commercial enterprise. But it was slowly supplanted by agriculture in the latter third of the seventeenth century when Sir Thomas Modyford of Barbados moved to Jamaica in 1664

English sugar and slave merchants see Trevor Burnard's description of the Lowbridge Brights firm in Kingston in "The Grand Mart of the Island," 233.

[33] Robert McNeill, Atlantic Empires of France and Spain (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 44, 169. On Jamaican re-exports of slaves to Spanish America see Philip Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 26.

[34] Pares, Merchants and Traders, 33; Burnard, "The Grand Mart of the Island," 236.

[35] Stephen A. Fortune, Merchants and Jews (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, 1984), 142-143.

accompanied by 700 planters and their slaves for the express purpose of expanding Jamaica's underdeveloped plantation economy.[36] As Governor (1664-1670), Modyford introduced and encouraged the production of both cocoa and sugar. Cocoa production initially did well and brought modest profits for struggling planters in Jamaica. However, with the steady decline of buccaneering and the cocoa blight of 1670, planters turned to sugar production, which sparked a remarkable proliferation of sugar plantations after 1670. In 1670, there were 57 sugar plantations producing 1,710 cwt of sugar. This number of plantations had increased to 124 at the turn of the century, and by 1774, Jamaica boasted over 775 sugar plantations. Between 1700 and 1775 Jamaica's sugar exports to England and Wales rose over 900 percent from 94,200 cwt to 953,800 cwt.[37] By 1725, Jamaica was the leading producer of sugar within the Caribbean, exporting close to 30% of the regional total. By 1748, that amount had risen to 42%, and remained somewhat constant through 1815 despite the ravages of war, hurricanes, and an intense rivalry with French St. Domingue in the 1770's and 1780's.[38]

Slave imports into Jamaica rose alongside the increasing production of sugar. Planter brutality, low birth rates, and high rates of mortality as a result of malnutrition, disease, accidents

[36] On the importance of piracy and buccaneering to early Jamaican economic development see, Nuala Zahedieh, "The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica,and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655-1692," in William and Mary Quarterly XLIII (1986), 570-593, and Nuala Zahedieh, "Trade, Plunder and Economic Development in Early English Jamaica, 1655-1689," in Economic History Review XXXIX (1986), 205-222.

[37] Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery, 208-222, 487-489.

[38] For Caribbean sugar production in 1725 and 1748 see Richard Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery, 410, and for 1815 see J. R. Ward, "The British West Indies in the Age of Abolition, 1748-1815," in Oxford History of the British Empire ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998)429. The period between 1748 and 1815 saw dramatic fluctuations in the sugar trade, particularly in the 1780's as French St. Domingue was able to produce cheaper and better sugar for the world market. The threat to Jamaican sugar production ended after the successful slave revolt in St. Domingue destroyed much of its sugar production. On St. Domingue and the successful slave rebellion see ibid., 415-439; C. L. R. James, The Black Jacobins (New York, NY: Random House, 1963) and David Geggus "Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789-1815" in A Turbulent Time: the French Revolution in the Greater Caribbean (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 1-50; on the French slave trade and its role in the French sugar trade see, Robert Louis Stein, The French Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century: an Old Regime Business (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979).

and the intensive labor regime demanded by sugar cultivation necessitated a high number of African slave imports into the island each year. Between 1702 and 1808, an estimated 830,857 slaves were imported into Jamaica – an average of 7,838 per annum. A Kingston resident in 1708 confirmed the importance of the slave trade to Jamaica and Kingston: "[the slave trade] employ'd . . . above a hundred ships capable of carrying 25,000 Negroes a year into the plantations."[39] Prior to 1713, British slave efforts were dominated by the Crown chartered Royal African company. The company could provide the necessary financial resources for investment in forts, castles, warehouses, and ships necessary for the African trade, which effectively lowered the cost of supplying Jamaican plantations with slaves. The exclusive monopoly of the Royal African Company was removed in 1713, which encouraged entrepreneurial-minded merchants to enter into the slave trade.

In 1713, the Kingston slave market received a financial boom in the *Asiento* contract from Spain. The Treaty of Utrect, ending the War of Spanish Succession, awarded the South Sea Company an exclusive contract whereby English merchants supplied 4,800 slaves per year to Spanish markets. This monopoly on the slave trade to Spanish America stimulated the slave market in Jamaica despite the pleas of resident planters and merchants who complained that the best slaves were being re-exported off the island.[40] Britain maintained its leadership in the slave trade throughout the eighteenth century largely as a result of England's ability to provide manufactures intended for the African trade cheaply, to extend liberal credit to merchants, and to develop cost-saving innovations in trade, shipping, and finance.

[39] William Wood, A Survey of Trade (London, 1718), 185-192; quoted in Richard Sheridan, Sugar and Slaves, 250.

[40] Richard Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery, 218.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Atlantic slave trade bound Kingston to the Atlantic world and contributed significantly in its rise to commercial prominence. Research indicates that 37% of all slave ships sent to British America were destined for Jamaica. For such a lucrative trade, merchants sought the largest vessels afloat to carry their cargo of slaves. Consequently, ships destined for Jamaica were usually larger, averaging more than 24 tons more than ships destined for other colonial British ports.[41] For these slave vessels, Kingston served as the sole port of entry until 1758 and remained the primary port of entry until the end of the slave trade in 1807-08. Consequently, the harbor became very busy and crowded, and a port city developed that was capable of handling vast numbers of commercial transactions. If Richard Sheridan's estimation of an average price of £30 per slave over the course of the eighteenth century is correct, the slave trade brought more than £25,000,000 to Jamaica during this period, of which £200,000 per annum went through Kingston slave merchants and factors.[42] This commercial windfall was not lost on local merchants and contemporary historians of the region, who consistently argued that the most important economic role of Kingston was the slave trade.[43]

But how did Kingston merchants factor into the profitable slave trade in Kingston, and how did they make money? Trevor Burnard pointed out that slaves were consigned to factors of the South Sea Company or to area merchants who earned commissions of 4 to 5 percent of the net proceeds. For example, in a 1752 voyage of the snow *Bristol* with a cargo of 213 slaves,

[41] Trevor Burnard and Kenneth Morgan, "The Dynamics of the Slave Market and Slave Purchasing Patterns in Jamaica, 1655-1788," in William Quarterly 58 (Jan. 2001), 1.

[42] Burnard, "'Grand Mart of the Island,'" 234. Burnard estimates an average value of £30 per slave based upon the work of Richard Sheridan. See Sugar and Slavery, 252.

[43] Trevor Burnard notes that the Lowbridge-Bright account books make clear that slavery and contraband trade were primary functions of Kingston merchants. See Burnard, "'The Grand Mart of the Island,'" 234. See also Edward Long, History of Jamaica II, 120.

merchants earned a commission of £0.99 per slave or £210.[44] Factors could potentially make great amounts of money through commissions if they worked for one of the few merchant houses that dominated the trade. Sixty-nine percent of slaves entering the Kingston market between 1752 and 1753 came under the control of three merchant houses that collectively made commissions of £11,157.[45] The dominance of a few firms in the Kingston slave market continued until at least the 1770's, as shown in the Jamaican Assembly's tax assessment on those who owed duty on imported slaves. Seven firms and four individuals owed more than £10,000; four firms accounted for 80% of the total.[46]

Merchants not only operated as factors, selling on behalf of merchants in England to plantation owners, but they also operated independently as buyers. In the Kingston market, local buyers accounted for 32-34% of slaves purchased from eighteen vessels in 1752-53. Many resident merchants owned pens on the outskirts of Kingston where slaves were "seasoned" for future employment on the plantations or awaited re-exportation off the island. H. S. Klein estimated that close to 25% of the slaves annually imported into Jamaica were exported, primarily to Spanish America.[47] The Kingston market also supplied slaves for Kingston residents, who appear to have been a slave-owning population. Probate returns for the period

[44] Burnard, "'Grand Mart of the Island,'" 234.

[45] Ibid., 234. The merchant houses were Hibbert and Sprigg, Richards and Gordon, and Peter Furnell. Burnard estimates the commissions based upon figures recorded for the snow *Bristol*.

[46] Trevor Burnard and Kenneth Morgan, "The Dynamics of the Slave Market," 14. The duty imposed by the Assembly accounted for 25 percent of all slaves imported into Jamaica in 1774 and suggest a strong dominance by only a few firms in the slave market of Kingston.

[47] H. S. Klein, The Middle Passage (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 154. As Roderick McDonald notes, Klein's figures exclude figures from 1789-1795 and suggests that Klein undercounted data form 1796 to 1800. McDonald's own figures suggest that 233,805 slaves were transported into Jamaica between 1789 and 1808. 33,730 or 14 percent were re-exported off the island. See, Roderick McDonald, "Measuring the British Slave Trade to Jamaica, 1789-1808: A Comment," in The Economic History Review (33):253-258. This does not greatly affect the overall percentage of slaves re-exported over the entire century, but it does show a decline in re-exports in the last decade of the eighteenth century.

1750-1799 reveal that 70% of the testators recorded ownership of at least one slave. Thirty-two percent of the Kingston residents owned between one and four slaves, eighteen percent owned between five and ten slaves, and sixteen percent owned more than eleven slaves.[48]

Kingston's Ethnic and Demographic Development in the Eighteenth Century

Most of Kingston's white inhabitants hailed from England, but, as Edward Long acknowledged, a large number of Jamaican residents came from "North Britain":

> Jamaica, indeed is greatly indebted to North-Britain, as very near one third of the inhabitants are either natives of that country, or descendents of those who were. Many have come . . . less in quest of fame, than of fortunes; and such is their industry and address, that few of them have been disappointed in their aim.[49]

These Scottish migrants came, Alan Karras argued, as sojourners, intent on making a fortune in Jamaica in order to build a new life in Scotland. The surest way to wealth, according to Scots, was to enter the island with a profession and by practicing it, earn enough to buy an estate large enough to retire to Scotland and live off the proceeds.[50] Richard Sheridan argued that the family or kin system helped make the migration of Scots to Jamaica continuous, for no sooner had a family member established himself than he sent for other members of his family.[51]

Usually of low or middle class backgrounds, though possessing a superior education, and enabled by contacts within the mercantile community of the Atlantic, Scots found great opportunity to prosper in Jamaica. Scottish immigrants often found employment in the professional services sector of the Jamaican and Kingston economy as estate managers, doctors,

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[48] Jamaica National Archives (hereafter JNA), 1B-11-3 vol. 29-91, Spanish Town, Jamaica.

[49] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 287. On the ethnic divisions of Jamaica see also Trevor Burnard, Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 88-89.

[50] Allan Karras, Sojourners in the Sun, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 50-51.

[51] Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery, 369.

attorneys, and merchants.[52] Despite their success, the dream of a profitable return to Scotland never materialized for most Scottish immigrants. As a group, Scottish "sojourners" remained in Jamaica, though their probated inventories suggest that they did achieve some measure of material wealth.[53] Interestingly, a high proportion of Jamaica's Scottish immigrants made their way to Kingston. Within Allan Karras's sample of 267 Scottish sojouners, 73% Scottish immigrants scattered around the northern and western Parishes, while urban Kingston attracted 27%.[54] Their dominating presence in the professions of Kingston was noted by Lady Maria Nugent in 1801, who stated that "almost all the agents, attorneys, merchants and shopkeepers are of that country, and really do deserve to thrive in this, they are so industrious."[55]

Portuguese Jews, a small but wealthy contingent of Kingston's population, first arrived on the Island with the Spanish and by 1730 had established a population of nearly 900. The lenient disposition of the island's government, combined with the "circulation of gold and silver" (i.e., commercial opportunities), according to the historian Edward Long, attracted Jews to Jamaica.[56] By 1750, the Sephardic Jewish community had a "spacious" and "handsome" synagogue on Princess Street and were granted the free exercise of their religion. In 1789, a

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[52] Ibid., 55-80. See also, Allan Karras, "The World of Alexander Johnston: The Creolization of Ambition," in The Historical Journal 30(1987): 53-76, for an examination of the Jamaican medical profession and Scottish immigrants. On the influence of Scottish medical schools, particularly the University of Edinburgh, on the Jamaican medical profession see, Richard Sheridan, Doctors and Slaves : a Medical and Demographic History of Slavery in the British West Indies, 1680-1834, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 56-61. On the experience of Scottish merchants in Jamaica see, David Hancock, Citizens of the World, (London, UK: Cambridge, 1995), 48-59,

[53] Ibid., 172-175. Karras examined estates from 1742, 1760, 1778 and 1796 and found that Scottish inventory values by 1778 where on average equal or slightly ahead of non-Scottish estates suggesting rising fortunes among the Scottish population.

[54] Ibid., 130. Unfortunately Karras does not explore the relationship between urban residence and Scottish migration choosing rather to explore Scottish migration to the northern and western parishes of Jamaica.

[55] Lady Nugent's Journal of her residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805, ed. by Philip Wright (Kingston, Jamaica: 1966), 29.

[56] Long, History of Jamaica, II: 293.

smaller Ashkenazi synagogue was built on Orange Street. Both synagogues were destroyed by a city-wide fire in 1882 but soon rebuilt. The Jewish community was also allowed its own burial ground located outside the town; the earliest surviving tombstone is dated 1716.[57]

Trade and commerce, the professions most often available to the Jewish population in Europe, attracted Jews to urban centers. In the Caribbean, an urban Jewish community could utilize commercial and kinship associations with Jewish traders across the Atlantic and work as retailers or merchants within the developing British West Indian market. Many of Kingston's Jewish retail shops were located near one another on the North/South Orange Street and on Tower Street, which turned into White Street as you traveled east to west. A "considerable share of the retail trade" was handled by Jews, according to J. Stewart; their goods were "generally of an inferior description" but sold at more moderate prices than Christian shops.[58] Despite the added financial burden of increased taxation assigned to Jews and European-ingrained social biases against them, records indicate that they were among the wealthiest of Kingston residents with estates on average double the value of average British estates, according to one historian.[59]

The extent to which the commercial prosperity of Jamaica's sugar and slave industry attracted English, Scottish, and Jewish immigration and settlement to the island can in part be measured by population growth in Jamaica and Kingston throughout the eighteenth century. Between 1673 (the year of the first census) and 1730, when the next census was taken, Jamaica grew from 3,874 total inhabitants to 83,008, the largest concentration of population in the West Indies. In 1673, 45% of the inhabitants were white; by 1730, that figure had fallen to a scant

[57] Richard D. Barnett and Philip Wright, The Jews of Jamaica Tombstone Inscriptions 1663-1880, Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1997).

[58] Stewart, 200.

[59] Brunard, "The Grand Mart of the Island," 229.

9.2%. In this same period the black population rose from 55% to 90.8%. From 1730 onwards, the ratio of whites to blacks remained a relatively constant 1:10.[60] By 1790, the white population of Jamaica had grown to 23,000, and by 1815, Jamaica still accounted for 44% of the white British West Indian population. Within the British Caribbean during the eighteenth century, Jamaica accounted for 40-45% of the entire slave population of the region (see table 1). Growth in Jamaica's population, both white and black, is directly related to the development of the plantation complex and the belief that the island was a suitable place to make a quick fortune and retire back to England.[61]

The urban population of Kingston also grew during the eighteenth century, emphasizing its profitable relationship to the sugar and slave industries within the Atlantic World as well as its role as the commercial center of the island. By 1730, after only thirty years of existence, Kingston's population had grown to 4,461, 5.4% of Jamaica's total population. Its white population numbered 1,467, or 20% of the white population on the island, and there were 2,747 blacks, 3.6% of the total black population.[62] The population of Kingston steadily increased, and by 1788, city residents could boast of a total population of 26,748, representing 10.5% of Jamaica's entire population. When compared with populations in other cities in the newly formed United States, Kingston ranked behind only New York (33,000) and Philadelphia (42,000) and well ahead of Boston (18,038) and Charleston (16,000) (see table 2) In 1788, Kingston's white population stood at 6,539 and accounted for 28% of the island's entire white

[60] Robert Wells, The Population of the British Colonies in America Before 1776 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 195-196. For the ratio of whites to blacks see Richard Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery, 152.

[61] On the movement and motivations of Europeans to Jamaica see Bernard Bailyn, Voyagers to the West, (New York, NY: Knoph, 1986); Allan Karras, Sojourners in the Sun Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake 1740-1800 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); and James Horn, "British Diaspora: Emigration from Britain, 1680-1815," in The Oxford History of the British Empire, 28-52.

[62] Trevor Burnard, "The Grand Mart of the Island," 227; Robert Wells, Population of the British Colonies, 198; and Barry Higman, "Jamaican Port Towns," 119.

population. This population was the largest concentration of whites on the island as well as in the Caribbean region. Kingston's enslaved population of blacks numbered 16,659 and accounted for a scant 7% of the island's total slave population. Despite the lower proportion of slaves when compared to the rest of the island, Kingston's slaves still accounted for more than 62% of the city's entire population.

Table 1. Population of Jamaica (1730-1790)

	Slaves	Whites	Total
1730	75,371	7,637	83,008
1739	99,239	10,080	109,319
1746	112,428	10,000	122,428
1754	130,000	12,000	142,000
1762	146,464	15,000	161,464
1768	166,914	17,000	183,914
1778	205,261	18,420	223,681
1785	229,000	25,000	254,000
1787	237,000	23,000	260,000
1790	255,700	23,000	278,700

Sources: Frank W. Pitman, The Development of the British West Indies (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 374, and E. Brathwaite, Development of Creole Identity in Jamaica (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 152.

Kingston's economic status as a commercial center also attracted a significant percentage of Jamaica's free colored population.[63] In 1730, when free blacks and coloreds were first counted, their population in Jamaica numbered 838, of which 267 lived in Kingston, 30% of the

Table 2. Population of Kingston in Eighteenth Century Compared to North American Cities

	Charleston	Boston	Kingston	New York	Philadelphia
1730	4,500	13,000	4,461	8,622	11,500
1790	16,359	18,038	26,000	33,131	42,444

Sources: For Kingston, see Burnard, "The Grand Mart of the Island," 226-227; for North American cities, see Jacob Price, "The Economic Function and the Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century," 176.

entire free colored population on the island; no other area matched this concentration of free blacks. The percentage of free coloreds living in Kingston apparently changed little over the course of the eighteenth century. An act passed by the Jamaican Assembly in 1762 requiring Free Blacks and Mulattoes to acquire a certificate of their freedom found 1,093 (32.1%) living in Kingston out of a total of 3,408.[64] In 1788, the free colored population of Kingston stood at 3,280 out of a total island population of 10,000 (32%).

Kingston, and other urban centers in the Caribbean, offered better economic and social opportunities for free coloreds, as well as a potential avenue for escape off the island. Elsa Goveia argued that the concentration of free people of color in urban centers of the Leeward Islands was due in part to the inability of free coloreds to compete with slaves in local food

[63] I use the term free colored as inclusive of the multiple classes and skin coloring used to legally and socially distinguish free blacks and free coloreds. Free blacks and free coloreds were socially distinct in Jamaica with free coloreds often having greater social privileges as a result of their more "pure" pigmentation, but they were never granted full civil rights under the institution of slavery in Jamaica. Legally, only two classes existed: Free Blacks' and 'Mulattoes'. See Gad Heuman, Between Black and White, (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1981), 4; and Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 167-175.

[64] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 337.

markets. Slaves could produce fresh produce from planter-owned provision grounds for local markets without the added costs of land purchases and paying workers. As a result, free people of color moved to the city in an effort to find other forms of employment.[65] The inability to compete in local food production and the social anonymity of an urban center likely pushed many free blacks to Kingston, where job opportunities for free coloreds did exist. An advertisement placed in the February 19, 1780 *Jamaica Mercury and Kingston Weekly Advertiser* sought the purchase or hire of a "Complete Waiting Man" able to shave and dress hair and "to wait on a single gentleman." Suggesting the potential for free blacks to find work, the advertisement ended stating, "Any **FREE PERSON** answering the above description will meet with good encouragement."[66] Free men of color often filled positions in shops or as boatmen or sailors or, utilizing trades learned in plantation labor, hired themselves out for their own economic profit. Free women of color worked as hucksters, selling goods and food in the city, and some owned or managed lodging houses within the city. Work that escaped the brutality of field labor was more readily available in the city, where free blacks and coloreds were able to distance themselves socially and physically from the slave population.[67]

The commercial prosperity that encouraged Kingston's ethnic diversity and demographic growth over the course of the eighteenth century could do little to abate the ever present specter of disease and death. Condemnations of the unhealthy situation of Kingston in the eighteenth century were well founded. Between 1722 and 1774, more than 17,918 whites were buried in

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[65] Elsa Goveia, Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), 227.

[66] *The Jamaica Mercury and Kingston Weekly Advertiser*, Saturday, February 19 to Saturday, February 26, 1780. Emphasis authors.

[67] Gad Heuman, Between Black and White, 9. For the attraction of towns for the free colored population see, Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 167-175, and Hilary McD. Beckles, "Freedom Without Liberty Free Blacks in the Barbados Slave System," in Slavery Without Sugar, ed. Verene Shepherd (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press), 197-223.

Kingston while only 2,669 white baptisms were recorded. According to Trevor Burnard's study Kingston mortality rates in the eighteenth century close to 30 percent per annum of recorded burials were from soldiers and sailors congregated in the city and who "died in droves." Transients from around the island flocked to the town and also made up a sizable portion of the deceased (61 %) while permanent residents of Kingston accounted for a relatively small proportion of burials (10 %). These figures indicate two things. First, Kingston's demographic growth, both white and black, in the eighteenth century did not come through natural increase. Second, as Trevor Burnard argued, to maintain Kingston's steady population increase throughout the eighteenth century, between 250 and 300 of 1,000 new immigrants, arriving annually on the island, would have had to establish residence in Kingston to overcome the dramatic mortality rates of more than 20% per year.[68]

Death was certainly a readily apparent part of life for residents of Kingston. Ann Brodbelt wrote her daughter in 1793 that "Jamaica has been uncommonly sickly for many months past, and we have lost very many of the Inhabitants, indeed they have buried nine and ten

[68] Burnand notes that these figures include migrants associated with the seafaring Atlantic world (sailors, soldiers and merchant travelers) which elevated the already high mortality rates. Burnard, "European Migration to Jamaica," in WMQ, 53 (Oct, 1996), 775-777. Burnard suggests an island wide mortality rate of 11 percent. Burnard acknowledges that his estimates of 100,000 to 125,000 immigrants removing to Jamaica between 1655 and 1776 are from "one-third to two-thirds higher than the highest current estimate of migration to Jamaica" (778). However, as Burnard points out, his figures fit well with both E.A. Wigley and R.S. Schofied's estimate of a net migration of 423,162 out of England between 1700 and 1776 and Aaron Fogelman's calculation of migration to the British North American colonies of 44,100. Accounting for 10,000 migrants to Ireland in the eighteenth century and around 100,000 to 200,000 deaths from military conflict during this period, there still remains an excess of 150,000 migrants unaccounted for, many of which, Burnard contends, were bound for the Caribbean and Jamaica. See Wrigley and Scofield, The Population History of England, 1541-1871 (Cambridge, MA: 1981), 227, and Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700-1775: New Estimates," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 22 (1992), 691-709. For migration to Ireland see Nicholas Canny, "English Migration in and Across the Atlantic during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Canny ed., Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500-1800 (Oxford, 1994), 64.

of a day in Kingston."[69] James Pinnock, a resident of Kingston and Spanish Town, provided insight into domestic mortality in his diary entries for 1780:

> January 1 – Doctor Gregory died, 84 years old buried in Spanish Town . . .
>
> July 24 – My mother Mrs. Mary Pinnock died exactly at midnight at the Great House at Halfway tree [near Kingston], in the 63rd year of her age, after short sickness of 4 days being violent fits epileptic in nature she was buried in family place in the south isle of Halfway Tree church.
>
> August 18 – The only child of my brother George Pinnock named Thomas died of putrid sore throat . . .
>
> August 23 – The only child of Augustine Sara Gwyn named Sara died of the like disease at my house in Kingston . . .
>
> September 17 – Emma Pinnock, my 3rd daughter died at ¾ after 8 o'clock in the morning at which time exactly on Friday morning she had been seized of a fit, this at 8 oclock she was playing at my knee at the breakfast table, it was thought at first to be occasioned by worms but . . . the body being opened after her death, neither Worm nor the Egg of a Worm was found . . .[70]

With death a constant reality in Kingston, or as one churchman called it, "The Suburbs of Hell," burial practices were a constant concern. [71] Edward Long complained that the unhealthy practice of "cramming so many corpses into a small church-yard in the centre of town; instead of providing a proper cemetery at a distance, and to leeward from all the houses" was most "inconsistent with the general health" of the city.[72] Burial of transients (non-residents of Kingston) was a concern to the Kingston Vestrymen, who established burial fees in an effort to regulate the "breaking of ground" in the church yard and in burial sites outside of the town. In 1781, a resident of Kingston could be buried in the church yard for 20 shillings and in the "new

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[69] Geraldine Mozely, ed. Letters to Jane from Jamaica (London: The West India Committee for the Institute of Jamaica, 1938), 77.

[70] British Library (hereafter BL), Add. MS. 33316, Diary of James Pinnock.

[71] O.F. Christie ed. The Diary of Reverend William Jones (London, UK: Brentos Press, 1929), 14.

[72] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 114.

yard" for 10 shillings. However, the fee for a transient or a foreign person to be buried in new church yard soared to £50 and £100 for burial in the old church yard. Death was such a constant reality that the Kingston Vestry even took action to limit the ringing of the church bell for funerals to five minutes, "unless for a white person."[73]

Wealth and Merchant Culture in Kingston

Kingston was a constantly evolving and migrating population, racially diverse, and as probate records reveal for the period, of widely divergent economic means. The potential for financial prosperity in Kingston as it developed into the dominant commercial center of the island had attracted a large number of immigrants. But not all enjoyed material success. Probate records for the period 1750-1799 indicate that Kingston was a very wealthy place for a few but a place of poverty for much, if not most, of Kingston. Between 1750 and 1799, 1861 probates were recorded for residents of Kingston with an average estate value of £2841.81.[74] Close to 20% of the probated inventories (364 of 1,861 inventories) ranged above the average, suggesting that great wealth was concentrated among an elite few. The top 10% of estates inventoried had an average value of £19,965.89 and represented more than two-thirds of the total wealth contained in the inventories (see table 3). Those inventories at the very top of the scale were truly massive and spectacular. Aaron Baruch Lousada's inventory in 1768 recorded more than £ 116,000 in moveable property, including book debts (debts owed the estate), while Edward Foord's estate was valued at £206,210 in 1777.[75] Occupations represented within the wealthiest sector of Kingston society point to its role as a commercial center within the Atlantic world. Merchants

[73] JNA, Vestry, 1-6/#6, Vestry Minutes for January 17, 1781.

[74] JNA, Inventories, 1B/11/3 vols 29-91(1750-1799). All monetary figures are in Jamaican currency.

[75] Trevor Burnard compared Kingston estates to those in eighteenth-century Philadelphia and Boston and found that Boston's largest estate would rank only number 36 in Kingston while the largest estate in Philadelphia would rank at number 16. Burnard, "Grand Mart of the Island," 229.

and Esquires accounted for more than 65% of occupations listed within the top decile of Kingston estates. If all estates (1,861) are taken into account, merchants accounted for 30.63% of total wealth, and Esquires accounted for 35.2% (see table 4).

Table 3. Wealth of Kingston (£ Jamaican Currency)

Decile	*Range*	*Average value of Estate*	*% of Total Estates*
First	> £ 6,317	£ 19,965.89	67.95
Second	£ 2838-£ 6304	£ 4,196.61	14.28
Third	£ 1562-£ 2828	£ 2,095.83	7.21
Fourth	£ 952-£ 1559	£ 1,235. 22	4.15
Fifth	£ 603-£ 951	£ 758.43	2.58
Sixth	£ 382-£ 601	£ 477. 66	1.62
Seventh	£ 242-£ 381	£ 309.27	1.05
Eighth	£ 146-£ 240	£ 190.98	0.61
Ninth	£ 72-£ 144	£ 109.32	0.36
Tenth	£ 1-£ 70	£ 32.42	0.11

Source: Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol 29-91, National Archives, Spanish Town, Jamaica

At the other end of the economic spectrum, the bottom 10% of probated inventories, the average estate value stood at £32.42 and represented a meager 0.11% of the total wealth of the recorded inventories.[76] As table 4 indicates, a mere 20% of the wealth represented in probate inventories recorded between 1750 and 1799 fell between the third and tenth decile. In this

[76] JNA, 1B/11/3 vols 29-91. These figures correspond almost exactly with Trevor Burnards study of inventories recorded between 1717-1783. See, Burnard, "The Eoncomic Function of Kingston," 228.

bottom 80%, a wide variety of vocations or social status were represented, merchants (14%) and single women (widows and spinsters, 12%) occupying the largest percentages. Interestingly enough, in the tenth decile, merchants still represented 7.6% of vocations within this range, and mariners represented 10.8% suggesting that despite the attraction of Kingston's maritime economy, not all merchants were successful.

Table 4. Wealth by Selected Occupation

Occupation	*Number (total = 1,861)*	*% of Total Occupations Listed*	*Average Value of Estate*	*% of Total Value*
Esquire	145	7.7	£12,841.737	35.20
Merchant	336	18.01	£4,822.96	30.63
Free Colored	107	5.7	£ 513.42	1.03
White Women*	222	11.90	£ 1,534.60	6.44
Gentleman	296	15.87	£ 1,301.94	7.28
Doctors	48	2.5	£ 2,841.35	2.57
Shop Keepers	102	5.4	£775.31	1.49
Carpenters	68	3.6	£1592.41	2.04

*Includes widows, spinsters and single women.
Source: 1B-11-3 vols 29-91, Jamaican National Archives, Spanish Town, Jamaica

A great amount of Kingston's wealth was located in the hands of a very few citizens. As a result, a large portion of the population remained somewhere in the middle and lower regions of wealth and society. Edward Brathwaite calculated that between 18,000 and 24,000 of Jamaica's white population between 1774 and 1820 were in the middle and lower classes and resided primarily in the towns of Jamaica as local merchants, artisans, and small scale

professionals hoping to move up the economic ladder.[77] Kingston attracted the lion's share of these urban artisans, retailers, professionals, and fortune seekers, for conditions there were the best for employment and economic improvement. But what employment opportunities might await them? Probate records for 1750-1799 and vestry records for the same period list a wide variety of potential vocations, including small scale merchant, retailer, carpenter, chaise maker, cabinet maker, silver or goldsmith, schoolmaster, cook, pastry chef, gunsmith, brick maker or bricklayer, tavern keeper, wharfinger, mariner, ship wright, wherry and drogger pilot, vendue master, stationer, hairdresser, staymaker, sailmaker, joiner, ironmonger, milliner, fire engine driver, constable, clerk, plumber, butcher, mason, police and night watchmen, printer, shoemaker, and peruke (whig) maker. Economic opportunity did exist for these urban artisans as one contemporary recorded: "There is very good encouragement in this island for saddlers, watchmakers, and tailors, who, if expert at their business may realize a handsome competency in half the time which a planter can do."[78] The financial opportunities available to artisans can be seen in the career of Thomas Storrow, a successful carpenter who died in 1762. Though only 34 years old when he died, Storrow had been successful enough to own several dwelling houses, 25 slaves (valued at £2340), and a fashionably furnished home. His estate was valued at more than £13,197 when he died, and he left his four children and widow rather large inheritances.[79]

Alongside the opportunities to advance one's fortune as an urban artisan, many young men came to Kingston intending to make their fortunes in the merchant world of the Atlantic. John Batho, originally from Philadelphia, traveled to Kingston in 1768 where he tried to obtain

[77] "Creole Society," 135-136.
[78] J. Stewart, A View of the Past and Present State of the Island of Jamaica (London, 1823), 201.

[79] JNA, Inventory of Thomas Storrow, 1B-11-3 vol 43; Henry Barlow Brown [Account of Thomas Storrow of Jamaica], Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, MHS; Thomas Storrow's burial inscription is included in J. H. Lawrence Monumental Inscriptions of the British West Indies (London, 1875), 149-150.

employment with local merchants.[80] Batho had spent some time in Antigua but was forced to leave the island under suspicious circumstances and flee for his father's home in Philadelphia. His reception in Philadelphia was less than cordial as his father constantly berated the young man for his poor judgment. After two years, he was again forced to take flight, this time for Jamaica.[81] The young Batho's introduction to Kingston life was indicative of the difficulties encountered when attempting to find work in the city. The aspiring factor wrote to his father upon arrival:

> I wrote you soone after my landing here when I flatter'd my selfe with an agreeable prospect of fair success in accomplishing the intent of my coming to this Island. but am sorry to have some cause to think'g my confidence at that time was rather premature, as it undoubtedly has been in messrs Bean and Cuthbert's power to have prefer'd me to a place in their own counting house since my arrival here, from this instance of their neglecting to serve me, . . . I think I can have no dependance upon their endeavours to establish me in any genteel way in this Town, . . . at this juncture"[82]

By March of 1768, his search for employment did not look much better, as he wrote to his father: "though I am likely to undergo a few hardships yet in this life still I am resolv'd to surmount them with due fortitude."[83] Fortitude and resolve were indeed necessary to pursue employment in the busy and risky merchant world of the Atlantic. Kinship and credit networks among traders were often hard to break into and without references; a young man of questionable character like John Batho often found it difficult to find employment.[84]

Though Kingston was an active commercial center, a steady and comfortable income was often difficult to establish for new arrivals to Kingston. Thomas Dolbeare moved to Kingston in

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[80] John Batho letterbook 1765-1768, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter HSP), Philadelphia, PA.

[81] The young Batho had evidently encountered some debts that he was not able to repay so he quickly departed for Jamaica in the hopes of finding employment and the approval of his father.

[82] John Batho to Father, Kingston 31 January 1768, Batho Letterbook, HSP.

[83] John Batho to Father, Kingston March 1768, Batho Letterbook, HSP.

[84] For the success of several 'marginal men' to break into the Atlantic commercial world see David Hancock's discussion of Alexander Grant in Citizens of the World, 48-45 and 48-59.

1769 from Boston and wrote, "Tho' the advantages in Mercantile matters are not so great here as they have been, yet they are much greater than in Boston, but the expences are so extravaganously high, that without good economy one cannot expect to establish good footing at first."[85] Establishing a firm financial footing was indeed difficult. Clerks, young professionals and small time factors could expect an income of between £150 and £200 per annum. Some were allowed to sleep on the premises of their shop, while others were forced to find accommodations in local lodging houses, where rent could range between £50 and £100 per annum. James Pinnock, an aspiring barrister, paid Sarah Green £50 per annum for lodging in Kingston in 1768. By 1773, his situation had become somewhat better as he paid a Dr. McQuestion £80 annually for lodging.[86] Expenses incurred in lodging and maintaining a fashionable appearance were a constant concern as one writer noted. Shirts wore out quickly due to the destructive method of washing by black women who used stones or stumps of grass to wash instead of the more expensive soap: "It will require yearly, if he has not brought a good stock or shirts, neck-cloths, breeches, waistcoats, coats and stockings from home, about £30."[87]

Many of these immigrants were young men who worked in the merchant houses, large shops and attorney's offices, men like John Batho or Thomas Dolbeare. They were the young bucks of Kingston society, frequenters of taverns and ale houses who worked hard in their attempt to secure a good reputation and letters of credit in the hopes of establishing themselves in the Atlantic commercial world.[88] J. B. Moreton recounted the hopes of these individuals well:

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[85] Thomas Dolbeare, Kingston, Jamaica, to [unknown], 28 July 1769, Dolbeare Family Papers, Box 2, 1746-1777, Folder 1766-1769, MHS.

[86] BL Add. Ms. 33317, Account book of James Pinnock.

[87] J. B. Moreton, Customs and Manners of the West Indies, (London, 1793), 98.

[88] Brathwatie, Development of Creole Society, 137.

> If a poor young man serves a merchant three or four years so as to gain his favour, he may get letters of credit, and be put into business for himself; or if he be clever at business he may be taken into partnership, and in time his friend and benefactor may go to Europe for the benefit of his health, whereby he is intrusted with the conducting of all the business, and has a glorious opportunity of becoming a great man; . . .or if a young man is sober, keen, and active, he may push himself into credit, get bargains at vendue . . and in time . . . make some money, get credit, and turn merchant; indeed, any huckster or grog-shop keeper with care, industry, and a little roguery, will make money fast.[89]

Some were successful like Thomas Dolbeare, who found a wife and lived "tolerably well"[90] on the island until 1780, when he left for London having established himself as a reputable merchant.[91] John Batho was apparently not so fortunate. After a dramatically unsuccessful attempt to collect a debt for merchant acquaintances in Philadelphia, Batho was forced to move to an estate in Clarendon Parish. Here, he took up duties as a bookkeeper, all the while hoping to obtain letters from Philadelphia vouching for his character so he could enter the merchant world of the Atlantic.[92]

But wealth was not always available or attainable for much, if not most, of Kingston society. The bottom half (50%) of the recorded probates between 1750 and 1799 contained a meager 3.8% of the wealth of the probated inventories. This figure is all the more staggering when placed alongside those for Kingston's total population, more than half of which is not even included in the estate inventories. Slaves (over 60% of the total population) were never recorded while only 4.4% of the probated inventories were from free coloreds. If Bryan Edwards's figures for the free colored population of Kingston in 1788 are correct (3,280) and remained relatively

[89] Moreton, Customs and Manners of the West Indies, 99-100.

[90] Thomas Dolbeare, Kingston, Jamaica, to Brother [John Dolbeare], 18 July 1770, Dolbeare Family Papers, Box 2 (1746-1777) Folder 1770-1772, MHS.

[91] Rebecca Dolbeare (wife of Thomas), Kingston, Jamaica, to brother, October 27, 1780, Dolbeare Family Papers, box 3 (folder 1780-81), MHS.

[92] John Batho, Halls Hall Estate, Claredon Parish, to Father, 4 April 1768, John Batho letter book, HSP.

constant throughout the decade, only 0.64% of the free colored population recorded inventories between 1780 and 1789.

Kingston's attraction for the transients and the impoverished from the countryside often proved a burden on parish finances and resources. Vestry minutes from October 16, 1752 recorded a petition to the Assembly from the Justices and Vestrymen of Kingston asking for relief from the increasing numbers of poor people seeking relief in Kingston as a result of the late war. The petitioners to the Assembly argued that

> from almost every parish of the island diverse poor, sick, infirm persons, objects of pity and compassion have made it common practice to resort to the poor house of the said town of Kingston, and many sick and disabled seamen are frequently left in the town by Masters of ships and other Vessells loading in the Harbour so that there have been seldom less than eighty five transient persons annually received into said poor House.[93]

A year earlier, of 19 residents in the alms house, only 2 were residents of Kingston. The situation was so dire that no sick or poor person was to be admitted to the alms house unless a resident of the Parish or by written order of the vestry. [94] Between 1750 and 1752 an average of 15% of the burials in the Kingston parish were "by the Parish" of individuals too poor to pay for their own burial.[95] As a result of the poverty of Kingston, Kingston officials hired and maintained positions directly relating to care for the poor. The January 17, 1781 vestry minutes recorded specific jobs relating to the poor. In 1781, William Midwinter was retained as surgeon for the poor for £150 per annum and Janet Duthie maintained her position as governess of the poor house (1781) for £50 per annum.[96] Regular payments from Vestry accounts were made to the poor, and poll-tax records frequently noted individuals exempted because of poverty.

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[93] JNA, 2-6 #3, Kingston Vestry Minutes, 16 October 1752.

[94] JNA, 2-6 #2 vol. 1, Kingston Vestry Minutes, 25 January 1751.

[95] JNA, 1B/11/8/9 vol 1.

[96] JNA, 1-6#6, Vestry Minutes for 17January 1781.

