A MIGHTY EXPERIMENT:

THE TRANSITION FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM IN JAMAICA, 1834-1838

by

ELISABETH GRIFFITH-HUGHES

(Under the Direction of Peter C. Hoffer)

ABSTRACT

When Britain abolished slavery, in 1834, it did not grant immediate freedom to the slaves, but put in place an apprenticeship period of four to six years depending upon occupation designation. This period, along with compensation of 6 million pounds, was awarded to the planters for their property losses. It was meant to be used to "socialize" the former slaves and convert them from enslaved to wage labor. The British government placed the task of overseeing the apprenticeship period in the hands of a force of stipendiary magistrates. The power to punish the work force was taken from the planters and overseers and given to the magistrates who ruled on the complaints brought by planters, overseers, and apprentices, meted out punishments, and forwarded monthly reports to the governors. Jamaica was the largest and most valuable of the British West Indian possessions and consequently the focus of attention. There were four groups all with a vested interest in the outcome of the apprenticeship experiment: the British government, the Jamaican Assembly, the planters, and the apprentices. The thesis of this work is that rather than ameliorating conditions and gaining the cooperation they needed from their workers, the planters responded with coercive acts that drove the labor force from the plantations. The planters' actions, along with those of a British government loathe to interfere with local legislatures after the experience of losing the North American colonies, bear much of the responsibility for the demise of the plantation economy in Jamaica.

INDEX WORDS: Slavery, Freedom, Apprenticeship, Jamaica, Magistrates, Punishment, Planters, British Government, Jamaican Assembly

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B.A., The University of Houston, 1991

M.A., The University of Houston, 1993

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2003

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DEDICATION

To my mother who never lost faith in me

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my adviser, Professor Peter C. Hoffer, who made me realize I could finish, and ensured that I did. I am indebted to Professor John C. Inscoe for his advice and encouragement, and who, with Nancy Grayson, persuaded me to return to Athens to work on the *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. Without this move, the logistics would have been so much more difficult. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Professor Allan L. Kulikoff and Professor Kirk Willis for their valuable comments. I am grateful to Professor Cheryll A. Cody for encouraging my interest in Jamaica and for sharing her documents on Ballards Valley plantation and Berry Hill pen with me. I owe a special thanks to Peggy Galis, who knows more about history than many professional historians, for her generosity and countless kindnesses toward me, and for the Southern history she has shared with me. Finally, to my "sisters in the blood," Wanda Wilcox and Ellen Ritchey, for our Friday nights when we met to solve the world's problems as well as our own, you have been my social lifeline in Athens.

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INTRODUCTION

The largest and most valuable of the British sugar islands, Jamaica epitomized the social, political, and economic structure of a society created for the sole purpose of producing staples for an export market. It was not only the most valuable of Britain's West Indian colonies, but also the most problematic. Its slaves were the most rebellious, its planters the most contentious, and its Assembly the most independent.

The history of Jamaica, like that of so much of the Caribbean, is the history of sugar and slavery. The essential ingredient in the cultivation of sugar and the "development" of these islands was a large and continuous supply of labor. Because indentured servitude was unable to satisfy this demand for labor, plantation owners in the New World turned to importing slaves from Africa. When for a variety of reasons, Britain abolished slavery in 1834, the planters' problem was how to ensure the retention of a compliant work force.

The abolition of slavery did not mean instant freedom. The British government introduced a system of apprenticeship, a compromise between slavery and "full freedom." Parliament meant this transition period to be used for training and "resocializing" the former slaves to accept the discipline of wage labor. Jamaican planters received a four-year grace period and six million pounds in compensation for the loss of their property, and to fund the transition to this new system of labor.

The form that emancipation would take and the future shape of Jamaican society was highly contested by four main groups with several competing agendas: These groups

included the British government, the planters and their representatives in the Jamaican Assembly, the magistrates, and finally the apprentices and their allies, the nonconformist ministers.

Historian Andrew Porter argues that, for the whole of the long nineteenth century, the British public was embroiled in debates over the form that British policy should take in regard to its colonial possessions. Humanitarianism and abolition were making a significant impact on British identity and policy. Two of the leading questions were how much should Britain intervene to protect its interests, and what should be done about the well-being of native (or enslaved) populations?[1] Among the debates were the roles of state vs. private enterprise at a time when mercantilism and tariff protection were giving way to free trade and globalization; how much authority the British government should cede to local legislatures that might not have the welfare of all sections of the population at heart; and the cost of any intervention at the time of an expanding empire.

The thesis of this work is that plantation owners were unwilling or unable to identify how best to realize their own long-term self-interests in the struggle to retain a large resident work force. Rather than ameliorating conditions and taking advantage of "feelings of good will" generated by the move toward freedom, planters responded with increasingly coercive acts. In this they were aided by the actions of the Jamaican Assembly in which many of them served, and a British government unwilling to interfere with a colonial legislature, except in cases involving the most egregious violations of the law. The labor crisis that ensued was a direct result of the actions taken by a plantocracy

[1] Andrew Porter, "Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism," in Andrew Porter, *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. 3: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 198-221.

stubbornly resolved to continue its absolute control over the labor force, and the determination of the ex-slaves to shape their own future.

The fact that the Emancipation Act that finally evolved from all these debates called for a period of apprenticeship, was easy to understand. Apprenticeship had been practiced in some form or other as far back as the Roman Empire and was deeply embedded in English law. From 1564 to 1814, apprenticeship in England was governed by the Statute of Artificers. This statute was repealed as a result of the industrial revolution that caused a breakdown in the guild system that had been practiced since medieval times. In this system, apprenticeships lasted a minimum of seven years and did not expire until apprentices reached age twenty-four. Children could also be apprenticed for seven years.[2] As slaves were looked on as immature individuals who should be treated like children, apprenticeship seemed a natural scheme to adopt. This sentiment was summoned up by one of the magistrates sent to implement the system: "The negro is yet a child accustomed to be directed entirely by the will of others,…my earnest recommendation which may to some sound harsh, [is] to bring him now to pay rent and take wages, let him see that he <u>is</u> a man, and will be a freeman but that with the advantages he must submit to the duties of such."[3]

The purpose of this study is to examine whether apprenticeship served its purpose, and whether the actions taken by the planters could be considered rational under the circumstances, and to trace what effects these actions had on the occupational structure and condition of the labor force, and on the profitability of the estates. The analysis draws on evidence from three sources: plantation records, travelers' accounts by

[2] Wendy Smits and Thorsten Stromback, *The Economics of the Apprenticeship System* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2001) 16.
[3] S.M. Baynes to Lord Holland, 25 February, 1835. *Holland House Papers,* Add. MS 51819.

members of the Anti-Slavery Society, and depositions made by apprentices to the stipendiary magistrates who were appointed to oversee the system. A handful of these magistrates also kept personal journals in which they recorded their opinions on the apprenticeship system.

Of particular value to this study is the set of documents of Ballards Valley plantation and Berry Hill pen covering this period. The papers, which are part of a larger collection at Duke University's William Perkins Library, consist of lists of slaves and apprentices, statements of accounts, and letters from the estate managers to the absentee owners. Analysis of the demographic data reveals the effects of emancipation on the occupational mobility and condition of the labor force and the profitability of these properties.

The depositions made by apprentices to the magistrates appointed to oversee the transition from slavery to freedom are a second set of valuable sources. It is obvious from an examination of these documents that apprentices knew their rights under the new laws and were prepared to resist any attempts to deprive them of these rights. The apprentices' complaints to the magistrates fell into three main groups that can be categorized as:

1) Concern over "personal space."

2) Work-related problems.

3) Violation of traditional agreements on provision grounds.

Although slaves held no legal title to these grounds, customary usage protected their ownership in what had become a mutually beneficial practice. For the ex-slaves, any interference in the control they exercised over these provision grounds was the most

serious violation of all. These traditional rights, which had developed over a long period, included time off to work in the grounds and attend Sunday markets, and the right to inherit and bequeath them as personal property and to receive compensation for their loss.

The third valuable source of material consists of the eye-witness accounts by travelers investigating the treatment of the apprentices for the Anti-Slavery Society. Many of these reports contain graphic descriptions of the punishment inflicted on apprentices in direct violation of the emancipation laws. In an attempt to remedy the abuse, the British government placed the prisons under the control of the governor. The Jamaican Assembly then voted to end apprenticeship two years prematurely in an attempt to rid themselves of what the Assembly considered was Colonial Office meddling in the island's affairs.

When I first began to look at the period of apprenticeship in Jamaica, there were only a handful of books and articles on the subject compared with the very large number of publications that concentrated on slavery. As Carl Campbell points out, "Since it was neither full slavery nor full freedom, the study of the Apprenticeship has fallen between the two stools of slave studies and post-emancipation studies."[4]

The older works of William Burn and William Mathieson were of the institutions. William Green wrote from a planter's perspective, and Swithin Wilmot from the apprentices' points of view. Verene Shepherd has looked at the effects of emancipation on livestock pens, and Douglas Hall, Michael Craton, Nigel Bolland, and Woodville Marshall have studied the post-emancipation problem of labor. Sidney Mintz, Douglas Hall, Hugh Paget, and more recently Jean Besson, have looked at the free villages, many

[4] Carl Campbell, "Early Post-Emancipation Jamaica: The Historiography of Plantation Culture, 1834-1865," in Kathleen E.A. Monteith and Glen Richards, eds. *Jamaica in Slavery and Freedom: History, Heritage and Culture* (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002), 52-69.

of them founded by missionaries. Thomas Holt included apprenticeship in his study of race, labor, and politics over a century from emancipation to the 1930s, and Demetrius Eudell compared the political language of emancipation in Jamaica and South Carolina.

Scholars have also edited the journals of a couple of the magistrates. Woodville Marshall edited the journal of Major John Colthurst, and Roderick McDonald has just published an edited version of the diary of John Anderson, both of them magistrates in St. Vincent. Diana Paton has written on punishment and prisons, and has recently edited the narrative of James Williams, an apprentice whose testimony of abuse was used by abolitionists to bring an early end to apprenticeship. James Walvin, Michael Craton, and Barry Higman have written histories of Worthy Park and Montpelier plantations, that include slavery, apprenticeship, and post-emancipation labor problems. I hope that this study contributes something to the understanding of this period of transition.

The significance of sugar and the problems of securing and managing the labor force necessary for its cultivation are the subject of the first chapter. The planters were dealt a double blow, first when the British government ended the Atlantic slave trade in 1807, and then in 1834 when they abolished slavery. At the same time, planters faced a decline in sugar prices and increasing competition from Cuba and Brazil.

The system of apprenticeship, the treatment of the apprentices, and the role of the stipendiary magistrates are examined in chapter two. The apprenticeship period failed to ease the transition to freedom. In many cases, the exploitation of apprentices proved harsher than before. The magistrates, who were meant to protect the rights of former slaves, were frequently coopted by the planters upon whom they depended for hospitality when riding the circuits around their districts. The Marquis of Sligo, governor of Jamaica

during the first two years of apprenticeship, expressed his frustration with the system of justice in Jamaica. "In truth, there is no justice in the general local institutions of Jamaica; because there is no public opinion to which an appeal can be made. Slavery has divided society into two classes; to one it has given power, but to the other it has not extended protection. One of these classes is above public opinion, and the other is below it; neither are, therefore under its influence…"[5]

A case study of the effects of emancipation and apprenticeship on the populations of Ballards Valley plantation and Berry Hill pen, and the profitability and management of these properties is the subject of chapter three. Statements of accounts, letters from managers and proprietors, and lists of slaves and apprentices describing their occupations and conditions in 1829 (under slavery) and 1836 (under apprenticeship) provide the basis of this analysis.

Chapter four examines the problem of labor in the post-emancipation period, and the planters' efforts to maintain both the profitability of their estates and their domination of the labor force. When coercion failed the planters turned to more subtle methods of control, for example, selling plots on their estates to workers, and building Anglican schools and churches to serve workers' families. Later, planters turned to importing indentured servants from Asia and Africa. The influence of the non-conformist ministers and the laborers' "flight from the plantations" as they lost faith in the bargaining process are also examined. Whether the movement from the plantations was inevitable or whether it was the result of the planters' desperate, but misguided, attempts to control the labor force by any means, the effect on the Jamaican economy and its people was devastating.

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[5] *Under the Apprenticeship System,* by a Proprietor. Institute of Jamaica, 109.

CHAPTER 1

JAMAICA AND THE ATLANTIC SLAVE SYSTEMS

> Tremendous wealth was produced from an unstable economy based on a single crop, which combined the vices of feudalism and capitalism with the virtues of neither.[1]

The history of imperial Jamaica, like that of much of the sub-tropical Atlantic World, is closely tied to the cultivation of sugar and the demand it created for land and a large compliant labor force. The plantation system of agriculture that developed to produce this crop ruled the economic, social, and political life of the Caribbean and much of Latin America for nearly four hundred years and had a profound effect on the populations of three continents.[2] Sugar cultivation resulted in the largest involuntary migration in history, a migration that robbed Africa of the labor force it needed for advancement, radically transformed the demographic make-up of the Americas, and totally changed European diets.[3]

Columbus brought sugarcane from the Canary Islands on his second voyage to the New World in 1493.[4] By 1516 the Spanish colonizers in Santo Domingo were growing

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[1] Eric Williams, *The Negro in the Caribbean* (Washington: The Associates in Negro Folk Education, 1942), 13.

[2] The Portuguese first utilized plantations to establish settlements in the Mediterranean in the fifteenth century in an effort to expand their nation-state and protect their trade routes to Africa and the Orient. The Portuguese plantation systems on Madeira and Sao Tome were duplicated on the Canary Islands by the Spanish. Both systems utilized a mixed-labor force of enslaved and indentured workers.

[3] Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Curtin calculated that approximately ten to fifteen million Africans were shipped as slaves to the New World from the beginning of the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Of those, nearly 50 percent went to the West Indies.

[4] Sidney M. Greenfield, "Plantations, Sugar Cane and Slavery" in Michael Craton ed. *Roots and Branches*: *Current Directions in Slave Studies* (Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1979), 93. Sugarcane is thought to be native to Southeast Asia. It was taken to India where it caught the attention of one of Alexander the Great's

and shipping sugar to Europe using enslaved African labor. Within ten years the Portuguese were shipping commercial quantities of sugar from Brazil to Lisbon, and sugar cultivation quickly spread to Peru, Mexico, and Paraguay.[5]

In spite of the fact that Spanish settlers established a sugar mill in Santo Domingo that was capable of producing 125 tons of sugar a year, the Spanish failed to capitalize on their Caribbean enterprise. Sidney Mintz offers several explanations for the commercial failure of the early Spanish sugar industry: Spain's obsession with the mining of precious metals which led to the neglect of other trade; lack of capital for investment; control of all private enterprise in the New World by the Spanish crown; shortage of labor with the rapid demise of the indigenous Taino Indian population; and the migration of island colonists to the mainland after the conquest of Mexico and the Andes.[6] For the British, however, and to a lesser extent the Dutch and the French, the acquisition of land for settlement and the production of marketable commodities was always the primary goal. In contrast, the Spanish desired an indigenous labor force to work in the gold and silver mines.[7] Consequently, it was the British, Dutch, and French who followed the Portuguese lead and established sugar plantations in the Caribbean early in the seventeenth century. By the end of the century, sugar had displaced tobacco as the most valuable export commodity from the British colonies.[8]

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generals who brought some back to Europe after a military expedition in 327 BC. It was not until the thirteenth century, however, that there was any attempt to grow it commercially when Norman and Venetian landowners began producing it on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus with the labor of enslaved prisoners of war. This was the precedent that established the link between sugar and slavery that lasted another six centuries.

[5] Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985) 33.

[6] Ibid., 35.

[7] See Patricia Seed, "Taking Possession and Reading Texts: Establishing the Authorities of Overseas Empires," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3rd Series, 49 (April 1992), 183-209.

[8] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power,* 36.

The British first established colonies in the Caribbean on the islands of St. Christopher (1624), Barbados (1627), Nevis (1628), and Montserrat and Antigua (1632). Prior to 1660, these tiny islands were of more economic importance and attracted more settlers—mainly indentured servants employed in the production of tobacco and cotton--than the colonies of mainland North America. Attempts to cultivate sugar in the islands were initially only really successful in Barbados. But when cotton and tobacco prices fell everywhere, small farmers could not compete, and indentured servants began to find the islands far less attractive destinations, opening the way for the introduction of plantation agriculture.[9]

By 1650, Barbados had replaced Hispaniola as the leading sugar producer in the Caribbean with an annual crop valued at over 3 million pounds sterling.[10] At first the British sugar colonies simply supplied the British domestic market. For a short period in the late seventeenth century they did expand their trade into the European market, but British consumption was rising so rapidly it was impossible to satisfy the home demand. The reasons for the expanding market were twofold: an increase in British worker productivity meant more workers could afford a commodity that had previously been considered a luxury, and sugar prices declined as the result of increased production, particularly in Brazil.

Between 1663 and 1775 the populations of England and Wales increased from four and a half to seven and a half million and the consumption of sugar increased

[9] Hilary McD. Beckles, "The 'Hub of Empire': The Caribbean and Britain in the Seventeenth Century," in Nicholas Canny, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 218-240.
[10] Ibid. 218-240.

twenty-fold.[11] Noel Deerr estimates that annual per capita consumption in Britain rose from four pounds at the beginning of the eighteenth century to eighteen pounds by the early nineteenth century. By 1850, following the removal of sugar duties, annual per capita consumption had risen to over thirty pounds.[12] Sugar, considered a rare medicinal spice in the mid-seventeenth century, had become a necessity by the nineteenth century, the single most importation addition to the working-class diet, contributing one-sixth of the per-capita caloric intake.[13] These changes in diet and consumption patterns were not accidental, Sidney Mintz and Eric Williams both argue that they were the result of political and economic forces embodied in the rise of mercantilism and capitalism.[14] Sugar was first used to sweeten tea, and tea drinking had spread to all classes of the British population by the late eighteenth century. Tea consumption was encouraged by three very different interests: the East India Company, which ran the tea trade; the British government, with its need for tax revenues; and the temperance movement. The popularity of tea was soon followed by a similar demand for coffee, and later for chocolate, although only the wealthy could afford the latter. Coffee houses spread throughout London and Europe, but tea was cheaper and the East India Company had a monopoly. As a result, English consumption of coffee never matched that of the ubiquitous tea. West Indian sugar growers benefited no matter which beverage the population consumed.[15] Of all the British West Indian sugar islands Jamaica would become the most valuable.

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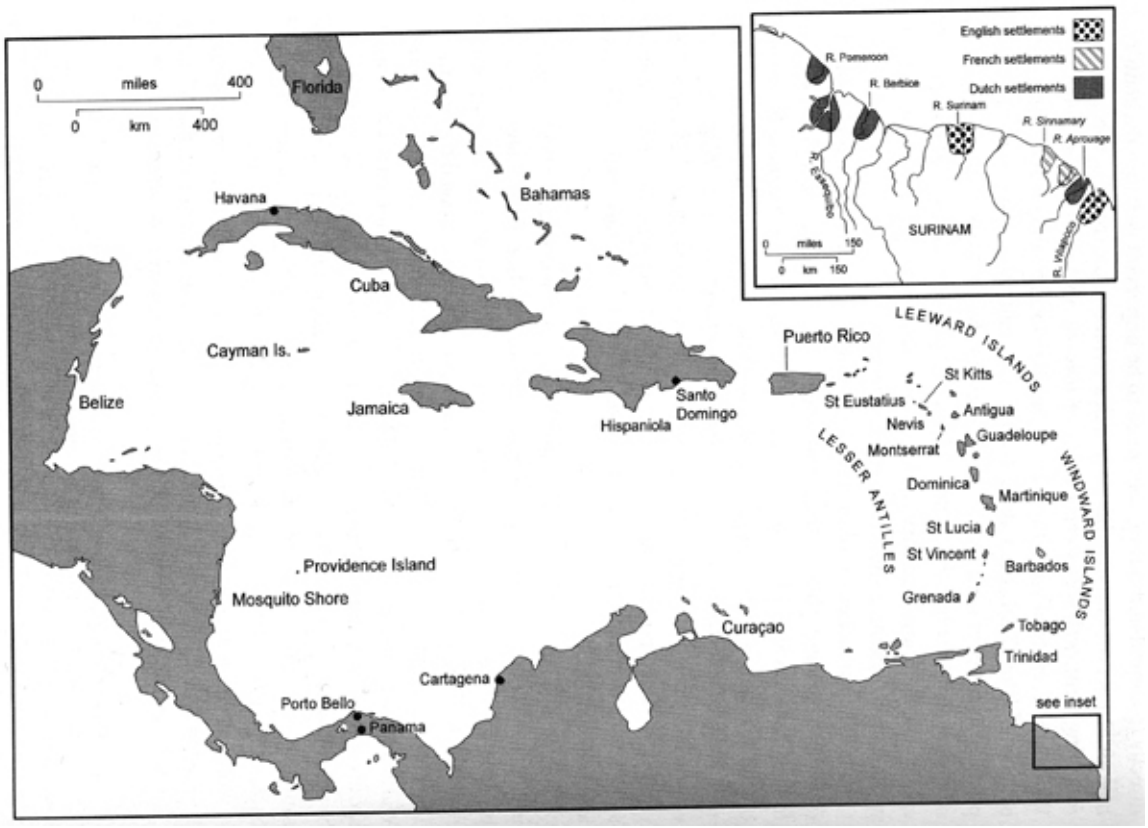
[11] Richard Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery* (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1974), 19.
[12] Noel Deerr, *The History of Sugar* (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1950), 2: 532.
[13] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power,* 149.

Fig. 1.1: Map of the Caribbean



Jamaica, the largest of the former British West Indian colonies, is part of the Greater Antilles, located in the Caribbean Sea ninety miles south of Cuba. Approximately 145 miles long by 50 miles wide, with an area of 4,200 square miles, much of the interior is mountainous—more than half the land being over 1,000 feet above sea level—with the Blue Mountains in the east rising to just under 7,500 feet. The name Jamaica is derived from the Taino/Arawak word "Xaymaca" meaning abundance of streams, but the island's more than one hundred rivers are of little or no navigational value due to boulders and waterfalls.[16] There are three areas of the island that are

[14] Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964), 33. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power,* 39-41.
[15] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power,* 111-114.
[16] Colin G. Clarke and Alan G. Hodgkiss, *Jamaica in Maps* (London: University of London Press Ltd., 1974), 14.

suitable for the production of sugar: coastal plains; the land along the lower basins and deltas of large rivers; and fertile inland valleys.