Eighteenth-Century Social Life in Kingston

Life in Kingston may have been tenuous for young and old, rich and poor, but social life was neither colorless nor dreary. The prosperity of the city and its cultural ties with England made entertainment and socializing important elements in the rhythm and electricity of Kingston's life. Any opportunity to drink, dance, socialize, and make merry was welcomed. Kingston was not without local amusements, nor did it suffer from a shortage of ale and rum shops, taverns, coffee shops, or theatres. Public entertainment abounded throughout the century. Horse racing and a May Day Fair had occupied the spring months since at least 1719, when a fair and market was held at a site called Littleworth (on the western side of Kingston); horse racing and various other sporting events were showcased. The winner of the horse race received a "very fine gold watch."[97] The occasion of welcoming a new governor to the Island also provided an occasion for a grand reception in Kingston. Not wishing to appear cheap or uncivilized, residents of Kingston attempted to outdo their planter friends of Spanish Town by treating the new governor to longer and more brilliant balls over the course of four or five days.[98]

Music and the theatre added flavor to life in Kingston. Early advertisements in Kingston newspapers suggest that retailers were attuned to the desires of the growing population for musical amusements. The *Weekly Jamaica Courant* of June 28, 1721 includes an advertisement stating, "Just come from England and to be sold at the Printer's, a choice collection of songs, with Notes, engraved on Copper Plates: also Instruction books for . . . Violin, Harpsicord and Flute; New sets of Minuets, Rigadoons and Country Dances; Likewise good Violins and

[97] Clinton Black, "Kingston in the 18th Century," in The Capitals of Jamaica ed. W. Adolphe Roberts (Kingston, Jamaica: Pioneer Press, 1955), 52.

[98] Richardson Wright, Revels in Jamaica (New York, NY: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1937), 19.

Flutes."[99] By the middle of the eighteenth century, Kingston could boast of a fine theatre. Initially located near the harbor on Harbor Street, the Kingston theatre presented plays and various amusements during the three-month theatre season. One early actor was none other than the future American naval hero John Paul Jones, who stranded himself in Kingston and chose not to continue working on a slave ship. By the 1780's, a new and elegant theatre had been built on the north side of the parade and became the site of many legendary performances.[100]

Dances, concerts, the theatre, and socializing in private homes and taverns were particularly appealing to the men and women of society. James Pinnock returned from his legal training in England in July 1765. It did not take him long to begin socializing, as his account book indicates two trips to the "Kingston Concert" in August and October 1765 at a total cost of £4 5*s* 8*d*.[101] For those frequenting the concerts and balls of Kingston, advertisers such as Mr. Goodwin publicized their dancing school.[102] But not all young men attended to their cultural education, choosing rather to frequent the more than 270 rum shops available by the end of the century where, as one writer suggested, "any huckster or grog shop keeper with care, industry, and a little roguery, will make money fast."[103]

Merchants had their own social organization in Kingston and frequently visited various commercial rooms overlooking the harbor to conduct business.[104] Taverns such as Ranelagh

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[99] Quoted in ibid., 13.

[100] On the eighteenth century theatre see ibid., 1-87, and Errol Hill, The Jamaican Stage 1655-1900 (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 14-40. On John Paul Jones' short acting career in Kingston see, Wright, Revels, 45-46.

[101] BL, Add. Ms. 33317, account book of James Pinnock.

[102] *Jamaica Mercury and Kingston Weekly Advertiser*, November 20-27, 1779.

[103] Quoted in Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 137. Figure for rum shops taken from Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 137, who counted 270 rum shops in Kingston paying taxes in 1787.

[104] Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 117.

House, Vauxhall, or Harmony-Hall provided merchants with ample room and sustenance to discuss business matters, especially those relating to competition with French St. Domingue. Edward Long recorded that the taverns were large and well supplied, especially Ranelagh and Vauxhall, with long rooms for concerts, balls, and public entertainment.[105] Merchants had their own Association, which was situated at the Kingston Coffee House. The *Royal Gazette* for 1794 recorded the appropriation of a "large hall upstairs and room adjoining, where a REGULAR Marine Intelligence [was] kept, and a very excellent spy glass for the use of Merchants and Captains."[106]

Conclusion

Kingston's emergence in the eighteenth century as the "Grand Mart" of Jamaica was largely a derivative of its economic function. With the simultaneous growth of the sugar and slave trade, Kingston emerged as the dominant economic arena for the island. Within this economic growth there also developed a local merchant class with significant entrepreneurial qualities; their activities succeeded in fostering Kingston's commercial links with merchants in French and Spanish Caribbean islands, British North America, and England. This economic activity enabled some merchants to make fortunes and brought many young merchants and clerks to Kingston aiming to do the same. But for most white inhabitants, the fabulous wealth of men such as Edward Foord remained elusive.

The economic growth of Kingston attracted or encouraged a continual supply of immigrants from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds. Many immigrants came willingly to Jamaica in search of a fortune with varying degrees of success. But most, slaves from Africa, came unwillingly and fared poorly. All were subjected to the often devastating effects of tropical

[105] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 117.

[106] *Royal Gazette*, XVI (1794), 5, 20.

life. For the white community of Kingston, the heat of the tropics as well as the tropical diseases prevalent in the region made that life tenuous at best. Despite the high number of immigrants necessary to sustain population growth, Kingston maintained a vibrant social life. The theatre, balls, public and private concerts, as well as the numerous taverns sustained Kingston's dominance in the cultural arena of Jamaica.

CHAPTER 3

SLAVE SOCIETY, SOCIAL SPACING, AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF KINGSTON

Gilberto Freyre, writing of the colonial Brazilian plantation "Big House" argued that "the house, the type of dwelling, is known to be one of the most powerful social forces of human experience."[1] On the Virginia tobacco plantation or the Brazilian or West Indian sugar works, the great house visibly portrayed the wealth and power of the master. Structures that housed the processing of sugar or tobacco, the slave huts, workshops, and storage buildings, were situated to highlight the home of the white master, effectively distinguishing the social, cultural, and economic worlds of the master and slave. At the height of eighteenth century Caribbean prosperity, the center of life, as Lowell Ragatz pointed out, was the "great house." The early "miserable thatched hovels" of the seventeenth century were replaced by imposing structures intentionally situated at the center of plantation social and economic life. Its pride of place communicated to its audience of slaves and other residents the dominance and importance of its white owner.[2] The social force of the colonial Caribbean plantation house, which portrayed the

[1] Freyre, The Mansions and the Shanties (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 107. Freyre argued that the Patriarchal society physically represented in the "Great House" or "Mansion" of early Portuguese society, effectively separated society by race and wealth.

[2] On Brazil see Gilbert Freyre, The Masters and the Slaves (New York: Knopf, 1956); see especially idem, The Mansions and the Shanties, 107ff; on Virginia Plantation homes see Dell Upton "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in Common Places, ed. by Dell Upton and John Vlach (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 315-336. On early Jamaican planter and merchant housing see Richard Dunn, Sugar and Slaves (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 288-299. Roderick McDonald notes that social status among plantation slaves was also defined by the size and accoutrements of slave huts in Jamaica. See, The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves (Baton Rouge, LS: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 95. Ragatz, The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean (New York: Octagon Books, 1963), 5-6. For an earlier assessment of planter's houses in Jamaica that emphasizes colonist's cultural ties with English rural gentry see Frank W. Pitman, The Development of the British West Indies (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1917), 22.

social and racial divisions slavery engendered, is often readily apparent to historians and social scientists; however, the social force of domestic structures and spatial distribution of housing in urban slave centers in the Caribbean often goes unnoticed. While acknowledging the social and economic divisions of Kingston society or other Caribbean urban centers, historians of the British West Indies have only sparingly examined how the built environment and social spacing of urban centers expressed the social ordering of those centers or the cultural development of its residents.[3]

Were one to have the ability to walk down a street in eighteenth century Kingston, pause on the sidewalk and look at the residences, shops, the merchants houses and warehouses, what would he or she see? Earlier observers saw two extremes of domestic space in Kingston: the wealthy house of an elite white merchant and the Negro hut found in the yard of a slave owner or dealer. Robert Renny observed that many of the homes, particularly north of the Parade, "vie in point of magnificence with those of any capital in Europe."[4] Anne Storrow remarked in 1792, "The Town of Kingston has some beautiful houses in it, was it uniform by well built it would be an elegant one, but you often see between two handsome houses, an obscure negro yard, which

[3]As urban studies of the British Caribbean have developed, little attention has been paid to the relationship between physical structures and social ordering. Edward Brathwaite's Development of Creole Society (London, UK: Clarendon Press, 1971), 122-129, briefly examines the Creolization of plantation domestic space, but fails to develop urban domestic space. Barry Higman's comprehensive demographic study of slave populations in the British Caribbean in the decades prior to emancipation presents an excellent discussion of urban slave housing and structures but fails to contrast it with white domestic space and the social force of both structures. See, Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 93-99; 255-257. Perhaps the best exploration of spatial distribution of whites, free coloreds, Jews and slaves, is Colin Clarke's, Kingston, Jamaica (1975) yet Clarke also makes little mention of the social force of urban domestic architecture. Pedro Welch's examination of Bridgetown, Barbados, during the period of slavery develops slave and free-colored housing, but fails to adequately examine white housing and the manner in which differences in domestic architecture might support urban slave society. See Welch, Slave Society in the City Bridgetown, Bardados 1680-1834, (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003), 158-160 and 177-181.

[4] An History of Jamaica (London, 1807), 103.

spoils the effect entirely."[5] Another commentator baldly stated that the town was "a wretched mixture of handsome and spacious houses with vile hovels and disgraceful sheds."[6]

These commentators' observations of elegant European-style homes alongside the "obscure" or "vile" Negro yards illustrates well how Kingston residents lived at the crossroads of two worlds. The institution of slavery and the economic function of Kingston as a port within the British Atlantic Empire dominated the social and cultural life of Kingston. In acknowledging the social force of domestic space, the above commentators drew a clear distinction between the elegant house and slave hut, suggesting the manner in which built forms in Kingston communicated social and racial divisions within society. The built environment, particularly of elite whites, served as a rhetorical device for declaring their collective social position and identity as masters and social elites in a racially segmented society.

But power and exclusivity within Kingston's slave society were not the only items available for display. Elite whites, attempting to create replicas of elegant domestic space in Georgian England, built "graceful buildings" representing a distinct cultural heritage. However, not all Kingston residents were quick to build structures so closely resembling Georgian architecture. Limited by wealth and available building materials, and seeking to accommodate themselves within the tropical environment, many white residents built homes that were respectable but also comfortably situated within the social and ecological environment of Kingston.[7] The rhetorical significance of Kingston's built environment is a complex issue. This

[5] Ann Appleton Storrow, Kingston Jamaica, to Miss Bulter, September 23, 1792, Anne Appleton Storrow Papers, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[6] Anon., An Accountant of Jamaica and Its Inhabitants by a Gentleman Long Resident in the West Indies (London, 1808), 14.

[7] The literature on theories concerning the built environment is immense. I have followed the particular theoretical path laid down by those who examine the built environment as the symbolic expression of cultural values and social construction. This view emphasizes the communicative role of the built environment where social and

chapter explores the social structure and spacing of Kingston society, the development of urban forms in Kingston, including street layout and various forms of domestic structures, and how the free and unfree residents expressed their accommodation with the social and ecological environment of eighteenth-century Kingston through built forms.[8]

Kingston's Social Structure

In 1797, The Jamaica Assembly recorded that

> The inhabitants of this colony consist of four classes; whites, free people of colour having special privileges granted by private acts, free people of colour not possessing such privileges, and slaves. . . . all these classes, when employed in the public service, have, as far as it has been practicable, been kept separate.[9]

Nowhere was this class distinction more apparent than in Kingston, where all classes of people lived in close proximity to one another. As has already been noted above, slaves accounted for more than half (63%) of Kingston's population in the eighteenth century. Free people of color (12%) and whites (28%) made up the remaining 40% of the population. The white population of Kingston was made up almost exclusively of immigrants of European descent – English, Irish, and Scots – and a small but wealthy Portuguese Jewish settlement. After 1791 and the slave

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cultural meaning is expressed to different groups at a variety of social levels. This view also places emphasis on the individual's attempts to communicate social place and prestige within a culture. For an explication of this see the classic work by Amos Rapoport, House Form and Culture (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969). For the development of Rapoport's arguments see James S. Duncan, ed. Housing and Identity (New York, NY: Holmes and Meir, 1982). The literature on built environment is admirably reviewed by Denise L. Lawrence and Setha M. Low, "The Built Environment and Spatial Form," in Annual Review of Anthropology 19(1990): 453-505.

[8] Built environment or form here refers to the buildings constructed by residents of Kingston and their outward appearance. I include within this definition specific elements such as doors, roofs, floors and the materials used to construct the built environment. For a fuller discussion of defining 'Built Environment' see "The Built Environment and Spatial Form," by Denise L. Lawrence and Setha M. Low in Annual Review of Anthropology 19 (1990): 454.

[9] Journals of the Jamaican Assembly, 647 of 28 July 1797. Quoted in Brathwaite, Creole Society, 105.

rebellion in St. Domingue, a contingent of free coloreds and white Frenchmen made their way to Kingston though it is difficult to establish their numbers.[10]

Whites of various European ethnic origins were not only "separate" as the Jamaican Assembly recorded; they maintained a dominant position within Kingston's social makeup. But this position was disproportionate to their numbers. The large number of slaves in Kingston, who outnumbered whites throughout the eighteenth century close to four times over, and the institution of slavery shaped the social practices and culture of Kingston. As Edward Brathwaite stated,

> No white creole, it must be realized, ever thought in terms of slavery in the abstract. Slavery meant the workers on the plantation, the hagglers in the sandy streets of Kingston, black men and women making noise in the market. . . . Here was an institution that had "encroached" until it had become almost completely identified with the society in which it was rooted.[11]

Slavery was visibly present virtually from the moment one first laid eyes on the island and set foot in Kingston. Olaudah Equiano, on first sighting Jamaica and still on board his ship, observed "a vast number of Negroes here . . . exceedingly imposed upon by the white people."[12] Upon reaching the port of Kingston, "Negro" pilots would guide the ship to its berth as Johann Waldeck, a Prussian mercenary traveling to Jamaica, noted. After dropping anchor in Kingston, Waldeck's boat was accosted by "two boat-loads of black girls [who] came on the ship with all

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[10] On this see David Geggus, "Jamaica and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt, 1791-1793," in The Americas 38 (October, 1981), 225, 228, and Richard B. Sheridan, "From Jamaican Slavery to Haitian Freedom: The Case of the Black Crew of the Pilot Boat, *Deep Nine*," in The Journal of Negro History 67 (Winter, 1982), 330.

[11] Development of Creole Society, 178-179. On this point see also O. Patterson, The Sociology of Slavery (Rutherford, NJ: Farleigh Dickenson University Press, 1967), 15-51. For the impact of slavery on the continuing development of modern Jamaican society see Rex Nettleford, Caribbean Cultural Identity, 2 ed. (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2003) and Patrick Bryan, Inside Out and Outside In Factors in the Creation of Contemporary Jamaica (Jamaica, Grace Kennedy Foundation, 2000), esp.1-23.

[12] The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oluadah Equiano Written By Himself, ed. by Robert Allison (Boston, MA: Bedford Books, 1995), 144.

sorts of fresh things to sell."[13] J. B. Moreton wrote, "but when you get up to Kingston, if you had five more senses, they would be all engaged. . . . with the most intense heat, and the horrid scene of poor Africans, male and female, busy at their labour with hardly rags sufficient to secret their nakedness, will affect you not a little."[14]

Once on land, slaves were visibly at the center of Kingston's public and private life. In private homes, male and female slaves served as domestics. In the public arena, male slaves provided labor in a variety of urban trades from ship building and fishering to transporting goods and passengers around the port and to Passage Fort on the Spanish Town highway.[15] Higglers traveled about the town selling a variety of produce and manufactures for their master or mistress.[16] The Sunday Negro market on Prince Street, where a variety of produce and manufactures were sold by slaves from Kingston and the surrounding parishes, often startled travelers to Kingston. Oloudah Equiano remarked on coming out of Kingston's church one Sunday, "we saw all kinds of people, almost from the church door for the space of half a mile down the waterside, buying and selling all kinds of commodities."[17] This market was a congested

[13] NLJ, Ms. 2006 Hessian Accounts of America, 119B. Thomas Thistlewood also notes that on his arrival in Kingston harbor "at 4 p.m. Negro pilot come on br [board] us." See entry for Monday April 23, 1750, Thistlewood Diary, reel 1, APS. On slaves as pilots for the port see Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 161. On the jobs of slaves working in and around the wharfs of Kingston in the transportation of people and goods see Barry Higman, Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834 (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1995), 39-40.

[14] West India Manners and Customs (London, 1793), 16.

[15] Barry Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 227-242.

[16] Lorna Simmonds, "Slave Higglering in Jamaica 1780-1834," in Jamaica Journal 20:1 (1987), 31-38. For the persistence of Higglering in modern Jamaica see Elsie LeFranc, "Higglering in Kingston," in Caribbean Review 1(1988), 15-18.

[17] Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, 171. For the internal market of slave goods in Jamaica and particularly Kingston see Sidney Mintz and Douglas Hall "The origins of the Jamaican Internal Marketing System," in Yale University Publications in Anthropology no. 57 (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1960). For the similar practices of the Sunday market in Bridgetown, Barbados see, Hilary McD. Beckles, "An Economic Life of Their Own: Slaves as Commodity Producers and Distributors in Barbados," in Slavery And Abolition ( ) 31-47, see esp. 35-36.

place of people and booths, and as one observer wrote in 1795, "[The market] was so shut up that in some places there is hardly six or thirty inches room for people to pass and repass."[18]

The activities of slaves in the economic life of Kingston brought the institution of chattel slavery visibly before the public. However, the power of whites over enslaved Africans was most clearly evident in Kingston's slave market. Kingston served as the major entrepôt for slaves into the island of Jamaica. The constant influx of slaves and the market system designed to support it were indirectly or directly the most important sources of wealth for Kingston merchants. Once in Kingston, slaves were either auctioned on board the slaving vessel or were taken to the slave market near the harbor and auctioned. At this point, most slaves departed to various parts of the island for plantation labor. Some were likely bought by Kingston residents for use in their homes or urban professions while other Kingston buyers sought out slaves in poor condition and took them to their pens for "seasoning." For those interested in purchasing a slave, and for those who were not, newspapers and broadsides announced the almost daily public auction of slaves. For instance, an advertisement in September 1779 read, "FOR SALE, by PUBLIC AUCTION, on Monday the 27th Instant . . . THE CARGOES OF THE SHIPS ROSE and SPY, Consisting of 300 Windward and Gold Coast Negroes." The sale of Negroes would begin at nine in the morning and continue each day until the cargo was sold.[19] The constant entrance of slave vessels into the port of Kingston and the almost daily slave auctions made visible to all the dominance of whites over blacks.

Inherent to the institution of slavery, so visible in the slave markets, labor regime and daily life of Kingston, was racial segregation and a divisive quality that dominated the social organization of Kingston. Whites, Jews, Free coloreds, and slaves maintained strict social

[18] Columbian Magazine (1796) as quoted in Simmonds, "Slave Higglering," 34.

[19] *Kingston Weekly Advertiser*, September 4-11, 1779.

boundaries that might best be represented, as Douglas Hall proposes, in a broadly based isosceles triangle (see figure 1).[20] Intersecting the triangle, parallel to the base, are two lines. The small apex triangle represents the white population, the elite "Establishment." The middle portion of the triangle contains Jews and free blacks, and the large base, the slaves. At the apex of society whites could be quite wealthy or poor but could never fall below the base line because they were white. Whites maintained control over the various economic and political institutions of Jamaica and tenaciously limited access to non-whites. In Kingston, the social and economic dominance of whites was quite disproportionate to their numbers, for they accounted for no more than 25% of the population during the eighteenth century.[21]

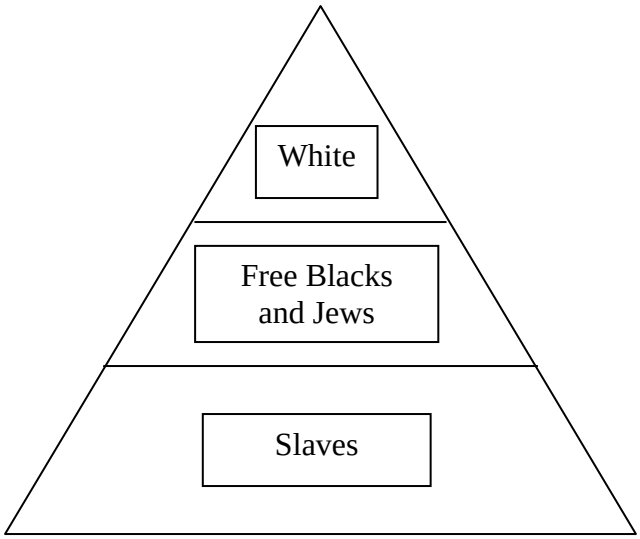

Fig. 1. Social Structure of Kingston, Jamaica

[20] Hall, "Jamaica," in Neither Slave nor Free, ed. by David Cohen and Jack P. Greene (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 195. See also, Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 105.

[21] Bailey, "Social Control in the Pre-Emancipation Society of Kingston" in Boletin De Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe 24 (1978): 98.

In the middle section of society was a mix of free coloreds and Jews. Through strategic land and property purchases, elites within these two groups might appear to be the social equal of whites located at the apex of society. However, throughout the eighteenth century, elite Jewish merchants and economically-privileged free coloreds were consistently discriminated against through increased legal strictures adopted by both the Jamaican Assembly and Kingston Vestry. In 1711, the Jamaican Assembly voted to exclude free coloreds from employment in political or public office; in 1733, the Assembly barred free coloreds from voting; and in 1761, free coloreds were forbidden from purchases or inheriting land in excess of £ 2000.[22] Despite the freedom to worship freely, Jews fared little better. Discriminatory taxes were imposed by the Assembly and Kingston Vestry throughout the eighteenth century to offset island and parish expenses in troop subsistence or to overcome budget shortfalls in an effort to contain the rising wealth of Jewish merchants. By an act of law in 1711, Jews were also denied the right to seek public office.[23] In each case, the intention of the lawmakers was clearly to limit the social advancement and economic prestige of free coloreds and Jews by enacting measures that would place them at a social and economic disadvantage to whites.

Movement and distinction between the base of society, the slaves, and the free coloreds was less firmly established primarily due to skin color. Bryan Edwards argued in 1793 that "complexion, generally speaking, distinguishes freedom from slavery," and J. B. Moreton added "all people are regarded according to their appearance."[24] In such a society where white skin color largely distinguished free from slave, the line between free colored and slave was quite

[22] Hall, "Jamaica," 197.

[23] Bailey, "Social Control in the Pre-Emancipation Society of Kingston," 101. For an impassioned condemnation of Jewish merchants and their 'roguish' practice in money manners see J. B. Moreton, Customs and Manners of the West Indies, 65.

[24]Edwards, History of the West Indies, Bk IV, 8; Moreton, Customs and Manners, 60.

blurry. In the urban milieu of Kingston, slaves could easily mix with the free black population, and slaves often attempted to pass themselves off as free. Advertisements for runaways in the Kingston newspapers often cautioned whites against employing slaves without a ticket of freedom. *The Jamaica Mercury* of September 4-11, 1779 sought the return of FOOTE, "well known in Kingston and Spanish Town . . . and passed by the names of James, a free man."[25] An advertisement placed by the Kingston merchant Issac Feurtado sought the return of a mulatto named SAM, "by trade a carpenter[who] passes for a free man, but the contrary will be shown to any person by the subscriber."[26] In purchasing their freedom or gaining manumission from their masters, slaves could legally establish their status within free society. However, in some instances, free coloreds who could not verify their status as free were forced to re-enter the base of society as a slave.[27]

Beyond the legally-instituted boundaries segregating Kingston society that restricted voting to propertied whites, imposed higher taxes on Jews, disallowed testimony of free coloreds in non-civil cases, and maintained chattel slavery through the slave code,[28] the built environment of Kingston reinforced racial separation and white domination. Institutional control of the white "Establishments" over Kingston was buttressed by its obvious wealth in property in both real estate and slaves. However, never content to remain outside the apex of society, Jews and elite free coloreds consistently attempted to join the ranks of the white elite through the purchase of

[25] *Jamaica Mercury*, September 4-11, 1779.

[26] *Supplement to The Jamaica Mercury*, February 19-26, 1780.

[27] Manumitted slaves were to carry a certificate of their freedom and supposed to wear a 'blue cross' on their right shoulder to mark their freedom. See E. Long, History of Jamaica, II:321.

[28] See Colin Clarke, Kingston, 19-20.

property and by maintaining an opulent style of living.[29] Furthermore, the built environment of slaves, who were denied access to property ownership, vividly exposed their social and racial exclusion. Social spacing, property, and home ownership played key roles for both whites and the rest of society in establishing or restricting social position.

Social and Ethnic Spacing in Kingston

Until the mid-eighteenth century, the most densely populated and racially mixed region of Kingston was south of the centrally located Parade (see figure 2).[30] Two factors helped determine this demographic. With no river to provide fresh water supplies, inhabitants depended upon access to ground water, which was most easily obtained near the harbor and at Dickens Well on the Parade. Second, transportation and communication channels were slow around Kingston, which made proximity to the harbor, the livelihood of the inhabitants, essential. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it appears that the wealthiest merchants still lived in the heart of the city. Jaspar Hall built Jaspar Hall on High Holborn Street, and Thomas Hibbert built Hibbert House on Duke Street.[31]

At mid-century, settlement to the north and east of the Parade was sparse, accounting for only 10 % of the dwellings in the town.[32] However, after mid-century, Kingston's spatial development increasingly segregated the city, particularly along the lines of wealth. Elite whites who could afford to build homes away from the immediate vicinity of the harbor and its water, increasingly moved to the sparsely populated northeastern section of the city where they had

[29] Bailey, "Social Control in the Pre-Emancipation Society of Kingston," 97-99.

[30] Mich. Hay, Plan of Kingston, (1745) Peter Force Map Collection #78, Library of Congress.

[31] Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 116 and Frank Cundall, Historic Jamaica (New York, Johnson Reprint Corp., 1971), 179. See also T.A.L. Concannon, "Houses of Jamaica," in Jamaica Journal 1 (1967), 37.

[32] Clarke, Kingston, 10.

more room for their spacious houses and gardens.[33] In a map of Kingston commissioned by Governor Edward Trelawny around 1745, architectural drawings are included. Structures appear to be spread out mostly in the southern portions of the town. However, suggesting a move by several wealthy citizens, the map also presents the three largest domestic structures, each of which are located in the North Eastern portion of the town above the parade. They were located on East Queen Street, Upper East Street and the northern end of Hanover Street.

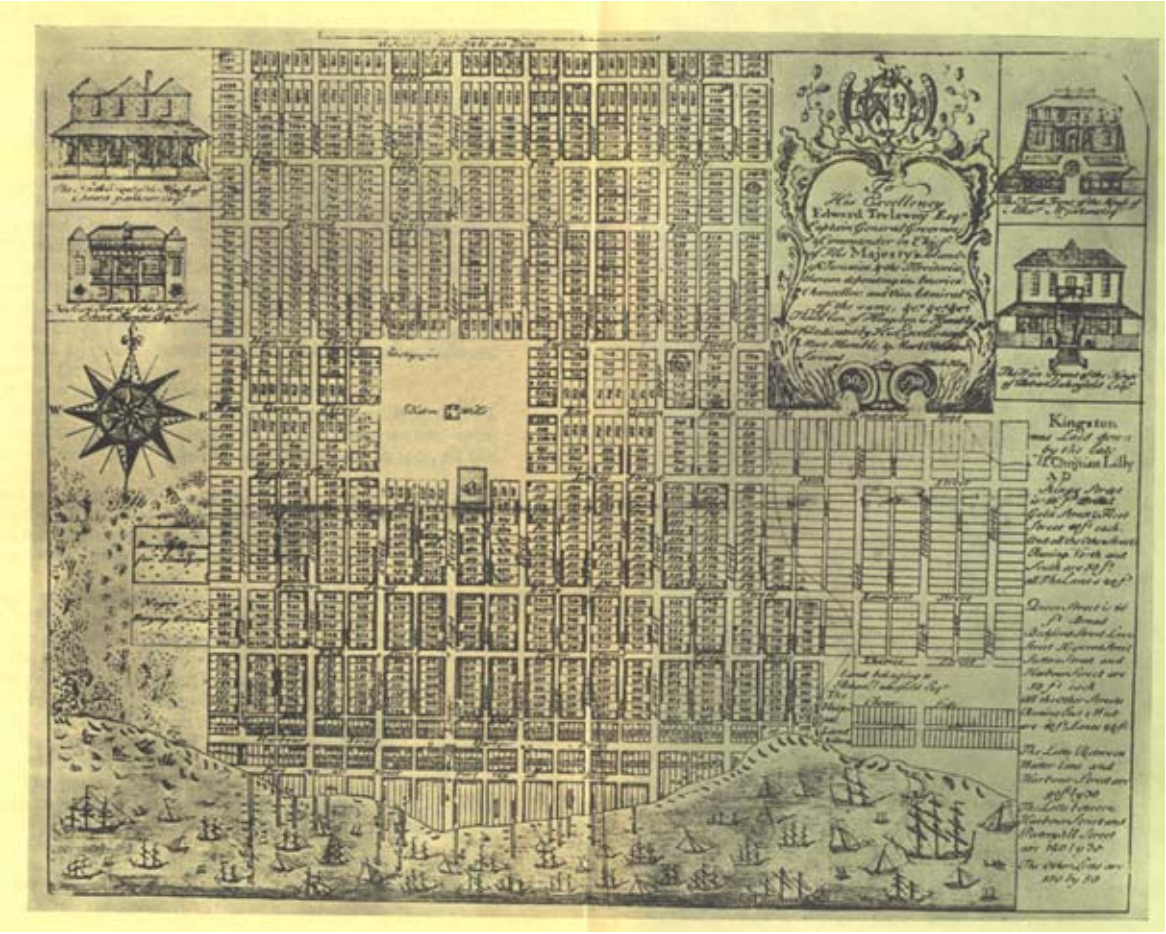

Fig. 2. Map of Kingston, Jamaica c. 1745.

[33] Marion Ross, "Caribbean Colonial Architecture in Jamaica," in Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 10(1977): 26.

In some cases, merchants also established residences outside of Kingston Parish in St. Andrews and St. Thomas-in-the-East. Johann Waldeck observed that "the gentlemen live a good part of the time at their plantations outside the city. They ride early in the morning into Kingston where they also have houses and where they conduct their businesses."[34] Edward Long wrote of a community of merchants who had built residences at Half-Way Tree: "[Here] a number of little-grass pens with good houses on them, are dispersed about the neighborhood, chiefly the property of merchants in Kingston, who occasionally retire to them from the hurry of business."[35] The life of a merchant living outside the congested region of the city was recorded by Peter Marsden in 1788:

> The merchants, from their pens in the country, or the higher part of the town, go down to their stores or shops in Kittereens about seven in the morning. Having breakfasted, they generally get a second breakfast at eleven, and dine at four or five, when all business is ended for the day . . . and if no public diversion is going forward, retire to bed at eight or nine, after having supped upon tea.[36]

Elite whites sought to escape the congestion and racial mixing south of the parade and established homes in a more comfortable and socially exclusive environment.

Socially excluded from the elite settlement in east Kingston, Jews increasingly invested in commercial property on Harbour, Port Royal, and Kings Street in the southern portion of Kingston.[37] Edward Brathwaite's research found that thirty-six of thirty-seven houses on Peter's Lane paying the Vestry Poll Tax in 1770, an area heavily devoted to commerce, were owned by Jews.[38] Jewish residents recognized the significance of property ownership and also began to

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[34] NLJ, Ms., 2006 Hessian Accounts of America, 126-127.

[35] Long, History of Jamaica, II 124.

[36] Peter Marsden, An Account of the Island of Jamaica (Newcastle, 1788), 6-7.

[37] Bailey, "Social Control in the Pre-Emancipation Society of Kingston," 100.

[38] Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 136-137.

increase their investments in property on the western edges of the city. The parish tax roll for 1774 recorded fifty-five individuals paying the parish tax for occupied or unoccupied lots on Matthews Lane, a lane on the western edge of Kingston. Based upon the ethnicity of names represented, at least 25% of the lots were owned by Jews. Of the twenty-three occupied lots, six were owned by Jews. Of the twenty-two unoccupied lots, eight were owned by Jews who bought properties immediately adjacent to one another perhaps as an investment.[39] Wilma Bailey's study of property ownership in Kingston confirms this data; she argued that Jews increasingly chose to separate themselves from the racially mixed region south of the parade by investing in undeveloped property on the western margins of the city. In this way, they also sought to remain close to their shops in south central Kingston.[40] Symbolizing their presence in the western portion of the city is the Sephardic synagogue, built in 1750 at the corner of Water Lane and Princess Street. In purchasing land, the Jewish community challenged the exclusive social dominance on property ownership of whites in the latter half of the eighteenth century through an increasing stake in the real estate market of Kingston. However, the exclusion of Jews to the western margins of Kingston symbolized their place in Kingston's society. Their proximity to the unhealthy marshes and burial grounds at the western edge of town only compounded their status as a unprivileged minority group.

The free-colored population of Kingston, legally and socially set off from white society, continued to grow throughout the last half of the eighteenth century. Some free coloreds did achieve elite status in terms of wealth and property ownership, though this group was likely very small. Tax rolls for 1745 list only 14 free coloreds paying the parish tax. Suggesting a marginal

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[39] JNA, Kingston Vestry, 2-6 #102, Kingston Parish Tax for 1774,.

[40] Bailey, "Social Control in the Pre-Emancipation Society of Kingston," 99-102.

increase in the wealth of free blacks in Kingston, 117 free blacks were included in 1769. Within this group, 61% owned their own home though, as Professor Bailey suggested, it is likely that the property was inherited.[41] While socially excluded, those free coloreds who were financially capable continually tried to distance themselves socially from slavery through the purchase of homes and commercial property. Recognizing the importance of property ownership in slave society, free blacks actively participated in the real estate market of Kingston throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[42] As Wilma Bailey's study pointed out, the general downturn in the Jamaican economy after the American Revolution forced small scale white merchants located in the heavily populated commercial sector of Kingston to sell their property. Free blacks took advantage of declining property values, invested in this property, and operated as hucksters.[43]

However, most free coloreds were not financially capable enough to purchase land. Reflecting their social exclusion, financial poverty, and geographical marginality into a virtual twilight zone between free white and enslaved black, many free blacks and coloreds lived in Negro yards located on the outskirts of the town. As Colin Clarke suggested, the Negro yards located on the periphery of town were the most racially homogenous areas of Kingston, where free coloreds, jobbing slaves and runaways lived side by side.[44] The exclusion of free persons of color to the periphery of the city was observed in urban centers throughout the British West Indies. Edward Cox noted the "spatial segregation" of free coloreds in St. Kitts and Grenadian

[41] Bailey, "Social Control in the Pre-Emancipation Society of Kingston," 102. The first reliable estimate of free-colored population in 1788 records 3,280 in Kingston. If Bailey's figure of 117 Free Blacks for 1769 is correct, this represented no more than 4 per cent of the free-colored population in 1769.

[42] Gad Heuman, Between Black and White, 6.

[43] Bailey," Social Control in the Pre-Emancipation Society of Kingston," 102.

[44] Clarke, Kingston, 18.

urban society, where "most free coloreds [lived] in their own communities in the outskirts of the towns."[45] Pedro Welch noted a similar development in eighteenth-century Bridgetown, Barbados, where the free-colored population settled in the eastern margins of the city.[46]

In terms of spatial distribution, slaves were scattered throughout the city with little apparent attempt to segregate them away from white society during the eighteenth century. For a number of slaves, Negro yards provided shelter. After working for their masters in jobs located throughout the city, masters gave these "hired-out" slaves weekly "board-wages." Slaves were then responsible for finding their own lodging and food, usually in the Negro yards located throughout the city, mostly on the periphery of development.[47] However, it appears that most urban slaves lived with their masters. Barry Higman's demographic study of slavery in the decades preceding emancipation shows that the large majority of urban slaves lived on their owners' premises and were consequently represented in every population sector of the city. According to Higman's research, various methods of housing slaves were employed. Many domestics, who needed to be constantly available to their masters, might have slept on the floor of the bedroom or in an adjacent hallway. Others might have slept in rooms separate from their master but close enough to be summoned. Owners of large numbers of slaves built "Negro rooms," behind their homes that resembled barracks.[48] This method for housing can be seen in a

[45] Free Coloreds in the Slave Societies of St. Kitts and Grenada, 1763-1833 (Knoxville, TN: 1984), 32.

[46] Slave Society in the City Bridgetown, Barbados 1690-1834, 177-181.

[47] On this system of labor known as 'self-hire,' see below, chapter 6, pp. 183-186.

[48] Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 255.

1780 advertisement placed in the Royal Gazette. A small house was for sale on High Holborn Street with an adjacent well, stable, coach-house, wash-house, and "Negro-houses."[49]

The spatial distribution of slaves throughout Kingston carried significant implications for the life of the city and is a study in contrasts. First, some slaves, particularly those working under the self-hire system, enjoyed a significant measure of independence. Slaves living in the Negro yards of the city slept, ate and entertained themselves away from the ever watchful eyes of masters or other whites. Other slaves, particularly waiting men and women, were required to be constantly present for their master or mistress and came under constant supervision and surveillance. Second, the congested nature and chaotic rhythms of urban life and the large number of slaves created a level of anonymity that allowed some slaves to escape notice and caused others simply to be ignored. But the anonymity of urban life did not mean that slaves or the institution of slavery was peripheral to city life. The large number of slaves distributed throughout the city and their presence in the private and public spaces of the city meant that the institution of slavery was never, as Edward Brathwaite noted earlier, conceived of in the abstract.

The spatial distribution of Kingston's population, at least in the latter half of the eighteenth century, points to a segregation of society along lines of ethnicity and wealth more than race. Those who could, such as elite white merchants, moved to the eastern periphery at the foot of the Liguanea Mountains to establish elegant homes in a much cooler environment. Jews, pushed to the western margins of the city, continually sought to establish themselves as landowners, and in some cases succeeded in moving into elite areas of white society but were, for the most part, located in the southern and western portions of the city. Some blacks, both free coloreds and slaves, socially marginalized by the institution of slavery and their skin color, moved to the Negro yards scattered around the periphery of the city. However, most slaves lived

[49] *Supplement to Royal Gazette*, April 29-May 6, 1780.

with their masters and were consequently present throughout the city. No ghetto or marginalized area of the city truly developed during the eighteenth century for the purpose of containing a particular ethnic or racial group. Rather, over the course of the eighteenth century, certain tendencies in spatial development appeared that reinforced slave society. The most obvious was the movement of elite white to more socially exclusive and less racially mixed areas of Kingston in the northeast and to plantations outside of the city. At the same time, though they attempted to remove themselves to less racially congested areas, slavery remained an ever-present reality.

Urban Layout and Development of Domestic Space in Eighteenth-Century Kingston

As Kingston matured and developed through the course of the eighteenth century, slavery remained at the center of parish life, shaping its social and cultural development. However, Kingston was also a hub of merchant activity and commerce within the British Atlantic world. As such, Kingston was the destination for thousands of European migrants and hundreds of thousands of African slaves who each brought with them, with varying degrees of success, cultural elements of their homeland. An important question remains in the exploration of the built environment of Kingston. If slavery and Kingston's role in the British Atlantic commercial empire[50] were central features of Kingston's social development, does the built environment reflect these features? Both the desire of Kingston residents to lay out a well-designed and modern city and the ability (free or enforced) to build homes within the confines of one's social or cultural station in life were essential elements in the social development of Kingston. Materials used in the construction of elaborate mansions and their spacious layouts or the "vile hovels" of the Negro yards and their spatial limitations poignantly portrayed the inhabitants' place in society. Old World architectural forms for building homes were introduced into an

[50] See above chapter 1, p. 41-45.

urban New World setting, where, over the course of the century, these forms were modified to accommodate the social, ecological, and racial environment of Kingston.