When Christopher Columbus first sighted Jamaica in 1494, an estimated 70,000 Taino Amerindians inhabited the island. In 1509, his son, Diego, Viceroy of the Indies, appointed Juan de Esquivel, a participant in the massacre of 700 Tainos in Hispaniola, as governor of Jamaica. The Spanish planned to establish the island as a staging post and settlement to supply cattle and labor to the more profitable mainland colonies. Esquivel forced the Indians into agricultural *encomiendas*[17] to grow food and cotton. By the end of Esquivel's six-year term, the Taino population was virtually wiped out. Those who did not die of smallpox, committed suicide or ran away.[18]

The Spanish colonists and their African slaves, along with some Portuguese Jews and the surviving Tainos, lived on isolated ranches along the south coast. They imported livestock and grew cocoa, corn, yucca, cotton, indigo and a little sugar, and built a small settlement they named Santiago de la Vega (now called Spanish Town). But the number of settlers was insufficient to fend off the constant raids from adventurers, pirates, and privateers—most of them English—whose actions were granted legitimacy by governments only too eager to share in the fruits of their spoils.[19]

Jamaica had been a Spanish colony for about a hundred and fifty years when, in 1655, an English expedition mounted by the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, seized the island as a consolation prize following a failed attempt to take Santo Domingo. The

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[17] Groups of Indians were assigned to privileged Spanish *encomendaros* and forced to pay them tribute and labor.
[18] Irving Rouse, *The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People who Greeted Columbus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 156.
[19] See Richard 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), 151-153, for a discussion of British colonization of Jamaica.

population of 1,500 to 2,000 was almost equally divided between Spanish settlers and African slaves. As the Spanish fled the island they freed their slaves who moved into the mountainous interior and set up the first Maroon communities.[20] After five years of military rule and the restoration of the monarchy in England, Charles II declared Jamaica a royal colony.

During the next twenty-five years, thousands of poor white settlers migrated—some voluntarily but more involuntarily--to Jamaica and set up ranches, indigo walks, cotton and cocoa plantations. Later they grew ginger, pimiento, logwood and coffee in the mountains, while wealthier planters built sugar works and imported African slaves. At the same time, Jamaica became a mecca for buccaneers.[21] The buccaneers were originally pirates or freebooters who conducted raids on Spanish ships. After being expelled from their bases on Providence Island, off the coast of Nicaragua, and Tortuga, off Hispaniola, they settled on the northern coast of Hispaniola where they hunted wild cattle and boars and continued to raid Spanish ships. Following Cromwell's abortive attempt to take Hispaniola, the buccaneers (who had allied with him) moved to Jamaica.[22] The huge natural harbor at Port Royal and the island's strategic position made it a perfect base for raids against the Spanish Main. By 1670, the island had 20 privateers with a total of about 2,000 men and was attracting 100 ships a year.[23]

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[20] Recent research by Cuban philologist, Jose Juan Arrom, suggests that the term "maroon" is derived from an Amerindian (Arawakan/Taino) root rather than from *cimarron*, the Spanish word for feral cattle or runaway. Over the years several maroon communities formed and members lived by raiding plantations and frontier settlements. For a thorough discussion see: Richard Price (ed) *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (New York: Anchor Books, 1973).
Similar communities developed throughout the Americas: the *seminoles* in Florida; the *quilombos* in Brazil; the *palenques* in Spanish America; the *saramakas* in Surinam; and the *marrons* in the French Caribbean.
[21] From the French *boucanier* meaning freebooter.
[22] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves,* 20-21.
[23] Nuala Zahedieh, "Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in Early English Jamaica, 1655-89," *Economic History Review,* 2nd ser. 39, (1986): 205-222.

Port Royal was the "Wild West of the Caribbean,"a lawless town where luxuries and entertainment, such as bear-baiting, cock-fighting and prostitution, were a way of life. One eye witness described "all manner of debauchery" which he blamed on "the large number of alehouses and the crue of vile strumpets and common prostratures which crowded the town, undeterred by frequent imprisonment in a cage near the harbour."[24] Port Royal was a wealthy town with a large merchant population. Nuala Zahedieh argues that it was the spoils from plundering the Spanish Main rather than British investment that provided the capital to fund Jamaican plantations in the late seventeenth century.

The colony had not been founded by joint-stock companies or proprietors, as was the case for most British possessions. Other investors were reluctant to gamble their capital, and few settlers could afford the cost of raising a plantation of 100 acres with 50 slaves and 7 white servants that, in 1690, was estimated at 4,000 pounds sterling. But Spanish gold and silver was available to those willing to take the risk. Buccaneer Henry Morgan's 1668 raid on Portobello netted 75,000 pounds sterling, equivalent to over seven years of sugar exports. Profits from this privateering were initially brought back to be spent in Jamaica, but this changed in the eighteenth century, as planters preferred to live in Britain in ostentatious houses built with their sugar fortunes.[25] Government collusion in piracy was confirmed when Charles II knighted Morgan, (who gained further notoriety for sacking Panama after the signing of the 1672 treaty) and appointed him lieutenant

[24] Nuala Zahediah, "Trade, Plunder and Economic Development," 220.

[25] Later, many of those who became successful planters transferred their wealth to England buying large estates and becoming members of the landed gentry. This is born out by Edward Long's statement in 1774 that most property owners in Jamaica had flocked to Britain and America and drained their incomes from the island. Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica,* 3 Vols. (London: 1774), 475. For a further discussion see R. Pares, "Merchants and Planters," *Economic History Review,* supp. No. 4 (Cambridge, 1960), "The wealth of the British West Indies did not all proceed from the mother country; after some initial loans in the earliest period which merely primed the pump, the wealth of the West Indies was created out of the profits

governor of Jamaica.[26] The British tolerated the actions of the buccaneers until the large planters began to lose indentured servants to pirate crews, and owners of merchant vessels--fearing the loss of their ships and cargoes--refused to trade with the island. After a twenty-year struggle and the destruction of Port Royal in the earthquake of 1692, the planters gained the upper hand and the buccaneers moved to other bases, leaving Jamaica to develop its plantation economy.[27]

The transition of Jamaica from an economic backwater to a wealthy plantation economy was facilitated by the appointment, in 1664, of Sir Thomas Modyford as governor. Modyford, a former governor of Barbados and a wealthy Barbadian planter, was an agent for the Royal African Company with a warrant to supply African slaves to Barbados. He was granted authority by the British government to lease huge areas of Crown Lands in Jamaica to prospective planters. Settlers were encouraged to move to Jamaica from Barbados, the Leeward Islands, and Surinam. Modyford, who arrived in Jamaica accompanied by 700 planters and their slaves from Barbados and another 1,000 planters and slaves from Surinam, issued 1,800 land patents totaling over 300,000 acres. Each planter was allowed 30 acres for himself plus 30 acres for each family member, servant, and slave. In 1735, the Council of Jamaica limited land grants to 1,000 acres but wealthy planters easily found ways to circumvent the law.[28] The ensuing development of

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of the West Indies themselves, and with some assistance from the British taxpayer, much of it found a permanent home in Great Britain."

[26] Samuel J. Hurwitz and Edith F. Hurwitz, *Jamaica: A Historical Portrait* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 15. In the late seventeenth century Sir Henry Morgan became a planter, owning two sugar estates and 122 slaves in St. Mary's Parish, valued at over 5,000 pounds sterling at his death.

[27] See Dunn, *Sugar and* Slaves, 43-44. In the violent earthquake of 1692 half the town of Port Royal plunged into the sea and over 2,000 inhabitants died. Port Royal never recovered from this disaster and the fire that followed.

[28] Michael Craton and James Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation: The History of Worthy Park 1670-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 21.

a plantation economy and the need to acquire and retain a large compliant labor force governed the lives of the Jamaican planters for the next two hundred years.

Plantations were not an invention of the New World. They were integrated systems, not simply large-scale agricultural complexes, but social, economic, and political institutions tied to the metropolis by an expanding mercantile system. Their role was to supply raw materials for manufacture and consumption in the mother country and to generate a profitable re-export trade. Initially land was in plentiful supply, but sugar was always a labor-intensive crop, and Jamaican planters constantly suffered from a shortage of capital and the labor force necessary to ensure its successful cultivation.[29]

The population of Europe in the seventeenth century, however, could not supply workers in sufficient numbers to cultivate staples like sugar, tobacco, and cotton. British authorities made vigorous efforts to encourage immigration and many indentured white servants were shipped to Jamaica. They included 2,000 Irish boys and girls under fifteen years of age transported in 1655 on orders from Cromwell, and Scottish prisoners taken in the Royalist uprisings of 1715 and 1745.[30] In addition, the government even emptied English jails and workhouses in an attempt to satisfy the need for labor. Pardons were issued to any prisoners who would agree to transportation, and over 50,000 petty criminals (many of them vagrants) were transported to the Americas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[31] The shipment of two boatloads of convicts to Jamaica in 1716, however, was not a success. The governor refused further shipments after

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[29] Philip D. Curtin, *Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* 2nd. Ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[30] Hurwitz and Hurwitz, *Jamaica,* 13.
[31] Peter Wilson Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains,1607-1776* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing co., Inc.), 3-16. The outlook for persons in the 17th and 18th centuries convicted of crimes was bleak: either rot in Newgate Gaol "the hell above ground;" accept a pardon and transportation; or be pressed into service in the

complaining that many of the former felons had become pirates, while others encouraged the slaves to desert to the Spanish in Cuba, and the remainder refused to work.[32] The practice of emptying jails to satisfy labor needs in the colonies was not much more successful in North America. Many of those transported were town or city dwellers unsuited for plantation labor. Officials in Georgia complained that, "many of them took such opportunities as they could get to desert and fly into Carolina where they could be protected."[33]

In spite of encouragement by the authorities and the prospect of 30 acres of land on completion of four years of servitude, the number of indentured servants who went to Jamaica fell far short of the number needed for a viable labor force. In fact, the white population declined from 7,768 in 1673 to 1,400 twenty years later, mainly as the result of war, epidemics, disasters, and French plundering.[34] Indentured servitude was not the solution, slavery was. Without slavery the development of the Caribbean sugar industry would not have been possible. Slavery began as the economic solution to a labor problem and developed into the entire industrial, social, and legal foundation upon which the colonies were based.[35]

The following table records the numbers of slaves imported into the Americas during the Atlantic slave trade. The figures for Spanish America, Brazil, and the United States include slaves shipped after the Atlantic trade had been abolished by most

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Army or Navy. British authorities continued to separate indigent children from their parents and ship them to the colonies well into the twentieth century.

[32] Coldham, *Immigrants in Chains*, 60.

[33] Ibid., 66.

[34] Richard B. Sheridan, "Caribbean Plantation Society, 1689-1748" in P.J. Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire Vol.2: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 394-414. Two years after the 1692 earthquake destroyed Port Royal, a French force raided the eastern end of the island, burning cane fields, destroying over 50 sugar works, and capturing 2,000 slaves, 1,200 head of cattle and over 400 horses.

countries. Cuba is not recorded separately, but this is where most of the Spanish slaves were shipped, especially in the nineteenth century. With the constant need to replenish the supply of labor in the New World, the most surprising figure from this table is that the roughly 400,000 slaves imported into British North America (and later the United States) had increased naturally to four million by the mid-nineteenth century. This pattern emerged early in the eighteenth century, and by the end of the century the slave population was increasing at the same rate as the European settler population.[36]

Table 1.1: Slave Importation During the Atlantic Slave Trade

Receiving Region	No. of Slaves
Old-World Traffic	175,000
Spanish America	1,552,000
Brazil	3,647,000
British Caribbean	1,665,000
British North America(to 1790)	275,000
United States (1791-1807)	70,000
United States (1808-61)	54,000
French Caribbean and Guiana	1,600,000
Dutch Caribbean and Guiana	500,000
Danish West Indies	28,000
Total	9,566,000

(Source: Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census,* 87)

Brazil, which pioneered plantation slavery in the Americas and whose participation in the Atlantic Slave Trade spanned nearly 400 years, imported over three and a half million slaves, more than twice as many as any other region. Brazil was the leading sugar producer at the end of the seventeenth century, endowed with plenty of land, rich soil, and easy access to harbors. In addition, the shorter voyages from Africa to Brazil resulted in mortality rates for the Middle Passage that were 30-50 percent lower than those of other destinations, which translated into a reduced cost per slave for

[35] Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery,* 27.