The initial layout of Kingston replicated the design of more modern European towns of the day and followed the patterns of increasing English urbanization in the seventeenth century. As the historian John Brewer noted, the rapid urbanization of England after 1650, primarily in port and mercantile areas such as Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, dramatically changed the country's demographic profile.[51] One consequence of this increasing urbanization was a more modern approach to the layout of new towns, which no longer included the medieval wall or moat surrounding the city. Paying more attention to sustaining the mercantile activities of a manufacturing center or port than to military defense, urban planners sought to open up the city's streets to the rural hinterland and maintain open access to the wharfs.[52]

The Kingston town fathers who oversaw the initial layout of the city plan adopted this European model and laid out the city streets in the form of a gridiron with straight lines, regular block units, and uniform dimensions (see Figure 2). Kingston's formation came some forty years after Charleston, South Carolina was developed and demonstrates a departure from what Peter Coclanis has termed a "hybrid" approach to urban development in the New World. Charleston adopted the more modern gridiron and open approach to its city layout, but it also incorporated the medieval attachment to establishing walls and moats for defense. [53] Not limited by walls,

[51] Brewer, Sinews of Empire (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 180-81. See also Sylvia Fries, The Urban Idea in Colonial America (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1977), 3-33.

[52] On urban development in the early modern period see Lewis Mumford, The Culture of Cities (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938), 73-142; and, Simon Eisner, Arthur Gallion and Stanley Eisner, The Urban Pattern 7th Edition, (New York, NY: Van Norstand Reinhold, 1993), 81-95.

[53] See Peter Coclanis, "The Sociology of Architecture in Colonial Charleston: Pattern and Process in an Eighteenth-Century Southern City," in Journal of Social History 18 (1985): 608-609. See also, Enrico Dal Lago, "The City as Social Display: Landed Elites and Urban Images in Charleston and Palermo," in Journal of Historical Sociology 14 (December, 2001), 374-396.

Kingston town planners could, and did over the course of the eighteenth century, add streets and structures on the margins of the city.[54] However, the topography of the region did play an important role as the layout of Kingston was established. Access to the harbor was a significant geographical factor in establishing Kingston at the foot of the Blue Mountains. Unhealthy marshes formed the western edge of Kingston's layout, forcing expansion to the east towards the parish of Port Royal and St. Thomas in the East. By the middle of the eighteenth century the town plan resembled an "L," as several lanes and streets were added to the southeastern portion of the city. Throughout the eighteenth century, Kingston also continued to grow northwest toward the foot of the Blue Mountains, east towards the parishes of Port Royal and St. Thomas in the East, and north toward St. Andrews.

This modern approach to city planning proved beneficial for those traveling on Kingston streets. European cities such as London and Paris were often criticized for the congestion created by the close and overbearing construction of homes and businesses. Pedestrians clogged the streets, often frustrating elites traveling by carriage or merchants carrying goods to market. This congestion was not present in Kingston, where the improved design of spacious streets and lanes allowed carriages and pedestrians to travel quite freely. A *Plan of Kingston* made in 1745 recorded that King Street, the major North/South boulevard, was "66 ft. Broad." The secondary north/south streets of Gold Street and Fleet Street were measured at 40 feet each while "all other Streets running North and South were 50 ft., all the Lane's 20 ft." The major East/West thoroughfare, Queen Street, was also "66 ft. Broad." Beckford Street, Lawes Street, Heywood

[54] The Kingston Public Hospital was built in an area originally outside of the town design. See Mich, Hay, Plan of Kingston (1745), Library of Congress.

Street, Sutton Street, and Harbour Street, all east/west secondary streets, were measured at 50 feet each, and "all the other Streets Running East to West were 40 ft. Lanes 20 ft."[55]

The "spacious streets" drew much praise. Travelers such as John Mair, a planter from Dominica who visited Kingston in 1787, noted that the streets were spacious and "pretty regular, but not paved."[56] Edward Long thought the design "not excelled by any town in the world."[57] This approach to city planning, seen in several British Atlantic ports such as Philadelphia, Charleston, and Bridgetown, allowed for freer movement of both foot and wheeled traffic. In this way, Kingston's merchants were better connected to the wharfs and the Atlantic world while also maintaining easy access to the plantation parishes surrounding Kingston.[58] However, the lack of paving and the "old glass and old iron about the streets" that Thomas Thistlewood saw in 1750 presented problems when torrential rains sent a rush of water down the principal streets, making them almost impassable.[59] Contemporaries observed that torrential rains often did more to clog streets with mud and refuse than did a rush of people or horses in colonial Kingston.

The development of urban society in England not only provided a foundation for England's emergence as a commercial Empire, but it also supplied the social context for many settlers who were venturing into the Atlantic World. In the case of Jamaica, as Trevor Burnard has shown, throughout the late seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, a large percentage of European migrants came from English cities. Burnard also pointed out that the occupational

[55] Plan of Kingston n.p. (1745), Library of Congress.

[56] NLJ, MS 1920, John Mairs Journal, extracts from the Nassau Senior Papers E752 and E753, Transcribed by Courtesy of the National Library of Wales. On Kingston streets see also Richard S. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, 298-99.

[57] Long, History of Jamaica, II.103.

[58] Mumford, Culture of Cities, 95-98.

[59] Thistlewood Diary, see entry for Monday April 30, 1750, reel 1, APS.

backgrounds of these migrants were heavily associated with urban life: mercantile and port trades as well as skilled artisan labor.[60] These factors were certainly a formative feature in the development of Kingston society. Many of its white residents were no doubt familiar with life in a European urban setting and some elites sought to construct a built environment that replicated English models of domestic space. However, while it is important to consider the urban background of colonial immigrants, it is also significant that these residents did not bring with them a concept of plantation society built upon the institution of slavery.[61] The layout and plan of Kingston reflected an understanding of emerging forms for city planning prevalent in England, but the social force of slavery and the tropical environment played equally significant roles in the formation of domestic space for the majority of Kingston's inhabitants.

Domestic Architecture

This discussion of the domestic built environment of Kingston is limited in two ways. In modern Kingston, few structures dating from the eighteenth century have survived. Devastating earthquakes, hurricanes, and fires over the past 200 years have virtually destroyed all structures from the eighteenth century. Furthermore, unlike other European and North American colonial cities, few visual images of domestic structures in eighteenth century Kingston have survived. Those visual images that have survived favor the elite and wealthy homes of Kingston; there remains virtually no representation of slave huts apart from descriptions by contemporary writers. Travelers and contemporary historians' accounts of Jamaican and Kingston architecture or home design also tend to favor descriptions of the elaborate homes built by plantation owners

[60] Trevor Burnard, "European Migration to Jamaica, 1655-1780," in WMQ 53 (October, 1996): 781-783; 790. Burnard estimates that no less than 60 per cent of migrants bound for Jamaica and usually a much higher figure (close to 85 per cent), came from England. Of these, 60 per cent came from London or the home countries suggesting a high proportion of the migrants to Jamaica were from urban areas.

[61] On this point see Barbara Solow, "Slavery and Colonization," in Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System, ed. by Barbara Solow (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 39.

or the rich merchants of Kingston.[62] However, from mid-eighteenth-century maps, contemporaries' portrayals of Kingston domestic space and daguerreotypes made by Adolphe Duperly in the 1830's, historians can gain a sense of the form and structure of Kingston's eighteenth-century domestic architecture.

Life in the "Torrid Zone" was not without its environmental difficulties, and the physical structures erected by the settlers reflected an adaptation to the climate and environmental dangers of the West Indies. Excessive heat or wind, torrential rains, fire and earthquakes could all wreak havoc on a building, as the inhabitants of Port Royal saw in the 1692 earthquake and 1702 fire. Early urban homes utilized thatched roofs on top of brick or stone structures. However, thatched roofs tended to burn quickly and were outlawed in some colonies. Subsequent efforts were made to guard against fires in several specific ways. First in place of thatched roofs, builders used shingles to prevent the spread of a fire. Second, as many fires began around the kitchen stove or fireplace, builders began to build kitchens in a detatched structure away from the main building. Also aware of the danger of fire, the Kingston vestry had established wells and pumps "in every principle street . . . and in the court house . . . fire engines and leathern buckets" by the 1780's .[63] Brick and stone proved to be too loose a construction to withstand the relatively frequent earthquakes; as a result, builders turned to wood and limestone construction.[64] In efforts to guard against the destruction of earthquakes, residents also found it preferable to build low

[62] See e.g. Edward Long's description of the Pinnock House, History of Jamaica, vol II, .

[63] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 104.

[64] Carl and Roberta Brindenbaugh, No Peace Beyond the Line The English In the Caribbean 1624-1690 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 370-371.

structures. Very few of the buildings in Kingston were more than two stories; as Charles Leslie recorded, it was "discouraged" to build more than two stories high.[65]

Fires and earthquakes could destroy a structure quickly, but residents also had to contend with the constant heat and humidity of the Liguanea Plain. They must have done quite well; Johann Waldeck observed during his time in Kingston that "as unbearable as the heat might seem, the people have learned to build their houses so that the air can blow through from all sides."[66] Few structures survive from the period under review but from daguerreotype's taken by Adolphe Duperly in the 1830's, historians can see how Kingston residents sought to keep the heat of the sun out while still allowing for the movement of air (see figure 3).[67] Elevated on a brick foundation with a double staircase ascending to its front door, the entire wall structure was louvred with a few sash windows. This type of structure allowed inhabitants throughout the house to take advantage of the sea breezes or "doctor" and supplied a more comfortable situation for entertaining or work. The sashes and louvred walls also provided a necessary screen from the sun. In structures of more than one story, the lower part of the building was usually built of brick; supported by colonnades, the upper story was made of wood. Both levels were built to take as much advantage of the sea breezes as possible through the use of open sash windows and piazzas. Duperly's second picture suggests what this structure might have looked like in the eighteenth century (see figure 4).

[65] Leslie, A New and Exact Account of Jamaica, 30.

[66] NLJ, MS 2006, Hessian Accounts of America, Waldeck, 126.

[67] Figures 3 and 4 are both daguerreotype's taken by Adophe Duperly. See David Buisseret, *Historic Architecture of the Caribbean,* 21-24.

Fig. 3. View of Church Street, Kingston, Jamaica c. 1830, from David Buisseret, Historic Architecture of the Caribbean (London, UK: Heinemann, 1980), 22.

One central feature of many Kingston homes readily observable from the outside was the "piazza."[68] The piazza, usually in the front of the structure, provided the inhabitants of Kingston with a partially enclosed domestic space that allowed for the free movement of air into the house while also providing some level of privacy. Ann Appleton Storrow found that in some houses of

[68] While much work remains to be done on Jamaican and Kingston architecture, the development of the Piazza as an adaptation to the tropical environment in the Caribbean and North American colonies has attracted the attention of architectural and material culture historians. Jay Edwards argues that Piazza's developed out of an assortment of European, African and West Indian influences in "The Complex Origins of the American Domestic Piazza-Veranda-Gallery," in Material Culture 21 (1989): 3-58. John Crowley argues that until the 1770's in the West Indies, due to the fear of circulating air, the urban Piazza was constructed more for pedestrians than as a domestic space. However, once the military proved the beneficial character of air circulation, the Piazza became much more of a domestic space utilized for socializing and comfort. See "Inventing Comfort - The Piazza," in American Material Culture ed. by Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison (Winterthur, DEL: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1997): 122.

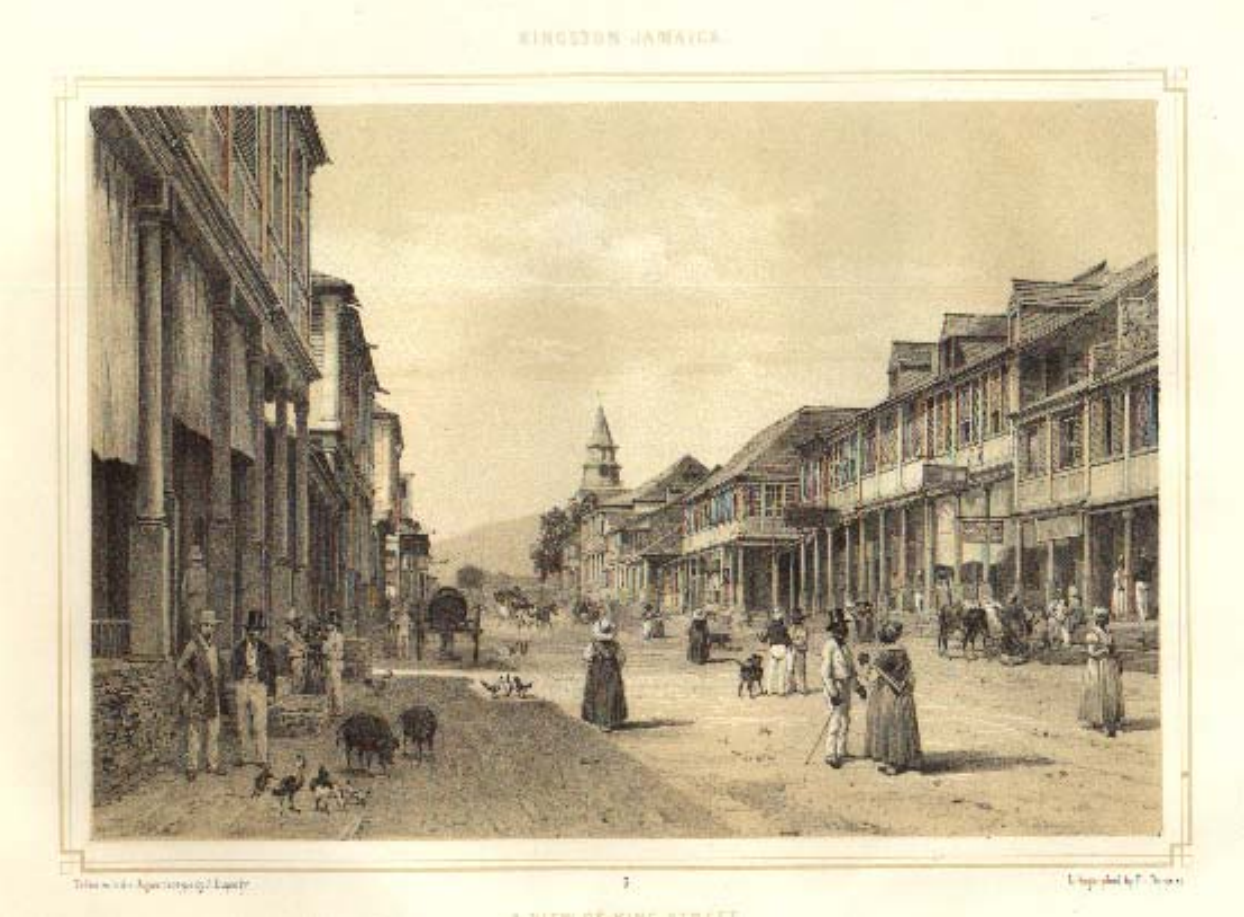

Fig. 4. View of Kingstreet, Kingston, Jamaica c. 1830, from David Buisseret, Historic Architecture of the Caribbean (London, UK: Heinemann, 1980), 22.

two stories, the piazza extended "the length of the house sometimes at both upper and lower stories, completely latticed from top to bottom painted green which looks very cool and refreshing,"[69] It served several social and commercial purposes in Kingston; as Ann Storrow later wrote, the piazza was a cool place both to work and to receive visitors.[70] Edward Long noted that the piazza was often where the greatest amount of time was spent doing business or

[69] Ann Appleton Storrow, Kingston, Jamaica, to Miss Butler, Providence, September 23, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[70] Ann Appleton Storrow, Kingston, Jamaica, to sister, (n.p.) 12 August 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792. MHS. Ann was sitting in the piazza working when an old friend came by and they visited.

engaging in conversation. Long stated "Nor can there be a more agreeable indulgence enjoyed by the master of the house, than to sit in an elbow chair, with his feet resting against one of the piazza columns; in the attitude he converses, smokes his pipe, or quaffs his tea, in all the luxury of indolence."[71]

Piazzas in urban Kingston also provided a walkway along the sides of the blazing and dusty streets (see figure 4) Johann Waldeck observed that the streets were not paved because "the sun on the stones would be so hot that no one, especially the slaves who have no shoes, could walk on them."[72] The urban Piazza along the sides of the streets offered residents a sheltered walkway, especially near the waterfront "so that a person can walk through them without being in the least exposed to the sun."[73] But it must have been a difficult and perhaps even treacherous journey as each foundation and walkway had been built at a different level. J. B. Moreton wrote, "The houses, though some are tolerable elegant, built of brick or wood, are very irregular; the piazzas are in the same manner, so that a stranger or drunken man, of a dark night, unless he walk in the middle of the street, is liable to get his bones broke."[74]

While the types of structures mentioned above represented an adaptation to the tropical environment of the Caribbean and show little resemblance to Old world architectural forms, some whites chose old world antecedents as models for their homes. Edward Long wrote that the

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[71] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 21. Long presents this view in contrast to a contemporary writer who states, "The manner in which they seat themselves, would strike you on the first view as ludicrious. – They draw their chairs to the railing of the piazza, and fixing themselves nearly upon the end of the back bones, they elevate their feet into the air upon the highest rail above their heads . . ." Anon., A Short Journey in the West Indies, 2 vols., (London, 1790), Vol. II, 2; as quoted in Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 118. This opinion is satirized in a cartoon by A. James where each individual, including the women, at a "Segar Smoking Society" in Jamaica have elevated their feet onto the walls or chairs. See, Lady Nugent's Journal, plate 10.

[72] NLJ, Ms. 2006, Hessian Accounts of Jamaica, 126.

[73] Ann Storrow, Kingston, Jamaica, to Miss Butler, Providence, September 23, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[74] Moreton, Customs and Manners, quoted in Buissert, Historic Architecture of the Caribbean, 22.

Georgian styled Pinnock house in Half-Way Tree "may vie, in the elegance and design, and excellence of workmanship, with many of the best country-seats in England."[75] Elite whites who had the financial capability built homes almost entirely of brick, which in Jamaica was extremely expensive for there was no foundry for local brick production. The homes of Edward Gardiner, Robert Turner, Alexander McFarland, and Robert Duckinfield, portrayed on a 1745 map of Kingston drawn for Edward Trelawney, exhibit this type of construction which derived from old world architectural forms. While these mansions were void of the louvred wall structure so common in many Kingston homes, they were built on elevated brick foundations with tall windows that reached to the height of the rooms within. In this way, these Georgian style homes "[were] not blind copies of English models. The classical components of the English Georgia style [were] carefully modulated to achieve coolness and comfort in a hot climate."[76]

These homes were built entirely of brick in the style of Georgian architecture and were quite similar to the "Double House" of Charleston, South Carolina. In much the same way as Peter Coclanis described the "Big House" of urban Charleston, these mansions of elite merchants in Kingston reflected the social structure of Kingston, serving as proud symbols of social rank within Jamaican and Kingston society. The sense of awe at the grandeur of the immense brick houses looking outward on urban society created social distance between both wealthy and poor and free and unfree. In this way, Kingston residents were given a clear idea of the social status and economic power of the owners. The social separation was only reinforced by the fencing surrounding the yard.[77] As the plantation great house suggested the wealth, prestige, and social

[75] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 30.

[76] Richard S. Dunn, Sugar and Slavery, 299.

[77] On Charleston, South Carolina homes and particularly the Double House see Peter Coclanis, Shadow of a Dream, 8-10. See also Coclanis, "The Sociology of Architecture in Colonial Charleston: Pattern and Process in an Eighteenth-Century Southern City," in Journal of Social History 18 (1985):607-623. On the social display of urban

prominence of the white owners, so too did these imposing structures present the urban merchant as socially and culturally exclusive.

This social and material separation becomes all the more clear when considering the built environment allotted to slaves in eighteenth-century Kingston. Perhaps the least physically separated from urban white society were domestic slaves, whose services to their masters required that they be immediately available. They slept in the bedchambers, in the hallways, or in special rooms in the owners' house often located near the kitchen or store.[78] The probated inventory for Fortunas Dwarris, a wealthy Esquire, recorded that adjoining the "blue room" (i.e., a bedroom) in his home was a "closet" that contained a "small bed and bedding and a table" well suited for a slave needing to be close to his master or mistress.[79] Slaves in this type of arrangement enjoyed better living conditions than plantation and other urban slaves as the homes of their white masters were better equipped to protect their inhabitants from the potentially harsh tropical elements. Also, the furniture available to domestic slaves was more likely to be of better quality than plantation or urban slaves. Pedro Welch noted that wills from several Bridgetown, Barbados residents left mahogany beds and furniture to their domestic servants.[80] On the other hand, as Barry Higman pointed out, urban domestics often had much smaller private space and were under the constant eye of their masters.[81]

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architecture see Enrico Dal Lago, "The City as Social Display: Landed Elites and Urban Images in Charleston and Palermo," in Journal of Historical Sociology 14 (December 2001), 374-396, esp. 384-389.

[78] Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 255.

[79] JNA, 1B-11-3 vol. 74.

[80] Welch, Slave Society and the City, 158.

[81] Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 255.

However, not all urban slaves lived in their masters' homes. Owners of multiple slaves built separate "Negro rooms" or "Negro houses" in the back of their lots physically separating slave from master. For Joseph Stretton's six slaves, there was a bedstead, bolster and pillows in a "shed room" that was apparently not a portion of the main house.[82] Several writers have referred to this type of urban domestic construction for slaves positively. The Rev. Bickell's account of slave huts on the plantation contrasts his assessment that in the towns "Slaves are, generally speaking, comfortably lodged." [83] Michael Scott's rather romantic description of elite homes in the "upper part of town, . . .[where] every house standing detached from its neighbors in its little garden . . . [has] a court of Negro houses and offices behind" suggests that slaves, while visibly separated, lived more comfortably than their plantation counterparts.[84] Barry Higman argued that while the materials used to construct these detached houses were likely of inferior quality, they still provided better protection from the tropical elements for the urban slave.[85]

Yet it is also clear that slave owners of Kingston could not, or did not wish to, provide housing for their slaves. Increasing numbers of urban slaves were utilized in a self-hire system in which slaves were hired out by their masters (or themselves) and returned their earnings to their masters.[86] Under this arrangement, slaves worked at various tasks in the city for their master and were given a weekly allowance to be used for lodging and provisions. The Assembly of Jamaica recognized that this system could be abused by masters who did not provide an adequate amount

[82] JNA, 1B-11-3 vol. 43 and 74. The value of this bedding was much cheaper than that for the rest of the household and its location in hidden areas of the house suggest its use for slaves.

[83] R. Bickell, The West Indies As They Are; or A Real Picture of Slavery, (London, 1825), 202. See also, Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 256.

[84] Michael Scott, Tom Cringle's Log, 105.

[85] Higman, Slave Populations, 256.

[86] For a fuller treatment of this system of labor see below, chapter 6.

of money for their slaves' boarding. The result was many unattached slaves wandering around Kingston. As a consequence, the Assembly required that owners "make good and ample provision for all such slaves as they shall be possessed of, equal to the value of two shillings and six pence currency per week for each slave in order that they may be properly supported and maintained, under penalty of £ 50." [87]

This type of arrangement where slaves were housed independent of their owners in the Negro yards sometimes caused problems for white society. Slaves were beyond the eyes and ears of their masters; runaways could and did seek shelter in the Negro yards; and whites, hoping to make quick financial returns, allowed slaves to build shacks or huts on unused land, without their masters' permission. In response to the close proximity of slave huts and the obscurity this might provide for runaways, the Jamaican Assembly required that huts have only one door to prevent a quick escape. Furthermore, in an obvious attempt to regulate slave dwellings and restrict the movements of those within, where four or more where built together, the huts were required to have a seven foot fence with one gate.[88] Slave huts gave slaves a relative freedom to establish themselves independently of their owners. Some whites evidently took advantage of this situation by permitting self-hire slaves "to build cottages and huts in the savannas and waste grounds." However, renting to "unknown persons [slaves]" engaged in this self-hire system was impermissible, and the Jamaican Assembly required in 1795 that all housing used in this way be torn down.[89] This decision reflected the impermanence of the houses and suggests that they were built of quite inferior materials. Slaves, limited in what they could earn and purchase, simply could not afford to invest much in their built environment and were forced to use materials that

[87] Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 256.

[88] On this see F. Pittman, Development of the West Indies, 23 n. 40.

[89] Jamaican Law for 1795 as quoted in Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 256.

were either cheap or readily available. Slaves used wood, when available, to construct the walls and floors of their rectangular huts. However, it appears that in Kingston, most slave huts utilized "Spanish walling" where masonry is used to fill around a wood frame. Roofs were thatched, making them susceptible to fire. The slave huts allowed a measure of freedom for slaves who were beyond the immediate control of their masters, but the built environment they occupied stood in stark contrast to that of their white masters. This contrast reinforced the institution of slavery and communicated the social status of both whites and slaves.

Conclusion

Louis Sullivan wrote in 1934, "what the people are within, the buildings express without."[90] When applied to those in positions of social power or social exclusion in Kingston during the era of slavery, this description is quite accurate. Wealth, dominance, power, prestige and social exclusion were displayed through the built environment whites constructed for themselves and for their slaves. While elite whites built opulent mansions, lower class whites adapted themselves to the social and tropical environment by building substantial structures conforming to their status within the apex of society. The institution of chattel slavery in Kingston was confirmed and expressed in the built environment allotted to slaves, be it a small room in a mansion, a detached Negro house in the garden of the master, or the "obscure," or "vile" hovels that Anne Storrow described. In each case, the social status of whites and blacks was displayed through the built environment. Power and dominance of whites over the slaves was enshrined and symbolized in the built environment of Kingston.

[90] Kindergarten Chats on Architecture, Education and Democracy, ed. by Claude F. Bragdon (1934), quoted in Peter Coclanis, Shadow of a Dream, 9.

CHAPTER 4

KINGSTON AT HOME

In the "hall," "7 mahogany chairs with leather bottoms, 1 pear [peer] glass, 1 large mahogany dining table, 1 small mahogany table, 1 tea table, a sett of china, and a mahogany tea board;" in the "back entry" 6 walnutt tree chairs, 1 mahogany bureau, 1 small table, and a pair backgammon tables; in the "front room above the stairs," a "mahogany bedstead, feather bed and mattress, bolster, counterpaine and musquito nett, a mahogany chest of drawers, a dressing table and glass, a close stool and 2 windsor chairs; in the "back room above the stairs" was another bedstead and mattress, "a mahogany cabinet, a small dressing glass, a Windsor chair, a close stool, a small table and wearing apparell; in the "cook room," a large iron pott, copper tea kettle, copper cloths pott, tin callendar, 4 flat irons and stand, sieve, ball of tin and tin funnell, grid iron and 2 spitts, pair of trivets, 4 brass candlesticks, tin dressing pan and flour box, 3 washing tubs, 1 water jar;" £9 of silver and a parcel of earthenware and house linnen in the "pantry." Completing this catalog of material goods were 4 slaves valued at £110 owned by the deceased.[1] Thus was the inventory for Haywood Gaylord, a Kingston merchant, entered into the probate records of Kingston, Jamaica in 1757.

This listing of all the "singular goods, chattels, rights and credits" required by the probate court of the merchant Haywood Gaylord offers a unique perspective into the domestic space of free Kingston residents during the eighteenth century. The objects and their placement within the household shed light on, to varying degrees, the social, cultural and geographical setting of Kingston. For instance, the fine pieces of mahogany furniture, "pear glass" [mirror], the china

[1] JNA, Inventories 1B-11-3 vol 37. Gaylord's entire estate totaled £618.

and silver, and specialized tables noted for tea and games suggest Gaylord's awareness and participation in consumption practices that marked refined society in the merchant world of the English Atlantic.[2] The mosquito net, a bed hanging quite different from the heavy curtains drawn over many English and New England beds for warmth and privacy, draws attention to the tropical environment in which Kingston homes were situated and the attention paid to maintaining a cool domestic environment. The substantial investment of £110 in 4 slaves, 18% of the total value of his total inventory, reminds us that Gaylord lived in a society dominated by the practice of slavery. Furthermore, slave ownership signified an acceptance of the institution of slavery.[3]

Function of Domestic Space

The full significance the objects and furnishings of domestic space in Kingston becomes clear only after considering the function of domestic space in an urban slave environment. Apart from providing a secure place for private rest and relaxation, domestic space in Kingston served a variety of different functions. The home often served as a tool, often as a place of business for professionals, shopkeepers, and tavern keepers, and/or as a workshop. Hugh Bethune, a Kingston attorney at law entered into the Jamaican probate records in 1757, likely operated his legal practice out of his home. Among the various rooms and their contents listed for his home is his "office" which contained a mahogany desk and book case, a bookcase painted green, another

[2] On the use of material objects and their importance in early colonial America in constructing a respectable or elite household see e.g. Phyllis Hunter, Pursuit of Identity (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 75; Richard Bushman, The Refinement of America (New York, NY: Knopf, 1992); or Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter Albert, eds. Of Consuming Interest (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1994. For England see e.g. Paul Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1989), 68-71, or Lorna Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760 (London, UK: Routledge Press, 1988) 169-174.

[3] For an examination of the how the process of Creolization was marked by the eventual purchase of a slave see Trevor Burnard, "Thomas Thistlewood Becomes a Creole, Jamaica, 1750-56," in Bruce Clayton and John A. Salmon, eds. Varieties of Southern History: New Essays on a Region and its People (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996): 99-118.

mahogany desk, and two stools, and a "sett of mahogany rails for the office." Working at his desk with his clerk at the other mahogany desk, Bethune likely kept his 20 volumes of law books on the mahogany bookcase near his desk.[4] Probates also suggest that some Kingston shopkeepers such as Frederick Wright or Moses Musquita, lived in one portion of their home, most likely the rear or upstairs, while displaying and selling their merchandise at the front of the home.[5] David Crowley and William Murray, both tavern keepers in Kingston, lived in rooms set apart from the establishment they owned.[6] As a tool, the home might also have served as workshop. John Burton, a tailor, and David Leslie, a peruke maker, both appear to have worked and sold their manufactures out of the home. Listed alongside their furnishings such as beds, furniture, or wearing apparel are the material objects necessary for their trades, such as £53 in "cloth," a cutout coat and thread found in John Burton's inventory, or £75 in a "parcel of hair and wigs" and 25 "bags for wigs" listed for David Leslie.[7]

Private domestic space was also utilized for social gatherings such as elaborate meals, balls, and dances to display or gain social capital. Ann Brodbelt, wife of a prominent Spanish Town doctor, wrote to her daughter Jane, then living in England, of her experiences with Kingston sociability during a visit to a Kingston home. The elder Brodbelt writes "we were very gay there, a continual round of dancing, indeed so much so that I tired of it." She continued in the same letter to describe Kingston's refined society: "the manners of the People and their mode

[4] JNA, Inventories, IB-11-3 vol 37.

[5] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol 68 and 77.

[6] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3 vols 48 (Crowley) and 36 (Murray).

[7] JNA, Inventories, IB-11-3 vol 35.

of living resembles England, they keep late hours, have suppers . . . and . . . the ladies and gentleman associate very much together."[8]

The entertainments and dinner parties, held at the homes of Kingston's elite white society were also methods of obtaining social capital and led some to criticize the opulent display. One contemporary complained of the excesses of Kingston sociability and pointed out that it was a "prevalent custom of the Country (was) to live up or beyond their income."[9] James Stewart found that in Jamaica, and particularly Kingston, "it may be supposed that none but the most opulent venture to give such costly entertainment: but everyone here is ambitious to make a figure in this respect and usually treat their guests in a style above, rather than below their circumstances."[10] The opulent hospitality criticized by Stewart was celebrated by Bryan Edwards, who found the propensity for opulent entertainment in the domestic spaces among West Indians to be virtuous. Edwards wrote, "In no part of the globe is the virtue of hospitality more generally prevalent, than in the British Sugar Islands."[11]

Some homes in Kingston might also have been used for religious services. Thomas Coke, a Methodist missionary, reached Kingston in late January 1789, when he was introduced to a Mr. Treble. The two quickly became good friends and, as Coke wrote, "In Mr. Treble's house I preached four times" though the room was apparently quite small." Another benefactor, Mr. Burn "observing the inconviences the congregation was put to, in Mr. Treble's small though neat house . . . most generously offered me the use of a very large room in one of his houses, which

[8] Geraldine Mozley, Letters to Jane from Jamaica, (London, UK: West India Committee, 1938), 122.

[9] O.F. Christie, The Diary of the Rev[d] William Jones 1777-1821, (London: Bretanos, 1929), 23.

[10] J. Stewart, A View of Jamaica, (London, 1823), 211.

[11] Bryan Edwards, The history, civil and commercial, of the British colonies in the West Indies, (London, 1801), Book IV, ch. 1, p. 9.

room has been frequently used as a public Concert-room, and is the largest but one in the whole town."[12]

Domestic space was also where the public and private sectors intersected.[13] Business transactions and social visits were conducted in the parlor, dining room, piazza, or office, and dinner parties brought families and associates together. Private domestic space was also where the very public social institution of slavery was brought into the most private spaces of Kingston homes. The interaction of master with slave, mistress with domestic, or child with slave nanny and the daily service of slaves for their masters in the bed chambers, hall, kitchen or others sites of domestic activity served as a constant reminder of the social reality of slavery in Kingston. When utilized as a site for public gatherings, the home also brought slavery before the public. For example, the Methodist minister Thomas Coke's preaching at Dr. Burns's home brought both whites and slaves together to hear the gospel message. The great room was full with "four hundred Whites . . . and about two hundred negroes, there being no room, I think, for more." During Coke's preaching the service became the site of a rather intense conflict between Coke and "a company of gentleman, inflamed with liquor." It seems that the gentlemen objected to Coke's religion and his criticism of slavery to the point that they "cried out, 'Down with him, down with him'" and rushed forward "pressing through the crowd in order to seize me."[14]

But the home served another very important function. As a tool where financial or social capital could be earned or lost, as a site for public or semi-public conviviality, or as a site for the

[12] T. Coke, A Journal of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Visit to Jamaica, and His Third Tour of the Continent of America, (London, 1789), 2.

[13] On this point see e.g. Daniel Roche, A History of Everyday Things, trans. Brian Pearce (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 101; Lorna Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture, (London, 1988,1996), 28-29.

[14] T. Coke, A Journal of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Visit to Jamaica, 2. Dr. Coke experienced several such encounters in his travels to Kingston. See also, T. Coke, Extracts of the Journals of Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America, (London, 1793), 138.

reinforcement of slavery, domestic space also functioned as a site filled with material objects for social display and private comfort. These objects served as rhetorical devices used by the owner to present him/herself to society. As Daniel Roche argued for French homes of the eighteenth century, the home in Kingston was "the heart of ordinary life," where the physical needs for rest or relaxation were met, and a site of public sociability. [15]

In the early modern era, the home and the objects used to fill domestic space were also, according to Roche, the center piece in the construction of an individual's self-identity and self-perception.[16] In Kingston, the domestic space and the objects that filled it served as a medium for the creative process that embodied the social and cultural development of the region. The urban home of Kingston, particularly for free whites, helped project an image of social prominence and power. Through architecture and the built environment, elite whites demonstrated their wealth and power to Kingston's lower class whites, free blacks, and slaves. In the same manner, elite members of white society portrayed their social and economic supremacy in Kingston through the acquisition and display of furnishings that were, for the most part, unattainable by the poorer elements of white society and slaves.

But elites and middle class whites were also members of an Atlantic commercial world marked by a quest for gentility and refinement. With England's rather dramatic development as a commercial empire from the late seventeenth century, the rising merchant class assumed an ever-growing sense of its own respectability as members of polite English society. Daniel Defoe, writing in 1740, elevated the Atlantic merchant to the status of gentleman: "Trade is so far here from being inconsistent with a gentleman, that, in short, trade in England makes gentlemen, and

[15] Roche, A History of Everyday Things 7.

[16] Ibid., 81.

has peopled this nation with gentlemen."[17] In Kingston, which lacked a gentry or aristocratic class, the middling and upper levels of society were dominated by a merchant class seemingly intent on preserving a genteel and polite society. By virtue of their contacts across the Atlantic world and their wealth, they were able to keep abreast of metropolitan norms of genteel society and attempted to replicate them within a dramatically different social and ecological environment.[18] This chapter explores how urban domestic space in Kingston and the material objects used to fill this space, situated at the crossroads of a tropical island dominated by the institution of slavery and at the hub of the British commercial empire, served as rhetorical devices through which whites communicated the social, ecological, and cultural reality of Kingston.

The Genteel Home in Kingston

Historians examining early modern English and colonial North American material culture and the revolution in manners and respectability have provided intricate details about how the consumer "revolution" of the eighteenth century contributed to the formation of gentility and polite society among the merchant classes of the Atlantic world.[19] However, providing a

[17] Daniel Defoe, The Complete English Tradesmen (London, 1740), 246.

[18] For the commercial and communication contacts Jamaican and Kingston maintained within the Atlantic world see Ian Steele, The English Atlantic (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), 29-31 and 237-38; and Julius Sherrard Scott, *The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution* (Ph.D. Diss., Duke University, 1986). For an examination of a Jamaican plantation owner's attempt to replicate London norms of sensibility in the 1790's and first decade of the nineteenth century, see Sarah Pearsall, "'The late flagrant instance of depravity in my Family': The Story of an Anglo-Jamaican Cuckold," in WMQ 60 (July 2003), 549-582.

[19] The idea of a "consumer revolution" in the eighteenth century is explored in McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, The Birth of Consumption (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982). The literature examining the relationship between consumption and genteel, polite or refined society on both sides of the Atlantic is immense. Representative of metropolitan studies of gentility is Woodruff Smith, Consumption and the Making of Respectability (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), Philip Carter, Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800 (London, 2001). David Hancock elegantly bridges the Atlantic world and describes the social aspirations and cultural worlds of merchant gentlemen in his Citizens of the World: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735-1785 (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1995). On the development of polite and refined society in colonial North America see e.g. R. Bushman, The Refinement of America (New York,

precise definition of genteel or refined Atlantic culture can be an unwieldy task of juggling such notions as morality, luxury, conspicuous consumption and political economy. David Hancock's examination of the commercial and cultural world of a group of Atlantic merchants noted how after the Glorious Revolution and with the increasing influence of wealthy merchants on English notions of polite society, status as a gentlemen became deportmental rather than hereditary. In suggesting a definition for British gentility, Hancock pointed to the necessity for a proper education, a "genteel dress and carriage," and refined external character.[20] This notion of the importance of personal bearing informs John Crowley's definition of eighteenth-century gentility: "Gentility was a specific set of manners that placed a premium on pleasing others in appearance, conversation, and social interaction."[21] Similarly, Phyllis Hunter noted the increasing attention to controlled movement, an effort to disguise bodily functions, elaborate attention to self-presentation, and skill in defined social rituals among Boston's merchant elite as indicative of the ever-increasing attention to constructing a polite society.[22]

Nowhere was the quest for gentility and refinement among the upper levels of society better expressed than in the equipping and furnishing of private homes of urban residents. John Crowley elaborated on his definition of gentility: "Its codes of graceful behavior found expression throughout material culture – in dress, in dining, in music and dance, in architecture

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NY: Knopf, 1992), Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, Peter Albert, eds. Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1994), or Phyllis Hunter, Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World: Massachusetts Merchants, 1670-1780 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

[20] Hancock, Citizens of the World, 280.

[21] Crowley, "The Sensibility of Comfort," in American Historical Review 104(June 1999), 757-58.