Brazilian planters. The first country in the New World to import slaves, Brazil became, in 1888, the last country to emancipate them.[37]

Spanish America, the French Caribbean, and British Caribbean imported just over one and a half million slaves each. The Spanish imported 700,000 slaves between the beginning of the sixteenth century and the end of the *asiento*[38] period in 1773. Another 225,000 were imported in the thirty-three years from 1774 until the official ending of the Atlantic Slave Trade in 1807. Undeterred by the ban imposed on the slave trade, Spanish America continued to import another 625,000 slaves to feed the sugar industries in Santa Domingo, Puerto Rico, and especially Cuba. A series of wars of independence throughout Spain's mainland American colonies between 1809-1825, however, effectively ended slavery in those countries.[39] Cuba, which became the world's leading sugar producer in the nineteenth century was, in 1886, one of the last to abolish slavery.[40]

Of the slave imports into the French possessions in the Caribbean and Guiana, more than half--over 850,000--went to St. Domingue with the balance of 800,000 mostly divided between Martinique and Guadeloupe and a lesser number going to French Guiana. By 1770, St. Domingue was the most valuable of all European colonies, producing 17 percent more sugar, nine times more coffee, and thirty times more indigo than the British Caribbean. David Eltis calculates that, by the time of the American Revolution, the value of crops produced in the French Caribbean was 43 percent greater

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[36] Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade,* 73.
[37] Ibid.,51-52.
[38] The *asiento* was a license issued by Spain to a foreign shipper to carry slaves to Spanish America. This was a highly desirable license as it enabled shippers to illegally sell other goods in exchange for Spanish silver. British traders were awarded the *asiento* by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713). See Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade,* 21. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves,* 235.
[39] John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions 1808-1826, 2nd edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986).

than those of the British Caribbean.[41] In order to achieve this remarkable growth, St. Domingue needed to replenish its labor force with over 30,000 new slaves annually, which Philip Curtin estimates as between one-third and one-half of the entire Atlantic trade during the 1780s.[42]

With the obvious exception of St. Domingue and also Louisiana (which stopped importing slaves after 1778 and was sold to the United States in 1803), the other French colonies continued to import slaves until about 1831. The French slave trade, however, returned in a different guise between 1852-1861 when the French government authorized the purchase of African slaves who would be freed on board ship to become "contract workers" in the French islands.[43]

Although later overtaken in importance by Jamaica, Barbados was for many years the most valuable of the British sugar islands. A tiny island only one twenty-seventh the size of Jamaica, its settlers first grew tobacco and cotton, and then, with assistance from Dutch shippers who had experience growing cane in Brazil, the settlers pioneered sugar growing in the British Caribbean. Barbados was the leading sugar producer in the end of the seventeenth century and had a larger population than either Massachusetts or Virginia, with a population density four times greater than England's.[44]

By 1767, Barbados was a sugar monoculture with 80 percent of its arable land dedicated to growing cane. Just 175 planters owned half the land and half the slaves.[45] Barbados was an anomaly among the Caribbean islands in that, by 1810, its slave

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[40] Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
[41] David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, 266.
[42] Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade,* 75.
[43] Ibid., 82.
[44] Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex,* 83.
[45] Ibid.,

population was increasing naturally. The best explanation for this growth was that there was a favorable ratio of female to male slaves, and that there were fewer absentee owners meaning that planters took a more personal interest in the welfare of their enslaved workers. The Privy Council of Barbados added a further explanation: when a Barbadian planter requested permission to ship some of his slaves to Trinidad which, like Jamaica, suffered from a decreasing slave population, the Council claimed that this "demonstrated that the Barbados plan of rationed allowances was superior to the provision ground system [practiced in Trinidad and Jamaica]."[46]

The Leeward Islands of St. Kitts, Antigua, Montserrat, and Nevis, which together imported almost the same number of slaves as Barbados, developed their sugar industries next, and by 1750, according to Curtin, were exporting three times as much sugar as Barbados.[47] The Leewards were at times occupied by both the British and the French and, in fact, changed hands several times as the result of wars that tended to interrupt the smooth development of their plantation economies.

It was not until the early eighteenth century that Jamaica out-produced all the other British Caribbean possessions. Jamaica's location put it at a disadvantage in both the reception of the numbers of slaves it desired and the cost of its sugar, two to five pounds sterling per ton higher than that of sugar shipped from Barbados, owing to the longer voyage to Liverpool.[48] The estimated number of slaves imported into the various British West Indian colonies is illustrated in the following table.

[46] Higman, *Slave Populations,* 306.
[47] Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, 84.
[48] Curtin, *Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex,* 75.

Table 1.2: Estimates of Slave Imports into the British West Indies

Region	No. of Slaves
Jamaica	747,500
Barbados	387,000
Leeward Islands	346,000
Ceded and conquered islands*	159,500
Miscellaneous small possessions	25,000
Total	1,665,000

(Source: Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade,* 71)

*St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Dominica, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago
The figure for Jamaica includes over 200,000 who were shipped on to other colonies (mainly Spanish possessions).

Being a sugar planter was risky business. Planters depended on English factors to sell their sugar and extend them credit with which to purchase slaves, supplies, and equipment. And they relied on the Royal African Company to deliver their labor supply.[49] Jamaican planters never received the number of slaves they wanted for two reasons. First, it was easier to ship to Barbados which was 1,000 miles closer to Africa; and second, Jamaica was the chief staging post for the *asiento* and many of the most desirable slaves were shipped on to the Spanish colonies.[50]

But from the beginning of the eighteenth century until the end of the British slave trade in 1807, over half a million slaves were transported to work the plantations of Jamaica. Owing to a combination of factors including the skewed sex ratio, low fertility and high mortality rates, maltreatment, overwork, disease, and resistance, the population of the British Caribbean (with the later exception of Barbados) failed to increase

[49] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves,* 189. The Royal African Company was a joint-stock enterprise that was granted a monopoly on the English slave trade in 1673. The monopoly ended with the Glorious Revolution of 1688, after which the trade was opened to all Englishmen—although private slave ships paid a 10 percent duty until 1712.
[50] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*., 235.

naturally.[51] Whether it was, in fact, true that planters found it more expedient to work slaves to death and replace them rather than encourage reproduction, official estimates show that it was nearly two and one half times more costly to raise a slave from birth than to purchase an enslaved adult.[52] Slave trader, John Newton, recalled hearing from an Antiguan planter, in 1751, that, "It was cheaper to work slaves to the utmost, and by little relaxation, hard fare, and hard usage, to wear them out before they became useless, and unable to do service; and to buy new ones, to fill up their places."[53] The following table illustrates the increasing rate of slave importations during the years that Jamaica was a leading sugar producer. In less than forty years, the rate of importation increased over 250 percent, reaching its height in the mid century and slowly decreasing toward the end of the century.

Table 1.3: Slave Importations into Jamaica 1702-1807

Period	No. of Slaves
1702-1719	45,209
1720-1739	72,990
1740-1759	117,481
1760-1775	107,446
1776-1807	90,373
Total	433,519

(Source: Deerr, *The History of Sugar,* 278)

Following a period of rapid growth, which in 1712 saw Jamaican sugar production exceed that of Barbados for the first time, Jamaica became firmly established as the major British sugar producer. After leveling off between 1730-1750, production

[51] See Deerr, *The History of Sugar;* Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves;* Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery;* B.W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean 1807-1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984). Gisela Eisner, *Jamaica, 1830-1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 129.
[52] Deerr, *The History of Sugar,* 278. The Board of Trade calculated in 1830 that it cost 112 pounds to raise a slave to the age of fourteen, whereas the market value of a slave in Jamaica in 1824 was only 45 pounds.
[53] Quoted in Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery,* 244.

increased rapidly, until in 1805 the Jamaican crop was nearly 100,000 tons, the largest single sugar export from any country for the two hundred years from 1700-1900.[54]

The number of sugar plantations grew in a similarly dramatic fashion. From approximately 70 in 1675, over the next one hundred years the number increased tenfold, until in 1774 there were an estimated 775 plantations. At the same time, the slave population grew from under ten thousand in 1673 to two hundred thousand in 1774. By 1770, sugar and rum constituted nearly 88 percent of the value of exports from Jamaica to Britain, Ireland, and North America—in large part due to the protection given to colonial producers in the British home market.[55] Table 1.4 charts the rise and fall of Jamaican sugar production from the latter part of the eighteenth century to the mid nineteenth century, when it was rapidly declining.

Table 1.4: Annual Jamaican Sugar Production 1780-1839

Period	Annual Average in tons	Change %
1780-1789	54,162	
1790-1799	60,105	+ 11.1
1800-1809	84,400	+ 40.4
1810-1819	76,139	- 9.8
1820-1829	72,047	- 5.3
1830-1839	58,841	- 18.3

(Source: Deerr, *The History of Sugar,* 198)

Of all the British possessions in the Americas it was Jamaica that was dominated by large slave plantations. In 1832, for example, 36 percent of Jamaican slaves lived in units of over 200 compared with only 5 percent in the sugar-producing areas of Louisiana.[56] The largest Jamaican estates were located in the most desirable areas—on

[54] B.W. Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica Publications Limited, 1988), 8.
[55] Richard Sheridan, "Changing Sugar Technology and the Labour Nexus," *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids,* 63, (1989): 63.
[56] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 69.

fairly level terrain near ports or other transportation networks. In the years between the end of the slave trade in 1807 and emancipation in 1834, the sugar industry was increasingly consolidated into large units. This, in turn, resulted in a loss of some of the independent economic activity experienced on smallholdings.[57] After the mid-eighteenth century Jamaican planters faced a series of crises both internal and external in origin. Warfare, slave insurrections, abolitionist pressure to end the slave trade and slavery, natural disasters, the rising cost of credit, and serious fluctuations in the price of sugar characterized the years between 1775 and 1806. Increased sugar production in Santo Domingo, Cuba, and Brazil depressed sugar prices, while, at the same time, the price of slaves rose as the increase in production demanded an equivalent increase in the supply of labor.

Jamaica was an inhospitable environment. Wars, disease, natural disasters, the climate, and topography all combined to produce a life that was harsh, violent, and frequently brief. The planters, lack of capital resources, the need for a steady supply of labor, the unhealthy environment, and market competition, made planting a risky business. The central mountains and the Maroons made travel from north to south difficult, and most goods had to be transported around the coasts by ship. Maroon communities were thorns in the sides of both the British Army and plantation owners. They provided a haven for runaway slaves who then raided plantations for supplies and female slaves.