[22] Hunter, The Pursuit of Identity in the Atlantic World, 75. On eighteenth-century definitions of politeness and refinement see the helpful discussion by Philip Carter, Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800, (London, 2001), 19-23.

and interior decorations."[23] Throughout the eighteenth century, Atlantic world urban residents increasingly defined themselves as genteel through the outfitting of parlors, halls, and dining rooms with a mounting array of specialized objects that not only were useful but also symbolized the owner's sense of taste and refinement. Lois Carr and Lorna Walsh pointed to the "increasing comfort, attractiveness and even elegance in living quarters" of the colonial Chesapeake as indicative of these residents' desire to be fashionable, which, according to Carr and Walsh, could be "summed up by the word – gentility."[24]

Perhaps the most important ingredient in the recipe for gentility was the conspicuous consumption of home furnishings. As more people had more money, consumption of household furnishings rose throughout the eighteenth century. After the 1720's, fashion increasingly shaped demand as more consumers arrived in the market place purchasing goods that were previously the province of the wealthy.[25] As the eighteenth century progressed, material consumption, according to David Hancock's analysis of an eighteenth-century consortium of Atlantic merchants, played an increasingly significant role in "signaling" entry into genteel society.[26] This consumption was quite pronounced in urban port centers where a merchant's elite status was displayed through their buying habits. Phyllis Hunter, who examined the merchant community of colonial Boston, argued that "the Georgian gentility that became a marker for urban elites in Anglo-America included . . . [the] intense involvement in consumption of novel

[23] Crowley, "The Sensibility of Comfort," 758.

[24] Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh, "The Standard of Living in the Colonial Chesapeake," in WMQ 45 (1988): 137.

[25] See e.g. Neil McKendrick, "The Commercialization of Fashion," in The Birth of a Consumer Society, 34-98, and Cissie Fairchilds, "The Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris," in Consumption and the World of Goods, 228-248.

[26] David Hancock, Citizens of the World, 280-81.

and imported goods."[27] But this consumption was primarily limited to fashionable goods, particularly home furnishings, which were utilized to establish and display a genteel and culturally-refined home to the public. Kingston's elite Esquires, merchants, and professionals could certainly enter into this market.

These consumption patterns stretched across both social and vocational boundaries. Professor Hunter's examination of Boston's merchants, she pointed to the active participation of the middling social levels in the consumption of the latest fashions. Within this segment of the population, there appeared, as Hunter argued, a concern with establishing a genteel household and a "self-conscious consideration and preoccupation with taste and appearance."[28] Particular items such as mirrors or prints, books, and specialized furniture consumed by the middle and upper classes enabled individuals to emulate their social betters and present themselves as genteel members of polite society. The material objects that adorned domestic space in the urban settings of Boston, Philadelphia, Glasgow, and London also, served as rhetorical devices through which their owners attempted to define and demonstrate their rising status within society.[29]

But consumption in Kingston took on an added dimension. Not only were white residents concerned with their status as members of genteel or civil society within the Atlantic world, consumption in Kingston also signaled their wealth, power, and authority within a racially-divided society. For most whites in Kingston, wealth and power were easily displayed through their material belongings. But the social hierarchy of Kingston placed whites, regardless of their

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[27] Hunter, Purchasing Identity, 75.

[28] Ibid. 75.

[29] On the rhetorical meaning of goods see Arjun Appadurai ed., The Social life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1986). On material culture in Glasgow, Scotland see Stana Nenadic, "Household Possessions and the Modernising City, Scotland c.1720-1840," in Material Culture: Consumption, Life-Style, Standard of Living, 1500-1900, ed. by Anton Schuurman and Lorena S. Walsh (Milano, Italy: Università Bocconi, 1994), 147-160.

wealth, at the apex of society. Yet, not all whites were wealthy nor could they consume or display objects that indicated an elite social status. Though still possessing power and authority by virtue of their skin color, poor whites were limited in the material expressions of there power and authority.

From probate records recorded in the last half of the eighteenth century, it appears that many residents of Kingston also participated in this Atlantic world revolution in consumption that helped project a sense of refinement and gentility. Luxury items such as china, knives and forks, and mirrors, recognized furnishings of a respectable and polite home, were frequently recorded within the elite and middling households of Kingston. The increasing array of specialized furniture, which were emblematic of polite society, was also recorded. Yet, while the acquisition of furniture revealed an attachment to Atlantic world notions of gentility and refinement, the social and ecological environment of Kingston also influenced the construction of domestic life and space. Old world models for organizing genteel society were inadequate when placed within the colonial Jamaican slave society of the tropical West Indies.[30] Gentility and refinement of home furnishings, reflective of old world cultural attachments, was also a symbol of a free society that white residents were forced to organize in a way that supported slavery. Socially excluded and economically deprived, slaves undoubtedly recognized the power and wealth that items such as a mahogany table, chair, bedstead, or silver candlestick were meant to convey. Similarly, the tropical environment had a profound impact on the organization of domestic space. Heat, wind, and even insects were constant realities that inhabitants of Kingston had to consider.

[30] Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, "Reconstructing British-American Colonial History: an Introduction," in Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era, ed. by Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 13.

Tables and Chairs

The most common pieces of furniture, which were necessary for public hospitality, private dining, and leisure in a genteel household, were tables and chairs. They were accounted for more than 70% of all sample inventories recorded in Kingston between 1750 and 1799 (see table 5). Tables and chairs were quite common listings among the inventoried wealth deciles established for this study, and the frequency of these items never dropped below 50% except among the bottom 10% of inventoried wealth (see table 6). Benches and stools, more common in seventeenth-century households, were seldom recorded in the Kingston inventories, reflecting their declining use as seating in the household.[31] What is perhaps most striking about middling and elite levels of acquisition of tables and chairs is the volume. Of estates valued in excess of £1239, 90% contained an average of 5 tables of various sorts and 18 chairs. While these numbers might suggest a large number of inhabitants living within these households, they more likely indicate the inhabitants' desire to acquire seating and tables suitable for social activities, a central function of domestic space within Kingston society. The estate of David Leslie, a wealthy Kingston peruke maker inventoried in 1755, demonstrates the variety of tables and chairs that were often present in an estate of high value:[32]

	£	*s*	*d*
1 old elbow chair		2	6
6 old leather bottom chairs	2	5	
1 card table	2	10	
12 mahogany chairs with leather bottoms	1	5	
2 small mahogany tables		15	
1 mahogany dining table	1	10	
1 mahogany small table	1		
1 other card table	1	10	

[31] See Raffaella Sarti, Europe at Home Family and Material Culture 1500-1800, trans. Allan Cameron (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2002), 123-24, for the decline in use of stools and benches in European households throughout the eighteenth century.

[32] JNA, 1B-11-3 vol 35. Leslie's estate was valued at £1135-4*s*-9*d*.

1 backgammon table		10	
1 old elbow chair		7	6
1 desk and 3 chairs	2		

The money invested in seating and tables positively correlated with estate values (see table 7). In estates valued under £228, the bottom 20% of inventoried wealth, inhabitants acquired fewer chairs and tables and limited their investment in this type of furniture to under £6. By contrast, within the wealthiest third of probated inventories, valued in excess of £3496 each, at least £23 per inventory was devoted to chairs of all sorts, and a comparable amount was invested in tables. At the highest level of inventory wealth, testators recorded £43 in tables and £45 in chairs.

Not only could these elites afford to have more furniture of this type, but they also acquired the most expensive kinds. Those estates valued in excess of £3496 listed tables averaging a value of nearly £4 each. Estates from the middling levels of wealth listed tables averaging a little more that half that value (£2.1). The estate of Matthew Powell, a Practioner of Physic and Surgery, whose inventoried wealth was valued in excess of £9,000, left 7 tables with an average value of nearly £3 each.[33] By comparison, Alexander Glenn, representative of the middling status, recorded 7 tables with an average value of just over £1 each.

While the presence of a table or chair could indicate a genteel or refined home in the Atlantic world, eighteenth-century polite society also required that furnishings such as tables and chairs be fashionable, sophisticated, and specialized, setting the stage for public social rituals and private leisure. One mark of fashion and the self-conscious desire to construct a beautiful and sociable home was the choice of wood for a table. Within the Atlantic world, mahogany furniture was an indicator of beautification and sociability. Paul Langford noted the increasing preference for mahogany furnishings among those aspiring to join the ranks of polite society in eighteenth-

[33] JNA, 1B-11-3 vol 62.

Table 5. Inventories with Selected Goods by Decade[34]

Item	1750	1760	1770	1780	1790	Avg
	% (n=76)	% (n=83)	% (n=70)	% (n=76)	% (n=87)	% (n=392)
Beds	74	75	70	59	78	71
Tables	66	81	63	64	90	73
Chairs	64	73	60	67	87	71
Pewter	37	22	14	5	3	16
China	40	46	37	39	30	38
Knives and forks	26	28	20	18	30	25
Looking glasses	58	51	47	41	57	51
Painting/Prints	46	49	36	31	36	40
Books	62	58	51	42	47	52
Clocks	21	20	16	18	15	18
Silver/Gold	89	88	73	64	76	78
Slaves	68	75	60	71	90	73

[34] As is apparent from the graph, there is a downward trend in ownership of these goods particularly after 1770. This likely represents the general downturn of Jamaica's economy in the 1770's and 1780's. The American Revolution cut off imports from North America forcing merchants and plantation owners to search for alternatives. The failure to find cheap alternative sources for food and supplies forced plantation profits to plummet. This, combined with increased competition with the French colony of Saint Domingue for the world's sugar market, brought a general downturn to the Jamaican economy until the slave revolt on St. Domingue in 1791 disrupted French supplies of sugar to Europe. A preliminary review of probate returns, partially reflected on Figure 4: A, points to a rise in consumption of the represented objects in the late 1780's and 1790's as Jamaica and Kingston's economy recovered. On the effect of the American Revolution on Jamaica's economy and the recovery see Andrew O'Shaughnessy, An Empire Divided The American Revolution and the British Caribbean (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 160-184, & 239. For the positive effects on Jamaica's economy after the successful slave revolt on St. Domingue see Seymour Drescher, Econocide. British Slavery in the Era of Abolition (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977).

Table 6. Frequency (%) of Selected Goods Across Wealth Deciles (1750-1799)

Wealth Decile		beds	tables	chairs	pewter	china	knives/ forks	looking glasses	pictures	books	clocks	silver/ gold	slaves
>£9711	n=22	86.4	86.4	86.4	27.2	86.4	59.1	86.4	50	50	50	95.4	91
£5246 - £9415	n=24	83.3	87.5	79.2	4.5	62.5	41.7	66.7	29.2	50	37.5	83.3	83
£3496 - £ 5170	n=21	90.5	95.2	90.5	19	71.4	33.3	76.2	61.9	52.4	52.4	90.5	90.4
£1857 - £3448	n=29	82.8	93.1	82.8	20.7	48.3	37.9	62.1	65.5	48.3	31	89.7	86.2
£1249 - £1834	n=34	91.2	88.2	88.2	8.8	61.8	32.4	70.1	58.8	52.9	32.4	88.2	85.3
£796 - £1234	n=40	65	65	67.5	20	35	20	45	37.5	45	22.5	77.5	87.5
£437 - £791	n=42	66.7	81	83.3	19	28.6	28.6	62	40.5	18.2	16.7	81	88.1
£229 - £436	n=55	78.2	74.5	69.1	7.2	29.1	18.2	45.5	40	49.1	7.3	70.1	87.3
£127 - £228	n=55	65.6	69.1	67.3	29.1	25.5	12.7	45.5	29.1	41.8	9.1	72.8	61.8
£0 - £126	n=70	45.7	45.7	42.9	11.4	15.7	11.4	28.6	22.9	35.7	2.9	67.1	30

Source: Inventories, 1B-11-3 volume 29-91, Jamaica National Archives Spanish Town, Jamaica

Table 7. Average value (£) of selected goods across wealth deciles (per estate where listed)

Wealth Decile	beds	tables	chairs	china	knives/ forks	looking glasses	pictures	books	clocks	silver/ gold	slaves
< £9711	44.05	43.83	45.5	19.35	23	24.5	14.68	26.59	13.18	140.8	3205.2
£ 5246 - £ 9415	30.45	24.4	28.6	17.75	30	18.6	16.96	8.66	9.66	130.88	1284.25
£3496 - 5170	25.05	22.63	22.9	11.95	3.5	9.5	14.83	55.7	14.5	47.81	858.1
£ 1857 - £ 3448	12.67	18.19	31.51	7.86	14.55	6.1	31.37	40.43	8.5	66.83	788.6
£ 1249 - £1834	23.77	14.68	14.5	7.6	5.64	8.3	6.14	7.92	5.8	52.4	507.5
£796 - £1234	15.27	12.72	11.58	11.06	3	5.9	11.29	7	8.9	35.19	331.28
£ 437 - £ 791	13	8.28	9.18	2.8	2.5	5.3	3.58	5.24	6.43	18.55	292
£229 - £ 436	11.02	15.29	11.56	3.8	13.75	7.12	8.76	13	9.25	22.53	156.9
£ 127 - £ 228	10.03	6.3	6.16	2.6	1.14	2.8	6	7.3	5.4	13.65	109
£0 - £126	3.63	4.82	3.26	1.6	0.86	1.8	1.7	2.57	5	8.86	54

Source: Inventories, 1B-11-3 volume 29-91, Jamaica National Archives Spanish Town, Jamaica

century England.[35] Despite the fact that Jamaica produced much sought after "heavier, closer and more beautifully grained" mahogany wood in the eighteenth century, there were few furniture manufacturers in Kingston producing mahogany furniture. Much of Jamaica's mahogany wood was sold to speculators intent on carrying or shipping the wood to England, where firms such as Waring and Gillows Ltd. purchased it to make furniture.[36] However, as K.E. Ingram pointed out, firms such as Waring and Gillows in Lancaster, England carried on a lucrative furniture trade with West Indian merchants. Apparently after 1770, Jamaica had become such a lucrative market for the firm that its trade with island merchants exceeded that of any other West Indian island.[37]

Although the type of wood is too infrequently recorded among house furnishings to be a definitive indicator of consumer choice, probated inventories in Kingston suggest that a mahogany table was the most desirable among fashionable homes. No other wood type is listed in such detail.[38] Fifty percent of those inventories that included tables listed at least one mahogany table. The variety was immense, ranging from large mahogany oval and square dining tables to smaller tea and gaming tables. Testators of the widow Rachel Gordon's modest estate, valued at £244, found "one mahogany table" and "three mahogany small tables" with a

[35] Carole Shammas "The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America," in Journal of Social History 14 (1980): 13. Paul Langford, A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 71.

[36] On the mahogany trade see Long, History of Jamaica III 842-843 and 497-498.

[37] Ingram, "The West Indian Trade of an English Furniture Firm in the Eighteenth Century," in Jamaican Historical Review (3 (March, 1962), 22-37. Further indicating its importance is Edward Long's inclusion of mahogany is his assessment of "rates for freight" between London and Jamaica in September 1771. Mahogany chairs, with or without arms, carried a rate of 7*s* 6*d* for each pair shipped. Long, History of Jamaica, I, 591.

[38] Though only speculative at this point, it is not surprising that there is a significant presence of mahogany furniture despite the necessity of shipping it into the colony. Furniture, as K.E. Ingram notes, was often shipped from England in empty hogsheads or tierces. The aim of the manufacture in England was that the hogsheads might be either sold in Jamaica or returned full of rum to be sold in England. Ingram, "The West Indian Trade of an English Furniture Firm," 29.

combined value of £ 2-1*s*-9*d*.[39] Among the wealthier segments of Kingston's population, the percentage of mahogany tables rose. Sixty per cent of inventories containing a table and valued in excess of £1234, the wealthiest 50% of inventoried wealth, contained a least 3.5 mahogany tables. The estate of Robert Holden, a Kingston merchant entered into the probate records in 1781, portrays the wealth invested in mahogany tables among Kingston's elites.[40]

	£	*s*	*d*
a pair mahogany dining tables	2	17	6
a pair mahogany card tables	3	10	
a mahogany tea table	2	16	3
a round mahogany tea table	1	12	6
1 large mahogany dining table	5		
2 small mahogany dining tables	3	2	6

Holden's listing of mahogany tables also points to the functional specialization of tables for Kingston's more prosperous families. The five dining tables, reserved for public or private consumption of food, or as a prop within the arena of polite conversation after a dinner party, was the most frequently listed. Robert Holden's inventory also points toward the acquisition of tables designed for specific social rituals. For instance, gaming tables—predominantly card or backgammon tables—were a noticeable feature of Kingston inventories. Within eighteenth-century society, the gaming table was a mark of luxurious consumption as well as an attribute of polite sociability.[41] Thirty-four percent of Kingston estates with tables contained a table specifically designed for cards or backgammon and was placed in the more public or common rooms of the house, such as the hall or great room. Estates from the lowest income level, under £126, to the highest all represented the increasing popularity of parlor games among Kingston's

[39] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol 51.

[40] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol 62. Holden's estate was in excess of £ 27,000.

[41] Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun, draws attention to the popularity of parlor games among urban residents in France. See The Birth of Intimacy: Privacy and Domestic Life in Early Modern Paris, trans. Jocelyn Phelps (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 104.

urban residents. William May, whose position as rector of Kingston perhaps encouraged him to acquire furniture for social activities such as games, had four card tables all valued in excess of £1-15*s* each. But the desire for gaming tables also appears to have reached across social and vocational boundaries. Aaron Manby, a prosperous iron monger, owned a "pair of card tables and a backgammon table" valued at £5-10*s*.[42]

It is difficult to establish the newness or even fashionablity of chairs from Kingston probate records which often limit listings to the number of chairs and their value. Cane bottomed chairs, a late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century item of fashion for polite society, appears to have dropped out of favor in Kingston by the mid-eighteenth century, perhaps reflecting the increasing wealth of Kingston as well as the increased desire for finer, more fashionable furniture.[43] However, the increasing desire throughout the eighteenth-century Atlantic world to acquire special-purpose seating for dining and leisure can be seen in Kingston probate records.[44] Matching chairs - an important element of polite society - around a dining table in the parlor, hall or dining room appears to have been prevalent among the wealthier sectors of Kingston society.[45] For instance, the inventory of Alexander Campbell, a merchant Esquire, recorded two dining tables, one large and one small, with two sets of apparently matching chair sets; "12

[42] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol 33 (May), and Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol 43 (Manby). On the increasing appearance of gaming tables in colonial North America, particularly in urban centers of the colonial Chesapeake, see, Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake," in Of Consuming Interest, ed. by Cary Carson and Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1994),67 and 102. See also Nancy Struna, who notes the attention paid by the middling ranks of Maryland society to acquiring card tables in "Sport and Awareness of Leisure," in Of Consuming Interest, 411-412.

[43] Of the eleven estates with cane chairs, 9 are from 1761 and before. On cane bottom's chairs in the late seventeenth century see Carr and Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake," 65 and Cary Carson "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial America; Why Demand?" in Of Consuming Interest, 594-595.

[44] Carson, "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial America: Why Demand?" 638-639.

[45] On matching chairs see ibid., 592.

leather-bottomed chairs" may have surrounded one table while "8 claw-foot chairs and 2 armed claw-foot chairs" encircled the other table.[46] Chairs designed principally for leisure, such as the arm or elbow chair, and the "sopha" also appeared in Kingston's elite households. For example, the sopha, considered specifically for leisure and lolling, "indispensable condition[s] of gentility" appear only in the wealthiest Kingston probates (estates valued over £1500) and only after 1779.[47] Ranging in values from £5 to £14, the sopha was a significant investment for the inhabitant and was placed in the hall or drawing room for use and social display.

Furniture for Visual Display

The variety of tables and chairs found in many Kingston homes provides evidence of a desire among free inhabitants to provide both a comfortable and refined home to the public. Fashionable tables and chairs were important pieces in the construction of a properly-equipped dining room or hall. The acquisition of decorative pieces of furniture such as looking glasses, or paintings also played a significant role in creating a refined interior. However, the variety of these pieces also suggests a range of possible meanings. The decorative qualities of mirrors, paintings, and clocks made an interior space look nicer. Mirrors also indicated a degree of self-awareness and even personal vanity that is often associated with a concern for self-presentation in the Georgian world of gentility. Paintings could reflect a desire to look outward beyond the immediate household while clocks indicate an increased awareness of time and desire to coordinate daily activities with more certainty.[48] The frequency of these objects recorded in the

[46] JNA, 1B-11-3 vol 29.

[47] Carson, "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial America: Why Demand?" 638.

[48] On the variety of meanings for decorative pieces see especially Lorna Weatherill, "The Meaning of Consumer Behaviour," in Consumption and the World of Goods, ed. by John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York, NY: Routledge, 1993), 212. On the vanity of self presentation associated with mirrors see Cary Carson, "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial America: Why Demand?" 595, or Phyllis Hunter, Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World, 74-75. On clocks see Mark P. Leone and Paul A. Shackel, "Forks, Clocks and Power," in Mirror

probated inventories of Kingston reveals an attention to obtaining decorative furnishings for the home, particularly among elites.

The most frequent of these pieces within the sample of inventories examined for this study was the looking glass or mirror (see table 5). Though a relatively common decorative piece, the looking glass or mirror was an important indicator of social advancement in the early modern Atlantic world. As Simon Schama argued for seventeenth-century Dutch culture, mirrors were a "common luxury item" adorning the walls and served to announce the credentials of the Dutch middle classes.[49] Lorna Weatherill's study of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century English material culture found mirrors and looking glasses not only at the gentry level of society, where they might be expected, but also among the tradesmen of high and intermediate status, who were often located in the urban centers of England and Scotland.[50] By the middle of the eighteenth century, mirrors were numerous and elegant in English middle-class homes and suggested, according to Paul Langford, attempts of the English middle classes to enter refined society.[51] This attention to obtaining a looking glass or mirror in order to decorate and beautify a wall, or to better construct one's personal appearance, was apparently not lost on Kingston society. At least 50% of the sampled inventories recorded some type of looking glass or mirror. When broken down by wealth deciles, at least 70% of inventories valued in the top half of Kingston's wealth contained a mirror or looking glass (see table 6).

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and Metaphor Material and Social Constructions of Reality, ed. by Daniel Ingersol and Gordon Bronitsky (Lantham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 51.

[49] Simon Schama, The Embarrassment of Riches: an Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age (New York, NY: Knopf, 1987), 316-317.

[50] For Weatherill, tradesmen of high status include clergy and "prestigious dealing trades" such as mercers and drapers. Trades of intermediate status included shopkeepers, innholders, clothiers, founders. See Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture, 169-171;178-183.

[51] Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, 70.

Looking glasses were found primarily in two places. First, the looking glass could be a personal piece of furniture used in the chamber or bedroom. These pieces were often small and portable and were of lesser value than their counterparts in the hall. In Francis Gale's "red bed chamber," there was a small looking glass, valued at *10s*, where he might check his appearance before leaving the privacy of his bedroom.[52] Mirrors or looking glasses were also found in the hall or more public rooms of the home, where the elegance of the piece provided a visual demonstration of wealth and also allowed the owner or his guests to reflect continually on their countenances. These pieces appear often to have been framed in mahogany or "in guilt frames" adding considerably to their cost. The 1779 inventory of Caleb Foyster, a merchant Esquire, is fairly typical of the types and location of looking glasses within domestic space of the middle and upper classes of Kingston. Two elegant mahogany-framed looking glasses valued together at £4 were found in the front hall. Two more looking glasses of significantly less combined value, £1-10*s,* were located in the back hall. Foyster's two bedchambers each had personal looking glasses, when combined with a table, two chests, and a stool, were valued at £2-5*s.* And, in case Foyster or his associates needed to check or reflect upon their appearances while conducting business, he kept an old writing desk with a looking glass in his room over the store.[53]

Paintings, prints, or pictures, illustrative of a desire to adorn walls for beauty in a genteel home, were less common than mirrors in Kingston. Only 40% of the sample inventories between 1750 and 1799 contained a print, painting, or picture (see table 5). The actual percentage might perhaps have been higher, for the value of a single paintings or prints was often quite low enough that testators rarely recorded a single print or painting. However, there appears to have been a desire among all levels of society to acquire paintings or prints of some type to adorn their walls;

[52] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol 56, The looking glass was valued at 10*s*.

[53] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol 60.

the percentage of inventories with a painting or print at any wealth level does not fall below 23% (see table 6). Paintings and prints appear to have adorned the walls of rooms where public exhibition was easily accomplished. When testators took down the location of a print or painting, it was most often in the front stage areas of the home such as the hall, parlor, or stairway. Less frequently were paintings or prints in the more private or back stage areas such as the bedroom, and none were found in the kitchen.

Estates among all wealth levels contained large collections of paintings, prints, and maps to display on their walls. Four estates, each from different wealth and social levels, indicate the large holdings of paintings and prints as well as the wide range of capital invested in these types of items. Thomas Stratton, an Esquire whose extensive estate was valued at £52,816, owned numerous prints, paintings and maps at his death valued at just over £64.[54]

	£	*s*	*d*
14 pictures	2	3	9
parcell of pictures	1	5	
1 large scripture painting	1	3	9
12 pictures	2	5	
parcel of old pictures		15	
picture	2	10	
parcell of old pictures		12	6
1 painting of the City of Venice	10	15	
1 painting of the ruins of Palmera	12	2	6
1 painting of the Grecian Daughter	5	1	3
4 pictures	5	16	3
1 piece of painting of an old man	1	13	1.5
4 very large paintings	7		
9 pictures	10		
3 maps and 5 pictures		18	9

Surgeon Isaac Morales, whose estate fell in the middle classes of Kingston at £630, left 30 pictures valued at £7- 10*s*.[55] Archibald Murray, listed simply as a "gentleman," whose estate was

[54] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3, vol. 59.

[55] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3, vol. 37.

valued at £52, represented the lowest income level. Appraisers accounted for 6 pictures in glass and 6 pictures without glass for a total value of £1-5*s*.[56] They also found pictures and prints in estates of free blacks; 50% of the estates (16) listed at least one print or painting. For example, Charles Herbert, a free black man whose estate was valued at just over £75, owned "12 old pictures" valued at £ 1.[57]

Other than the probated value, details such as a title or description are rare. The estate of Thomas Stretton, where four titles of paintings are noted, is an exception rather than the rule, even among estates of high value. Religious paintings, widespread in Europe, appear quite infrequently. Where titles or descriptions are present, Kingston's role as a port and merchant center is central. Maps of England and Jamaica are present, as are "charts," presumably of ports areas around the Atlantic. Despite the lack of titles or descriptions, pieces of furniture designed for visual display, such as mirrors or prints, that adorned the walls of chambers and halls of Kingston's free population, shedding light on the attention colonial settlers of Kingston paid to acquiring furnishings that symbolized gentility, refinement, and social superiority.

Sleep and Rest

Domestic space in Kingston not only provided for the social display of genteel furnishings in the more public or open parts of the house, it also supplied a secure environment for sleep. However, the environment for sleep and rest was quite different in the tropics than in Northern Europe. Not only did inhabitants wish to fill a bedroom or chamber with comfortable or elegant furniture similar to their metropolitan or colonial North American brethren, they also had to account for the heat and insects of the tropical night. These ecological concerns, as well as the

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[56] JNA, Inventories 1B-11-3, vol. 49.

[57] JNA, Inventories 1B-11-3 vol. 71.

desire to have the proper furnishings, influenced the decisions of polite society as they shaped the spaces set aside for sleep.

In European and colonial North American households, the framed bed was a common element by the middle of the eighteenth century.[58] Indeed, as one historian has suggested, the early modern period might rightly be called the "Age of the bed."[59] In Europe and North America the bed met an essential need by providing warmth and supplying a comfortable and secluded space for rest.[60] Beds were fairly common in Kingston, as 70% of sample household inventories entered into the probate records between 1750 and 1799 included at least one bed (see table 5). This figure may have been higher if the testators' notations of "household furniture" include beds.

While the bed was a common piece of furniture for most Kingston households, it also appears to have been a considerable expense for some of its residents. Probate inventories suggest that no item other than a slave approached the bed in value. The estate of William Butterfield, a peruke maker from the lower levels of wealth, entered into the probate records in May, 1760 lists three beds, nine chairs, and six tables. The average cost per bed was £6, while the average costs per chair and table were £ 0.44 and £ 0.33, respectively. William May, rector of Kingston until his death in 1751, left a sizable estate. His inventory recorded seven beds, fifty chairs, and fifteen tables. The bedsteads were worth an average of £13.14 per bed, while the fifty

[58] On the importance of the bed in early modern European and colonial American society see e.g. L. Carr and L. Walsh "Changing LifeStyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake," 133-134, Roche, A History of Everyday Things, 182-185, or Raffaella Sarti, Europe At Home, 119-123.

[59] Carol Shammas, The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America, (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1990), 169.

[60] On the developments in comfort see Cary Carson, "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial America: Why Demand?" 637-38. On the developing idea of 'comfort' and its relation to the acquisition of furniture in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world see the excellent piece by John Crowley, "The Sensibility of Comfort," in AHR, 104(June 1999), 749-782.

chairs and fifteen tables were worth an average of £0.86 per chair and £1.8 per table.[61] Joseph Stretton, a gentleman inventoried in 1766, possessed two bedsteads with a combined value of £19. The average value of the eighteen chairs entered in the inventory was £1.4 per chair and £3 for three tables. The theory that beds and bedding in Kingston were of considerable expense and likely the most expensive items among household goods is consistent with similar studies of English and colonial North American material culture. Lorna Weatherill noted that within English homes of the early modern period, the bed was often the most elaborate or expensive single item among household goods.[62]

The range in types of beds and bedding furniture appears to have been quite large. Most beds were elevated on either a "bedstead" or "frame." In only a few instances, inventories indicated that a mattress was laid directly on the floor. Moses Lemara's estate lacked a bedstead for his "feather bed and mattress," which was quite rare among the sample inventories.[63] However, of the 55% of households at the lowest income level who were recorded as not having a bed or mattress of any sort, it is quite possible they simply lacked a frame and slept directly on the floor on an inexpensive straw mattress. Most mattresses were lifted off the floor by frames of quite diverse quality and value. Values in bedsteads ranged from 5*s* to just over £7, for the more expensive mahogany furniture. Testators also often included the terms "old" or "very old" in

[61] JNA, Inventories IB-11-3 vol 39, (Buttlerfield) vol 33 (May). Butterfield's entire estate was valued at £152- 2*s*-6*d*. Butterfield also owned one slave valued at £45. May's estate, valued at £4919-16*s*-3.5*d*, listed 30 slaves averaging £42.9 per slave.

[62] Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 160.

[63] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol 58. Lemara was a shopkeeper from the lowest wealth decile. His entire estate was valued at £97-13*s*-2*d*.

cataloging a bed. For example, John Walker, an attorney inventoried in 1775, left only a "very old" bedstead, which together with a pair of small pistols was valued at £2.[64]

As the above suggests, the bed could be a relatively inexpensive piece of furniture for some inhabitants of Kingston. The wealthy elites of Kingston were able to spend more on elegant and comfortable beds; yet even among the middle and lower levels of recorded wealth, beds were also a relatively common listing with a wide range of value. Seventy-four percent of inventories valued between £3448 and £127 recorded at least one bed (see table 6) with an average value of £14 per estate (see table 7). These ranged from the simple bed, bedstead, and mosquito net of John Watt valued in 1753 at £4-10*s*-7.5*d*, to that of Ann Mackenzie, a free mulatto woman, who in 1794 owned two "mahogany feather beds, mosquito net, pillow cases, and furniture" which had a combined value of £30.[65] Only in the lowest wealth decile does the percentage of inventories with a bed fall below 50%. Two factors may account for this: first, the bed or mattress may have been worth too little to merit listing, and second, many of those inventoried in the lowest wealth decile might also have been renting a furnished room and had little need or financial ability to purchase a bed.[66]

However, the bed and accompanying furniture increasingly marked a fashionable and genteel household in the eighteenth century Atlantic world. Cary Carson argued that in colonial North America, "expensive and fashionable furniture came to be located in best bedchambers,"

[64] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-3 vol. 56. At least 25 per cent of inventories which listed a bed contained the designation "old."

[65] JNA, Inventories, 1B-11-s vol. 33 (Watt) and vol.80 (Mackenzie).

[66] Brathwaite notes that many clerks and other professionals slept on the premise of the employer or rented rooms suggesting that they owned little or no domestic furnishings. See Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 137.

displaying the gentility and refinement of the inhabitants.[67] These colonists were emulating their European brethren for whom, as Rafael Sarti argued, the purchase and display of a bed not only met a domestic need for a comfortable and secluded place of rest, but also served to create social distance through its conspicuous display.[68] In Kingston, we see a similar desire among the upper classes to acquire expensive and fashionable beds and bedding. Among the wealthiest households, those valued in excess of £3496, at least 84% owned a bed (see table 6). Among elites, beds constituted a smaller percentage of the total inventory value, but the expense of each item was greater than lower classes were able or willing to allocate to a bed. As table 7 indicates, estates valued in excess of £3496 spent on average at least £25 for beds; the richest inhabitants spent nearly £44 on beds. The quality and style of these bedsteads is often difficult to gauge beyond the inventories' notation of worth. However, as an indicator of elegance and value, the testators' inclusion of mahogany may be evidence of high quality. In each estate valued in excess of £3496 that contained a bed, testators found at least one mahogany bedstead. In estates valued below £3496 that contained a bed, only 19% listed a mahogany bedstead (see table 8).

Table 8. Estates Listing a Mahogany Bedstead

Estate value	% of Estates with Bedstead	% of Estates with Mahogany Bedstead
< £3496 (n= 67)	88 (n=59)	100 (n=59)
>£ 3496 (n=325)	68 (n=222)	19 (n=43)

[67] Carson, "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial America: Why Demand?", 637-638.

[68] Sarti, Europe at Home, 123. See also Simon Schama, Embarrassment of Riches, 320-321.

The bed was not only a considerable expense for families of Kingston; birth, death, and the seemingly ever-present sickness of the tropics made the bedroom an important site of domestic activity. Many of the most important events in Kingston took place in the bed or in rooms designed for sleep and rest. The diary of James Pinnock recorded the births of his family and his slaves which likely took place in the bedroom or chamber:

> April 26, 1774—Mrs. Pinnock delivered of a daughter between the hours of 12 and 1 of the day (this child afterward named Mary).
>
> August 29, 1776—Mrs. Pinnock delivered of a daughter 10 minutes before midnight or 12 o'clock—present Mrs. Dehaney, Mrs. Cockburn, Mrs. Paterson.
>
> November 21, 1777—Mrs. Pinnock delivered of a daughter at 5 mins. after 1 past midnight—present in the room, Mrs. Dehaney, Mrs. Cockburn, Mrs. Towers . . . in the room below stairs.
>
> February 21, 1784—Mrs. Pinnock's Jenny, washerwoman, brought to bed of a daughter.[69]

Death was also a constant reality to the Pinnock family chamber, as James recorded on November 27, 1778 the death of his daughter Mary Elizabeth Pinnock who "died about 7 o'clock in the evening in this house."[70]

In general, Kingston residents appear to have been early risers, spending little time in beds during the heat of the day. "Early-rising," according to some writers, was required by the tropical climate. Edward Long wrote,

> Early-rising, which has been spoken of with the greatest encomiums by medical writers, for its contributing very eminently to the health, vigour, and activity of animal life, as well as rational, is particularly necessary in Jamaica. No man ever attained to longevity here, who was not an early riser; nor are any so healthy, as those who religiously addict themselves to this practice."

[69] BL Add. Ms. 33316 Diary of James Pinnock.

[70] Ibid.

For Edwards, the bed "should be forsaken no later than six o'clock at furtherest" to take advantage of the cool air for morning exercise, work and leisure.[71] William and Sarah Dwarris, a young couple newly arrived from England in 1781, heeded this advice and rose early in the morning for rides around the race track in Kingston. William Dwarris wrote to his father in November 1781,

> The Morn^{gs} are cool & pleasant as the north wind now begins to come in – y^{r} daur. (daughter) and myself ride round the Race Course every morn^{g} at day break - at first I had some difficulty to get her up so soon, but every matter in time becomes familiar she is now so well ust to it that she always wakes at gun fire (daybreak). Early rising here is necessary, as it enables you from the strength you gain in the cool, to go thro' the heat of the day without fatigue.[72]

Merchants who lived in the outlying areas of Kingston were known for rising from their beds early in the morning and arriving early at their shops, usually by seven, so as to avoid driving into town during the heat of the day.[73] Edward Long even suggested that Jamaicans who rose early in the morning and exercised required less sleep than their European counterparts. "If an inhabitant of England sleeps eight hours a night, at an average the year throughout, the inhabitant of Jamaica will be found to sleep not more than seven" if they arose early in the morning as Long suggested. Consequently, the Jamaican gains thirty days more "conscious existence" and may, after twelve years "have outlived the other by a full twelve months." The benefit of this increased "conscience existence" was found in increased personal and commercial activity as

[71] Long, History of Jamaica, vol, II, 538.

[72] William Dwarris Kingston, Jamaica, to Father, November 19, 1781, (Typescript), Archives and Special Collections, Otto Richter Library, University of Miami.

[73] Peter Marsden, An account of the Island of Jamaica, (Newcastle, 1788) quoted in E. Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 117.

well as a general freedom from "distempers" that struck Europeans in the bleak months of winter.[74]

The environment for sleep itself was quite different in a tropical climate and required a significant adaptation particularly among newcomers. Although the tropical night could be much warmer than European evenings, the coolness of winter evenings and the sea breezes in Kingston might still require a blanket. Ann Storrow, a former resident of the much cooler News Brunswick, moved to Kingston in 1791 with her husband Thomas Storrow. Writing to a friend back in New Brunswick, Storrow congratulated herself on making it through another winter in Kingston:

> I must case myself in Flannel, for even here I am glad during a North Wind, to shut the doors and windows, and sleep with a thick Manchester quilt every night. My blood is all turned to water. I want to come your way and thicken it up a little, that I may be fit for another campaign.[75]

Perhaps the most disquieting aspect of sleeping in Kingston, particularly for newcomers, was the invasion of mosquitoes during the heat of the night. Ann Storrow, upon arriving in Kingston from New Brunswick, found accommodation in the house of someone she described as "real creole to the back bone." Restricted to one bedchamber, Ann and her three children were forced to sleep in a room so small "that when the childrens' bed was spread upon the floor, I could not walk a step without treading upon it." Adding further discomfort to this situation was the lack of "a breath of air," and the children being "instantly attack'd with the sand flies and mosquitoes."[76] Lacking the protection of a mosquito net above their beds, Ann's children

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[74] Long, History of Jamaica, vol II, 538. James Stewart notes that the common time to retire in the evening for families came around ten or eleven o'clock. Stewart, View of Jamaica, 212.

[75] Ann Storrow, Kingston, Jamaica to Mr. Brown, 1 March 1794, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[76] Ann Storrow , Kingston, Jamaica, to "Your Little Namesake" no date. Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

became sick as a result of this "attack," but quickly recovered.[77] Probate records for the period showed that 30% of those inventoried owned a mosquito net, which was usually listed next to the bedstead. This adaptation of European migrants arriving in the tropical West Indian environment allowed Kingston residents to sleep without the disturbance from mosquitoes. Johann Waldeck appreciated the mosquito net hung over his bed at Howard's Tavern and saw it as a "necessary fixture in this region of earthquakes, as the mosquitoes allow a person less rest at night than during the day."[78]

Light in the Tropics and the Domestic Environment

In the early modern Europe, as improvements in glass-making allowed sunlight to penetrate deeper into domestic space, there was an improved ability to define specialized space and separate ways of life. The work day became longer and activities that demanded light could be moved to other areas of the home. Clearer glass meant that sunlight could better penetrate the darkness of interior spaces and allow for more efficient use of daylight. Efforts to limit the darkness of night by artificially lighting an area were also reflected; masters demanded that their apprentices and employees to work long into the night. [79] Cities seeking to better protect their citizens erected street lights to discourage crime, which also had the result of increasing mobility after dark. Developments in artificial lighting created privacy and sociability within the home. Rooms such as the bedroom or study could be shut off from the fireplace, the traditional and

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[77] Storrow , Kingston, Jamaica, to Mr. Brown, 23 March 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[78] NLJ, Ms. 2006, Johann Waldeck, in Hessian Accounts of America, 129-130.