Throughout the 1730s they fought the British, until, in 1739, the Trelawny Town Maroons signed a peace treaty agreeing to a grant of 1,500 acres of land (very mountainous terrain, only 100 acres of which was suitable for cultivation) in exchange

[57] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 71.

for a pledge to return all future runaways to their original owners. But as their populations increased, the lack of arable land forced the Maroons to encroach on the plantations. Trouble again flared up following a 1791 Act that banned whites from employing Maroons and restricted Maroon movements. The Second Maroon War (1795-97) ended when the Maroons surrendered thinking their grievances would be met. The British seized the opportunity to sell their land and transport the entire population of Trelawny Town to Nova Scotia and then to Sierra Leone.[58]

The climate and natural disasters also made life hazardous. Between 1770 and 1820, Jamaicans had to contend with seventeen earthquakes, ten hurricanes, four droughts and famines, and nine devastating fires.[59] Thomas Thistlewood, who owned thirty slaves and a small property called Breadnut Island Pen near Savanna la Mar, Westmoreland, recorded in his journal the devastation suffered during a hurricane in 1780. He and his slaves had taken refuge in the hallway of his house as the slave huts, stables, and storehouses were all "blown apart." A few hours later his house was torn to pieces and the only thing that remained standing was one wall "where he and the slaves had stood all night in the rain which came like small shot." In Savanna la Mar "about 70 whites, and at least as many people of colour and blacks as make up 500" perished.[60]

In addition to the natural disasters, malaria, yellow fever, smallpox, and dysentery, made life expectancy short. Insurance companies refused life insurance to any resident of Jamaica.[61] The annual death rate of army personnel serving in Jamaica was 1 in 4. Soldiers in Britain were reported to have mutinied on hearing they were

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[58] Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica,* 249.
[59] Ibid., 4-6.
[60] Douglas Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-86* (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1989), 277-278.

posted to Jamaica believing it "the most unhealthy place in the world."[62] Early death was not limited to military personnel. Missionaries and their families died at comparable rates. Planters similarly feared for their health and returned to Britain when possible leaving their plantations in the hands of managers, attorneys, and overseers. The first three generations of the Price family who owned Worthy Park plantation, for example, had an average lifespan of only twenty-four years.[63] As a result of these mortality rates, historian Barry Higman calculates that, by 1832, more than half the enslaved population was owned by absentees.[64]

Gothic writer Matthew Gregory "Monk" Lewis, who inherited plantations in Jamaica on the death of his father, kept a detailed journal of the two trips he made to his properties. Lewis described not only the hazards of the journey but also the hazards of life in the islands. Sixteen of the ships that left England with his were lost in gales, and Lewis himself perished of yellow fever, in 1818, on his return voyage to England. He wrote that he was warned against taking exercise after 10 am, being exposed to dews after sundown, and sleeping at lodging houses. Lewis ignored the advice.[65] Lady Maria Nugent, whose husband governed Jamaica from 1801-1815 and who also kept a journal, wrote of the frequent deaths, "The melancholy schemes that we meet with and the manoeuvres of party which we witness, will, I hope, be useful lessons to us for the rest of our lives, by shewing [sic] us the vanity of all things, and reminding us more and more

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[61] Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 69.
[62] Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 7.
[63] Craton and Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation,* 47.
[64] B.W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean 1807-1834* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 112-113.
[65] Matthew Gregory Lewis, *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor* (London: John Murray, 1834), 64.

the shortness and uncertainty of this life."[66] Lady Nugent, while writing sympathetically of the constant deaths, also commented scathingly on the way British residents overindulged in rich food and drink.

If conditions were difficult for whites, they were far worse for slaves. The ongoing slave trade, absentee owners, wars and the disruption in food supplies, distant provision grounds, the labor demanded to cultivate sugar, the harsh climate and prevalence of disease, and the ability of the Jamaican Assembly to circumvent British government directives aimed at protecting the enslaved population, were a deadly combination. In the eighteenth century various estimates put the death rate for slaves during the middle passage and the seasoning period of the first three years on the plantations as thirty to fifty percent. [67]

Whereas most English colonies were usually financed and organized by private investors, as previously noted, Jamaica was founded by the army and pirates and settled by convicts and indentured servants. In 1660, when representative government replaced military rule, the legislature was comprised of the governor, a Council of twelve appointed by the governor, and an annually elected Assembly. The majority of Assembly members were planters with some merchants, doctors, and attorneys.

The island was divided into parishes—initially 19 and later 21—and each parish sent two elected members to the Assembly while the towns of Port Royal, Kingston, and Spanish Town sent three members each. The legislature, which met four days a week from October to December, was modeled on the English parliament.

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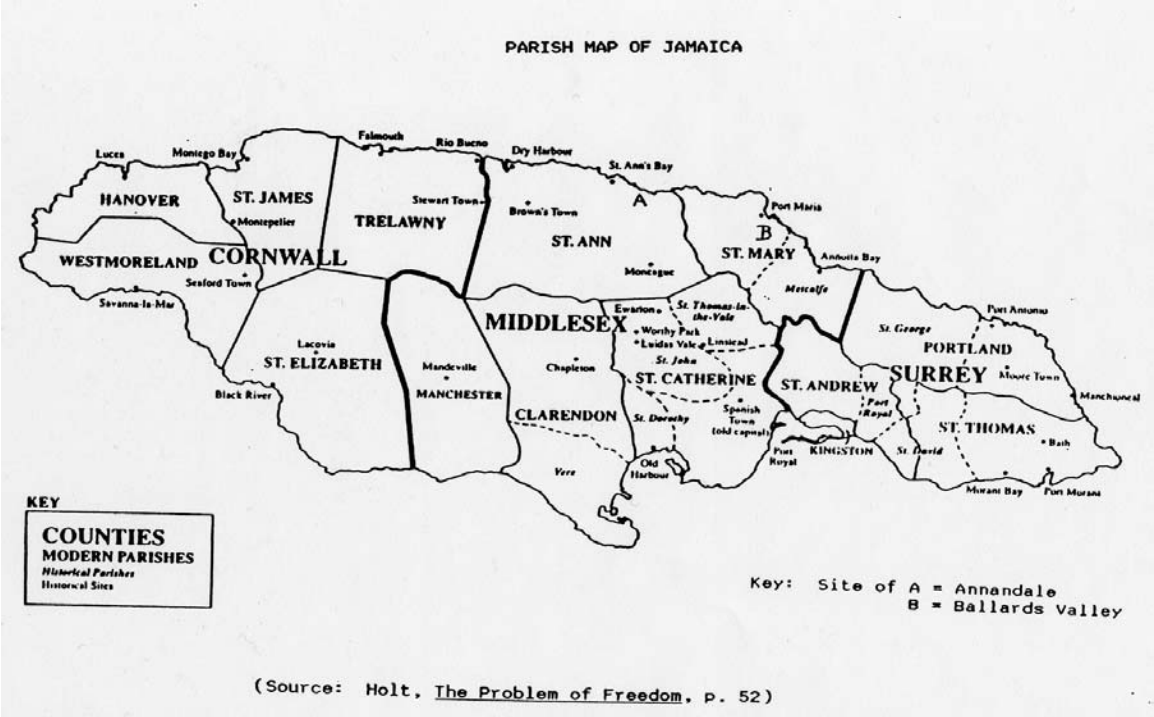
[66] Maria Skinner Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal,* ed. By Frank Cundall (London, 1907), 179.
[67] Michael Craton, "Jamaican Slave Mortality: Fresh Light from Worthy Park, Longville and the Tharpe Estates," *Journal of Caribbean History,* 3 (1971): 1-27. Slaves who survived the seasoning period could expect to live another 30 to 40 years.

Fig. 1.2



The Assembly set the agenda and the Council could only amend bills, but after 1710 the Council could no longer amend economic bills. Bills passed by both houses were submitted to the governor who was supposed to disallow Acts that conflicted with British policy and inform London of his actions. Owing to the composition of the Assembly, most laws confirmed the planters' agendas.[68] As it took at least a year for the Board of Trade in London to act on these bills, the Assembly took advantage of this loophole by passing annually those bills that were likely to be disallowed, such as the Consolidated Slave Bill of 1808.[69]

[68] For a discussion of how the building and maintenance of the road system in Jamaica benefited the planters and the Assembly's reimbursement of costs incurred by planters see Craton and Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation,* 58.

[69] Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society,* 10.

Local government was the responsibility of the parish vestries. Each vestry was made up of twelve men elected annually by the votes of a minimum of six freeholders, and consisting of the rector, two churchwardens, and local magistrates, and chaired by the *custos rotulorum* (chief magistrate). Vestries met whenever local circumstances required them to take care of the business at hand. Their diverse duties included managing workhouses and jails, road repairs, the education of poor children, tracking down runaway slaves, emergency relief, police, fire, local security, the regulation of markets, hawkers, and tavern keepers, the licensing of nonconformist preachers, and the collecting of parish taxes and rents. [70] To qualify for the franchise, residents had to be male, over twenty-one, have a freehold minimum of ten pounds per annum, and be white, which in Jamaica—unlike the mainland colonies—meant four removes from black ancestry.[71]

A militia was raised in 1681 to defend the island against external threats. Additional duties included putting down slave rebellions and hunting for runaways and felons. Free men from sixteen to sixty, "white, black, colored, or Jew" could join, although only whites could be officers. The men had to supply their own uniforms and small arms. The militia averaged 8,000 men backed up by approximately 2,000 British regulars.[72]

Although Jamaica was not directly involved, two revolutions in the late eighteenth century had major consequences for Jamaican planters and the enslaved population. The first was the American Revolutionary War in 1776 that resulted in a ban on direct British colonial trade with the United States and significantly increased the cost of supplies of

[70] Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society,* 20-21.
[71] Ibid., 44. For a discussion of the major color categories used in the registration of slaves in Jamaica see Higman, *Slave Population,* 154.
[72] Ibid., 26-27.

food and lumber to Jamaica.[73] Andrew O'Shaughnessy argues that the British defense of their colonies in the West Indies—at that time considered their most valuable possessions--contributed to their defeat in the American Revolution.[74] One quarter of all British troops serving in the Americas were stationed in the Caribbean. Of these, two regiments were deployed to Jamaica. Jamaican planters were sympathetic to the American cause and some called for secession and federation with the U.S., but the reliance on the monopoly of the British market and dependence on the British military for defense against attacks from other colonial powers rendered this a non-viable option.[75]

Historically, settlers believed that the British Navy was stationed in the Caribbean to protect them from foreign invasion, and the British Army was there to protect them from the slave population. The white population was right to be nervous. During the 1760s there were three major slave rebellions in Jamaica and another even larger one in 1776 that was a direct consequence of the American Revolution and the resulting loss of food supplies. To counteract these threats, between1779-1780 the British sent another six regiments to Jamaica and strengthened their naval presence.[76]

The American Revolution was a disaster for sugar planters in particular. The British government raised the duty on sugar and rum to help finance the war, production fell by nearly 50 percent, and planters had to compete with the military for any available food and were forced to begin importing supplies all the way from Ireland. To add to their misery, the Continental Congress ordered the seizing of British property. American privateers captured about 250 merchant ships, causing the collapse of four London

[73] During the American Revolution the cost of provisions rose 400 percent, and delivery schedules were extended by months from the necessity of shipping supplies from Ireland rather than North America. See Craton and Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation,* 166.
[74] O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided,* xv.

merchant companies. In addition, the French—taking advantage of an over-committed British army—captured Dominica, St. Vincent, and Grenada. In a final blow, six hurricanes between 1780-87 destroyed valuable provision grounds, and without imported food from the United States, over 15,000 slaves starved to death.[77] Slave-produced food was customarily supplemented by salt fish and guinea corn imported from North America. Planters and government officials became increasingly concerned that food shortages would trigger further slave revolts.[78]

One group that did benefit as a result of the American Revolution were the free coloreds who grew in total numbers and gained in their economic importance as peasant farmers. Their numbers increased as slaves who had served in the military were manumitted and black loyalists from North America emigrated to Jamaica.[79]

A second revolution had a very positive—if short term—effect on the fortunes of West Indian planters. In 1791, slaves in St. Domingue led by Toussaint L'Ouverture and encouraged by the revolution in France, rose up and defeated their owners in the only successful slave revolt in history.[80] The prospect of this revolt spreading to Jamaica—where the slaves had always been rebellious and where they outnumbered whites by 10 to 1—terrified the planters.[81] The end of St. Domingue's sugar industry as a result of the revolution, however, was Jamaica's gain. Planters could scarcely meet the demand and