[79] For the influence of light on the work day see Roche, A History of Everyday Things, 106-110, and Pardailhé-Galabrun, The Birth of Intimacy, 125-130.

central place of lighting during the night in the early modern world.[80] Increased illumination allowed leisure activities such as reading or conversation to become separate spheres of activity and made private if desired. Such activities could also be shared, thus becoming more public. As Daniel Roche commented, this increased attention to lighting came in the century of illumination: the Enlightenment. Light pushed back the darkness of ignorance and fear, and created a sphere of consumption that simultaneously illuminated a new openness to society and emphasized social display.[81]

This same trend can be seen in colonial Kingston though in quite a different geographical setting. Parisian or London homes with thick wall construction and glass windows could be dark places during the winter months when natural light was at a premium. This was not the case in Kingston. The warm tropical environment, the longer hours of daylight due to Kingston's proximity to the equator, and method of home construction provided more than adequate natural lighting during the day. The open or lattice wall construction and sash windows of Kingston homes not only allowed the sea breezes to circulate within domestic space, they also had the potential to allow natural light to penetrate deep into the home. The interior layout of homes in Kingston, designed to allow for the admission of air, also meant that the most functional rooms would be on the perimeter of a structure where natural lighting was also abundant. The most frequently used rooms, the piazza, bedrooms, and front hall, were on the perimeter, while the interior hall was apparently little used during the day as it would have been unbearably hot. The use of artificial lighting by candles or lamps would only have added to the oppressive atmosphere. Residents of Kingston could, if they desired, work, relax, and socialize throughout

[80] Pardailhé-Galabrun, 130.

[81] Roche, A History of Everyday Things, 115, 122.

the year, in a well-lit natural environment by day and sometimes even at night. During her stay in Jamaica, Lady Nugent noted, "The night a perfect calm, and the moon so bright, that I got my small Bible, and read some verses in it, as easy as I could by daylight." [82]

Though the sun and the moon provided much natural light for Kingston residents, inventories also recorded a fairly abundant supply of artificial lighting implements and glass globes to protect the burning candles. Johann Waldelk noted with some measure of astonishment, "Here in Kingston the candles burn under the finest glass globes made of the whitest glass. Without these globes, the constant air currents would prevent the candles from staying lit, and if a person closed the doors and windows, no one could stay in the room because of the heat."[83] In an effort to maintain a well-lit environment, many Kingston residents owned some type of lamp, candle or lantern. On average, there appear to have been at least two lighting objects per household inventory, such as candlesticks, made of brass or silver, glass lamps, candles, and 'lanthorns' for lighting. The materials of candlesticks are little recorded, but it is interesting to note the decline of brass and the relatively steady presence of silver candlesticks. Brass was never a substantial portion of the sampled estates, and brass candlesticks are recorded in only 33 estates; the numbers decline significantly after 1770. The number of estates with silver candlesticks is slightly lower, but is represented in each decade in a fairly uniform fashion (see table 9). As table 10 shows, elite and wealthier members of society generally owned lighting implements. Their holdings could be quite extensive, as reflected in the estate of Fortunas Dwarris (Esq.), who in 1790 owned the following:

[82] Philip Wright, ed., Lady Nugent's Journal of her residence in Jamaica from 1801-1805, (Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Jamaica, 1966), 117.

[83] NLJ, MS. 2006, Johann Waldeck, in Hessian Accounts of America, 129.

	£	*s*	*d*
Pair large shades	3		
1 old shade	1	10	
pr Arguad [sic] lamps with brass stands	3		
8 cut glass candlesticks	6		
large lamp	7		
8 patent lamps	5		
4 long silver candlesticks and 1 silver candlestick with a branch	30		
2 flat candlesticks	12		
1 silver tea strainer, 3 silver salt spoons, silver inkstand with silver bell, candlestick and snuffer, silver dram bottle, and cruet	25		

Table 9. Estates with Brass or Silver Candlesticks by Decade

Material	1750	1760	1770	1780	1790	Total
Brass	11	11	5	3	2	33
Silver	8	6	4	6	8	32

For many of the elite, it was important to have artificial light in the hall or dining room for social gatherings or meals that stretched long into the night. Fortunas Dwarris had placed most of his candlesticks and lamps in the "front hall," the "drawing room," and "green room," where social activity and dining took place. These rooms could also be used privately for reading or relaxation. Interestingly, the more expensive four long silver candlesticks and two flat candlesticks appear to have been stored in a "back room," suggesting that they were brought out only on special occasions. When the location of lighting implements was recorded, there was an average of four candlesticks or lamps in the halls and parlors. Listings of artificial lighting in the bedroom or chamber were almost negligible. This reflects the importance of the central hall of Kingston as a place of sociability and for private relaxation for book reading, playing games and

Table 10. Frequency of Lighting Implement by Wealth Deciles

Deciles	*%*
<£ 9711 (n=22)	81.8
£ 5246 - £ 9415 (n=24)	62.5
£ 3496 - £ 5170 (n=21)	71.4
£ 1857 - £ 3448 (n=29)	51.7
£ 1249 - £ 1834 (n=34)	47.1
£ 796 - £ 1234 (n=40)	50.0
£ 437 - £ 791 (n=42)	52.4
£ 229 - £ 436 (n=55)	23.6
£ 127 - £ 228 (n=55)	34.5
£ 1 - £ 126 (n=70)	17.1
Total (n=392)	42.1

private conversation. The kitchen appears to have served as the storage center for items such as wax or tallow candles and lamp oil. In the case of the widow Maria Balfour, 7 old candlesticks were stored in the pantry alongside her cooking utensils.

Over half of the sample inventories did not record any lighting equipment (58%). Eighty-three percent of inventories within the lowest decile of inventoried wealth did not record any lighting implement at all (see table 10). There may be several reasons for their absence from these records. First, the probate process tended to list items of value. Valuable lighting implements would be more common in households of higher wealth and would therefore be inventoried. Simple implements for holding candles or inexpensive lamps, more common in

households of lower wealth, could either be ignored as having no value or listed with other items under the category of household items. Perhaps also, given the amount of daylight in the tropics, some citizens, especially those of the lower orders of society, simply did without. In 42% of inventories, however, which include some article used for lighting, there are close to 3 implements per inventory.[84]

Conclusion

As a site for the most intimate activities of private family life, the colonial household of Kingston also provided their owners with the potential to shape their identity as white elites in a tropical, urban slave environment. Situated at the crossroads of empire, Kingston's contacts with London and colonial North American port towns allowed residents to keep abreast of the latest fashionable furnishings of Europe and also display them in their homes. Fashionable furniture such as proper bedsteads, tables and chairs made of the finest mahogany, or fine lighting implements, expressed the cultural attachments of Kingston's white society to Georgian ideals of gentility and refinement.

While metropolitan influences helped shape the identity of Kingston's white society, the tropical environment also figured significantly in the material acquisitions of urban residents. The sultry and oppressive environment encouraged the acquisition of items designed for maintaining a comfortable sleeping environment, such as the mosquito net. But, as contemporary writers noted, the heat of the region also persuaded most residents to rise early in the morning to take advantage of the cooler morning air for work and exercise. The heat and breezes of the tropics also affected the use of artificial light in Kingston as glass globes protected lamps from the sea breezes. Closing windows or doors to keep breezes away from candles or lamps would

[84] This is similar to that of elite Parisians in the eighteenth century. See Pardailhé-Galabrun, Birth of Intimacy, 125-26.

have been unbearable but this also allowed Kingston's residents to take better advantage of the natural light of the sun than their European counterparts.

CHAPTER 5

"SENSELESS EXTRAVAGANCE, EXCESSIVE POMP":

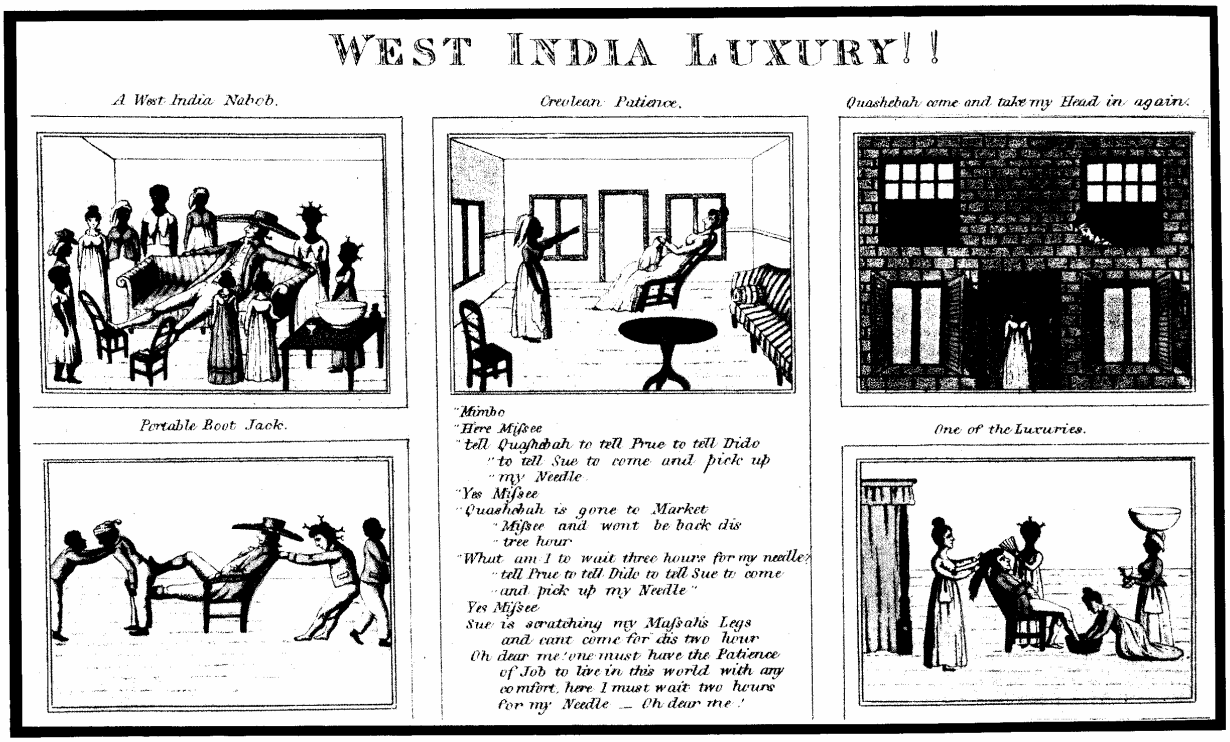
WHITE WOMEN IN LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY KINGSTON

In London, shortly after the end of the British transatlantic slave trade, the well known satirist William Holland published a cartoon depicting life in the West Indies entitled West India Luxury (see figure 5). In a frame titled "Patience," Holland portrayed the futile efforts of a West Indian white woman attempting to have her slaves pick up a sewing needle. The needle is visible on the floor just under the sopha where "Missee" is reclining and it sparks the following exchange:

> Missee: "Mimbo!"
> Mimbo: "Here missee"
> Missee: "Tell Quashebah to tell Prue to tell Dido to tell Sue to come and pick up my needle."
> Mimbo: "Yes Missee" "Quashebah is gone to market Missee, and won't be back dis tree hour"
> Missee: "What, am I to wait three hours for my needle? Tell Prue to tell Dido to tell Sue to come and pick up my Needle"
> Mimbo: "Yes Missee" "Sue is scratching my massahs legs and cant come for dis two hour."
> Missee: "Oh dear me! One must have the patience of Job to live in this world with any comfort. Here I must wait two hours for my needle – Oh dear me!"[1]

This fictional conversation between an indolent white women and her slave represents the fairly common negative portrayal of the Creole West Indian white women in metropolitan sources, a stereotype that persisted throughout popular and satirical literature of the day.[2] From

[1] William Holland, West Indian Luxury, cartoon, (London April 1808), Clements Library, University of Michigan. For an examination of comic strips at the time of abolition of the slave trade see David Kunzle, History of the Comic Strip Volume 1: The Early Comic Strip Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsheet from c. 1450-1825 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), 372-376.



12–23a & b. William Holland (?). *West India Luxury* and *Johnny Newcome in Love in the West Indies* (1808).

Fig. 5. West India Luxury

Sarah Scott's depiction of the manipulative and ambivalent slave-owning wife of George Ellison in The History of George Ellison to Emily Bronte's portrayal of the mad and drunken Jamaican Creole Bertha Mason in Jane Eyre, white women of the British Caribbean were repeatedly vilified throughout the colonial period.[3] Even beauty, or its apparent escape from the white

[2] This cartoon portrays a common anecdote as a similar story is retold by Benjamin Browne who visited Bridgetown, Barbados in the early part of the nineteenth century. Browne wrote, "a woman . . . sitting beside a closed window blind, called Molly to tell Jane to tell Phyllis to tell Susan to come and open it." Quoted in Pedro Welch, Slave Society in the City (Kingston, UWI Press, 2003), 133-134.

[3] Sarah Scott, History of George Ellison (London, 1766). Emily Bronte, Jane Eyre (London, 1847). See Wylie Sypher, "The West Indian as a Character," in Studies in Philology 3(1939): 503-519 for an examination of the stock figure of the West Indian creole in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century novels, plays and poetry. For an evaluation of Bronte's Jamaican character Bertha Mason as representative of Bronte's anxieties concerning oppression see Susan Meyer, "Colonialism and the Figurative Strategy of Jane Eyre," in Victorian Studies 3(1990): 241-68. See also Jenny Sharpe, Allegories of Empire: the figure of Woman in the Colonial Text (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) for an excellent discussion of the portrayal of women in colonial literature. For

women of Jamaica, was a target, as seen in the 1763 text *The Peregrinations of Jeremiah Grant*. Grant, a fictional character portrayed as a Jamaican Creole, described his father's Jamaican bride, "the third daughter of one Mr. Adams, a gentleman of small fortune," in the following way: "For if a woman, who may be reckoned a great beauty in that scorching abode, was to be transferred in an instant by some magic art to a temperate climate, she would be placed at the sag end of beauties, or among the least ugly: her my father obtained without difficulty."[4]

Travelers to colonial Kingston, as well as contemporary historians, seemingly confirmed this picture. Likely serving as sources for the novelists and poets listed above, these authors highlighted for their readers the excessive indolence and material extravagance of colonial white women. The "Creole Ladies" of Kingston, whom the well-traveled Anglican cleric William Jones could barely tolerate during his residence in Kingston, drew his particular ire in 1778; he recorded his impressions in his journal:

> Shockingly unfavorable have all the Accounts been which I have receiv'd of the Creole Ladies even from Creoles themselves. More shockingly despicable still are those Beings who have never been out of the Country, . . . as untaught, & almost as indelicate, as are those hapless Negroes they imagine themselves born to trample on. Not possessed of the least desire or attention to please: but, on the contrary, pettish, insolent & proud. Domestic Oeconomy, one would suppose, had in it something which scared them; they detest its appearance. Thoughtless extravagence & expensive pomp they doatingly are fond of.[5]

The historian John Stewart recognized the exaggeration of many who, like William Jones, ridiculed Jamaican white women for their "excessive indolence." Writing in 1823, he stated, "These exaggerations, like all others of a national description, savour more of a caricature

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a helpful discussion on the historical background to Sarah Scott's History of George Ellison, see The History of Sir George Ellison, ed. by Betty Rizzo (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1996).

[4] Anon. The Peregrinations of Jeremiah Grant, The West Indian (London, 1763), 4.

[5] O. F. Christie, ed. The Diary of the Reverend William Jones 1777-1821 (London, 1929), 31.

than truth."[6] Stewart suggested that the heat of the tropical climate, which "naturally begets [*sic*] a langour, listlessness, and disposition to self-indulgence," was the likely source of these depressing characteristics among white women in Jamaica. Yet while attempting to resuscitate their lethargy and rescue their virtue, Stewart reiterated the common perception among metropolitan writers of Creole ladies: they "are so excessively fond of pleasure and amusements, that they would be glad if the whole texture of human life were formed of nothing else. . . . diligence, industry, and economy cannot be said to be among the number of their virtues."[7] Edward Long also invoked the influence of the climate on Jamaican white ladies writing: "As a foil to the brilliant part of their character, I must acknowledge . . . that they yield too much to the influence of a warm climate in their listless indolence of life."[8] But for Long, a lack of proper education and good maternal examples "rendered some women here extravagant in their expences and very indifferent oeconomists in their household affairs. They employ too numerous a tribe of domestic servants, and are apt to trust too far their fidelity, which is not always proof against strong temptations."[9] The vision of a loyal and devoted wife, active in domestic activities, economical, responsible, of sound breeding and education—qualities esteemed in metropolitan English society—seemingly fled Jamaican white women once they entered and began to live in the "torrid zone." Even a defender of Jamaican women, Patrick Browne, after elaborating on the positive qualities of these women such as their "great love of decency and cleanliness" or their "genteel and good humor," lamented that "many of them [Creole women]

[6] Stewart, View of Jamaica (London, 1823), 177.

[7] Ibid., 177-78.

[8] Edward Long, History of Jamaica, II, 280.

[9] Ibid., II, 281-282.

have been remarked both for their indolence, and the want of consideration; which too often deters the gentlemen in these colonies from entering into the matrimonial state."[10]

In examining white women of the colonial Caribbean, a modern historian of the Caribbean Marietta Morrisey wrote, "Most observers of Caribbean white women . . . claim they contributed little to their communities and benefited shamelessly from slave labor."[11] Yet, is the perceived social marginalization of white woman a correct interpretation? Further, is the caricature of the indolent Caribbean white women an accurate portrayal? White women may not have been so limited in the urban setting of Kingston, where the population of white women was greater, where the nature and organization of urban slavery was quite different than that of the sugar plantation, and where the city offered more economic opportunities for women. Furthermore, the slave housekeeper, who held considerable influence over the daily activities of the white household and over the management of domestic slaves on the plantation, was much less common in towns than in rural areas.

For all the depredations and attention aimed at colonial Jamaican white women by contemporary satirists and historians alike, they are virtually invisible or significantly marginalized in the historical record. The patriarchal social and racial institutions, which were the foundations of Jamaican plantation society, restricted the economic and political opportunities of women, thus limiting their inclusion in official and estate records. Although women represent 12% of the total probate inventories recorded in Kingston between 1750 and 1799, their population by 1750 "may well have exceeded the number of men." [12] Women were

[10] Patrick Browne, The Civil and Natural History of Jamaica (London, 1756), 23.

[11] Morrisey, Slave Women in the New World : gender stratification in the Caribbean, (Lawrence, KA. : University Press of Kansas, 1989), 150.

[12] R.V. Wells, Population of the British Colonies in America Before 1776: A Survey of Census Data (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 196, 201-02.

excluded from holding public office and participating in political administration and are absent from the official chronicles of island institutions. Institutionally marginalized, white women were also isolated socially. The lack of schools or religious education in Jamaica, the rural plantation life of the sugar estate, and consequent social isolation often limited their pursuit of education and severely checked white women's social independence.[13] Trevor Burnard wrote of the status of white women in Jamaica:

> Heavily outnumbered by White men within the White population, intimidated by their slaves and by their responsibilities in a society that did not recognize them as full participants, reduced to sexual and economic impotence as a result of the importance of Black and Coloured Women, by the mid-eighteenth century White women were anomalies in a society that was divided on strict racial and gender lines.[14]

The marginalization and exclusion of women from the official records of Jamaica, as well as their apparent social isolation within Jamaican slave society, has made it extremely difficult to assess the situation of colonial Caribbean white women.

Until recently, Caribbean historiographical traditions have also overlooked the role of white women, ignoring not only any participation they may have played in fashioning the colonial complex but also any contribution they may have made as a socio-economic agent. Studies of the Caribbean, which have explored the development of colonial political institutions, the Atlantic commercial empire, and communication networks, all of which were institutions

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[13] Lowell Ragatz wrote of the Christian church that was "normally the zealous guardian of learning as well as spiritual guide in rude communities" that in Jamaica the church only "played a role of but slight importance up to the 1790's." The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763-1833 (American Historical Association, 1928; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1963), 19. William Jones wrote of Jamaica and the irreligion he observed, "Was shocked to hear a Gentleman near me say, 'He had seen & heard favorable descriptions of Heaven,' but, as for his part, 'he never desired to go there.'" Diary of William Jones, 26.

[14] "'A Matron in Rank, A Prostitute in Manners,' The Manning divorce of 1741 and Class, Gender, Race and the Law in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica," in Working Slavery, Pricing Freedom, ed. by Verene Shepherd (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001), 146.

dominated by men, have paid little attention to white women.[15] Studies examining the planter class of the Caribbean and its ascension to power and eventual economic and social decline have paid little attention to the planter's wife and left virtually unexplored her potential role as a socio-economic agent on the plantation complex.[16] Acknowledging the lack of attention paid to marginal social and racial groups, Barbara Bush noted, "The lives of ordinary people, either black or white, were generally ignored," including the role of white women.[17] Further marginalizing white women are studies that focus on slave women. While this approach has served to highlight the social and power relations slave women could achieve within slave society, they have presented white women as "unimportant to the ideological formation of the colonial complex."[18] However, the more recent work of Hilary McD. Beckles, Barbara Bush, Pedro Welch, and Trevor Burnard, among others, has illuminated the lives of colonial British Caribbean white woman. Important to each of these authors is the life experience and socio-economic agency of the white woman in Caribbean slave society.[19]

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[15] See e.g. Frank Pitman The Development of the British West Indies, 1700-1763 (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1917); Richard Pares, A West-India Fortune (London, Longmans Green, 1950); George Metcalf, Royal Government and Political Conflict in Jamaica, 1728-1783 (London, 1965); Richard Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775 (Barbados: Caribbean University Press, 1974); and Ian Steele, The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: and Exploration of communication and community (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). On this point see Verene, Shepherd, "Women in Caribbean History," (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1999), xviii.

[16] See e.g. Lowell Ragatz, The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean. An exception may be Richard S. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), which notes the presence of women though they play little to no role in the rise of the British West Indian planter class.

[17] Barbara Bush, "White 'Ladies', Coloured 'Favourites' and Black 'Wenches'; Some Considerations on Sex, Race and Class Factors in Social Relations in White Creole Society in the British Caribbean," in Slavery And Abolition 2:3 (1981), 245.

[18] Hiliary McD. Beckles, "White Women and Slavery in the Caribbean," in History Workshop Journal 36(1993): 66-67.

[19] Women's history and gender history of the Caribbean region has slowly developed over the last thirty years focusing much needed attention on the experience and agency of slave women in the Caribbean plantation complex. As a result of this increased attention, several edited volumes exploring the experience of black women

These considerations are all the more pertinent when the condemnation of creole white women is placed alongside a more general criticism among late seventeenth and eighteenth-century Atlantic writers regarding notions of the female propensity toward consumptive frivolity.[20] Amanda Vickery argued that in England, the eighteenth-century lady of the leisure class "played a crucial role in the performance of conspicuous leisure." According to contemporary perceptions, her raison d'être was to "consume and display" and thus illuminate her and her family's position within the social order.[21] This notion is similar to Thorstein Veblen's idea of the "vicarious consumption" of women in the late nineteenth century. Women of all social ranks, according to Veblen's argument, drew attention to the husband's social status as well as the respectability and elite reputation of the home through vicarious consumption and

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(and white) in Caribbean slave society have been published over the past two decades. See especially, Gender in Caribbean Development, ed. by Patricia Mohammed and Catherine Shepherd (Trinidad and Tobago: University of the West Indies), 1988; and, Verene Shepherd, Bridget Bereton and Barbara Bailey, eds. Engendering History Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective (Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 1995). On slave women see especially Marietta Morrissey, Slave Women in the New World (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, 1989); Barbara Bush, Slave Women in Caribbean Society (Kingston: Heinemann Publishers, 1990); see also the numerous articles by Hilary McD. Beckles recently collected in Centering Woman Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999). With the increased attention devoted to slave women, several authors have also begun to explore the experience of white women in Caribbean society and their role as a socio-economic agent. See especially, Barbara Bush, "White 'Ladies', Coloured 'Favourites' and Black 'Wenches'; Some Considerations on Sex, Race and Class Factors in Social Relations in White Creole Society in the British Caribbean," in Slavery And Abolition 2:3 (1981), 245-262; Hilary McD. Beckles, "White Women and Slavery in the Caribbean," in History Workshop Journal 36(1993), 66-82; Trevor Burnard, "Inheritance and Independence: Women's Status in Early Colonial Jamaica," in WMQ 3rd ser., 48 (1991), 93-114; Trevor Burnard, "'A Matron in Rank, A Prostitute in Manners,' The Manning divorce of 1741 and class, gender, race and the law in eighteenth-century Jamaica," in Working Slavery, Pricing Freedom, ed. by Verene Shepherd (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001),133-152; Susan E. Klepp and Roderick A. McDonald, "Inscribing Experience: An American Working Woman and an English Gentlewoman Encounter Jamaica's Slave Society, 1801-1805," in WMQ 3(July 2001): 637-660; and Pedro Welch, Slave Society and the City, (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003), 126-135. For a more extensive overview of the historiography of women's and gender history of the Caribbean see Jean Stubbs, "Gender in Caribbean History," in General History of the Caribbean, ed. by Barry Higman (London: UNESCO, 1999), 95-135.

[20] On this see Amanda Vickery, The Gentleman's Daughter (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 5.

[21] Amanda Vickery, "Women and the World of goods: a Lancashire consumer and her possessions, 1751-81," in Consumption and the World of Goods, ed. by John Brewer and Roy Porter, (London: Routledge, 1993), 276.

display of wealth.[22] Women of the eighteenth-century leisure class not only served to promote the respectability of the household through their conspicuous consumption; in their role as domestic consumers, they also held considerable economic and social influence. Yet within their role as a domestic consumer there was also a significant tension. As domestic consumers with considerable agency over household management, men clearly appreciated, as Amanda Vickery wrote, "female management skills." In the domain of the home, economic prudence was a much sought after quality among eighteenth-century women.[23] These competing views created tension; women were supposed to consume and display the social position of the household but in a way that was not ostentatious or outside the bounds of sound morals and thrift.

Consequently, it is important to reconsider two separate but related issues that shape the contours of this chapter. First, the stories of Ann Storrow and Sarah Dwarris, two sojourners—one from colonial North America and the other from metropolitan England—illuminate the life, relationships, and concerns of white women living in an urban, Caribbean slave society. Historians today know little of what life was like or the challenges white women faced as they lived in Kingston; hence, the first section aims to describe the experiences of two white women. Their experiences serve as a foundation for the two subsequent sections. The first examines the material life of the Storrow and Dwarris and their attempts to create a genteel home within an urban Caribbean environment. The last section of this chapter explores the role white women played in the domestic economy of Kingston's households and argues that white women in Kingston actively managed their homes, overseeing daily domestic affairs and the purchase of domestic consumables. As members of the white elite leisure class, they were cast into the role

[22] Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class, Intro. by John Kenneth Galbraith (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1973, originally published 1899), 68-70.

[23] Vickery, The Gentleman's Daughter, 129.

of domestic overseer and financial manager. Furthermore, in a society where opulence and social display were crucial to racial distinctions as well as class divisions among whites, the white woman's role as domestic consumer and household manager would invariably assign a great amount of social power and agency to her. Utilizing the letters of Ann Storrow and Sarah Dwarris, as well as a record of expenses by Elizabeth Pinnock, the wife of Kingston barrister and socially prominent James Pinnock, this chapter challenges the caricature of the indolent and senselessly extravagant urban creole white woman.

The Experience of Ann Storrow and Sarah Dwarris in Kingston, Jamaica

Ann Appleton Storrow was born in 1760 near Portsmouth, New Hampshire to Samuel Appleton and Mary Wentworth. She was from a socially prominent family; her mother was the granddaughter of John Wentworth, the first Royal Governor of New Hampshire, and Ann was the first cousin to John Wentworth, the last Royal Governor of New Hampshire. Her father, Samuel Appleton, was a direct descendant of an earlier Samuel Appleton, who came to America in 1635 and settled in Ipswitch, Massachusetts. When Ann's father died at sea in 1770, he left a wife and three children, including Ann, who as only ten years old. At this time, the young Ann went to live with her maternal grandparents, where she lived until her marriage in 1777. Though her mother remarried, there is no indication that Ann went to live with her mother and step-father; she evidently chose instead to remain with her grandparents. Ann had a deep affection for her maternal grandfather, who died only two years before her marriage to Thomas Storrow.[24]

[24] Unless otherwise stated, all biographical information on Thomas or Ann Storrow is taken from a manuscript prepared by Henry Barlow Brown, a family friend of Thomas and Ann Storrow. It is contained within the Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, folder 1790-1796, held at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

Thomas Storrow was born in Kingston, Jamaica. His father, also named Thomas, was a successful carpenter who owned several houses, stores, and, at his death, 23 slaves.[25] The elder Thomas died on November 5, 1762[26] at age 34, leaving a young wife and four small children—two boys and two girls. After her husband's death, Mrs. Storrow left Jamaica with her four children, Thomas, Nicholas, Nancy, and Mary, and returned to England, where she eventually remarried. Following the "customary" practice for estate divisions in Jamaica,[27] Thomas Storrow left his sizeable property holdings and slaves to his eldest son, Thomas, and made cash provisions for the rest of the family.[28] Both Thomas and his younger brother Nicolas purchased commissions in the British Army. Nicolas went to the East Indies, where he had amassed a fortune of nearly £80,000 pounds by his death. During the American Revolution, Thomas served in the West Indies, where he apparently squandered most of his fortune.

During his time in Jamaica, Thomas became romantically involved with a Jamaican lady named Miss Dawson. In early 1777, his mother, not approving of the Creole Miss Dawson, sent immediately for her son, urging him to return to England. Storrow quit the island, but on the voyage home, his ship was captured by the American navy and he was carried to Newport, Rhode Island. Allowed to circulate "on his honor" within the New England community, Thomas was invited to Portsmouth, New Hampshire by the Loyalist Royal Governor John Wentworth.

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[25] JNA, 1B-11-3 vol. 43. Storrow's estate was valued at £13,197 at his death.

[26] J.H. Lawrence-Archer, Monumental Inscriptions of the British West Indies (London, 1875), 149-150.

[27] On this see Trevor Burnard, " Female Independence in Jamaica" in Continuity and Change 7(1992):181-198; and idem., "Inheritance and Independence" in WMQ 48 (1991): 93-114.

[28] Charles Denny, in a separate biographical account of Thomas Storrow, notes that Thomas Storrow's will provided a portion of the estate to Nicolas and £500 cash for the two sisters. See Charles Denny, Ann Appleton Storrow, 1760-1796, unpublished manuscript held at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Henry Barlow Brown's account provides a somewhat different story stating that the entire estate was left to Thomas who thought this not fair. As a result the younger Thomas Storrow divided the property with his brother and gave £500 cash to each of his sisters. It is likely that Mr. Denny's account is closer to the truth as it follows the common practice for estate divisions in Jamaica.

Although he had intended to remove to Britain as soon as possible, Storrow met Ann Appleton and decided to stay for a while longer. Soon, he proposed to marry and was favorably received by Ann though her mother and grandmother objected. Theirs was apparently a love match, and the happy couple was married on December 2, 1777 when Ann was only seventeen years old.

It seems likely that Ann realized Thomas had squandered most of his fortune, for upon their return to England, the couple was forced to rely on Thomas's mother for support. By the end of the war, because officers were reduced to half-pay, Thomas had left the army and ventured to Nova Scotia in the hopes of remaking his fortune. Sadly for Ann, Thomas does not appear to have been a good business man. They settled on the island of St. Andrews, where Thomas eventually lost what little remained of his fortune in several poorly planned or poorly executed business ventures. He also had the bad fortune of settling on the island of St. Andrews, which was legally still the property of an absentee family. When, in the late 1780's, the rightful owners returned and began to push the settlers off, Thomas resisted.[29] The situation became so dire that Ann was forced to hide the family furniture and silver and eventually flee the island. In 1789/90 Thomas departed for Kingston, Jamaica, where he hoped to reclaim the properties of his father and again remake his fortune. Ann followed nearly a year later. The family's sojourn in Kingston was relatively short, only 4 years, but the letters from Ann to her family and friends in Nova Scotia and New England shed light on Ann's personal misfortunes and her attempts to adjust to life in tropical Kingston.

Much less personal information is known about Sarah Dwarris prior to her arrival in Kingston. Sarah, or Sally as she was sometimes referred to, was the daughter of W. Smith of Southam in Warwickshire, England. From Sarah's letters, it appears that her father was a merchant, which likely provided an avenue or introduction for Sarah into the Dwarris family,

[29] See the account of this event in Mary Gannett Wells, Campabello A Historical Sketch (n.p.:n.d.), 6-8.

who had commercial ties to Kingston, Jamaica. The Dwarris name was well known in Kingston, for Sarah's uncle by marriage, Fortunas Dwarris, was a wealthy Kingston doctor, merchant, and plantation owner.[30] Sarah's husband, William Dwarris, was an attorney who set out for Kingston, Jamaica to establish a law practice and, as his letters suggest, he also served as a merchant factor for his father. The couple left England in May 1781 for Kingston on board the *Vere* and remained in Kingston for at least eight years. Two children where born to the couple during their time in Kingston; one son did not survive infancy, and the other son, named Fortunatus William Dwarris in honor of his uncle and his father, returned to England with his parents, became a successful barrister of the Middle Temple, and was knighted in 1832 for his service to the realm.[31]

Travel across the Atlantic Ocean was often a perilous journey during the colonial period.[32] Added to the tension of a long voyage, often two months or longer, was the knowledge that the foreign tropical destination would undoubtedly require substantial physical and social adjustment. For both women, the trip to Kingston was a long journey. Storrow had traversed the Atlantic already in her journey to London, but it does not appear that Sarah Dwarris had had a similar experience to draw on. Despite her experience, the journey was still difficult for Ann Storrow. The entire journey from St. Andrews in northern New England to Jamaica took close to 45 days. Much of the time, around 30 days, was spent on board a leaky vessel that, according to

[30] Fortunas Dwarris owned an estate in St. George Parish where he served as a member of the Assembly for St. George Parish. See W. A. Feurtado, Official and Other Personages of Jamaica, from 1655 to 1790 (Kingston, 1896), 30. When he died in 1790 he left an estate valued in excess of £17,000. JNA, 1B-11-3 vol 73.

[31] The Dictionary of National Biography, ed. by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, vol VI (London, Oxford, 1917).

[32] On immigration and the perilous journey travelers faced see Allison Games, Migration and the origins of the English Atlantic world (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Benard Bailyn, with the assistance of Barbara DeWolfe, Voyagers to the West : a passage in the peopling of America on the eve of the Revolution (New York : Knopf , 1986); or Ian Steele, English Atlantic (New York: Oxford), 1986.

Storrow, did not handle the rough seas very well. Storrow wrote to her sister about the uncomfortable voyage:

> The first bad weather we met with, which was in crossing the gulph [*sic*], we were obliged to throw part of the deck load over board and even then the pump was constantly going. . . . the water dashed in at every crevice and fairly drenched my poor baby and myself in our bed. Many times I gave up the idea of our seeing land again, having my poor children around me in so disagreeable a situation, weaken'd my spirits and render'd me as fearful as if I had never been at sea, and the shatter'd situation of the vessel did not in the least diminish my anxiety; add to this the constant attendance of the children, Rebecca being all the time as troublesome as you would suppose in so confined a place, the dirt and filth of everything around me, which far exceeded anything I can describe and you will have some faint idea of what I suffered on board the Jenny.[33]

The rough journey was made all the more unnerving for Storrow as she traveled with no help in caring for her four children. The seas brought seasickness, and though two of her children did quite well and were only "sick for only a few hours, . . . Nancy was extremely ill for two days." Traveling alone, the constant water and ocean spray flowing in on them, their dingy surroundings, and the uneven seas all forced Storrow to rely on the kindness and assistance of those around her. Of "Mr. Murray" and the two captains who helped her, she wrote, "its impossible to say how kind they were."[34]

Sarah Dwarris's journey does not appear to have been quite so harrowing though it took considerably longer, more than ninety days, to reach Kingston from Portsmouth, England.[35] Little comment is made of rough seas or of seasickness though William did write about his wife

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[33] Ann Storrow (hereafter A.S.), Kingston, Jamaica, to My Dearest Sister, February 13, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS. Unless otherwise noted, all letters from Ann Storrow were written from Kingston, Jamaica.

[34] Ibid.

[35] According to William Dwarris in letters to his father, the *Vere* left Portsmouth around May 14, 1781 and arrived in Kingston sometime after July 31, 1781. Travel between Britain and the Caribbean could vary but on average a voyage took approximately 10 weeks. On approximate travel times between Britain and various ports in the Americas see P. J. Marshall, "Introduction" in The Oxford History of the British Empire vol 2 The Eighteenth Century, ed. by P. J. Marshall, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 13.

early in their journey, "Sally has not yet been sick—but a little squeamish this morning."[36] Though not affected by the discomfort of seasickness, Sarah did fall prey to the tropical insects during the couple's multiple port-calls between St. Lucia and Kingston. Upon arriving in the tropics and still on board the *Vere*, William wrote that "My dar. [*sic*] Sarah has been so much tormented by the Buggs that from scratching herself too much she highly inflamed her arm—for which I have given her Bark these three days and it has had the desired effect."[37] Instead of children to protect from the elements, William and Sarah had friends with whom to share their journey and to pass the time. The couple enjoyed the companionship of some "agreeable young women" and some very "obliging" gentleman; early in the voyage, William could write, "we promise ourselves a very pleasant passage and good cheer."[38]

Upon arriving in Kingston and throughout their time in the city, a central concern for each woman was the health of their immediate family members. Kingston was a death trap; the heat and diseases of the tropics made life perilous for eighteenth-century whites. Sarah, during her time in Kingston, celebrated the health of her husband, as well as her Aunt and Uncle. In writing her letters, Sarah often concluded by noting the health of her immediate family.[39] At one point, William had become very ill with a violent fever. After three bouts, each of which lasted 24 hours, Sarah began to be "uneasy," but she ultimately wrote to her mother, he "is now thank God very well."[40] Much aware of the heavy specter of death in Kingston that claimed young and

[36] William Dwarris (hereafter W.D.), no location, to Father, 14 May 1781. (Typescript), Archives and Special Collections, Otto Richter Library, University of Miami. All subsequent references to William Dwarris and Sarah Dwarris are from this collection unless otherwise noted.

[37] W. D. St. Kitts, to "Sir," July 30, 1781. St. Lucia is in the Lesser Antilles.

[38] Ibid.

[39] See e.g. S.D., to Father, n.d. (Spring 1782) or S.D. to Father, 18, May 1782.

[40] S.D., to Mother, 11 December 1785.

old alike, Ann delighted in the "blessing of heaven," which allowed her the only happiness she ever expected in Jamaica—"the health of my husband and my children."[41] Fortunately for Ann, her children experienced only mild fevers and seemingly recovered quickly. Evidently, her husband did not fare so well. Mr. Storrow, though a creole, did not readapt well to the tropical climate in Kingston and was sick at various points during their time; at one point, he even fell "down some stone steps and cut his head open."[42]

Although both women commented on the health of their husbands, each enjoyed quite a different relationship with her spouse. This difference is perhaps a reflection on the contrasting life-stages of the couples as well as their increasingly divergent economic situations. Ann Storrow had married poorly and against the wishes of her family.[43] By the time the Storrow family had moved to Kingston with four children in tow, Ann's "duty" was to her husband while her love and affection seem to have been directed towards the children. Throughout Ann's letters to her friends and family, she referred to her husband simply as Mr. S. or Mr. Storrow, certainly proper for the time but also quite dispassionate.[44] Though desiring his continued health,[45] and while still acceding to "Mr. S." on matters of family life—Ann had sought his "permission" in sending their young son Sam to his Aunt's home in New Brunswick as she feared "Mr. Storrows

[41] A.S., to Mr. Brown, St. Andrews, 23 March 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[42] A. S., to "My Dearest Sister, 28 June 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[43] Her mother and grandmother had not approved of the match and, as Henry Barlow Brown wrote, her grandmother only consented when it became apparent that, with or without her consent, Ann was to be married. Her mother never appears to have consented to the marriage.

[44] Compare to Lady Nugent writing of her "Dear N" in Susan Klepp and Roderick McDonald, "Inscribing Experience," in WMQ, 58 (2001): 646.