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[75] O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire* Divided, 247.
[76] Ibid., 210.
[77] Ibid., 240.
[78] Ibid., 146.
[79] Ibid., 243. An estimated 1,270 loyalists and 4,000 slaves settled in Jamaica. Among them were several Native Baptist preachers like George Liele of Savannah who had a profound impact on the future of religion on the island.
[80] C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution,* 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).
[81] The Jamaican government requested military reinforcements and banned entry of free negroes and persons of color from St. Domingue. In addition, Jamaican slaves were forbidden to travel on ships calling at St. Domingue. See Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society,* 247.

for a short time the island prospered. But the gain was only temporary as the economy was in decline. West Indian prosperity had been based on preferential British sugar duties and lack of foreign competition. Britain could not absorb all the sugar that was produced, and Napoleon's "Continental System" barred Britain from participating in the European market. In addition, the developing sugar beet industry offered a cheap alternative to cane sugar.[82]

Jamaican planters also faced a problem of deteriorating soil quality. Unlike the planters in Barbados who, owing to the shortage of land, had been forced to add fertilizer to their cane fields early on, Jamaican planters simply exhausted the soil and then cleared new land. Edward Long, the Jamaican planter-historian, commented in 1774 that, "Others wear out their lands by incessant cultivation and a neglect of recruiting it with seasonable supplies of mould, or other dressing; and after throwing it up pass on to a new piece, which is destined to be worked to the bone in the same manner; and very few of them understand the method of preparing suitable compost for their land."[83]

In addition, a new variety of cane had been introduced into Jamaica in 1793 which was more resistant to pests and dry weather, and which yielded one-third more juice and supplied more fuel to the boiling house, but it also exhausted the soil more rapidly. The results were larger crops and overproduction that triggered a further decline in sugar prices.[84]

There was a temporary halt in the decline in sugar prices between 1793 and 1815 as the result of wars between England and France. But the ending of the British slave

[82] Hurwitz and Hurwitz, *Jamaica,* 50.
[83] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica* 3 vols. (London: 1774), 439.
[84] Sheridan, "Changing Sugar Technology," 68.

trade in 1807 created far more serious problems for the planters as slave replacements could no longer be purchased, and the planters were forced to begin to ameliorate conditions in an attempt to increase the labor supply by natural means.

West Indian planters were dealt a further blow following American independence, when the British government gradually shifted its interests from its Caribbean colonies to India, and abolitionists like William Wilberforce sponsored bills calling for an end to the slave trade. In a move to counteract the attempts of abolitionists to end the slave trade, Charles Rose Ellis (later Lord Seaford), an absentee proprietor and leader of the West Indian interest in parliament, used the occasion of his maiden speech in the House of Commons to argue against abolition of the slave trade. Ellis argued that the legal trade would be replaced by an illegal one. The solution he claimed was to "civilize the Negroes in the West India islands." They should be given "moral instruction," he declared, "especially in regard to marriage and the care of children." Like most Europeans, Ellis believed that polygamy was the root cause of the failure of the population to increase naturally. By arguing that this "moral instruction" would take a generation or two, the West India interest endeavored to preempt the abolitionists campaign for amelioration of slave treatment by offering their own solutions, and thus prolong the Atlantic trade.[85]

The abolitionist cause was helped by the fact that there was a sugar glut. In 1799, sixty-five estates were “thrown up” in Jamaica and allowed to become “ruinate,”[86] and a further thirty-two were sold to pay off debts. In addition, the British had recaptured some of the smaller sugar islands, such as Grenada, Dominica, and St. Vincent from the

[85] B.W. Higman, *Montpelier Jamaica: A Plantation Community in Slavery and Freedom 1739-1912* (Kingston: The University Press of the West Indies, 1998), 32-33.

French. In an attempt to prevent a continued rise in sugar production that would further depress prices, the British government then moved to cut off the supply of slaves to these new acquisitions and to all foreign-owned colonies. This action was expanded to include the entire British Empire, and on March 25, 1807, the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade became law.[87]

The size of the population and the production of sugar gradually declined after the ending of the slave trade. Table 1.5 illustrates the average annual output of sugar, the price per hundredweight, the total enslaved population, and the average output per slave.

Table 1.5: Sugar Production, Slave Population, and Average Annual Jamaican Output 1800-1834

Period	Value of Sugar Exports (Pounds)	Slave Population	Average Output per Slave (Pounds)	Average Sugar Price (Shillings/cwt)
1810-14	2,111,870	350,643	11.18	54.8
1815-19	2,322,436	345,252	11.56	53.0
1820-24	2,251,355	338,000	11.44	32.6
1830-34	1,985,984	313,000	10.99	27.2

*Amounts are in pounds sterling, 1832 prices.

(Source: Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica 1807-1834,* p. 213.)

Planters could not blame economic hardship on the work force at this time, however, as output per slave only fell 3.8 percent between 1800 and 1834. In contrast, sugar production fell over 15 percent and the slave population declined by 7 percent over the same period. Barry Higman contends that planters wrongly blamed their decline in income on the slave labor force and failed to consider that per capita productivity had

[86] A Jamaican expression meaning abandoned and allowed to return to nature.

[87] Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery,* 98. Denmark was the first to abolish the slave trade in 1803, the U.S. did so in 1808, Holland in 1814, and France in 1815. See also David Eltis and James Walvin, eds. *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Origins and Effects in Europe* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).

been maintained.[88] What really hurt the planters was that the price of sugar fell by over 50 percent during this period.

Abolitionists hoped that the ending of the slave trade would improve slave treatment, but it had little effect. They then turned to advocating amelioration of the conditions of slavery. As the result of pressure from the British government, the Jamaican Assembly reluctantly passed a slave registration bill in 1816. Under the terms of the Act, slave owners had to file a return each year with the parish Vestries listing every slave they owned, the condition of that slave, and detailing the increase and decrease in the slave populations on their properties for the preceding three years. This registration served the dual purpose of determining from death rates and physical conditions if slave treatment had improved, and also if new slaves were being imported illegally.[89] Duplicate copies of these returns were archived in the central Slave Registry Office in London.

Leaders of the anti-slavery movement in Britain stepped up their campaign, and West Indian planters, who were already losing their influence within the British government, were dealt a further blow when, in 1823, the House of Commons passed a resolution stating the intention of the British government to abolish slavery gradually. Revisions ameliorating conditions were made to the slave code in 1824, but most of these reforms were ignored by the Jamaican legislature and never enforced.[90] It was obvious that the intransigence of the West Indian plantocracy rendered it impossible to reform the system of slavery. Barry Higman argues that it was not until the attempts to ameliorate conditions failed, that humanitarians "came to actively promote the abolition of the

[88] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 214.
[89] Ibid., 46.

institution of slavery."[91] This meant that, in future, planters would have to pay wages for labor and, at the same time, compete with foreign producers in Cuba and Brazil who continued to utilize enslaved labor until the late 1880s.

It was not just the intransigence of the plantocracy that was to blame for this loss of support, but changing economic factors. By 1828, the West Indian sugar monopoly was costing the increasingly resentful British public more than one and a half million pounds a year. The age of mercantilism and its concomitant monopolies and protective tariffs was coming to a close, to be replaced by a booming industrial society and a policy of free trade.[92]

The final impetus for emancipation was the actions of the slaves themselves. No rebellion in the British colonies was as successful as the revolution in St. Domingue, but slave revolts and marronage were a constant threat in the Caribbean. Three revolts in particular pressured the British government to act to end slavery. A major rebellion in Barbados, in 1816, led by drivers and tradesmen resulted in the deaths of 100 slaves, the execution of 144, and the transportation to British Honduras (Belize) of a further 170.[93] In 1823, in Demerara (Guyana) an estimated 9,000 slaves, again led by drivers and tradesmen, rose up and, confining their masters and overseers in the stocks, they attempted to present their grievances to the governor. The attempt to petition the

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[90] Hurwitz and Hurwitz, *Jamaica,* 104.
[91] Higman, *Slave Populations,* 303.
[92] For discussions on mercantile capitalism and slavery see Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery;* David Brion Davis, "Reflections on Abolitionism and Ideological Hegemony," *American Historical Review* 92 (October 1987) 797-812; Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1977); Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760-1810* (London: Macmillan, 1975).
[93] Higman, *Slave Populations*, 393-394.

governor failed. Colonial militia killed 255 slaves (only two or three whites died) and dozens more were tried and executed or subjected to brutal floggings.[94]

Jamaican slaves had a long history of resistance and rebellion dating back to the first Maroon populations. These rebellions culminated in a revolution in 1831 that has become popularly known as "The Baptist War." The potential for a serious revolt had been growing. The humanitarian and reform movements in England fueled a belief among the slaves that freedom was within reach. At a mass meeting in May 1830, abolitionists in Britain demanded an immediate end to slavery. Leading British newspapers voiced their support for the abolitionist cause after the news of the persecution of missionaries and a particularly inflammatory speech from prominent Baptist missionary William Knibb. British ministers of all denominations preached sermons espousing the cause of abolition, and petitions—one with one and a half million signatures—were presented to Parliament demanding immediate emancipation.[95]

In July 1830, there was a revolution in France and the rioting spread to England. The Tory government resigned and was replaced by a Whig government pledged to reform parliament, and high on its agenda was the regulation of slavery. The planters made no secret of their dismay. They held a series of meetings and protests and there was talk of separatist movements and breaking from Great Britain to join the United States. The slaves were well aware what was going on. In addition, missionaries kept

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[94] Emilia Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). One of those who died was John Smith, a young, inexperienced minister sent out by the London Missionary Society. Smith was accused of inciting the slaves to rebel. He was tried and sentenced to death and died of consumption in prison before news of his pardon by the British government reached Demerara.

[95] Hurwitz and Hurwitz, *Jamaica,* p. 116. See also Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982.)

their congregations abreast of developments in Britain.[96] Uncertainty on the part of both planters and slaves fueled the unrest. The planters feared a rebellion similar to the one in St. Domingue, and the slaves—encouraged by the sermons of the Baptist missionary preachers—spread the word that the King had freed the slaves and they would have no opposition from British troops, only from the planters' militia.[97]

The rebellion was not the result of a single central organization, but rather a series of individual plots. The plot leaders, as was the case in the uprisings in Barbados and Demerara, were among the elite of the enslaved population, mostly drivers on the plantations and deacons in the local Baptist churches. One of the most influential was Samuel Sharpe, a literate slave and deacon in the Montego Bay congregation of the Baptist minister, Rev. Thomas Burchell.[98] Sharpe spread the word among his fellow slaves that the king had issued a paper freeing them, but that the planters had kept the truth from the slaves. He met with drivers and other Baptist deacons in the parish of St. James, and together they planned a series of non-violent strikes.

Three days after Christmas, in 1831, slaves in the four western parishes of Hanover, St. James, Westmoreland, and St. Elizabeth revolted and set fire to estates. Approximately 160 properties were burned—many of them only superficially—and a dozen whites were killed. The Earl of Belmore, governor of Jamaica, declared martial law and offered amnesty to those who surrendered. But, despite evidence that there was no organized attack on the towns and little threat to most whites, the militia exacted revenge on the slaves. Three hundred and seven slaves were killed and a further 626

[96] Curtin, *Two Jamaicas,* 83.
[97] Ibid., 85.
[98] Burchell was one of a trio of Baptist missionaries—the others were William Knibb and James Phillipo—who became famous for their abolitionist activities and for the "Free Villages" they established.

were tried by courts-martial or in slave courts. Three hundred and twelve, including Sam Sharpe, were executed. Baptist and Methodist missionaries were also arrested throughout the island, but only two were brought to trial and both were acquitted.[99]

While it is true that the leaders of the rebellion were Baptist deacons, white Jamaicans reacted to the revolt by giving it a religious significance that masked its political and social objectives. Slaves had rebelled not to escape and form a new society, but to remain on the plantations as free men with the right to earn fair wages.[100] Planters responded by forming the Colonial Church Union, an anti-missionary organization that outwardly claimed to be working to spread the doctrines of the Church of England, while in reality working for planter interests. This was not surprising considering that many Church of England clergy were the younger sons of planters. Early in 1832, members of the Colonial Church Union destroyed seventeen Wesleyan and Baptist chapels, attacked the homes of missionaries, and threatened their congregations. Missionaries were forced to take shelter in Kingston—the only place not under Union influence—and some temporarily left the island.

Leaders of the Wesleyan Missions in Jamaica appealed to Viscount Goderich, Secretary of State for the Colonies:

> In the month of February last, five chapels of the said society situated respectively in the parishes of St. Ann and St. Mary and in the town of Falmouth, were totally destroyed by lawless mobs, and that

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[99] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries,* 161.For more details of the Baptist War see Michael Craton, "Proto-Peasant Revolts? The Late Slave Rebellions in the British West Indies 1816-32," *Past and Present,* 85 (November 1979), 99-125; Curtin, *Two Jamaicas;* Philip Wright, *Knibb "The Notorious": Slaves' Missionary 1803-1845* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1973).

[100] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries,* 163. See also Eugene Genovese's definitions of slave revolts in *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), xxi. In the Age of Revolution, Genovese argues that slave revolts were no longer restorationist, slaves did not desire a return to a precapitalist society, but rather they demanded participation in bourgeois-capitalist property relations. They wanted their own land and the means to support their families.

> although several of the offenders who actually demolished those chapels were identified and affidavits of sundry respectable persons to that effect were soon after lodged in the Crown Office and Bills of Indictment were preferred at the Grand Court held in Spanish Town in June last, none of the perpetrators of those outrages have been brought to Justice, nor have your Memorialists yet been able to obtain any redress or compensation whatever for the destruction and loss of their property.[101]

The missionaries received an outpouring of support from the British public when planters reacted by trying to prevent further missionary activity and by tightening slave discipline. But it was the large free colored population in Kingston that protected the missionaries and organized opposition to the Church Union. The missionaries were also aided by the appointment of a new governor, Lord Mulgrave, who was sympathetic to their cause. The governor acted by removing Unionist militia officers and magistrates from their posts. And by the summer of 1833 it became clear that the Church Union and the pro-slavery party were no match for the combined opposition of the free colored class and the British government.[102] Thus, the planters not only failed in their attempts to prevent emancipation, but they also lost the propaganda war.

Eric Foner argues that 1831-1832 also marked a crucial turning point for the institution of slavery in North America with William Lloyd Garrison's demands for immediate abolition in the *Liberator*, Nat Turner's rebellion, and the Virginia debate on slavery.[103] Parallels can be drawn between the Baptist War in Jamaica and Nat Turner's rebellion. The uprisings took part only four months apart with a background of mounting abolitionist activity, and both rebellions were led by literate slave preachers with possible

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[101] Appeal for protection by Wesleyan Missions in Jamaica to Rt. Hon. Viscount Goderich, 1833. Institute of Jamaica, MS 779.
[102] Curtin, *Two Jamaicas,* 89.
[103] Eric Foner (ed.), *Nat Turner*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1971), 9.

connections to Afro-myal movements.[104] Edward Kamau Brathwaite, who has studied many of the New World slave rebellions, contends that in both the Baptist War and Nat Turner's rebellion "an Afro-myal movement underlay the more liberal-reformist creole concern with justice and land."[105] Whatever the similarities, the outcomes were very different for both slaveowners and the enslaved population. In the American South the outcome was a hardening of proslavery sentiment, but in the British colonies the events of 1831 signaled the beginning of the end of the institution.

At the time of emancipation, in 1834, the population of Jamaica was 368,000. After the free blacks, the whites constituted the smallest population group. The free colored population had tripled to 31,000 since 1790, with the addition of refugees from the Haitian Revolution, and females in this group outnumbered males 2:1.[106] Many free blacks and coloreds were slave owners. An estimated 70,000 of the 310,000 slaves were owned by these two groups.[107] Table 1.6 gives a breakdown of the Jamaican population in 1834.

Table 1.6: Estimated Population of Jamaica in 1834

Whites	16,600
Free Coloreds	31,000
Free Blacks	11,000
Slaves	310,000
Total	368,600

(Source: Gad Heuman, *Between Black and White,* 7).

[104] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries,* 55-56. Obeah men were priests who interpreted the African spirit world and were familiar with good and bad magic and the usage of herbs. Myal men were thought to be obeah men with higher powers, possibly cult leaders. Many of them held positions of authority i.e. as drivers or headmen on the plantations.
[105] Costa, *Crowns of Glory,* 357 n. 70.
[106] Gad J. Heuman,*Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), 7-10.
[107] Heuman, *Between Black and White,* 84.

The majority of free blacks and coloreds lived in towns, as legislation passed in 1761 took away many of their privileges, including the right to own land. Whites had become increasingly worried about the amount of wealth coloreds were inheriting. Some coloreds were educated in England where they were often "accepted as whites." Back in Jamaica they were mostly excluded from white society. [108] In reaction to this exclusion, free coloreds adopted European fashions and culture. The historian Gad Heuman argues that coloreds established educational societies and were "more interested in European literary and cultural developments than were the white creoles."[109] Not wishing to mix with free blacks, and not accepted by whites, they formed a distinct group. The class system based on privilege of birth in England was replicated in Jamaica as a class society based on color. Free coloreds refused to perform agricultural labor or educate their children at schools that integrated black and colored students. In 1823, coloreds began to organize and demand more rights, and they petitioned the Crown and humanitarian organizations in England to pressure the Jamaican Assembly on their behalf. In 1830, the Assembly passed a bill granting freedmen the same privileges as whites, which subsequently opened the door for their participation in the political process. It also meant that they were more loyal to the Crown than the white population. They were not, however, in favor of apprenticeship or compensation for slave owners, but supported free labor and immediate abolition.[110]

In 1834, when emancipation finally came, it was the result of a combination of factors: a stepped up campaign by abolitionists; a realization that subsidized West Indian slave-produced sugar was no longer economical for British taxpayers or consumers; and,

[108] Heuman, *Black and White,* 14.
[109] Ibid.

most important of all, the actions of the slaves themselves. But abolition was not immediate. The British government planned a gradual transition in an effort both to appease the planters, and to "resocialize" the labor force, by transforming workers from chattel slaves to wage slaves during a six-year apprenticeship.[111] The debate over emancipation, the bureaucracy that was created to administer this apprenticeship, and the reaction of both the planters, and the former slaves who were not yet "full free," is examined in the next chapter.

[110] Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 98.
[111] Mary Turner, (ed.), *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

CHAPTER 2

THE MIGHTY EXPERIMENT

> Whether it was emancipation from above or emancipation from below, emancipation was the only alternative.[1]
>
> The problem posed by the transition from a slave to a free society, as James Spedding [of the Colonial Office] succinctly put it, was 'to change a slavish multitude into an orderly and happy peasantry [and] a slave driving oligarchy, deformed and made fierce by their false attitude, into a natural upper class.'[2]

Emancipation in Jamaica was not the result of any one factor, but a combination of an escalating level of resistance and rebellion by the enslaved population, economic interests moving from a belief in mercantilism and monopolies to the espousal of free trade, and stepped up lobbying by humanitarian and reform movements. The Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, declared it was a "mighty experiment." It was an experiment closely watched by all slave-holding societies, and abolitionists hoped that Britain's example could be used to launch an attack on American slavery. It was also an experiment in the formation of a bureaucracy to manage the transition to freedom.[3] As the historian William Green points out, the important questions were: "Could 800,000

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[1] Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964), 208.

[2] William A. Green, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment 1830-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 86. James Spedding joined the Colonial Office as a clerk in 1835 after attracting the attention of officials for the skilled speeches he delivered to the Cambridge Debating Society. He, along with James Stephen and Henry Taylor, brought enormous intelligence and ability to the Office. He resigned from the Colonial Office in 1841 "to devote the rest of his life to studying Bacon's philosophies."

[3] The affairs of the colonies had been managed by the Third Secretary and 4-8 clerks in the Department of War, but as the pressure of work mounted and more staff had to be added, the Colonial Office emerged.

slaves in 19 colonies be set free without violence? And, once free, would they sustain a plantation economy and its related institutions?"[4]

This chapter examines this transition period, the policies implemented by the British government, the actions and reactions of the planters and apprentices to the new conditions, and the impact of emancipation on the labor supply and the Jamaican sugar industry.

Humanitarian and reform movements had been gaining in influence in England since the late eighteenth century. The rise of capitalism and a growing middle class, many of them Wesleyan Methodists, resulted in a convergence of humanitarianism with missionization and encouraged female participation in the anti-slavery movement.[5] Many of these women were the wives and daughters of anti-slavery activists, but anti-slavery activism was not confined to the middle class. Upper-class and working-class women, both black and white, campaigned in Britain against slavery.[6] Quakers, who had long shamed members of their sect who participated in the slave trade, took the lead in forming an anti-slavery movement with the goal of abolishing it.[7] Foremost among them were James Cropper, a philanthropist and East India sugar merchant, and Joseph Sturge, a Birmingham corn merchant and philanthropist, who traveled in the West Indies to gather information for the movement, and whose book about the experience published in 1838 contributed to the early ending of apprenticeship in August of that year.[8] They were

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[4]Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, 127.
[5] Andrew Porter, "Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism," in Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol.III. The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 198.
[6] Claire Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns 1780-1870* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[7] D.J. Murray, *The West Indies and the Development of Colonial Government 1801-1834* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 89.
[8] Murray, *The West Indies and the Development of Colonial Government,* 106. Christine Bolt, *The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction: A Study in Anglo-American Co-operation 1833-77* (Oxford:

joined by a group of humanitarians who were derogatively dubbed "The Saints" or, later, "The Clapham Sect" after the area of southwest London where many of them lived and worshipped. They included their spokesman and leader, Yorkshire M.P. William Wilberforce; Zachery Macaulay, who had spent some time as a bookkeeper on a West Indian estate; James Stephen, a West Indian lawyer and M.P. for Tralee and East Grinstead, Sussex, whose son and namesake became Permanent Undersecretary at the Colonial Office and who was responsible for much of that office's policies during and following emancipation; and Thomas Fowell Buxton, M.P. for Weymouth, an evangelical London brewer and Norfolk landowner, who later led the movement in Parliament when Wilberforce's health began to fail.[9]

In 1787, the anti-slavery activists formed the Abolition Society to work on ending the Atlantic slave trade. The House of Commons passed a resolution in 1792 calling for the gradual abolition of the trade, but war with France postponed further action. Following the British victory at Trafalgar in 1805, Parliament again debated the question, and, in 1807, Britain abolished the Atlantic slave trade. Other countries, however, stepped up their participation.[10] Abolition Society members then turned their attention to the amelioration of conditions of slavery by advocating the registration of slaves, followed by triennial censuses, in an attempt to document the continuation of the slave trade. When amelioration failed to improve conditions for slaves--mainly because planters continued to coerce maximum labor from the work force with the threat of harsh punishment--and the slave populations failed to increase naturally (except in Barbados),

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Oxford University Press, 1969), 3-5. Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1838).