[45] A.S. to Mr. Brown St. Andrews, New Brunswick, March 23, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS

displeasure"[46]—Ann was often critical of her husband throughout her letters. Ann attributed much of her solitary time in Kingston to the failure of Thomas to make proper introductions for her. Lamenting that "Mr. S." was not a "ladies man," Ann wrote to a friend that Thomas "had none to introduce me at my arrival except Mrs. Shea, who is nobody."[47]

Ann also directed criticism at Thomas's lack of business acumen, which had become evident early in their marriage and continued to plague him in Kingston, apparently placing increased stress on their relationship. By December 1792, Ann was relieved finally to have a house in Kingston for "housekeeping." But the delay of close to 9 months, as Ann saw it, was placed squarely on her husband's poor judgment. "The place in the country," which Ann had hoped for, "had some difficulty in the lease which made it necessary for [Thomas] to wait for some time till it could be settled—and he thought it best in the mean time to take a house, which had it been done at first would have saved some hundreds."[48] Mr. S. could not even buy the right paper for Ann, who wrote to a friend, "I don't know whether you will be able to read this scrawl you see how it is blotted and blurr'd pray by the fault on my husband for buying such infamous paper."[49] Ann's displeasure in her situation, both in Kingston and in her marriage, becomes clear upon reading of her hope for departure from the island: "Mr. S. appears at present determined upon quitting this island as soon as possible. I pray God he may carry it into effect. Yet I hold myself prepared for a disappointment. I have experienced so many that I now look for them as a

[46] A. S., to "My Dearest Sister," April 24, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[47] A. S., to [n.g], 5 May 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, folder 1790-1792, MHS. Interestingly the first woman Ann Storrow meets upon landing at Port Antonia was her husband's former love-interest. Miss Dawson was now married to the comptroller of the harbor Mr. Papley. A. S., to "My Dearest Sister," February 13,1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers, 1790-1796, folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[48] A.S., to Sister, December 2, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[49] A.S., to My Dear Friend, December 4, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

matter of course."[50] Soon after penning this letter, Ann, her husband, and two daughters left the island and returned to New England. Thomas Storrow, who had been sick much of his time in Kingston, died soon after their arrival in Boston in December 1794.

In contrast to Ann Storrow's rather stale relationship with her husband was Sarah Dwarris's devotion to "Dear Mr. Dwarris." Both repeatedly referred to one another as "My Dear," and William often wrote of his "Dear Girl" or "Dear Sally." Indicative of William's attachment to his wife is his complaint, after a two week absence of Sarah during which she had gone into the country, "I really believe I shall never let her go again without me, for I am just like a fish out of water at home."[51]

Sarah's sentiment towards her husband manifested itself throughout her letters as she discussed his health and work and the birth of their children. Sarah Dwarris, like many of her Kingston counterparts, feared for the health of her husband, who traveled around the island suffering from the intense heat. However, Sarah's attachment does not appear to have been merely the security of a husband after moving to a foreign place but one of love and affection. She wrote to her father-in-law, "My Dear Mr. Dwarris [is] [*sic*] now in thank God perfect health and is my constant prayer he may continue so for a better husband no woman ever had."[52] Her affection and devotion to her husband only grew after the birth of their first child on March 20, 1785. She wrote to her mother of her comfortable situation: "I have not a wish besides my Dear Mr. Dwarris's care and attention to me during my confinement is not to be express'd and indeed

[50] A.S., Kingston, Jamaica, to My Dear Sister, May 14, 1794, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1793-1796, MHS.

[51] W.D., Kingston, Jamaica, to Mother, April 17, 1783. Unless otherwise noted, all letters from William and Sarah Dwarris are written from Kingston, Jamaica.

[52] S.D., to My Dear Father, May 18, 1782.

at all times do I express his greatest regard."[53] Sadly for the young couple, their young child died only a few months after birth, yet even in this moment of intense grief, Sarah wrote of her complete devotion to her husband:

> I find there is no true happiness in this world. I thought myself very happy a few weeks ago but it was not of long duration, however I comfort myself that it might have been worse for had it pleased God to have taken the father instead of the Son I should have been a most miserable creature indeed—My Dear Mr. Dwarris is thank God very well although the weather is extremely hot and his Business obliges him to be so much in the Sun.[54]

The letters of Sarah and William also suggest a close relationship with mutual friends and family and even shared activities, such as riding at the race track in the cool of the morning. Sarah and William supported each other in their sadness and disappointment at the death of their first child, then rejoiced together at the birth of Fortunatus two years later. Such shared life activities do not seem to have been a part of Ann and Thomas Storrow's life in Kingston. Ann, according to her letters, was for the most part alone in a foreign place—a place with which she had little in common and for which she had little fondness. However, both women dutifully accompanied their husbands to the "Torrid Zone" and left only when their husbands did. William and Sarah quit the island of Jamaica in 1790, though William retained his Golden Grove property on the island. Upon his death in 1813, he left his wife an annuity of £500 per annum for life.[55] Thomas and Ann left the island in June/July of 1794, and by the end of the year, Thomas Storrow had died in Boston. Ann died two years later in 1796.

While in Kingston, social and economic status distinguished the experiences of Sarah Dwarris and Ann Storrow. Socially adept and well educated, to which her letter-writing skills

[53] S.D., to My Dear Father, April 24, [1785].

[54] S.D., to Mother, July 17, 1785.

[55] *London Times*, 28, November 1835.

and her continual attention to her children's education attest, Ann still found it difficult to enter polite society in Kingston. Her husband's squandered fortune and his unsuccessful attempts to regain a solid financial footing also prevented Ann from entering into the polite social circles of Kingston's white elite. Having no friends with which to share her time, Ann was disconsolate and became critical of Kingston ladies, referring to them as a "queer set," "tho its certain," she wrote, "I am not qualified to give my opinions knowing so little of them."[56] Frustrated by her lack of friends, Storrow lamented, "I never felt a loss of [my friends] more keenly than at the present time having not a single female acquaintance in the town." But her sorrow quickly turned to criticism of Kingston: "The conversation of women generally speaking is not very edifying, but a total want of society is terrible." Her complaint continued as she focused on her husband's role in failing to make a way for Ann to enter polite Kingston society: "There are no impediments to a large circle [of friends] here if one had but a proper introduction."[57] Ann's solitude is interesting for what it reveals about white society in Kingston. Being white did not ensure her acceptance into elite white social circles. Lacking wealth, a secure home, or proper connections, Ann's time in Kingston was apparently one of frustration and solitude.

It appears that Sarah Dwarris did not come from elite lineage in Warwickshire, but it does seem that she entered a financially secure relationship through her marriage to William. This marriage, along with his connections in Kingston, facilitated her entrance into Kingston's elite society. Metropolitan born and educated and a relative of a rich man of Kingston society, Sarah did not have difficulty gaining friends or participating in the social activities of the area. Though she complained about having to live on £500 a year, which evidently hindered the couple's social

[56] A.S., to [Sister], May 5, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[57] A.S., to Miss Butler, September, 23, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

activities, Sarah managed to be at ease among friends and family. Where the lack of family relatives hindered Ann Storrow's entrance into Kingston society, Sarah Dwarris enjoyed her status as "favorite" of her wealthy uncle-in-law Fortunas Dwarris. In various letters, the couple wrote of dining at their uncle's home up to two or three times a week, mingling with other elites of Kingston society. After the birth of Fortunatus, named for his wealthy uncle, the couple enjoyed his hospitality as he hosted the christening banquet.[58]

For Ann Storrow and Sarah Dwarris, adapting themselves to a new life in the complex society of Kingston was difficult, apparently more so for Ann. After a long journey to a foreign country with four children, Ann had great difficulty entering into Kingston society. Although she dutifully stayed alongside her husband and tried to make the best of her situation, Ann never completely adjusted to life in Kingston, ultimately welcoming her exit from the island. Sarah Dwarris, though at times complaining of the heat as well as the great distance from her family, enjoyed the company of a loving husband and good friends while adapting well to life in the tropics. Their experiences and relationships highlight the struggles many white women had in urban Caribbean society, where family was often far away and where close relationships with a husband or friends could be difficult to sustain.

Material Life in Kingston

As Ann Storrow and Sarah Dwarris wrote of establishing their homes in Kingston, they commented upon their material surroundings and particularly noted their activities in outfitting the homes they moved into. Within these letters, historians begin to see how the tropical setting of Jamaica affected their desires for a comfortable built environment and how they adapted to life in the temperate climate of Kingston. Historians also begin to see how both women adapted to Jamaican forms of gentility and polite society, particularly in dress and fashion and their

[58] S.D. to Father, December 9, 1786.

choices for table wares. Finally, as these women established their homes and oversaw their function, historians can begin to distinguish their role in establishing and maintaining Jamaica's slave society. It is only in their discussions of domestic space and their management of the home that both women commented upon slavery and began to reveal their function in supporting Jamaica's slave society.

On their arrival in Kingston with their four children, Ann and Thomas Storrow rented a room at a lodging house.[59] Perhaps in chilly Portsmouth or clammy London, a cramped room might serve to conserve precious warmth, but in the torpid summer heat of Kingston, the confines of this small room caused considerable discomfort. Ann described this first dwelling place: "They could only give me one bed chamber, which would have been enough, had it been large. But this was so small that when the children's bed was spread upon the floor, I could not walk a step without treading upon it. There was hardly a breath of air could come into it, this was my situation in point of room."[60] Early in their sojourn, Mr. Storrow endeavored to find a house in the more temperate climate of St. David's, a parish just to the east of Kingston, and during this time, Ann wrote of her desire to move to the country. In her melancholy, Ann told her sister, "I am just status quo, and so am like to be sometimes I am to think I shall go into the country, and sometimes to stay in town, a few years will determine it."[61]

By August of 1792, almost four months after her arrival, Ann was able to move to "a more airy situation, with more room than I had before." She did not expect to be in it long, as she still held out a hope for moving to the country: "I am sure I hope for it, for I am heartily tired of

[59] A.S., , to My dearest Friend, August 12, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[60] A. S., to n.g., n.d. Ann Appleton Storrow Papers II, 1782-1804, Folder 1782-1794, MHS.

[61] A.S., to My Dearest Sister, June 28, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

lodgings, which beside the expense are very ill convient for a family."[62] Ann's continued desire to move to the country is remarkable. Though a home in the country would likely have been cooler—her most frequently stated reason for moving to the "country"—it would also have meant an even lonelier existence than her life in Kingston. It would have removed her from a lonely situation in urban Kingston to what would likely have been an even more secluded existence in rural Jamaican plantation life, where educational opportunities for her children and social company were scarcer than what she had found in Kingston. However, Ann may have preferred this type of life, for Campebello, where she once lived, had been a relatively unpopulated island with only a few close friends to keep her company. She provided some insight into her motivations: "I lead as solitary a life as when I was at Campo Bello and am quite settled in a lodging house, sometimes [I want] to get a house in town and sometimes to go into the country. The latter idea seems now predominant but God knows how it will be at any rate town or country is alike hateful to me."[63] Nine months after her arrival in Kingston, Ann finally moved into a house. "It is neat enough," she wrote to her sister, though "not so well situated as I could wish, but however will answer." Ann apparently finally gave up the idea of moving to the country: "Mr. S. still hold[s] it out but I fancy will end in air."[64] With her housing relatively settled, Ann seldom mentioned moving to the country again. The home agreed with Ann; she

[62] A.S., to My Dearest Sister, August 12, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[63] A. S., to My Dearest Friends, August 12, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[64] A.S., , to Sister, December 2, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

wrote in late 1793, near the end of her sojourn in Kingston, "my house is in a very airy situation, and I rarely have cause to complain of heat."[65]

The Storrow's move to Kingston from the sparsely populated Campebello required significant adjustment not only to living in a cramped urban space but also to the stagnant air of a tropical climate. While space was at a premium in the cramped lodging, the heat was almost unbearable, particularly for the children, as Ann wrote during her first summer in Kingston:

> Poor Rebecca comes to me twenty times a day and lays her head in my lap to have me rub her with the powder puff which cools the intolerable heat and itching. My own arms and hands look exactly like Clayton's face when he is half drunk, for such a country Lord deliver me. The Thermometer a few days ago was as high as 93. Upon my word I could hardly breath, and the house I am in, is none of the coolest.[66]

Adapting to the heat of the tropics obviously required a significant adjustment for Ann. Upon her move to the more "airy" situation, the discomfort of the heat for her and her children diminished considerably.

Upon their arrival in Kingston, Sarah Dwarris and her husband had few domestic cares, for they lived rent free in what appears to have been a comfortable house. The situation changed in late August 1783, when, two years after their arrival in Kingston, Sarah wrote to her father, "I am sorry we are under the necessity of looking out for a house as the one we have liv'd rent free in, is now wanted by the owner." Her husband wanted to move "downtown," likely to be closer to business interests and potential clients for his legal practice, "but," Sarah wrote, "His Uncle was against it, as he says it was too warm down there, and would not agree with me."[67] The couple chose to live in the savannah at the northern end of town, but two years later, and shortly

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[65] A.S., to My Dear Penny, May 31, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1793-1796, MHS.

[66] A.S., to n.g., April 24, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1782-1804, Folder 1782-1804, MHS.

[67] S. D., to Father, August 31, [1783].

after the birth of their first child, the couple again decided to move. This time, they did move closer to downtown as Sarah realized her husband's need to be closer to clients. For Sarah, moving to town was "a most disagreeable piece of Business, I cannot bear the thought of it besides that of leaving all my friends."[68] Living in the savannah on the northern fringes of Kingston had been comfortable for Sarah, both for the cool breezes that made tropical life tolerable and the pleasant social atmosphere of her many friends.

In January 1788, the family moved again. Mr. Dwarris's business was not going well, and a move even closer downtown, he reasoned, would bring him into contact with more clients. Sarah did not enjoy moving: "I dont like the thought of it at all for I am very comfortably settle'd and I hate moving; it is so troublesome, but the house we are going to is so much more convenient for business." The house was going to cost £80 per year, but, as Sarah reasoned, "if the situation brings more business why we shall be better able to pay it."[69] Living in the center of town was not the most comfortable situation for Sarah. From her letters, it appears that the first and second home her husband lived in were on the outskirts of town where the air circulated and where she was surrounded by friends. But with the move closer to the center of town Sarah came to reside in the most congested and racially diverse region of the city south of the parade.

While both women were moving, each wrote of their efforts to furnish and manage a household. Their efforts reveal much about their material desires and shed light on the function of women in the urban domestic slave economy. Ann Storrow was quite excited to move to her own home and out of lodgings: "I expect to furnish—matter of wonder—when I get into a house

[68] S.D., to My Dear Father, April 24, [1785].

[69] S.D.,to My Dear Father and Mother, January 27, 1788.

of my own."[70] Perhaps her move to an "airy" home presented Ann with more opportunities to meet potential friends or to entertain. Whatever the case, Ann was excited about furnishing a home, which she saw as an opportunity to establish herself in Kingston in a more comfortable situation. It seems likely that in her haste to leave Campebello, few items other than plate and clothing were brought along to Jamaica, and no records survive that indicate how Mrs. Storrow set up her home or what purchases she made. It also seems apparent that Mr. Storrow played an insignificant role in outfitting the home, for he was seldom mentioned in Ann's domestic discussions.

Sarah Dwarris and her husband mentioned little in the way of furnishing a house until they were forced to move out of their rent-free situation. It is probable that they brought some items from England to be used in establishing their home, though no inventory or shipping list has been found. However, upon moving to their new home Sally, through her husband William, requested some important articles for their table:

> Sally wishes to trouble My Mother to buy & send out the following Articles: 2 Dozen of China Plates, One dozen of Soup Plates a Turin, one pair of butter boats, one pair good sizeable dishes, one pair of less, 2 pair of small, 4 glasses for our Salts, as the salt eats the silver and we forgot to bring any out and if there should be money sufficient left, one Dozen of plain neat white-handled knives and forks.[71]

This listing is interesting for a number of reasons. Sarah Dwarris did not buy the items in Kingston. Prices for such items were notoriously high in the Caribbean, and those residents with merchant contacts or family members often had goods and manufactures sent directly to them. Furthermore, purchasing them through her contacts in England whose judgment she trusted also ensured that she received the latest and most fashionable objects. In seeking to obtain these

[70] A.S., to Miss Butler, September 23, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[71] W.D., to "Sir," October, 10, 1783.

manufactures, Sarah aptly demonstrated the conflict for many eighteenth-century women across the Atlantic between purchasing a genteel table with skill and economical prudence.[72] Both price and fashionability appear to have been important elements in her request, which suggests what was more and less important to Sarah. Knives and forks, likely as much a luxury for the couple as it was for many others in colonial America, were only to be purchased if funds were still available.[73] Sarah, far from being an "indifferent oeconomist" or too "extravagant in her expenses" presents quite a different picture of Kingston white women than what many contemporary commentators drew.

Outfitting their tables was not the only task that sparked the interest of Sarah Dwarris or Ann Storrow. Like most of the white residents of Kingston, each lady was interested in keeping abreast of the latest fashions from England and France.[74] Parisian fashion was an important news item, as two articles in the *Kingston Daily Advertiser* during the spring of 1790 suggest. The April 10 edition recorded the latest fashions of Parisian hair styles and fashionable caps. The article also noted that silk "is again coming into fashion," as well as "a shaded satin of different hues." A month later, Parisian fashion was again brought to the attention of gentlemen and women readers of the *Daily Advertiser*. The finest silk and satin jackets complete with the most

[72] Vickery, Gentleman's Daughter, 129.

[73] On this point see Carr and Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behaviour," in Of Consuming Interest, 132.

[74] See also Letters to Jane from Jamaica, 96, for Ann Brodbelt's, the wife of prominent Spanish Town physician,interest in London fashions. On Colonial North American concerns with clothing fashions from Europe see e.g. T. H. Breen, The Market Place of Revolution (Oxford, 2004), 39-41, or Ronald Bushman, The Refinement of America, (New York, NY: Knopf). On the importance of clothing and fashion during the consumer 'revolution' in Great Britain see N. Mckendrick, "Commercialization and the Economy," in The Birth of a Consumer Society, 9-196.

popular colors were being worn by French men and women who, the author wrote, "always take the lead in whatever relates to dress."[75]

Ann Storrow, evidently too practical, perhaps not given to excesses in finery, or limited by her personal financial situation, wrote little of her private fashion preferences. In fact, when she did write about the fashion of Kingston's ladies, she noted immediately that she had little knowledge or appreciation of "the subject." In her recitation of the fashionable dress of Kingston's ladies, Ann elaborated on the luxurious finery she saw around her:

> The [beaver hat] is the most general fashion, squeezed on to the head like a mans. A few bonnets you see, made very small, and some of them trimmed in the most fantastic stile the hair dress'd closer than of late, and hanging loose behind,the dress of the neck is nothing new. Jackets are much worn, with two narrow flournas [*sic*] on the coat and tricks between the [unreadable] are all drawn like your muslins or made like a polonese, and trimed with [unreadable word] all with capes made in the stile of Mrs. Campbell. . . . The ladies wear gold earings of different patterns, very beautiful to reach almost to the [back] indeed they dress . . . prodigiously, the muslins exceed every thing [I] ever saw for fineness and variety and very cheap too. I have seen some as high as 30 shillings a yard, the beauty of which is more than I can describe. Every lady here wears handsome shoes . . . all painted sandals or painted leather, silk stalkings are almost as common as legs.[76]

The finery of ladies' clothing in Kingston is quite apparent from Storrow's account, which noted the latest European fashion of hats and shoes as well as the use of the finest fabrics such as silk and muslin. Ann Storrow, apparently not given to excess in fashion and averse to the high cost of silk and muslin, likely would have agreed with Johann Waldeck, who wrote of Kingston in 1779 that "dress and fashion is greatly exaggerated by the women. Feathers of many colors and beauty are used in dressing the hair. Silk and linnen is the daily costume."[77] Perhaps such fashion excesses highlighted the wealth of women within white society, their sensitivity to elite

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[75] *Kingston Daily Advertiser*, March 10, 1790 and May 14, 1790.

[76] A.S., to n.g. May 5, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS. Mrs. Campbell was an acquaintance of Ann's from her days at Campebello.

[77] NLJ, Ms. 2006, Hessian Accounts of America, Waldeck, 142.

consumption of fashion, or their desire to appear in the cultural attire of polite society. But these consumption habits also served to create social distance between upper and lower class white women, as well as between white women and enslaved black women, highlighting how clothing or costume revealed social position.[78] In a society where white women were limited and black women were socially excluded, one by virtue of their gender and the other by virtue of their race, the excessive fashions so commonly deplored by writers was also a way that white women created distance and reinforced the distinction between slave and free.

While Ann Storrow wrote on the fashion of those she saw around her, she commented little on her own needs, save for a desire to have shoes sent to her. In fact, both Ann and Sarah Dwarris communicated in their letters to family and friends that shoes in Kingston were expensive and wore out too quickly to justify what they considered to be an excessive expense. It was preferable for both to have shoes sent to them from their families in New England and London.[79] Ann wrote to her sister in St. Andrews requesting her husband "to secure" a pair for her.[80] Although Sarah Dwarris recorded much more of her own desires regarding clothing, her first request was to have shoes sent to her from England. As her husband explained, "she much wants shoes &c she is tired of buying them here, having given often ten shillings for common

[78] Roche, History of Everyday Things, 193-94.

[79] Women were not the only the seek shoes. Thomas Dolbeare, a young merchant/factor also sought out shoes to be sent from Boston. He asked his father, Benjamin Dolbeare in Boston to "send 4 pairs turn'd pumps and 2 pairs shoes of Birds' make, taking the money out of what I have remitted." Thomas Dolbeare, Kingston, Jamaica, to Benjamin Dolbeare, Boston, Massachusettes, July 28, 1769. Dolbear Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 1766-1769, MHS.

[80] Ann Storrow, to Mr. Brown, March 23, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS. At other times Ann Storrow also notes the difficulty of getting shoes for her children and makes requests to have shoes sent for them. Ann Storrow, to Sister, December 2, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

callimanes shoes which being sent out for sale will scarcely last a week."[81] Neither woman walked a great deal about Kingston. Slaves walked in the streets, and the dust and heat of the streets required polite and elite white women to obtain carriages. Ann Storrow stated, "There is no such thing as walking here. The streets are such beds of dirt, indeed its so much disused here, that its hardly esteemed decent for a white woman to be seen in the street."[82] Ann's inclusion of "white women" is significant here as it suggests important how shoes and clothing were in reinforcing racial boundaries. Few slaves, it appears, wore shoes, and most walked around the town. Indeed, a slave wearing shoes was such an anomaly that advertisements for runaways made special mention of slaves who owned a pair.[83]

Soon after noting her desire for shoes, Sarah Dwarris also wrote of her need for mourning cloths in the death trap that was Kingston. Sarah took the occasion of her 1785 Christmas celebration to reflect on the deaths within her extended family in Kingston. She wrote to her mother, "As Christmas is so near and we must spend it with the family as usual the party seems to decrease fast as two are dead since last year."[84] With death an ever-present reality, polite society required the proper display of sentiment through the wearing of a fashionable mourning costume.[85] White residents of Kingston aiming to preserve the elements of genteel fashion were attuned to the need for a proper display of mourning clothes. Barely six months into their

[81] W. D., to "Sir," June 26, 1782. As the Oxford English Dictionary defines it, Calamanco is a fabric that is "glossy on the surface, and woven with satin twill and chequered in the warp, so that the checks are seen on one side only." Shoes of this type would have a leather bottom or heeled and were quite popular in the eighteenth century.

[82] A.S., to Mr. Brown, March 23, 1792, Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

[83] See below, p. 196.

[84] S.D., to Mother, December 11, 1785.

[85] On mourning dress, fashionability and polite society during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries see Lou Taylor, Mourning Dress, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1983), 92-119. On the use of costume to distinguish between society's "ordinary and extraordinary situations, between everyday and holiday," see Roche, History of Everyday Things, 196.

residence in Kingston, Sarah recognized her need for mourning clothes. William, corresponding with his mother, lamented, "I was sorry Sally did not bring out a Black Silk as one or other of so large a family is always going off."[86] Sarah, just a few months later in July 1782, stated, "our family is so large we are almost allways in mourning—the short time I have been here, we have been in Mourning twice and as I visit so much amongst the genteelest familys I could not well appear out of Mourning while my relations are all in." Clothing of this sort was expensive. A black silk gown and petticoat could cost as much as 17*s* 6*d* a yard, "and that is such a price" Sarah wrote, "it quite frightens me."[87] Sarah had graciously received a gift of a mourning gown from a gentleman whose wife had died, but it barely lasted the three months of mourning. Within genteel society, where death was properly observed by wearing the appropriate mourning clothes and jewelry, one could be socially disadvantaged if found without the proper clothing. Evidently, the need for mourning clothes was soon met as neither William nor Sarah mentioned this matter again in their correspondence.

Twice during her time in Kingston, the Dwarris's received money that Sarah used to buy clothes that revealed her taste for elegance and style, as well as a desire for economy. The first came in the form of a legacy that, as Sarah wrote, "was very acceptable [in] these hard times." In such "hard times," William gave a portion of the legacy to Sarah to spend as she wanted and "to get a few things which I much want," primarily clothing. Living at the periphery of the British Empire, Sarah Dwarris displayed a discriminating familiarity with both the prices and styles of the various garments she wanted and instructed her mother to "send the best as nobody wears anything but the best here." Sarah desired

[86] W.D., to Mother, January 14, 1782.

[87] S.D., to Mother, July 8, 1782.

> a Pink Silk Peticoat, I fancy may get a very good one now for a gunia, three Pair of Leather Slipper with Bows, and two Pair of Black Calamonco Slipper with bows the same size as last I had from Mr. Laycock as his shoes are the only ones I can wear with pleasure. . . . Six pair of Cotten Stocking at five shilling a pair will be I fancy very good and two fine Buch Muslin Handkerchiefs I believe you will meet with them very good at seven shilling a piece but beg you will let them be fine. Three or four yards of the best Gause and will be oblig'd to you to send them as soon as you can as I want them much.

Upon rethinking what she wanted or needed, and the amount of money she had available, she added a lengthy postscript:

> Since I wrote the above I have alter'd my mind with respect to the Handkerchiefs as I find the money will not last out; therefore I will be oblig'd to you to send instead of those a fine nice work'd Muslin Apron which I imagine will come to about thirty shilling but pray let it be wide and quite handsome. Please send the Shoes as mention'd now two pair of Colour'd Leather Slippers one pair of Dark Green with Black bows and Heels and one pair of the most Fashionable Colour with Bows two pair of Black leather Slipper with bows, they must be fine Spanish Leather. [88]

Similar to her request for tablewares, this listing of manufactures reveals Sarah's attention to the requirements of "fashionable" and genteel society while at the same time limiting her spending to the confines of her budget. She apparently gave great thought to what she wanted, for she corrected her first request and constantly noted what she would pay for most items. Obtaining the items directly from London insured that she would be wearing the "best"; the fine quality linens such as silk, muslin, and fine cotton were also popular and practical in the tropical heat of Kingston.

Sarah Dwarris's desire for the best and most fashionable items, "as nobody wears anything but the best here," and the apparent excessive devotion to luxury among creole white women detailed by Ann Storrow and other social commentators was often interpreted by contemporary historians and social critics as a singularly negative consequence of Jamaican slave society. Colonial white women in slave societies, it was argued, were prohibited from an active or public economic or political life and situated within a society that required little or no

[88] S.D. to Mother, December 11, 1785.

industry within the domestic sphere and, therefore, devoted themselves to the frivolous pursuit of luxuriant living. However, one should consider another potential meaning behind the conspicuous consumption of luxurious clothing among white urban women. Given that white women were excluded from most economic and political institutions of slave society and also situated within a society that placed them in sexual competition with female slaves or free colored women, whites consumed finery in an effort to create social distance by virtue of their wealth. Through maintaining direct ties with metropolitan forms of fashionability, a social and economic arena difficult for slave women or even free coloreds to enter, white women protected their socially and racially superior position through conspicuous displays of luxury. Furthermore, through their participation in the economic life of the colony as consumers of luxury goods, white women in Kingston could carve out a sphere of influence and lay claim to their own participation and contribution to sustaining slave society in Jamaica.

But this consumption is only part of the process whereby white urban women demonstrated their participation in and support of Jamaican slave society. As the letters of Ann Storrow suggest, not all white women were able to nor perhaps sought to participate in the consumption of fine clothing. Though colonial white women were of elite social status by virtue of their membership in the ruling caste, financial limitations or even personal preferences such as those of Ann Storrow meant that white women found other methods of influence or agency within slave society. Through their influence on, and in some cases control over, domestic expenditures and management of slaves within the home, white women carved out a socio-economic sphere of agency within urban Jamaican slave society.

White Women, the Domestic Economy, and Slavery

Though often caricatured by contemporaries as indolent and ineffectual managers of their homes, the accounts detailed below offer a different portrait. Historians of the colonial American south have also wrestled against a stereotypical "moon-light-and-magnolia" Civil War era myth that depicted a submissive, privileged, and protected plantation mistress existing within a carefully proscribed domestic arena. Julia Cherry Spruill, writing in 1938, was among the first to take issue with this view; she argued that the home "was by no means a narrow sphere, but one wherein individual initiative and executive ability as well as many other talents might be put to use."[89] Later studies of Southern colonial plantation life have emphasized the role of women as domestic managers overseeing a variety of tasks within the household.[90] Similar to their colonial counterparts in the American plantation south and England, Kingston's elite white women managed their homes by overseeing servants and directing the daily purchase of domestic consumables.[91] In this section, in addition to the letters of Sarah Dwarris and Ann Storrow, the account book left by a Kingston and Spanish Town barrister of considerable wealth, whose wife controlled much of the domestic expenditures for the household, will shed light on this managerial role.

James Pinnock, a Jamaican barrister living in Kingston and Spanish Town between 1765 and 1790, was born into the socially and politically prominent Pinnock family on September 27, 1740. He studied law at Cambridge and returned to Jamaica in 1765 seeking to establish his

[89] Spruill, Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1938), 65.

[90] See especially Catherine Clinton, The Plantation Mistress (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1982) and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

[91] For England see especially Vickery, The Gentleman's Daughter, 127-160.

practice as a barrister.[92] In October of 1756, while still in England, James began to keep a rather simple diary, in which he recorded important monthly events. He continued this habit upon his arrival in Kingston, where he wrote down notes about the purchase of a new horse or his improvements at the family's Pera estate. Accompanying this diary is an account book that contains his personal and domestic expenses; business accounts for his law practice were evidently recorded elsewhere. While the account book and diary are important documents for what they contain about the expenditures and material concerns of an urban barrister and estate owner, they are also significant for what they reveal about the position Elizabeth Pinnock, James's wife, occupied in managing the domestic sphere of the Pinnock family while living in Kingston.

On Easter Sunday, April 19, 1772, James Pinnock married the former Elizabeth Dehaney at "Doctor Gregory's" in Spanish Town. Likely seeking to escape the heat, the couple was married at "around six in the morning by the Reverend Doctor Griffith, Rector of Spanish Town."[93] After his marriage, James's personal expenses immediately grew as he and his wife began to establish a home in Kingston. Between 1765, when he began his Jamaican account book, and May of 1772, when he got married, James had spent a total of £40 on furniture. In those 7 years, he had purchased a mahogany desk, a mahogany clothes press, a backgammon table, clock, bookcase, and several other smaller pieces of furniture. However, immediately after his wedding, between April and July of 1772, James purchased over £100 pounds in furniture. In May alone, as he and his wife took up residence at Dr. McQuestion's house, James paid £90 for furniture to William Gordon. But furniture was not the only major purchase. On April 25, 1772,

[92] His father, Thomas Pinnock, was an Assemblyman for St. David in 1756 and again in 1759. His uncle, Philip Pinnock, was also a member (1749, 1768) and later served as Speaker of the Jamaican Assembly (1768-69, 1775-1778). See, J. A. Feurtado, Official and Other Personages of Jamaica from 1655-1790 (Kingston, 1896), 77.

[93] BL, Ad. Mss. 33316. Diary entry for April 1792.

barely a week after their marriage, James paid out £60 to William Gordon for "four cases of knives and forks."[94]

The large expenditures for furniture or plate at a time when the purchasing power of the couple was likely higher were made by James Pinnock.[95] Amanda Vickery found the Lincolnshire gentlewoman Elizabeth Shackleton to be in a similar situation; her husband also handled large cash outlays for purchases of furniture or plate.[96] The similarity between the households of the creole Elizabeth Pinnock and English gentlewoman Elizabeth Shackleton does not end there. The "daily management of consumption" and oversight of the household, including servants, that "fell" to Mrs. Shackleton is similar to the arrangement reflected in the accounts kept by James Pinnock in Kingston. After his marriage, James Pinnock gave control over general expenses to his wife; he wrote the following in his account book for May 1772, the couples first full month of marriage: "N. B. All general Exp. will be inserted herafter to Mrs. Pinnock's acct. wherein is included the necessary allowances."[97] Personal purchases of Mr. Pinnock including clothing, his accounts with the hair dresser or tailor, expenses relating to transportation such as the upkeep of a chaise or kittereen, saddles and the care of the horses, liquor or entertainment, and expenses for the Pera estate in St. Catherine's continued to come under his own account. However, from May 1772 to the end of Mrs. Pinnock's time in urban Jamaica, the account book kept by James Pinnock contains a monthly entry for Mrs. Pinnock averaging around 30% of all the recorded expenditures for any given year (see table 11). The

[94] BL, Ad. Mss. 33317, Account book entries for April, May, June and July 1772.

[95] On the stages of life and the consumptive habits they engender see John Styles, "Plebian Fashion," in Luxury in the Eighteenth Century, ed. by Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 103-118.

[96] Vickery, "Women and the World of Goods," 279.

[97] BL, Ad. Mss. 33317, Account book – Entry for May 1772.

lack of detail in these monthly entries for "Mrs. Pinnock's account" suggests that Mr. Pinnock was not directly involved in them and that he only provided the funds.

Table 11. Expenditures of Mrs. Elizabeth Pinnock, 1772-1781 (£ Jamaican Currency)

	1772	1773	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778	1779	1780	1781
January		12	28	32	40	80	30	27	26	16
February		23	34	37	40	40	40	40	45	187
March		30	57	50	101	49	83	56	72	97
April		22	40	31	110	80	61	40	45	47
May	37	33	40	97	40	80	40	109	45	51
June	46	38	35	71	40	50	61	59	70	63
July	47	45	59	32	43	30	19	53	40	33
August	15	17	15	42	40	60	48	47	51	28
September	49	36	39	80	143	143	51	19	26	33
October	4	36	31	40	40	76	40	39	62	38
November	45	28	40	40	40	44	40	72	51	42
December	58	54	57	40	41	62	55	54	75	59
Total	301	374	475	592	718	794	568	615	608	694
Household Total	1747	1200	1474	2240	1563	1918	1556	1945	3087	1889
% of Household Total	17	31	32	26	45	41	36	31	19	36

Source: BL, Ad. Ms. 33,317 Account Book for James Pinnock

As the account book only indicates a total allowance per month to Mrs. Pinnock, it is somewhat difficult to judge exactly what her account covered during the first three years of marriage. However, within the account book, as well as the diary, there are certain clues that suggest what the entries for Mrs. Pinnock's account included. For example, after his marriage, two particular expenses disappeared from the account book, suggesting that they were turned over to Mrs. Pinnock. Purchases of linen (including handkerchiefs and unmade clothing), which between 1768 and 1771 accumulated to nearly £10 per annum, disappeared from the account book and were likely subsumed under Mrs. Pinnock's account. Second, purchases for food, china or tableware, and Mrs. Pinnock's own clothing that were not recorded by under Mr. Pinnock likely came under Elizabeth's account.

Three years after their marriage, James and Elizabeth appear to have come to some sort of agreement regarding the maintenance of the home and which purchases would come under Mrs. Pinnock's account. This agreement, just one year after the birth of their first child, when domestic expenses for food and clothing would rise, provides further clues about what Elizabeth Pinnock's consumption habits might have been. James wrote in his diary for March 5, 1775, "settled this day that the allowance for housekeeping (*exclusive of Liquors, Horses and House rent*) shall be pr annum £500 and for Mrs. Pinnock and the child in cloathing or other expenses £170 . . . total allowance to Mrs. Pinnock [being] £670."[98] It appears that all domestic expenses came under the purview of Mrs. Pinnock. Furthermore, James Pinnock recorded this entry in his diary as a settlement or agreement between two parties, which suggests that Elizabeth had some say in how much money she might be allotted. James Pinnock provided further details on the monthly allotments, writing that for ten months of the year exclusive of March and September, Elizabeth would receive £40. In March and September, she would receive £100, and in January,

[98] BL Ad. Ms. 33,316, Diary of James Pinnock entry for Mary 1775. Emphasis mine.

she would be given an additional £70, bringing her yearly total to £670. It is not clear why certain months were singled out for extra expenses though they may have coincided with Mr. Pinnock's duties as a Clerk of the Superior Court, when his home might be used for social functions that necessitated greater expenditures for entertaining.

Finally, it is important to note that the care and oversight of domestic slaves appears to have come under the purview of Mrs. Pinnock. Prior to his marriage, Mr. Pinnock recorded monthly expenses for his slaves such as clothing, allowance, and personal items. Between 1765 and March 1772, the month before his marriage, James had spent nearly £12 per year on "servant expenses" under such entries as "allowances," "clothing," and "livery for Harry." These notations disappeared from the account book entirely after his marriage, likely coming under the category of housekeeping, which was under the direction of Mrs. Pinnock. Furthermore, the agreement between James and Elizabeth in 1775 suggests that Mrs. Pinnock was given oversight of the domestic staff, for Mr. Pinnock limited his domestic expenses to "Horses, Liquors, and House Rent." This exception suggests that personal oversight and management of domestic slaves came under the purview of Mrs. Pinnock. This is in contrast to domestic roles of white women on Jamaican plantations. On rural sugar estates in the Caribbean that had large domestic staffs of slaves, the housekeeper—usually a slave but sometimes also a free colored—managed the domestic staff and the daily maintenance of the great house. In Kingston, where domestic staffs were smaller and slave housekeepers were rare, the household slave manager of the Pinnock home was Mrs. Pinnock herself. This does not appear to be an anomaly within urban slave society. Probates taken in Kingston between 1750 and 1799 of unattached females known as spinsters show that over 87% of them owned slaves. Absent of men, management of these slaves likely came under the authority of these women.

Mrs. Pinnock left no explanation of her attitudes or sentiments towards her slaves, nor did she leave a detailed account of her expenses other than the monthly notation recorded by her husband. However, it does not appear that Mrs. Elizabeth Pinnock was an indolent or excessively extravagant woman. Instead, in her position as manager and overseer, she effectively ran the Pinnock household, staying close to the financial boundaries established in the settlement between James and Elizabeth in 1775. James never recorded in his diary or account book a negative or disparaging comment regarding his wife's expenses or her relationship with the household slaves. This point is significant because James was meticulous about his personal expenses, noting in detail the purchase of birds for his estate, a saddle, or liquor and wine purchases and kept careful tabs on where his money was going in both documents. Furthermore, James recorded only once any problems within the domestic staff; on August 7, 1777, "Rose, a housewench" was "disgraced, and sent to the estate."[99]

Through the letters left by two Kingston residents of the 1780's and 1790's, Ann Storrow and Sarah Dwarris, it appears that they too managed the domestic arena of life for their families. While the financial detail of an account book is absent from the historical record for these two women, their letters reveal that they administered domestic consumption for their families. Furthermore, in their discussions of the private sphere of life and domestic consumption, they revealed their sentiments towards slaves, the practice of slavery in urban Jamaica, and their tacit support of the institution. In this way, they shed light on the relationship between slavery and white women as domestic managers.

Ann Storrow looked forward to moving out of a crowded and hot rented space and into her own house. As the prospect of moving "to a more airy situation" approached, Ann wrote of her role in establishing and managing the house: "I am so delighted at the thought of being by

[99] BL, Add. MS. 33316, Diary of James Pinnock.

myself, and having a little island of my own to govern, like Sancho with his Baratana, that I am daily forming schemes for the government of my vassals." Clearly, not only was Ann to be in charge of the family, but she also, in her position as "governor" of her "little island," was to oversee the domestic consumption of the house. Throughout her letters, when reference is made to food purchases or furnishings for the home, Ann is presented as the consumer with Mr. Storrow playing little if any role. Perhaps Thomas Storrow's visible failure to be fiscally responsible encouraged Ann to manage what areas of expenditures she could.

In this same letter, Ann revealed another aspect of her government. She commented on the difficulties she would no doubt face as her "vassals" or slaves would require a great deal of attention:

> I appraise you in the management of negroes some few of the virtues are called forth, such as patience, forbearance, and so on. For I declare I believe had it been for the fortune of Job to live in the islands, his character would have been tarnished, if not destroy'd. Seriously they are torments, one good white servant will do more work in an hour than half a score of them in 3.[100]

The virtues of "patience" and "forbearance" would be called upon of Mrs. Storrow, the domestic manager of this staff. Though critical of the laziness of slaves and comparing them to white servants in London or the Northern colonies, more importantly this statement exposes Anne's role as domestic manager or overseer in Kingston.

Similar to Elizabeth Pinnock and Ann Storrow, Sarah Dwarris exercised management over much of the domestic affairs of the Dwarris family while living in Kingston. Throughout the correspondence between Sarah and William and their families in England, references to domestic consumption such as "keeping house" or obtaining foodstuffs circulate around the activities of Sarah. For example, Sarah wrote to her father in 1782 that she would like to be sent

[100] A.S., to "My Dearest Sister," September 16, 1792. Ann Appleton Storrow Papers 1790-1796, Folder 1790-1792, MHS.

"ale . . . cheese and bacon or any little matter in the housekeeping way."[101] A short time later, and within a discussion of the scarcity of supplies such as tea, flour, and coffee, Sarah complained, "it is almost impossible" for her "to keep house."[102]

It is within this context of her domestic responsibility that William, and particularly Sarah Dwarris, commented upon domestic slavery and suggested Sarah's authority in this arena. Early in their sojourn, William Dwarris wrote that Sarah received from their wealthy uncle "a cook and waiting Boy which came to him [F. Dwarris] from his Mother's death. So, that prevents us hiring longer."[103] This "gift" came to the Dwarris's home quite early in their sojourn, barely six months after they had arrived in Kingston, and was evidently quite welcomed as labor saving for Sarah as well as cash saving for the couple.

Giving further insight to both Sarah's domestic responsibilities and her attitude towards slavery was the visit by a Mr. and Mrs. Simpson. Apparently the Simpsons had had some difficulty finding lodging in Kingston, so, as Sarah wrote, "we told them we would make shift for one night, but they stay'd five or six." After they left, Sarah wrote home that she was not a little happy to see them go, not because they were bores but rather because her slaves were virtually no help. Sarah wrote a familiar refrain: "two servants at home will do the work of five or six here, the Negroes are so slow." Though critical of the lethargy of their slaves, this statement reveals that the management and oversight of the domestic slaves fell to Sarah.[104]

In a letter close to the end of her sojourn in Kingston, Sarah wrote more extensively of her attitudes towards the practice of slavery as she observed it in Kingston. These comments

[101] S.D. to Father, March 5, 1782.

[102] S.D. to Dear Father, n.d. See also S.D. to Dear Father, May 18, 1782.

[103] W. D., To "Sir" February 10, 1782.

[104] S.D. to Dear Father, May 11, 1783.

came at a time when the debates surrounding the end of the slave trade began to heat up in the late 1780's. She compared slaves in Jamaica to the laborers in England:

> [Slaves] are the happyest set of people in the world I am sure much more so than a day Labourer in England for if they are sick they have a Doctor to attend them and are nursed without any trouble or expence to them, and they live as well as any white people for they raise all kinds of stock and don't think any thing of getting a fine J'onbar Duck for their Dinner, nowhere is the poor person in England that can do and as to slavery it is not the name for I Don't know what great slaves they are.[105]

Continuing her discussion, she added this telling remark about the domestic responsibilities of the mistress of the house, albeit casting the mistress as the slave and the slave as a mistress:

> one Servant in England will do as much as four of them, you can't keep house here without five or six of them and notwithstanding you have so many you must look to everything yourself or you will not have one thing decent about you. I am sure the Mistress of a house in this Country is the Slave and not her Negroes.[106]

Casting herself as both the mistress of the house and the slave, Sarah Dwarris might have been seen as an indolent white woman shamelessly living an extravagant and expensive life at the expense of her slaves. But, in her activities as a domestic manager, carefully administering the consumption of the household and supervising the domestic staff, Sarah, like Elizabeth Pinnock and Ann Storrow, illuminated her role within the social order of an urban slave society. As members of the white elite and leisure class of Kingston, these women charted out an arena of economic influence through their activities as domestic consumers. But it is also in the domestic arena that they also contributed to the preservation of slavery in their role as domestic overseer.

Conclusion

The portrayal of the West Indian creole white woman as indolent and "senselessly extravagant" was fairly common in the cartoons and literature of the eighteenth century.

[105] S. D. to Father and Mother, November 9, 1788.

[106] Ibid.

However, this caricature does not fit when considering the life and experiences of the three Kingston women discussed in this chapter. As Ann Storrow and Sarah Dwarris traveled and established themselves in Kingston, they encountered a social and ecological environment that required a significant degree of adaptation. As they adjusted to life in the urban arena of Kingston, both women revealed a deep commitment to family. As each woman attempted to form relationships within Kingston society they had different experiences. Ann Storrow's limited financial means and the ineptness of her husband made entering polite society difficult, regardless of skin color, while the socially well-connected Sarah Dwarris does not appear to have had any difficulty making friends and establishing a genteel household.

Both women were also forced to adjust their material lives as they embarked on creating a home for the families. For Ann Storrow wanted to find a comfortable and airy house with enough beds for her family. As Sarah Dwarris and her husband moved closer to the center of town over the course of eight years, Sarah accumulated a variety of furnishings for the home, revealing her attachment to Georgian forms of gentility and fashion. For Sarah also wrote of her desire for polite mourning clothes and other fashionable clothing. In consuming such finery, Sarah revealed not only her cultural attachment to England but also an effort to create social distance between the enslaved black population and white elites. The consumption of luxury items and their display maintained the dominance of Kingston's white society and established visible boundaries between white and black.

In their role as consumers and domestic managers, white women in Kingston carved out a sphere of socio-economic agency. As managers overseeing the daily consumption of the household and managing domestic slaves, Ann Storrow, Sarah Dwarris, and Elizabeth Pinnock present a much different picture than the cartoon character of William Holland. Demonstrating

an ability to stay within financial boundaries and effectively manage a staff of slaves, these women bear more resemblance to women of polite society in European and colonial North America who managed their homes with thrift and prudence while also projecting a sense of respectability and refinement.

CHAPTER 6

URBAN SLAVERY AND THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF SLAVES IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY KINGSTON

Throughout the eighteenth century, the slave population concentrated in Kingston represented close to 10% of the total slave population of Jamaica. Jamaica's white population was spread out over the plantations and pens of the island, yet a significant number, close to 20%, lived within the borders of the Kingston parish. Among the free colored population, some lived out in the countryside, but most were concentrated in the towns of Jamaica and especially Kingston, where economic opportunity and relative anonymity made urban life attractive. In Kingston, free coloreds represented close to 32% of the island's entire free colored population, making it the largest concentration of free coloreds on the island. This demography is significant because it begins to reveal what the rest of this chapter will explore: the divergence between plantation and urban slavery during the colonial period and its impact on the material culture of urban slaves.

The nature of colonial Caribbean urban society allowed larger numbers of divergent social and racial groups to live in close contact with one another in ways not seen on the sugar plantations of rural Jamaica. The concentration of whites in Kingston brought urban slaves into personal contact with a more economically and socially diverse assortment of whites. The free colored population of the island, largely concentrated in Kingston, revealed to both whites and enslaved blacks not only the fact that not all blacks and coloreds were enslaved but also the contradictory nature of slavery. Not only do these demographic statistics suggest different social

and economic relationships between the white and black residents of Kingston, but they also highlight the economic function of Kingston as the major port for the island. Its significance as port within the British and Spanish Atlantic economy influenced the nature of slave labor organization and management in Kingston.

This arrangement of urban society, so different from the plantation complex that developed around the production of sugar, created abundant problems for Kingston's white elites. The particular social and economic organization of urban Kingston—where some slaves and free blacks were free to pursue their own economic advantage, where other slaves challenged slavery by blending into the free black population, where the large scale residential segregation of blacks from whites found on the plantation was absent—challenged the very foundations of slave society, distorting the boundaries for what was acceptable for slave socio-economic activity in Jamaica. Kingston society also had a more open and fluid environment. The boundaries that divided Kingston society along racial and social lines were significantly blurred as urban slaves had a greater degree of independence as well as increased opportunities to obtain excess capital. While many, if not most, urban slaves lived under the harsh regime of Jamaica's slave society and the strict limits it imposed on material comforts, the nature of urban slave society allowed for increased opportunities to improve one's material world. This chapter explores the nature of urban slave society in Kingston and its impact on the material world of slaves during the eighteenth century.

The Social Matrix of Urban Slavery

In several ways, Kingston's eighteenth-century development as an urban slave center mirrored similar developments in Charleston, South Carolina's economic and social growth around a boom in low country rice production. Kingston, supported by the mid- century sugar

boom, rose to prominence serving as the major entrepôt for the rural hinterland of Jamaica.[1] The economic growth of Kingston directly affected its demographic development; the town had a black majority for much of the eighteenth century. Enslaved blacks comprised around 60% of the city's total population by the latter half of the century while whites, by at least the 1740's, composed around 30% of Kingston's total population. Though whites were largely outnumbered by Kingston's black majority by close to 3:1, throughout the last three quarters of the eighteenth century, the white minority in Kingston made up a much more concentrated, substantial, and visible population than in the rural parishes of the sugar plantations. This concentration, combined with the number and concentration of transient blacks, runaways, and free coloreds living in Kingston, served to heighten the awareness of urban whites of the racial, social, and economic imbalance of urban slave society.[2]

Not only was the demographic structure of Kingston different from the sugar plantations, patterns of white ownership of slaves also differed significantly in the urban setting. Within urban slave regimes of the New World, historians have found that slaves tended to be owned in small lots, usually not exceeding ten per household or owner, a number dramatically lower than the 180-200 slaves found on sugar plantations.[3] A preliminary review of all probate returns for

[1] For an overview of Charleston's eighteenth-century social and economic development see Peter Coclanis, The Shadow of a Dream (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); for an examination of the impact of low-country rice production and the increased importation of slave labor that contributed to the development of Charleston, South Carolina see Stephen G. Hardy, "Colonial South Carolina's Rice Industry and the Atlantic Economy: Patterns of Trade, Shipping, and Growth," in Money, Trade, and Power The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina's Plantation Society, ed. by Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 108-140. For an overview of urban slavery in Charleston, South Carolina see Philip Morgan, "Black Life in Eighteenth-Century Charleston," in Perspectives in American History 1(1984):187-232.

[2] William Gardner estimated the runaway population in Kingston at about 2,000 at the opening of the nineteenth century. See William Gardner, A History of Jamaica (London 1873; reprint, London, Frank Cass, 1971), 267.

[3] See Morgan, "Black Life in Charleston," 189; Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 226; P. Welch, Slave Society in the City (Kingston, Ian Randle, 2003), 10-11. Claudia Goldin finds in her survey of

Kingston parish, entered into court records between 1750 and 1799, suggests a similar pattern of ownership. Sixty-eight percent of all individuals inventoried between 1750 and 1799 owned an average of ten slaves per estate.[4] This average corresponds to contemporary observations of urban slavery such as those of Dr. Frederick Bayley, who confirmed towards the end of slavery in Jamaica that "an inhabitant of a West India town is, perhaps, a possessor of six, eight, ten, or even a dozen slaves."[5] It is important to note that within Kingston probate inventories, only 27% of estates listed 10 or more slaves. These slaves were often large gangs of field laborers that were likely hired out by the Kingston owner or were residents on the owner's plantation outside of Kingston. The vast majority of Kingston's slave owners, 73%, owned 9 slaves or less, and 48% of slave-owners listed 4 slaves or less.

The ownership of urban slaves in small allotments points to a significant difference between urban and rural slave regimes. In contrast to plantation slavery, where slaves established their own "village" apart from the white quarters, the smaller holdings of urban slaves were for

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urban slavery during the nineteenth –century American south that the large majority of slave owners (anywhere between 65 and 80 per cent) owned five or fewer slaves. See Goldin, Urban Slavery in the American South, 1820-1860 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 19-25. Mieko Nishida found that 86.2 per cent of registered slave owners in Salvador, Brazil, between 1808 and 1888 owned 10 or fewer slaves. See Mieko Nishida, "Manumission and Ethnicity in Urban Slavery: Salvador, Brazil, 1808-1888," in The Hispanic American Historical Review 73(August 1993), 369. For the size of slave populations on Jamaican estates see B. Higman, Slave Population and Economy of Jamaica 1807-1834 (Jamaica, 1995), 13. I have slightly modified Higman's findings removing the slave populations for urban slave occupations such as jobbing and wharfage slaves. For the eighteenth century Roderick McDonald notes that slave populations "numbering in the hundreds were commonplace" within Jamaican plantation society. See McDonald, The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 5.

[4] This number is perhaps slightly inflated through the inclusion of several large slave holding estates whose owners apparently lived in Kingston but had slave holdings elsewhere on the island. I was not able to exclude these estates as they often do not indicate where the slaves are located. When the inventory indicates that slaves were held in a parish other than Kingston, I did exclude them from the totals.

[5] Frederick W. Bayley, Four Years Residence In the West Indies (London, 1833) as quoted in Welch, Slave Society in the City, 10.

the most part not residentially separated from their white owners.[6] Many, if not most, urban slaves were housed within their masters' homes or in closely adjacent Negro yards, creating a wide geographical dispersal of slaves across Kingston. With their living quarters in such close proximity to whites, urban slaves, and particularly the large population of domestic slaves, were often under close watch and supervision by their white owners.[7] Only towards the end of eighteenth century and into the first three decades of the nineteenth century did slaves become increasingly residentially segregated from Kingston's white society. Tax rolls of 1832 from Kingston Parish recorded eighteen "negro yards" that were located on the fringes of town, suggesting, according to Barry Higman, an increasing residential separation of white and slave.[8]

The small units of slave ownership found in Kingston's probate inventories also suggest significant differences in the dispersal of slaves across gender boundaries. In rural Jamaica, as in the rest of the Caribbean plantations, most slave holders tended to be white men who often owned large numbers of slaves. Within the British Caribbean urban setting, as Barry Higman has suggested for the early decades of the nineteenth century, urban white women and free blacks were more likely to own slaves than their rural counterparts, often in lots that rarely exceeded more than five slaves.[9] Kingston's probate returns for the last half of the eighteenth century correspond to Higman's findings and point to the high percentage of slave ownership among women, both white and free black. Probate inventories from Kingston Parish recorded for the last half of the eighteenth century reveal that 77% of white women who were inventoried by the

[6] On the building of slave houses and plantations owners allocation of land for this purpose see Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 219 and Roderick McDonald, The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves, 92-103, and Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 185-186.

[7] On the large population of domestic slaves in Kingston, see below pp. 179-180.

[8] Higman, Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica 1807-1834, 60-61.

[9] Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834, 226.

courts owned slaves. This number rises to 84% for free black women (see table 12). Among white men, 64% owned slaves, while 88% of free black men owned slaves. Reflecting the smaller allotments of slaves held by an owner is that within each gender category, the majority, at least 68%, owned fewer than 9 slaves.

Table 12. Slave Ownership within Gender and Racial Categories

Social category	*N*	% with Slaves	1-4 Slaves (%)	5-9 Slaves (%)	10> Slaves (%)
White Women	229	77	41	27	32
Free Colored Women	81	84	60	18	19
White Men	1528	64	47	26	27
Free Colored Men	26	88	78	7	13

Source: 1B-11-3 Probate Inventories 1750-1799, Jamaica National Archives, Spanish Town, Jamaica

Not only were Slaves widely dispersed across geographical and gender lines in Kingston, but they were also dispersed across a wide economic segment of the white and free black population. This dispersal brought them into contact with the very rich and powerful and with the poorest elements of Kingston's white and free black population. Many whites aimed to display their wealth through slave ownership; as Johann Waldeck observed about Kingston, the "wealth of a man is measured by the number of slaves he has. The one who has ten has taken a long stride toward becoming a rich man."[10] William Foster and Thomas Stretton where assured of being recognized as wealthy. Foster, whose estate was valued at over £50,000, owned 13 slaves worth £620 while Thomas Stretton's estate, valued at over £52,000, noted 29 slaves valued at

[10] NLJ, Ms. 2006, Hessian Accounts of America (Waldeck), 123.

£1655. However, many in Kingston where not as financially successful as Foster or Stretton and could not afford to purchase a large number of slaves. However, not wishing to be socially marginalized within in a society that valued slave ownership, whites, even among the lower levels of society, invested heavily in slaves.[11] They no doubt followed the judgment of the young white overseer Thomas Thistlewood, who recognized that his entrance and acceptance into white Jamaican society, his full "creolization," and his economic success were complete only after he had purchased a slave for himself.[12] For example, John Herron, a shopkeeper whose estate was valued at £322, had invested considerably in slaves, owning 4 valued at £225. Sixty percent (£29) of the widow Ann Burly's £49 pound estate was concentrated in 1 slave, the single most valuable item listed in her estate. Mary Roberts, a free negro woman inventoried on June 6, 1765, owned two slaves valued at £100 in an estate valued at £126 16*s* 6*d*.

The higher percentage of free black men and women owning slaves seen in table 1, it must be cautioned, does not correspond to high ownership patterns within the entire free black community of Kingston. While the population of free blacks in Kingston was the largest concentration on the island, the number of probate inventories recorded between 1750 and 1799 reflects only a small percentage of the free black population of Kingston. Furthermore, as Barry Higman pointed out for the period after 1807, registration returns failed to identify all such free black owners, making it virtually impossible to gauge slave ownership patterns among this community.[13] However, the high percentage of freedmen owning slaves represented within Kingston's probate returns is considerable and should not be passed over too quickly. There are

[11] See Table 6 above.

[12] On this see especially Trevor Burnard, "Thomas Thistlewood Becomes a Creole," in Varieties of the Southern History, ed. by Bruce Clayton and John Salmond (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996).

[13] Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 107.

several potential reasons that free blacks owned slaves. In some cases, free men and women purchased kin intent on manumitting them when possible. Others, recognizing that entrance to white society was closed, realized that owning a slave was virtually the only route to wealth. Finally, owning a slave physically and socially distanced free blacks from slavery and presented a major impediment to their being reintegrated into that institution.

Slave Society and Labor Organization

The dispersal of slaves across social and racial lines within Kingston society reflects several significant differences between urban and rural slavery in Jamaica. These differences are also seen when considering the labor organization of slavery in Kingston. The city's function as an economic center for the island as well as its position as an Atlantic port city forced slave labor to be organized in a manner quite different from that of Jamaica's plantation society. The lack of plantations or large-scale agricultural production in Kingston parish meant that the typical forms of slave labor found in rural Jamaica were absent. For example, slave drivers and field slaves, key to the labor regimes of plantation sugar production, were virtually non-existent in Kingston. Few slave drivers are recorded in the inventories, and where the probate returns for Kingston parish indicates the status of slaves as "field slaves," most appear to have been "hired out" to plantations outside of Kingston. In other cases, "field slaves" were owned by a resident of Kingston who also owned a large plantation located in another parish. In contrast to the rural slave regime, where slave watchmen guarded the large population of field slaves and also protected the plantation fields, whites in Kingston served as the primary overseers and protectors of their property. It was economically impractical to own a slave who functioned as an overseer for a few slaves.

Another significance difference in the labor organization of urban slavery was the larger number of domestic servants found in Kingston. The concentrated population of whites living in Kingston required the labor of a larger domestic servant population, for domestic servant became the primary occupation for urban slaves. According to statistics compiled by Barry Higman for the early decades of the nineteenth century, domestics, only 10% of the plantation slave population, accounted for 50-60% of the urban slave population.[14] Similar statistical evidence for the eighteenth century is difficult to come by, but from probate returns for the last half of the eighteenth century, it appears that urban slaves often engaged in domestic labor—washerwoman, housewench, footman, manboy, waiting boy or girl, and seamstress—were by far the most frequently occupations cited. In many cases, a domestic slave was the only slave recorded for an urban household. For example Mary Cudsworth, inventoried in January 1749/50, owned 6 slaves, all of which were for domestic use. "Peggy," "Hannah," and two other unnamed slaves served as washerwomen; "Sally" served as a semptress; and "Molly" was a waiting girl.[15] Thomas Meyers, inventoried in 1793, owned 17 slaves, six of which were domestic slaves. His inventory included 3 "waiting boys," 2 "housewenches," and at least one "washerwoman."[16]

Not only were domestic servants more prevalent in Kingston, but the organization of domestic labor differed from the work of plantation domestics. Though the tasks of urban and rural domestic slaves were similar, urban domestics were required to master a variety of tasks within the urban household. The domestic servants were more specialized in the plantation household, where, in the great house of the sugar estate, the division of domestic labor was certain. On the plantation, individual slaves served as washerwomen, cooks, seamstresses, or

[14] Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 227, 230-232.

[15] JNA,1B-11-3 vol 29.

[16] JNA, IB/11/3 vol 81. No occupation is given for the other 9 slaves.

market slaves with little apparent overlap in duties. The organization of labor for domestic servants in Kingston appears to have been quite different as slaves preformed a variety of household tasks. An advertisement placed in Kingston's *Royal Gazette* illuminates the many jobs a domestic slave might have been called upon to master. Stephen Prosser was intent on selling a "young negro wench" whose primary value was that she was a "good cook." However, adding to her value, as Prosser wrote, was that she could also "wash and iron, and is a little of a semptress, and used to marketing."[17] In another example, the Creole slave Sam had run away from his master and was described as a "jack of all trades," evidently having mastered domestic and a variety of other skills. The owner, seeking the return of such a valuable slave, alerted his readers to all the different tasks Sam could do: As a domestic, he was "capable of being a waiting man, [and] a cook" but was also skilled in the work of the port as a "sailor and almost every thing you can set him about." Completing the inventory of Sam's abilities, the advertiser noted that he was skilled in "the planting, fencing and railing business he can hand the adz and saw pretty well though left handed."[18]

As the increased number of domestics and the variety of tasks they were called upon to perform distinguished urban slaves from their rural counterparts, the nature of urban gang labor also illuminated the differences between the urban and plantation labor regimes. Gang labor was nowhere near as prevalent in Kingston as what was found on the sugar plantations, where slaves were divided into as many as four gangs for work in the fields.[19] While there were no plantations in Kingston, its function as a major port within the British Atlantic required groups of slaves to

[17] *Royal Gazette*, May 13, 1780.

[18] *Royal Gazette*, February 21, 1781. In both cases the versatility of the slaves made them more valuable to their owner.

[19] See Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 161-167. Higman notes that the division of slaves into two, three or four gangs was based upon age and the task to be performed.

work at specific tasks such as loading and unloading ships and ship repair. These transport workers perhaps came closest to what might have been considered gang labor in Kingston.[20] Slaves were employed as sailors and transporters or in ship repair and even fishing. For example, James Russell, a ship's carpenter, owned a total of 12 slaves (see table 13) of which a gang of 7 were employed in various aspects of his carpenter trade. Of the five other slaves, one was a domestic and 4 had an undisclosed vocation.[21] Philip Wilson, a gentleman, owned a gang of 17 negro fishermen, as well as Tom (a tailor), Mimba (a washerwoman), Fidelia and Rachel (both house wenches), Charolette (a child), and Betty (a house wench and market woman).[22]

Urban Kingston also offered slaves more of an opportunity to work as skilled laborers such as carpenters, masons, seamstresses or tailors, bakers, and smiths. Barry Higman's research on urban societies in the British Caribbean found that skilled trades people accounted for around 10% of the British Caribbean urban slave population, double the percentage of what was found on rural holdings.[23] Indicative of the skilled labor that slaves might perform is the account of Johann Waldeck, a Hessian soldier spending a brief sojourn in Kingston during the war for American Independence. Soon after his arrival in Kingston, Waldeck met a fellow German, "a Holsteiner by birth," who owned a cabinet shop. On visiting the gentleman's home and cabinet shop, Waldeck observed "the most excellent cabinet work," which caused him to reflect with pride that "Germans are to be found in every part of the world, and the German manages his affairs better than people of any other nation." But what struck Waldeck as even more surprising was that slaves performed a great amount of the skilled cabinetry work. The work of these slaves

[20] Ibid., 236.

[21] JNA, 1B-11-3, vol 58.

[22] JNA, 1B-11-3 vol. 58.

[23] See Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 232-235.

Table 13. Occupations and Monetary Worth of James Russell's Slaves

Name	Occupation	Value (£)
Charles	Caulker	100
Ben	Caulker	80
Peter	Carpenter	80
Tom	Blacksmith	80
Bob	Young Caulker	70
Will	Waiting Boy	50
Ned	n.g.	60
Jenny	Girl	65
Bella	New Negro	50
Robin	Caulker	80
Davy	Carpenter	100
Jimmy	New Negro Boy with Yaws	50

made it so the German master, who had taught the slaves their craft so well, "no longer [had to] work" and could live the life of a gentleman artisan owning seven additional houses in the city. At the workshop, Waldeck further noted the specific skills his fellow German's 19 slaves performed. "The slaves," Waldelk wrote,

> finish the finest cabinet work, mostly form mahogany. . . . They made cupboards, tables, chairs, and beautiful wardrobes. [The master] had taught all nineteen. One worked at a lathe with the finest tools. Another black helped ease the task by turning a wheel which turned the lathe, and would have been operated by foot, otherwise. I was surprised at how competent the black slaves could be.[24]

[24] NLJ, MS 2006, Hessian Accounts of America, (Waldeck), 121-122.

Advertisements for the hire or purchase of slaves placed in the Kingston daily or weekly newspapers also highlighted the skilled occupations that slaves might fill. For example, two announcements placed in the Daily Advertiser for January 2, 1790 sought slaves skilled as coopers, bricklayings, or sawyers.[25] Advertisements placed in Kingston newspapers for runaways also drew attention to the skilled labor that they provided in the urban economy. That skilled slaves were prominent among advertisements of runaways is important for several reasons. First, their skill made them more valuable to owners who sought their speedy return. Second, the slaves' skills also made them potentially easier to identify. Third, their skill likely provided an increased ability to obtain or maintain their freedom.[26] For example, Ned, a runaway saddler listed in the Royal Gazette for May 13, 1780, "carried his tools with him, [and] it is probable he may be employed in mending saddles or lining kitterines." Appolo, a carpenter by trade, ran away from his master, though he had other abilities that might have made him more difficult to identify; his other trade as an "excellent fisherman" prompted his master to suggest that Appolo might be at the east end of Kingston "with fish."[27]

The varied occupational structure of Kingston contributed to the more fluid and open nature of urban slave society. This development is perhaps best represented by the self-hire system.[28] The self-hire system, much more popular in urban slave society than within plantation

[25] *Daily Advertiser*, January 2, 1790.

[26] On this point see Gad Heuman, "Introduction" in Out of the House of Bondage Runaways, Resistance and Marronage in Africa and the New World, ed. Gad Heuman (London, England: Frank Cass, 1986), 5.

[27] *Jamaica Mercury*, June 19, 1779.

[28] On the self-hire system in the urban Chesapeake and Charleston, South Carolina, see Ira Berlin, Many Thousands Gone The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1998), 136, 156-158. See also Morgan, "Black Life in Eighteenth-Century Charleston," 192-194. On the self-hire system in the British Caribbean see Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 237-38, and 242; for a discussion of the self-hire system in eighteenth century Jamaica see Brathwaite's discussion of "jobbing" and "hired slaves" in Development of Creole Society, 146, 159-160. Howard Johnson writes, "The urban environment provided slaves not only with employment but also with extensive opportunities to fraternize and the

culture, was arranged in two ways. Slaves were either hired out by their master, who made the financial arrangements, or a slave was given permission to make their own financial arrangements to market their services. In either case, the slave was required to provide their master an arranged weekly or monthly sum of money. The master was legally required to provide an allowance sufficient to maintain the slave in housing and food. The self-hire system was in place among nearly all the occupations of slaves but appears to have been most prominent among skilled workers, those slaves involved in labor at the wharfs and the wherry traffic of Kingston harbor. One writer noted in 1790,

> The ships of war off Port-Royal, between which place and Kingston the general communication is kept up by wherries, boats much larger than the London wherries, carrying two-sails, and ballasted with stones. They are all under the care of negroes; in every ones is a chief, who has two other negroes, being the property of some of the inhabitants of Kingston or Port-Royal, are put into the boats by their masters, who (as the terms is) let them out to hire to themselves; that is, they expect a certain sum from them daily or weekly, for six bitts to a dollar a day each negro.[29]

Kingston's newspapers contain several instances where individuals advertised for the hire of "tailor negroes" or "3 wharf negroes" with the wages to be agreed upon between the owner and advertiser.[30] Domestic slaves, it also appears, were hired out. Richard Bickell writes that slaves were not given wages, except for domestic slaves in towns, "where they are allowed from two shillings and three pence to three shillings sterling, per week."[31] Advertisements placed in daily newspapers confirm that Kingston residents sought to hire domestic slaves. For example, an

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leisure time to do so on a regular basis. . . .[with] the greatest flexibility in their work schedules [among] those who labored in the self-hire system." See Howard Johnson, "Slave Life and Leisure in Nassau, Bahamas, 1783-1838," in Slavery and Abolition 16:1(April 1995):47.

[29] Annon. Short Journey in the West Indies in Which are interspersed, curious anecdotes and characters (London: 1790), 24-25. The author adds this note, "a bitt is about 5d. sterling, and ten bitts and 5d. currency make a dollar."

[30] See advertisements placed in the *Kingston Daily Advertiser*, January 5, 1790; March 5, 1790; or September 13, 1790.

[31] Bickell. The West Indies As They Are, (London, 1825), 9.

advertiser in the March 5, 1790 *Kingston Daily Advertiser* sought to hire "a complete waiting boy preferably one from the country who is use to waiting on a family."

The "twilight zone" between slavery and freedom that the self-hire system represented for many urban blacks was not without what whites construed as real or potential abuses by slaves that served to challenge the social institutions of urban slavery.[32] Perhaps the most serious challenge the self-hire system represented to whites was the independence this labor arrangement offered to slaves and the potential to use this freedom to escape slavery altogether. Tom and Juba pretended "to be hired out" but were in fact runaways, according to an advertisement from the *Royal Gazette*.[33] Guy, a slave from St. David's Parish, had been hired out in Kingston to Samuel Thomas and Co. as a waiting man. However, going to Kingston under the self-hire system had given him the opportunity to try and escape "the country or pass for a free man."[34]

Many whites also complained that self-hire slaves who had runaway from their masters found sanctuary among other urban whites or blacks who protected them in return for cheap labor. Ned, a runaway slave from William Lewis, had been hired out to a saddler Spanish Town and was, according to Lewis, "a remarkable good workman." However, Ned had apparently taken advantage of being away from his master to runaway: "it is supposed he is employed by some person in or near Kingston, in making harness or stuffing saddles."[35] Whites also protested that slaves, who were allowed to negotiate purchases or handle money for their master, often cheated whites. A hired-out slave was only required to pay his/her master a specified amount;

[32] I borrow the phrase from Philip Morgan's description of the self-hire system of Charleston South Carolina in the eighteenth century. Morgan, "Black Life in Eighteenth-Century Charleston," 194.

[33] May 25, 1793.

[34] *Kingston Daily Advertiser*, April 13, 1790.

[35] *Royal Gazette*, March 1, 1781.

anything the slave was able to acquire beyond this amount was kept by the slave. This system, according to contemporaries, engendered the economic abuse of whites by the hired-out slave.[36]

The self-hire system of slave labor not only offered some slaves increased independence but also presented them with the potential to acquire liquid capital beyond what was available to other slaves. However, the opportunity of urban slaves for personal economic gain was not limited to self-hire. Slaves might be paid for service to the parish, as they were after a fire in Kingston. On 4 March 1751, the Kingston vestry noted the service of 26 slaves who had helped put out a fire on Port Royal Street. The vestry also gave each slave 10*s* for their efforts in extinguishing the potentially damaging fire. The vestry was also evidently not above singling out a particular slave for an extra monetary reward, as the minutes for July 24, 1751 indicate. Cain, a Negro owned by Alexander Graham, was to be given 20*s* for his help in extinguishing the fire on Port Royal Street.[37] It is likely that these slaves did not receive all the specified cash reward, and perhaps received nothing, though it was not without precedent for slaves to be provided with financial rewards for service to the community.

Slaves might also have acquired a financial reward for turning in a runaway slave. Runaways from across the island who were attracted to the obscurity that Kingston offered were in danger of being reported by an enterprising slave seeking to collect on a reward. In an effort to encourage the return of runaways by those most likely to protect them, the Jamaican slave code explained that "a slave, taking up a run-away, and bringing to the owner or to the next goal, shall receive one shilling *per* mile for the first five miles, and eight-pence *per* mile for every other." Whites were discouraged from stealing this money, for "any person, depriving or defrauding the slave of such reward, shall forfeit *treble* the value." The code continued by offering an even

[36] On this point see Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 161.

[37] JNA, 2/6 #2 vol 1, Kingston Vestry Minutes.

more substantial reward of money and clothing for bringing in a dangerous slave. Any slave who took up or killed a rebellious slave would "receive 40*s*, and a coat with a red cross upon it."[38] Most runaway slave advertisements, such as the one placed by W. Skurry in the July 24, 1779 *Jamaica Mercury* seeking the return of Warwick and Betty, offered monetary rewards for information about or the return of a slave. In exchange for information "if by a white person, Ten pounds, if by a free Negro or mulatto, Five pounds, or by any slave or slaves, Forty Shillings reward."[39]

Rewards for service to the community or in capturing runaways provided opportunities for urban slaves to gain some specie, but it was the urban market, stocked with goods from provision grounds or manufactures acquired in the city, that presented urban slaves with the greatest opportunity to acquire "a little money." Masters were required by the 1696 Jamaican slave code to provide one acre of ground, "well planted with provisions, for every *five* slaves belonging to them, under penalty of 40*s* for every such acre deficient."[40] Compliance with this law was further encouraged, as Sidney Mintz and Douglas Hall have noted, by the topography of Jamaica; planters had a limited amount of land at their disposal for planting sugar, enabling or encouraging them to allot land to slaves for growing food crops.[41] Contemporary historians and travelers regularly noted that slaves grew crops for personal consumption and that surpluses

[38] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 490.

[39] *Jamaica Mercury and Weekly Advertiser*, July 24, 1779.

[40] Long, History of Jamaica, II: 490. See Sidney Mintz and Douglas Hall, "The Origins of the Jamaican Internal Marketing System," in Yale University Publications in Anthropology, 57 (1960): 3-26 for an excellent examination of the provision ground and market system in Jamaica and its role in the formation of a Jamaican peasantry. See also Roderick McDonald who examines the internal economy of plantation society in Jamaica. See The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves, 16-49.

[41] Mintz and Hall, "Internal Marketing System," 4.

could be taken to local urban markets such as Kingston where they were exchanged or sold for cash. The eighteenth-century historian of Jamaica Bryan Edwards wrote,

> The practice which prevails in Jamaica of giving the Negroes lands to cultivate, from the produce of which they are expected to maintain themselves (except in times of scarcity, arising from hurricanes and droughts, when assistance is never denied them) is universally allowed to be judicious and beneficial; producing a happy coalition of interests between the master and the slave. The negro who has acquired by his own labor a property in his master's land, has much to lose, and is therefore less inclined to desert his work. He earns a little extra money, by which he is enabled to indulge himself in fine clothes on holidays, and gratify his palate with salted meats and other provisions that otherwise he could not obtain; and the proprietor is eased, in great measure, of the expense of feeding him.[42]

But slaves did not limit themselves to what they could cultivate on their provision grounds. R. C. Dallas, writing in 1803, recorded that while some slaves raised provisions, "others fabricate[d] coarse chairs, baskets, or common tables" to sell or exchange on market day.[43]

Manufactured goods as well as products grown by slaves on the provision grounds were brought to the Kingston market, where "the most luxurious epicure cannot fail of meeting here with sufficient in quantity, variety, and excellence, for the gratification of his appetite the whole year round."[44] As Ira Berlin suggested about North American slaves who used the proceeds of their independent production "to enrich their families' diet and expand their wardrobes," Kingston's slaves also utilized the market to trade in kind for food or clothing or sold goods for cash.[45] Urban slaves played a key role in this market, particularly the urban higglers who would meet the country Negroes outside of Kingston, buy their goods, and then resell them in Kingston

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[42] Edwards, History Civil and Commercial, 2:131. For other historians assessment of Jamaica's slave provision ground see Sloane, A Voyage to the Islands . . ., vol. 1 (London, 1707),52; Leslie, A New and Exact Account of Jamaica (London, 1739), 322; Beckford, Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica (London, 1790), 256-7; and Stewart, History of Jamaica, (London, 1823), 263.

[43] R. C. Dallas, The History of the Maroons, vol 1 (London, 1803), cviii.

[44] Long, History of Jamaica, II, 105.

[45] Berlin, Many Thousands Gone, 137.

for a "75 to 100 per cent profit."[46] Higglers and the others involved in the urban markets utilized their profits to purchase liquor, food, or clothing in excess of what was provided to them by their masters. R. C. Dallas noted in 1803 that goods produced from provision grounds were "bartered for salted meat, or pickled fish, utensils, or gaudy dresses; of which they are very fond."[47]

Slaves were not limited to legal means of acquiring money or goods. Indeed, one writer sympathized with the Negroes who were "so stinted that it is almost impossible to avoid thieving."[48] White urban residents were constantly aware that unsupervised slaves milling about the city posed a potential threat—particularly the threat of theft. John Hogg, an attorney in Kingston, whose purse was stolen on Saturday night or early Sunday morning of June 23-24, 1779, immediately suspected his own servants of playing a part. He wrote a public notice requesting information from "any person who can give the smallest intelligence . . . or who has since that time seen any of Mr. Hogg's Negro or Mulatto servants, or Negroes intimate with his servants or frequently about his house." Interestingly the identifying mark for Mr. Hogg was that these black or Mulatto servants would possess "a larger sum of money than Black or Mulatto people in their station usually [have] or possess of milled gold." Those "answering the above description, and will discover the same to Mr. Hogg or the Printers hereof, shall be thankfully and generously rewarded." But the attorney was not merely upset at the loss of a pocket book and its contents. His home and privacy had been invaded by slaves and he feared for the safety of his family:

> The loss of the money in the present case, is not so much regarded as the thoughts of Mr. Hogg's having such dangerous people (as the thief or thieves must be) harboured in or

[46] Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 161.

[47] R.C. Dallas, The History of the Maroons vol 1: cviii. On slave consumption of alcohol see Johnston, "Slave Life and Leisure in the Bahamas," in Slavery and Abolition 16(April 1995):49.

[48] J. B. Moreton, Manners and Customs in the West Indies, 161.

> about his house, as he thinks his and his family's lives, as well as his property are every night in their power, till they are found out; when the proper methods will be taken to rid the community of such domestic plaguers."[49]

Runaway slave advertisements mention several instances where a hired-out slave absconded with money or goods. Priscilla, a market woman, ran away from William Harris, and though "elderly," she had "absconded with money that she [had] received for provisions &c. she [had] sold." Chloe and Sylvia, house Negroes, were also hired out by William Harris for monthly contracts and had "made off with several months wages."[50]

Slaves also took advantage of an urban disaster to steal. The great fire of February 1782, one disaster in a decade filled with manmade and natural calamities, offered several enterprising slaves the opportunity to steal. William Dwarris, a barrister and small-scale merchant factor, wrote to his father that following the fire "a general search was made in the negroe houses for stolen Goods, taken from the sufferers at the fire, and several thousands poundsworth [sic] have been found."[51] Perhaps even more disquieting to white residents hoping to inherit goods or money from deceased relatives was the theft of the property by the household slaves. Indeed, J. B. Moreton, author of Manners and Customs in the West Indies warned,

> As soon as the breath is out of a white man, his favourite black or mongrel wench, assisted by her female friends, who are always ready and expert on such occasions, will, if not prevented by some sensible sharp white person, plunder and make away with as much of the moveable property of the deceased as possible; such as cash, furniture, apparel &c. &c."[52]

Moreton's comments here, it must be cautioned, were written from an attitude of disgust with the West Indies and the institution of slavery, which may have led him to embellish. However,

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[49] The Jamaica Mercury and Weekly Advertiser, July 3, 1779.

[50] The Jamaica Mercury and Weekly Advertiser, June 19, 1779.

[51] William Dwarris, Kingston, Jamaica, to Sir, February 10, 1779.

[52] Moreton, Manners and Customs, 161.

advertisements for slave runaways such as Warwick, who ran away at the death of his master, suggest that slaves took advantage of the death of a master to steal away and attempt to gain their freedom.[53]

The function of Kingston as a port within the Atlantic world, as well as the increased economic opportunities urban society presented for its enslaved population, enabled some slaves to improve their economic situation. Slaves utilized these opportunities in a variety of ways to resist or challenge the institution of slavery. Some used the anonymity of urban society to rebel or resist slavery altogether by running away to the maroon communities of Jamaica or by attempting to leave the island entirely. Other slaves chose to make the most of their situation through acquiring material objects, particularly clothing, which asserted a level of personal autonomy. Though many slaves appeared to observers in Kingston as ragged in appearance, some took advantage of urban society to better their material life. Not only did clothing serve to elevate their status within the black community, but perhaps more importantly, these objects served to blur the distinctions of cultural and racial superiority that whites worked hard to maintain.

"Few of them are without Better Clothing": The Slave Code and Clothing

It is somewhat difficult to determine the exact nature of urban slaves' material acquisitions in Kingston. By examining the Jamaican slave code, contemporary accounts of slave dress, and advertisements placed in Kingston's daily and weekly newspapers for runaway slaves, however, historians gain a glimpse into the material world of urban slaves. Of these sources, the advertisements for runaways are perhaps the most significant. As Edward Brathwaite wrote of

[53] *Royal Gazette*, January 12, 1793.

slave runaways, "Running away made them visible."[54] While their skin color and physical marks were perhaps the most indelible signs of social conditions for a slave, clothing also made them visible in a society and culture where social condition was often inscribed into dress.[55] Runaway advertisements not only serve to remind historians of a path many slaves utilized to resist slavery but also suggest how slaves were seen by whites and the social and cultural values or identities that both whites and blacks associated with clothing.

In practice, the 1696 slave code established the annual slave clothing provision, which included for male slaves, a "jacket and drawers" and for female slaves, "jackets and petticoats, supplied to them once a year, under penalty of five shillings, to be paid by the owner or master for every default."[56] Almost a century later, the clothing requirements for masters had changed little though the specific items of clothing were more ambiguous. The code of 1792 states, "every master, owner, or possessor of slaves, shall, once in every year, provide and give to each slave they shall be possessed of, proper and sufficient clothing, to be approved of by the justices and vestry of the parish where such master, owner, or possessor of such slaves resides."[57] Towards the end of the eighteenth century, several historians of Jamaica, aiming to portray slavery in as positive light as possible, commented on the dress of slaves. They noted that slaves were generally given an annual allowance of "ten to twenty yards for men, and seven to fifteen yards of cloth for women," which seemed abundant for their needs in a tropical environment. Slaves were to make appropriate garments from this clothing provision. In addition, "to every

[54] Development of Creole Society, 202.

[55] On the language of dress see esp. Daniel Roche, A History of Everyday Things, 193-220, esp. 194, and Silvia Hunold Lara, "The Signs of Color: Women's Dress and Racial Relations in Salvador and Rio De Janeiro, CA 1750-1815," in Colonial Latin American Review, 6 (December 1997): 205-225.

[56] Long, History of Jamaica, II,490. See also Orlando Patterson, The Sociology of Slavery, 83.

[57] Edwards, The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies, vol. II (London, 1793), 148, quoted in McDonald, The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves, 111.

negro" was also given "a Worsted Cap, Bonnet, or Hat, besides a Woolen Jacket, or Welch Blanket, to the men; and a Petticoat and Blanket to the Women." The general assessment of these writers was that "the Negroes of Jamaica are well clothed."[58]

However, this assessment of the adequacy of slave clothing does not seem to hold up. Though required by law, which imposed fines if not followed, the tropical climate meant that some masters could provide less than the required provision, and, as Roderick McDonald pointed out for plantation slaves, "clothing rations often proved inadequate."[59] The general appearance of slaves in Kingston, at least with regard to their clothing, was "ragged." One writer complained that "many negroes" in Kingston, "while in their owners employ, totally neglect their dress; wearing the most ragged clothes in their possession, sometimes until they fall off, which however they protract as long as they can, by knotting their drapery to keep it hanging together."[60] Apparently, some of Kingston's slave population even worked naked, a complaint often directed at plantation slaves. Johann Philip Waldeck, during his brief stay in Kingston, observed a fellow German's cabinet-making slaves, who "work completely naked and finish the finest cabinet work."[61]

Advertisements for slave runaways suggest that many slaves in Kingston were provisioned with only the barest necessities of clothing and often appeared ragged, though fulfilling the essential requirements of the law. Masters provided slaves in Kingston, as in the rest of Jamaica and the Caribbean, with clothing made of osnaburg cloth, a course and hard-wearing linen named for the German town of its origin: Osnabrück. Advertisements for runaway

[58] Quoted in Brathwaite, Development of Creole Society, 232.

[59] On this see McDonald, The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves, 123.

[60] Columbian Magazine 3 (1797): 8 as quoted in Higman, Slave Populations, 257.

[61] NLJ, Ms. 2006, Hessian Accounts of America, (Waldeck), 121.

slaves from Kingston often noted this type of fabric, its color (usually dark), the type of garment, and the general condition of the garments a slave had on when they "went away." For whites, these items of clothing served as distinguishing marks of the slave and were useful reference points for their identification. Letitia "had on when she went away an old blue doccas and a dirty ragged Osnabrug frock." One runaway, Lucy, "was not very black" and "had on when she went away an old blue baize doccas and an Osnabrug frock."[62] In general, runaway advertisements for men indicated the same simplicity in clothing as well as the provision of course linnen. Gloster had on a "pair of black breeches and a check shirt." Sharper had on "when he went away blue breeches and osnabrug frock." Fortune, a thirteen-year-old boy, ran away wearing a "check shirt and Russia drab breeches."[63] The clothing of Romeo, a runaway in the summer of 1780, was sufficiently ragged enough to serve as an identifying mark. Romeo was wearing a "check shirt and ragged pair of breeches."[64]

Central to the provision of clothing for their slaves was the masters' attempt to acculturate them to Jamaican slave society. Similar to the power asserted by masters in shackling newly arrived slaves, the provision of slave clothing further enhanced their power over their slaves. Clothing was given to the slave by the master; it was of a European style and made of the cheapest and coarsest linens.[65] The shock of slave society for newly arrived slaves was compounded by the clothing given to them, which further confirmed their inferior status within

[62] *Royal Gazette* Jan 20, 1781 and February 17, 1781.

[63] *Jamaica Mercury and Kingston Weekly Advertiser*, Saturday May 15, 1779 and August 7, 1779.

[64] *Royal Gazette*, Sept 18, 1779 and July 1, 1780.

[65] On the objectification and depersonalization in the case of French servants as a result of clothing provided by a master see Cissie Fairchilds, Domestic Enemies: Servants and their Masters in Old Regime France (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 103.

Kingston society.[66] European notions of gentility and polite society, displayed in the elite white gentlemen and ladies of Kingston who wore close-fitting garments of the highest design and material quality, were set in harsh contrast to the loose-fitting and colorless slave garments made of course osnaburg or fustian linens.[67] The provision of clothing by masters and the enforced poverty of blacks in Kingston prevented much variation in the dress of slaves. It is likely also that clothing was the least necessary item for a slave's survival and consequently could be reused or refashioned during times of crisis.[68]

Newly arriving slaves were evidently quickly incorporated into the European styles of clothing and the provisions of their master at the point of purchase. Indeed, the newness of a Negro's clothing suggested to whites that a slave was a recent arrival to the island. For example, a slave was "taken up" in St. Elizabeth parish who had on "an oznaburg frock and trowsers, a black hat with a white binding, [and] brought with him a white blanket frock and was armed with mascheat," the typical clothing provision for a slave. However, the author of the advertisement added some important details as a postscript that alerted the reader that this slave was a new arrival to the island: "It is supposed he cannot have been so long purchased as he says he never had any other cloaths but those he had on, which do not appear to be half worn."[69]

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[66] For an examination of the acculturation of slaves through clothing provisions in Jamaica see, R. McDonald, 125 – 126; for North America see White and White, "Slave Clothing and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in Past and Present, 148 (August 1995):150-153. See also Daniel Roche on clothing and social expression in A History of Everyday Things, 197. Slave naming, an attempt by whites to eliminate the cultural identity of a slave through onomastics, was another manner whites used to enforce a new identity. On this see especially Trevor Brunard, "Slave Naming Patterns: Onomastics and the Taxonomy of Race in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica," in Journal of Interdisciplinary History 31:3 (2001): 325-346.

[67] See White and White, "Slave Clothing and African American Culture," 153.

[68] Daniel Roche notes that countryfolk in France had little variation in dress largely as a consequence of their poverty. When resources were low due to taxes, war, or epidemics, clothing could be 'cut down.' See, A History of Everyday Things, 199.

[69] *Royal Gazette* April 8, 1780. See also White and White, "Slave Clothing and African American Culture," 151-52.

For many urban slaves, coarse and ragged garments and perhaps even nakedness were the norm; however, it also appears that slaves in urban regimes were better clothed than their rural counterparts.[70] By acquiring excess capital through the market and labor system of Kingston, through theft or through gifts from their masters, slaves had more access to a wider variety of clothing than what was available to rural plantations slaves. Though prescribed by law and often constrained by what a master or mistress might actually provide in clothing, some slaves, as runaway advertisements suggest, took advantage of the economic opportunities, the cosmopolitan nature of urban life, and more lax social atmosphere of urban Kingston to acquire clothing that might elevate their status, alter their appearance, or assert their personal autonomy. For example, shoes, not provided for slaves by masters, appeared infrequently in the slave advertisements. However, for the runaway slave Jack, shoes served as the primary identifier and no doubt served as an attempt by Jack to both distinguish and attempt to elevate himself socially. A slave from St. Mary's, Jack was evidently living in Kingston, where he dressed "generally in shoes and stockings and a kind of thickset coatee"[71] Sam, a thirty-year-old slave with a very "sulky look" was also distinguished by his shoes. The subscriber noted that Sam could not go "without shoes and stockings" and was wearing a "pair of new shoes when he eloped." For Sam and Jack, their acquisition of shoes and even stockings served to identity them and make them more visible, yet the shoes likely served to also distinguish themselves from other slaves.

[70] Historians of urban slavery agree on this point. See Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 257. For comment on the "excess dress and costly apparel" of urban slaves in colonial North America see Morgan, "Black Life in Charleston," 203; for nineteenth century urban slavery in the United States see Richard Wade, Slavery in the Cities (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 125-131; and White and White, "Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century," 160. See also Mary Karasch, "From Porterage to Proprietorship: African Occupations in Rio de Janeiro 1808-1850," in Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere, ed. by S. Engerman and E. Genovese (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 384, who states that urban domestic slaves in Rio De Janeiro possessed better clothing "because a master's prestige was enhanced by the sartorial elegance of his slaves."

[71] *Royal Gazette*, April 15, 1780.

It is interesting that the advertisements for Jack and Sam reveal that both traveled outside of Jamaica—Sam to America and Jack to England—where they had no doubt encountered or observed the fashions of the urban Atlantic world and also of English servants. These travels had perhaps encouraged them to adopt the style of dress fit for an English servant and became a tool for challenging the social boundaries dividing white from black in Kingston. This style of dress also distinguished Phurah, a slave from Trenton, New Jersey, who spoke "remarkable good English" and had used her travels to America to educate herself on the proper dress for "servants." Even though Phurah was "very black," as the advertisement read in the *Royal Gazette*, she evidently dressed above her racial status "in the style of English servant[s]."[72]

That the domestic slave Phurah desired the dress of an "English servant" is quite important because it suggests that the higher number of domestics in Kingston placed these slaves in a better position to augment their material world. A significant portion of the enslaved population in Kingston served as domestic servants. Similar to European society, where domestic servants occupied a position of "high status," serving as "symbols of the household's splendor in the eyes of the public at large," domestics within both Jamaican plantation and urban culture also occupied positions of higher status and were outfitted accordingly.[73] In their role as status symbols depicting the sartorial splendor of their masters, domestic slaves were also provided opportunities to obtain, through gift or purchase, more and better clothing.

The clothing purchases that James Pinnock, a Kingston barrister, made for his slave Harry demonstrate this trend. Pinnock spent around £2 10*s* annually between 1768 and 1771 for

[72] *Royal Gazette*, April 28, 1781.

[73] For plantation domestic and their desirability as "evidence of status" see Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 172-174. For the social status of domestics in France see Cissie Fairchilds, Domestic Enemies, 2 and 31. On black domestic servants as symbols of "prestige" in England see Philip Morgan, "British Encounters with Africans and African-Americans, circa 1600-1780," in Strangers Within the Realm, 165-167.

a "livery for Harry." Perhaps aiming to outfit his slave and display his own elite status, Pinnock's allotment of a livery was an additional expense, for during the same period, Pinnock also purchased garments such as two long frocks (10*s* 7 *d)*, suphia breeches(£1 2*s* 6*d*), or new breeches (1£ 10*s*) for Harry.[74] Pinnock was not alone in providing liveries for his servants. Though not a prominent item recorded in estate inventories of Kingston's elite, they are represented. For example, the Esquire Alexander Campbell's estate, when inventoried, contained two suits of livery valued at more than £8.[75] Liveries were not the only distinguishing clothing found on domestic slaves. James, known also as "Sawny," was evidently a well-known slave in Kingston, "being esteemed one of the best servants" for his neatness and amicable disposition. He was also distinguished by a piece of clothing not normally seen on slaves: "a dark brown coat, with small yellow buttons."[76] Nancy, a runaway slave in April 1793, also appeared to have had more than the normal provision of clothing for a slave. "From Angola country," Nancy was "well known in the three towns," for she had worked as a domestic in John Bogg's tavern. Nancy, when she had run away, carried all her clothes with her. She "had on when she went away a green baize dorcas and white frock, and carried with her a purple coat and gown."[77] Although no mention was made aobut how Nancy or "Sawny" may have acquired these clothes, in their capacity as domestic servants, each slave worked in close proximity with whites. Perhaps in their position as household domestic, they were able to obtain cast-offs through purchase or gift.

[74] BL, Add. MS 33317, Pinnock Account book.

[75] JNA, IB-11-3 vol. 29.

[76] *Royal Gazette*, August 5, 1780.

[77] *Royal Gazette*, April 6, 1793.

The multiple articles of clothing represented in runaway slave advertisements such as the one for Nancy and the apparent fashionability of shoes and socks suggest a variety of possible ways that clothing was used as a device for social communication. First, excessive clothing owned by a slave exhibited the wealth of their owner who sought to display their elite social status within urban society on the bodies of their slaves. Daniel Roche discovered a similar phenomenon in servant dress and display in urban ancient regime France: "In this world of appearances servants had the task of reinforcing their masters' affirmation of omnipotence."[78] The livery of Harry, James Pinnock's slave, as well as the clothes given to female domestics as castoffs, reinforced the power of their masters or mistresses through sartorial display.

Second, multiple clothing items could also suggest the advancing economic status and social autonomy of a slave within Kingston white and slave society. Through acquiring clothing beyond what was normally prescribed for a slave, slaves were able to blur social and economic distinctions, particularly between the poorer elements of white and black society. Though racial distinctions largely remained in force, slaves displaying what whites construed as excessive clothing distorted the lines that divided slave and free. The writer of the *Columbian Magazine* who complained of the raggedness of Kingston's slaves noted that "few of them . . . are without better apparel." Their finery included anything from fine linens to "printed, striped, and chequered linens, and aprons on which are sewed rude imitations of the human figure, flowers, &c. cut out of white cloth."[79]

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[78] A History of Everyday Things, 207.

[79] "Characteristic Traits of the Creolian and African Negroes in Jamaica" in The Columbian Magazine, ed. by Barry Higman (Kingston, Jamaica: Caldwell Press, 1976, originally published, 1793). All references are to this edition unless otherwise noted. The writer of the Columbian Magazine noted that female slaves were often supplied with cloths by their owners. 10-11

Third, in some instances runaways also used the extra clothing they had acquired to alter their appearance. Some attempted to communicate that they were free blacks while others utilized clothing to assume a different vocational identity. Sawney had run away from his master and, as his advertisement recorded, had acquired clothing to fit his new vocation as a sailor. Though blind in one eye, he "had frequently been seen in Kingston and Port Royal sometimes on a Wherry—generally wears Dutch beads and sailors dress, having learnt to be a very good sailor since his elopement."[80] Chance, his master noted, "had on when he went away" the normal clothing of a slave: "a frock and trowsers." However, the applicant wrote that he "may change [his clothing] as it is supposed he took some other cloaths with him."[81] The owner of Tom, a "baker by trade," had no doubt that he was going to alter his appearance. The advertisement stated, "Had on when he went away a check shirt and a pair of trowsers—though he has in his power to alter his dress, having taken with him all his wearing apparel with a silver watch. . . . He took with him a pair of new shoes, and a pair of silver plated shoe buckles, being long accostomed to wearing shoes, he may probably continue to do so."[82] Tom was not only going to change his clothes in an attempt to escape slavery but was also going to attempt to appear above his station. By altering his appearance through better clothing and the genteel accouterments of silver watch and buckles, Tom likely hoped to assume a more elevated place in society where few would question that he was not a slave.

Tom's appropriation of English forms of genteel dress points to a fourth potential method of communication through slaves' clothing. In their role as domestic servants, slaves were placed in a position where they could observe the fashion choices of whites, which placed them in a

[80] *Royal Gazette*, November 10, 1781.

[81] *Royal Gazette*, April 6, 1793.

[82] *Daily Advertiser*, May 5, 1790.

position of cultural mediators—between slave and free, black and white, European and African—transmitting and filtering the social and cultural values of white society to the popular masses of slaves below it.[83] Obviously aiming to appropriate the fashions of England, the writer of the *Columbian Magazine* wrote that domestic slaves "frequently have their cloaths made in the newest English fashion and sometimes exceed it fantastically."[84] That slaves sought to emulate English fashion is also seen in the desire of the female domestic Phurah, who wished to appear as a white English servant. Or perhaps the acquisition of shoes, an item rarely seen on slaves, by Sam and Jack indicated their attempt to appear above their social status and enter the world of Atlantic gentility.

These attempts were alarming to whites who sought to preserve their cultural superiority, at least partially, through clothing. In colonial North American urban centers, slaves appearing above their station after appropriating European forms of dress garnered numerous complaints. Whites saw the material extravagance of many slaves as a challenge to, as Ira Berlin pointed out, the "exclusive symbols of civilization."[85] Similar complaints were formulated in Kingston by whites uneasy with slaves who appropriated the newest English fashions in their clothing or even "exceed[ed] it fantastically."[86] Johann Waldeck recorded that "the ladies of the city who have negroes as chambermaids, treat them better, and make a great display with them. They dress them in beautiful white dresses and beautiful hats, so that when a man does not see their faces, he

[83] On this see Faichilds, Domestic Enemies, 109, Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (London, UK: T. Smith, 1976), 28, 63; and Daniel Roche, The People of Paris, trans. by Marie Evans in association with Gwynne Lewis (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 283.

[84] Columbian Magazine (1793), 11.

[85] Ira Berlin, Many Thousands Gone, 160.

[86] Columbian Magazine (1793), 11.

thinks they must be ladies of high position."[87] Adding further confusion to Kingston's racial boundaries, as the writer of the *Columbian Magazine* recorded, was the dress of the Negro "Kept Mistresses" in Kingston, who were

> generally more expensive in their habiliments than wives; indeed their sole motive for cohabiting with white men, is the gratification of their extravagant desires. They value themselves on the number and ample dimensions of their coats, the weight and heat of which no way amend the effluvia just mentioned. The dress of such a Delilah is a Holland shift, cambrick handerchiefs, a chintz bed-gown, Morocco slippers, a beaver or silk hat richly laced, with a broad cloth laced cloak. [88]

Indeed, as this writer concluded, "the senseless extravagance of these Negro wenches required the adoption of a sumptuary law to restrain the 'unbounded extravagance.'" The emulation of white standards of fashion served to blur the social distinctions between slaves and free white society. Clearly, slaves, by virtue of their skin color, could never enter the elite status of whites in Kingston society. However, their clothing obfuscated the social boundaries whites sought hard to maintain.

But this cultural transmission was not without some alteration, particularly as slaves introduced African cultural elements into their styles of clothing. Shane White and Graham White have argued that clothing for North American slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth century represented a "cultural *bricolage*, a cultural mediation" of Africa and America. In creating a look that was distinctly African-American, North American slaves contrasted colors, fabrics, and patterns in their clothing.[89] Similar evidence exists for Kingston's slaves, who also appear to have chosen clothing with vibrant and contrasting colors as well as mismatched—by European standards—fabrics and patterns. For example, the clothing of Hardy, a runaway slave,

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[87] NLJ, Ms. 2006, Hessian Accounts of America (Waldeck), 133-134. See also Columbian Magazine, 11.

[88] Columbian Magazine, 10.

[89] White and White, "Slave Clothing and African American Culture," 164-170.

must have struck observers with a distinctly contrasting "scarlet coat, striped waistcoat and round black hat."[90] Sally, whose alias was "Charlotte," escaped with garments contrasting in both color and fabric patterns. She was wearing when she went away "a blue baize doccas and a stripped linen gown."[91] The writer of the *Columbian Magazine* noted that during the time set aside for "parties," the dress for male slaves was quite extravagant and garish. The clothing for males consisted of "white and coloured linen breeches and waistcoats; preserving in general and shewy patterns and *gaudy colours*."[92] Though it is difficult to measure at this point the persistence of an African cultural heritage in the dress of Kingston slaves, it seems clear that certain elements similar to the contrast of vibrant colors that Shane White and Graham White found among slaves in North America was also present within urban Caribbean slave society.

Conclusion

Within the colonial urban environment of Kingston, slavery developed in marked contrast to what was found on the rural plantations in Jamaica. Although Kingston had a black majority, urban slaves had to contend with a larger and concentrated population of whites. As a result, urban slaves came into contact with a more socially and economically diverse group of whites in Kingston. In Kingston, slaves were normally owned in small lots of no more than ten and were also widely dispersed across the social and geographical topography. Urban slave labor was also organized in a different fashion. Domestic slaves were much more common in Kingston than within plantation culture and were required to master a variety of skills as opposed to one singular task. Gang labor developed on the wharfs, where slaves worked to load and unload ships as well as carry goods across the port.

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[90] *Royal Gazette*, April 7, 1781.

[91] *Royal Gazette*, July 5, 1794.

[92] Columbian Magazine, 11. Emphasis mine.

The organization of slavery in Kingston created a more open and fluid situation for blacks. The self-hire system, as well as the opportunity to work outside the purview of whites along the docks and shores of Kingston, allowed for a measure of personal freedom not found on plantations. The self-hire system, as well as rewards, gifts, produce from the provisioning grounds, or theft, also offered urban slaves an increased opportunity to acquire capital that many used to acquire clothing in excess of what was provided by their master. The clothing provided to slaves signaled the master's dominance over them and also confirmed their place in society. But slaves contested this dominance by obtaining clothing that seemed, at least to whites, above their station. While not all slaves appropriated English forms of servant or genteel dress, those who did distorted the boundaries that divided white and black society, and in this capacity, they also served as cultural mediators. Slaves, it appears, were also able to preserve some elements of African culture in the styles of dress they displayed to white society. Slaves often became more visible to white society by virtue of their clothing, especially when that clothing departed from the norms established by whites. In this way, slaves utilized clothing to contest the social boundaries in which they found themselves encased.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

When Samuel Dickens of Council Street in London wrote to the Board of Trade at Whitehall in 1757 supporting the move of Jamaica's capital from Spanish Town to the more modern Kingston, his letter reflected the dramatic growth of the urban parish since its founding in 1693. Following the devastating earthquake of 1693 that destroyed two thirds of Port Royal and killed more than 2,000 inhabitants, colonial leaders chose as the site for a new town and principle port for Jamaica the Liguanea Plain at the foot of the Blue Mountains. After a rough beginning, during which many more inhabitants of the region died from exposure to the tropical heat and diseases, the new town of Kingston matured into a commercially prominent town. Situated at the crossroads of the British Empire and at the center of Jamaican economic life Kingston prospered. Its growth was so extensive that just after its first half century of existence Dickens could write that Kingston was the "grand mart and magazine of the island."

Kingston's economic expansion over the course of the eighteenth century came as Jamaica's fortunes rose in the production of sugar. After initial attempts in the production of cocoa failed in the 1670's, Jamaican plantation owners turned to the more lucrative cultivation of sugar cane. Between 1670, when there were only 57 sugar plantations, and the turn of the century, the number of plantations more than doubled (124), and by 1774 Jamaica boasted over 740 sugar plantations. By the 1730's Jamaica was the leading producer of sugar in the Caribbean, a position it held throughout the century. The market in sugar proved to be an

extremely profitable venture for many plantation owners. Some owners established elaborate estates in the rural parishes of Jamaica while many others retired to England where they lived as absentee plantation owners. However profits were not limited to the rural plantation owners. A great amount of the sugar produced in Jamaica was exported through Kingston harbor profiting the merchants and factors located there. As the production and exportation of sugar grew over the course of the eighteenth century it proved to be a commercial boon for the planters of Jamaica, the merchants located in Kingston and the Atlantic world, as well as an important source of revenue for the British Crown. With its dramatic impact on the British Atlantic economy many came to recognize the island as the "jewel of the British Crown."

The expansion in plantation production of sugar corresponded to the growing market in slaves. Imported slaves from Africa provided much of the labor on sugar plantations where conditions were deplorable. Planter brutality and violence, as well as the extremely difficult work regimen required for the cultivation and harvest of sugar, combined to devastate the slave population of Jamaica. Yet, slave imports to Jamaica kept pace with planter demands. Between 1702 and 1808 Jamaica served as the principal destination for slaves intended for British North America. Over the course of the eighteenth century over 830,000 Africans were brought to the island. Until the latter third of the eighteenth century all slaves destined for Jamaican plantations passed through Kingston. This market provided great profit to the slave merchants and factors located there who collected fees for the sale of slaves or who served as commission agents for merchant houses located across the Atlantic. After the 1760's other Jamaican ports such as Montego Bay on the eastern portion of the island where opened to the slave trade but Kingston remained the primary port of call for slave traders and the trade in slaves remained a principle avenue of commercial enterprise and profit.

Despite the dominance of the sugar and slave trade, Kingston was not merely shipping and receiving center for these products. Kingston also served as the major entrepôt for the island with a variety of commercial opportunities for entrepreneurial minded merchants. The *Asiento* trade (1713), which provided a monopoly for British Merchants trading slaves with Spanish America, gave Kingston's commercial enterprise a forward looking nature as Kingston's merchants re-exported close to 5,000 slaves annually to the Spanish Caribbean. Exports of slaves to the Spanish Caribbean grew alongside the internal trade of Jamaica. Foodstuffs, intended for the slaves of Jamaica's plantations, and plantation supplies from colonial North America (until the American Revolution disrupted this trade), largely went through Kingston and its merchant community. The lucrative trade in manufactures from England such as clothing, furniture, or china intended for the white citizens of Jamaica also passed through Kingston merchants. The variety of commercial opportunities in the sugar or slave trade, or in the internal trade of plantation supplies and manufactures provided entrepreneurial minded merchants with profits, access to foreign markets and commercial ties throughout the Spanish and British Caribbean.

The commercial prosperity of Jamaica promoted Kingston's population growth and social development throughout the eighteenth century. English, Scottish and Jewish immigrants, attracted by the potential fortunes to be made in the sugar and slave markets of Kingston, settled in the urban parish where they worked as merchants, factors, physicians or in a host of other vocations. Some were quite successful as probate returns for the period suggest but for many, the hopes of making a fortune remained elusive. While whites were attracted to the fortunes of Jamaica, blacks from Africa were yanked from their homes and villages, and transported across the Atlantic to work as slaves on the sugar plantations. Although there were few if any plantations in Kingston a significant number of slaves worked as domestic servants, on the

wharves, or in the carrying trade of the harbor. Despite its reputation as a deathtrap Kingston's white and black population grew and by the 1770's Kingston was the third largest city within British America absorbing anywhere from 250 – 300 of the nearly 1,000 European immigrants who annually made their way to Jamaica during the eighteenth century.

The merchant orientation of Kingston, its nature as a slave society, as well as its population growth of white and black immigrants throughout the century combined to influence the development of its social and racial strata. Within an urban setting dominated by the institution of slavery whites, by virtue of their skin color, were located at the apex of Kingston's social and racial strata. Jews and free blacks, though small in number within Kingston Parish, occupied a middling level. Their freedom elevated them above the mass of slaves at the bottom of Kingston's social and racial ladder, while the skin color of free coloreds or ethnic origin and religious preferences of Jews restricted them from joining the ranks of Kingston's white population. Despite the larger concentration of whites found in Kingston the population in Kingston was a black majority. Throughout the eighteenth century as Jamaica's slave population grew, blacks in Kingston outnumbered whites by a relative constant 3:1.

With the continuing immigration of Europeans and Africans to Kingston a variety of cultural traditions flooded into Kingston. White and black met in this urban setting and each was forced to acclimate themselves to the dramatically different social and racial setting of tropical Kingston. In settling into to the new world around them they also attempted to retain old world cultural traditions while at the same time adjusting to the new social world dominated by the institution of slavery. This adaptation created a new "creole" culture and can, as this study suggests, be observed in the material culture of Kingston. From the built environment of urban architecture to the material acquisitions of white residents for their homes, the material culture of

eighteenth-century Kingston reflected the steep social and racial hierarchies that formed, the cultural attachments of whites and blacks to old world models of behavior and dress, and enslaved blacks attempts at self-autonomy and self-expression.

The contrasts inherent within slave society were visibly apparent to eighteenth century observers of Kingston's built environment. Beside an elegant Georgian mansion stood a "vile negro yard" clearly expressing the social and racial divide between Kingston's white and black residents. Serving a similar function as the plantation "Big House" which focused attention on the elite status and power of the owner, the Georgian style mansions of Kingston's white elites visually reinforced the division between elite and middling level whites as well as between whites and enslaved blacks. While displaying their social preeminence and racial power, these homes also functioned as symbols of their European cultural heritage expressing old world styles of architecture. Further, white elites in adapting to the social and ecological climate of the region increasingly moved to the Northeast section of Kingston over the course of the eighteenth century to take advantage of the cooler climate and avoid the ethnic and racial congestion of the southern and western portions of the city. However, not all white residents could build expansive mansions. Many of the middling and lower levels of Kingston society accommodated themselves to the tropical environment by building structures emphasizing comfort in a tropical environment. Homes utilized louvred windows and walls, and the Caribbean style "piazza", which allowed for the freer circulation of air and made for a comfortable and airy setting for work and entertainment. Jews, despite their wealth, were largely excluded from the social and political institutions of Kingston. The built environment of Kingston reflected this exclusion as Jews increasingly invested and moved to property in western portions of the city. The built environment of Kingston expressed the ethnic and racial divisions of Kingston's society, the

cultural attachments of whites with metropolitan forms of architecture and urban design, as well as the significant adaptation whites made with their tropical environment. These same racial divisions, cultural attachments and accommodations with the tropical environment are also seen within of the interior of Kingston's homes and the material objects that filled this space.

The homes of Kingston's white residents served a variety of functions. As a tool it was a site for business transactions, or it might also serve as a site for public and private entertainment. Yet the home, and the material objects found within, was also a site for the construction of an individual's self-identity, self-perception, and self-portrayal. As a merchant oriented community with commercial and cultural ties to the British Atlantic world, whites were intimately attuned to metropolitan ideals of polite and refined society often expressed in the consumption of fashionable furniture. Seeking to construct their self-identity as social and racial elites within Kingston and communicate their credentials as members of polite society within the British Atlantic world, Kingston's white elite acquired such items as mahogany bedsteads, tables and chairs, specialized gaming tables or fine mirrors and prints. However, this consumption was not limited to the upper levels of Kingston white society. Within the louvred walls of Kingston's middling and lower levels of white society, material acquisitions such as tables and chairs, mirrors and prints, or even mourning clothes suggested the pervasiveness of attempts to construct a genteel and polite environment.

However, it is important to remember that the tropical environment also influenced the domestic material desires of Kingston's white population. The often oppressive heat of the region was quite different than the more temperate climates of England or colonial New England and required significant adjustment within their material world. Kitchen and fireplaces used for cooking were increasingly moved to the margins of the house or away from the house entirely.

The mosquito net, found in many bedrooms of Kingston, was acquired in an effort to preserve a peaceful and relatively cool time of rest absent from the insects that plagued the night air. Glass globes, “the finest in the world” according to one traveler, allowed residents to burn their candles and lanterns even with the almost constant sea breezes of the port.

These same objects that announced an individuals genteel credentials within the British Atlantic world, announced their social status as white elites, or portrayed an adaptation to the tropical climate, also expressed white society’s economic, social and racial power over slaves. Slavery was never an abstract phenomenon in urban Kingston. From the slaves work in the carrying trade and at the wharves to their constant visible presence in the city’s streets and markets, slaves and the institution was apparent everywhere. Their social and racial marginalization was not only dictated by the colonies black code, it was also portrayed in Kingston’s material world. The fine and fashionable homes, furniture or clothing displayed by whites served to divide white residents from the enslaved black population emphasizing the social and economic divide between white and black. The close fitting and tailored garments that Kingston’s white society chose to purchase and wear were set in harsh contrast to the loose fitting clothing made of course fabric given to slaves by their masters. Further reinforcing the slave’s social and racial inferiority was the fact that slaves were seen as material objects themselves and often as an object for the display of the masters or mistresses social preeminence. Purchasing a slave was the surest way to advance both socially and economically in Kingston society. Further, domestic servants in Kingston were often used as objects of display. Long considered a sign of social prestige and power within the plantation “Great House” as well as within the European household, Kingston’s masters and mistresses provided liveries or finer

clothing that what was normally given to slaves to their domestic servants and in this way announced their social superiority on the bodies of their slaves.

These racial distinctions, cultural attachment and adaptations to the tropical environment were also expressed in the experiences and material desires of white women living in Kingston during the eighteenth century. Through examining the material world they sought to construct around them we can also see how some white women were able to carve out a socio-economic role within urban society as well as their agency in supporting Kingston's slave society. West Indian white women were often depicted within metropolitan sources as indolent beings with an unhealthy attachment to the frivolous consumption of excessive luxury. However, this caricature appears at variance with the experiences of Ann Storrow, Sarah Dwarris and Elizabeth Pinnock who lived in Kingston during the latter third of the eighteenth century. Attuned to the cultural requirements for establishing a genteel and refined home in urban Kingston, these women displayed discriminating taste in acquiring clothing and material objects for their homes. But the consumption of items such as mourning clothes, linnens or plate was not without financial boundaries. Far from the excessive consumption practices that writers often criticized West Indian white women of, the women reviewed for this study managed the domestic consumption of their household with careful attention to thrift and prudence in economy. Further, in managing the urban domestic household consumption white women also managed the domestic staff of slaves. In this way white women carved out a socio-economic role for them preserving the racial divisions between white and black.

The racial distinctions between white and black that whites sought to firmly establish and which were visibly apparent within the material culture of Kingston's slave society were also significantly blurred within the more open and fluid nature of urban society. Although the

concentration of whites in Kingston meant that slaves were almost constantly in their presence, urban society was marked by a greater degree of social independence for slaves. This is particularly seen in the self-hire system which not only provided a measure of social independence but also presented some slaves with the increased ability to acquire surplus liquid capital. Other slaves utilized the Sunday market and trade in goods from the provision grounds to obtain additional specie. In each case slaves often used this money to augment their material world, particularly in the acquisition of clothing. While the clothing provided by master's displayed his/her dominance over their slave, the clothing acquired by slaves contested this power and altered the social and racial distinctions of slave society. Particularly disquieting for whites were urban slaves who acquired the materials used to construct a genteel and refined appearance such as fine coats, gowns or shoes or buckles. Through their acquisition of material objects normally found only within white society, some slaves also served as cultural mediators transmitting the social and cultural values of whites to the masses of slaves below. However, the contrasting fabrics, and "gaudy" colors seen on slaves also suggests slave's cultural attachments to their African heritage. The variety of social and cultural meanings attached to the clothing of slaves reveals how urban society presented slaves with increased opportunities to contest the social and racial boundaries that confined them and mark out an arena for personal autonomy and self-expression.

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APPENDIX A

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF KINGSTON[1]

Sector	Occupational Category	Occupation	Juror List 1782	Voter List 1784
Government			7.52%	3.80%
	Esquires		23	13
Service			38.24%	40.53%
	Professional		1.30%	0.88%
		schoolmaster	4	3
	Retailers / local wholesalers		20.26%	25.14%
		auctioneer, vendue cryer	13	15
		hardware, dealer, iron monger, iron merchant	9	14
		retailer, shopkeeper, storekeeper	35	52
		stationer	2	1
		trader, dealer, jobber (tea dealer)	1	1
		wine cooper, liquor seller	2	2
	Retailer crafts		4.20%	3.80%
		baker, biscuit baker	4	3
		tailor	9	10

[1] I have followed the occupational categories found in Jacob Price's "Economic Function and the Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century," in Perspectives in American History 8(1974): 123-186.

Sector	Occupational Category	Occupation	Juror List 1782	Voter List 1784
	Building Crafts		8.49%	5.02%
		carpenters, house carpenters	19	13
		joiner	1	
		mason, bricklayer	3	3
		painter	3	1
	Travel / Transport		3.92%	5.60%
		blacksmith, ferrier	5	8
		tavern-keeper, taverner, dram shop keeper	3	7
	Other Services	barber, hairdresser	4	4
Industrial			13.4%	13.9%
	Textile		0.65%	0.59%
		dyer, silkdyer, blue dyer	2	2
	Leather / Fur		2.20%	2.07%
		saddler, saddlemaker	7	7
	Food / Drink Processing		0.65%	0.59%
		sugarboiler, refiner, sugarbaker	2	2
	Shipbuilding / Fitting Crafts		3.26%	3.80%
		sailmaker	1	1
		shipcarpenter, joiner, wright	9	12

Sector	Occupational Category	Occupation	Juror List 1782	Voter List 1784
	Metal Crafts		3.50%	2.95%
		cutler	1	
		gunsmith	1	1
		silversmith	3	1
		watchmaker	6	8
	Furniture Trades		1.60%	1.18%
		cabinet maker		1
		turner	2	
		upholster, upholder	3	3
	Miscellaneous		0.98%	2.60%
		chaisemaker, coachmaker, coachpainter		2
		printer, engraver	3	6
		staymaker		1
Commerce / Fisheries			40.85%	41.71%
	Mariners		0.98%	0.59%
		fisherman	3	2
	Merchants / Supporting Personnel		39.86%	41.12%
		broker, scrivener	1	

Sector	Occupational Category	Occupation	Juror List 1782	Voter List 1784
		cooper	5	9
		merchant	109	122
		wharfinger	7	7
Totals			306	338
Unclassified				
	Unemployed / Retired (Including Gentleman)		53	32

Sources: JNA, 2-6, Kingston Vestry Minutes for 1782 and 1784.