[9] Murray, *The West Indies and Development of Colonial Government,* 106.

[10] Porter, "Trusteeship," 203. Britain passed a law in 1824 making it a capital offense for British subjects to participate in the slave trade.

the abolitionists turned their attention to emancipation, and, in 1823 founded an Anti-Slavery Society in London.[11]

Buxton drafted a bill he proposed to introduce in Parliament stating that, "slaves' conditions and status were to be improved, marriage encouraged, Sunday made a day of religious worship and instruction, the slave was to be allowed to buy his own freedom, his evidence was to be received in courts. No governor, judge or attorney general might be a slave owner. In addition, slavery was to be extinguished by declaring free all children born after a date to be determined."[12] Encouraged by the society's mouthpiece, the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, more and more women and children became involved in collecting signatures and Parliament was deluged with anti-slavery petitions.[13] Radical abolitionists abandoned calls for the gradual phasing out of slavery and demanded immediate emancipation.

In 1832, everything coalesced in favor of ending slavery in the British colonies: the Whigs were returned to power in 1830 and 1832 pledging reform;[14] a greater number of abolitionist M.P.s were elected diluting the influence of the West India interest that had lost twenty-seven of its supporters;[15] and capitalist interests argued for the superiority of free over enslaved labor. But it was the Jamaican rebellion in December 1831 that finally made all sides realize that the retention of slavery in its present form was

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[11] Murray, *The West Indies and Development of Colonial Government,* 106.
[12] C. Buxton, *Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton,* 1848, 128-9, quoted in Murray, *The West Indies and Development of Colonial Government,* 107.
[13] See Claire Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns 1780-1870* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[14] The Whigs in passing the Great Reform Act of 1832 did away with "rotten boroughs" i.e. those with very few electors but that were safe seats for the landed gentry, and drew new districts favoring the burgeoning populations of the industrial cities such as Manchester and Birmingham. Before the Reform Act, for example, the Isle of Wight with an area of only 155 square miles, returned six members of parliament, four of them from rotten boroughs. Today, with a vastly larger population it has one.
[15] Kathleen Mary Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation: Jamaica and Barbados 1823-1843* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 9.

untenable.[16] James Stephen (son of "The Saint"), who was then Legal Counsel to the Colonial Office (and from 1836 to 1847 its Permanent Undersecretary), declared that "the evils of slavery are beyond the reach of legislation and can be remedied only by laws directly abolishing the relation of master and slave."[17]

The new Undersecretary at the Colonial Office,Viscount Howick, son of the Prime Minister, Lord Grey, was convinced by the Baptist missionary William Knibb of the necessity of immediate emancipation in order to prevent a new uprising in Jamaica. Knibb, giving evidence about slavery before a House of Commons Select Committee, swore that "I will never rest, day or night till I see it [slavery] destroyed, root and branch."[18] A letter from Captain Charles Elliot, Protector of Slaves in Guyana, to Viscount Howick added to the fears of further massive insurrections, and his comments on the proposed apprenticeship proved prophetic.[19] In 1832 Elliot wrote:

> As to my office it is a delusion. There is no protection for the Slave Population; and they will very shortly take the matter into their own hands, and destroy the Property. The only way of saving these Countries is to give the Slaves a reasonable share in the produce of their Labour. I am desperately unpopular, although I am sure I have not intended to do my duty captiously. But the fact is that this Colony is in a state of rebellion; the administration of Justice obstructed or totally defeated…What remedy for all these evils is sent out to us? Despatches full of hopes and exhortation, of advice to repent and behave better…The Order in Council is a dead letter…Setting aside the improbability of ensuring the observation of such a body of Law, I do deeply feel its inadequacy to present circumstances. You have brought forward the Slave to a certain point of civilization and intelligence, and he perceives the utter insufficiency of your System either for his further advancement

[16] Porter, *Trusteeship*, 204.
[17] Stephen memo, October 1831, 3rd Earl Grey's Papers/Colonial Papers, Slavery. Quoted in Murray, *The West Indies and the Development of Colonial Government,* 193.
[18] Murray, *The West Indies and the Development of Colonial Government,* 194.
[19] Unlike the colonies with legislative assemblies, the crown colonies i.e. Trinidad and Guyana had a Protector of Slaves appointed by the British government to look after the interests of the slave population.

> or for his controul [sic]. What should be given to the Slaves is *such a state of* FREEDOM *as they are now fit for.*[20]

It became obvious to all parties that emancipation was inevitable; the difficult questions were the form it was to take and the time-frame. The planters were convinced that after emancipation the slaves would not stay on the plantations as wage laborers unless they were forced to do so. They believed that freed people would choose to work on their own provision grounds or move to land that was still unappropriated, especially in view of the low wage rates that planters were willing to pay.

The British Colonial Office had to reconcile two goals: immediate emancipation and the continued profitability of sugar production. Several plans were considered in an attempt to ensure a continuing labor supply, including imposing high taxes on land not previously devoted to the cultivation of sugar. Another more elaborate plan proposed that the government would pay wages for two days work per week enabling the slaves to buy their freedom over a period of three years. The objection to this plan was that it discriminated against the old and the sick who were unlikely to be able to earn sufficient money to buy their freedom.[21]

The emancipation plan that was finally adopted and became law on August 28, 1833, pleased no one—not the planters, not the abolitionists, and certainly not the former slaves--when it became clear that there was to be no change in the social order. In an effort to execute a "smooth" transition to freedom, the British government proposed to introduce an apprenticeship period for the labor force. The Emancipation Act that was effective as of August 1, 1834, ensured that slaves would not be free until they were

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[20] Letter from Captain Charles Elliot to Viscount Howick, *The Howick Papers,* quoted in Kenneth N. Bell and W.P. Morrell, eds., *Select Documents on British Colonial Policy 1830-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 382.
[21] Curtin, *Two Jamaicas*, 91.

"resocialized" to accept the discipline of wage labor. The Act established nine main conditions defining labor and social relations:

1) Ex-slaves would be "apprenticed" to their former masters for forty and one-half hours per week for no wages.
2) Apprentices were free to hire themselves out for wages to whomsoever they chose for any number of hours they wanted to work, over and above the hours owed to their former masters.
3) Apprentices would be given Friday afternoons and Saturdays off for the cultivation of their provision grounds and attendance at the weekly markets.
4) All children under the age of six would be freed immediately.
5) Any apprentice would be allowed to buy his or her full freedom at a fair price determined by an impartial appraisal of their labor value.
6) Apprenticeship for praedial (field) slaves would be for a term of six years and end on August 1, 1840. Apprenticeship for non-praedial slaves (skilled tradesmen, drivers, and domestics), who were deemed less critical to sugar production, would be for four years and end on August 1, 1838.
7) Special magistrates would be appointed to oversee the system and enforce work discipline.
8) Flogging would be abolished for females and set at a maximum of fifty lashes for males.
9) Punishment, including extra labor, imprisonment in parish workhouses, and flogging, would be meted out by the stipendiary magistrates and administered by a plantation police force made up of free blacks who would be subject to

military discipline, and who would receive grants of land for their police service.[22]

Colonial legislatures would remain unchanged and would be in charge of enacting the law and implementing its policies, except for the Crown Colonies where the British government's terms were imposed by Orders in Council. Alone among the British colonies, Bermuda and Antigua, the latter with its dense population, resident owners, and expensive imported provisions, rejected apprenticeship and opted for immediate and full freedom for their slaves.[23]

In addition, the British government agreed to pay the West Indian planters compensation of twenty million pounds sterling (for the loss of their capital investment in slaves) when their legislatures passed a version of the plan. Jamaica stood to receive the largest share—nearly six million pounds.[24] Twenty million pounds was an incredible amount of money for the government to grant to one group of people. Sir Alexander Baring of the famous banking family was "driven to express his bewilderment that M.P.s who normally haggled over 500 pound salary votes could readily approve a grant of twenty million pounds."[25] Lord Stanley had originally recommended a loan to the planters of fifteen million pounds, but large majorities of both Houses of Parliament voted for the twenty million pound grant. William Green argues that the reason for this action was that following the Reform Act of 1832, "the governing elite were concerned over the security of property…Members of Parliament interested in preserving a respect

[22] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 58.
[23] Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 124.
[24] Williams, *From Columbus to Castro,* 332. See Butler, *Economics of Emancipation*, 143. The average price of a slave in Jamaica from 1822-30 (the period on which the valuations were based) was just under 45 pounds sterling. The average compensation paid per slave to Jamaican owners was just under 20 pounds.
[25] Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 119. This was the same Barings Bank that was in the news a few years ago when a rogue trader in its Singapore branch gambled on derivatives and forced the venerable old bank into bankruptcy.

for the rights of property would have been recklessly denying their own interest by abolishing slavery without indemnity to the planters."[26] In fact, the amount of compensation paid to the planters by the British government was amply covered by the sugar duties, a regressive tax disproportionately paid for by the poor.[27] And to underscore the amount of planter indebtedness, Kathleen Butler calculates that 15 percent of the compensation went directly to the large British merchant houses that underwrote the West India trade.[28]

At the time of emancipation there was a total of 310,368 enslaved people in Jamaica. The majority, 218,669, were classified as praedials, 37,144 were non-praedials, 15,656 were aged, and 38,889 were children under the age of six.[29] As Jamaica had a self-governing legislature, the British Colonial Office needed the cooperation of the Jamaican ruling class in establishing a free-labor society. Consequently, implementation of the plan was left to the Jamaican Assembly.[30] Before implementation, however, Howick forwarded the plan to Lord Mulgrave, the Governor of Jamaica, who criticized the Colonial Office for being over-optimistic. Mulgrave pointed out that Jamaica was hardly "like part of England…there was nothing to stop the freed people settling in the mountains" (as the Maroons had done previously). Who, he wanted to know, was going to administer the scheme, collect the land taxes, and pay for the machinery necessary to enforce the policy? Mulgrave continued,

> …..I often long for the Magic Carpet, in the Arabian Nights on which to transport myself for half an hour's conversation with you

[26] Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, 121.
[27] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power,* 176.
[28] Butler, *Economics of Emancipation*, 52.
[29] Anton V. Long, *Jamaica and the New Order 1827-1847* (Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research University College of the West Indies, 1956), 1.
[30] Unlike the Crown Colonies (e.g. Trinidad and Guyana) that were governed directly from London and implemented the British government Acts as they were applied by Orders in Council.

> in Downing St., for the great misfortune of the English Government in their treatment of all these questions is the paucity of disinterested testimony they have ever been able to have upon so many points which must materially affect the success of any plan they may attempt. You have plenty of evidence as to the state of the Negroes etc.—before Committees—but you have never been properly informed of the state of the Machine of Government here upon many details in which so much must depend.[31]

The "Machine of Government," or bureaucracy, that parliament proposed to put in place to administer apprenticeship was a force of stipendiary magistrates (officially referred to as S.M.s to distinguish them from the unpaid local magistrates) to be appointed by the Colonial Office. Their assignment was complicated by the fact that sugar estates were agricultural, industrial, and social complexes, encompassing a wide range of work occupations and skills, as well as gender and kinship structures and relationships. Magistrates were expected to arbitrate disputes between planters and apprentices; ensure that allowances were paid; enforce discipline and working hours; inspect hospitals and prisons; sit on appraisement tribunals; and review apprentices' complaints.[32] Rather than using this period to train the laborers and ameliorate conditions, however, the planters withdrew many privileges and exercised even harsher control over the work force.

The proposals for apprenticeship therefore left in place the main features of slavery. Unpaid labor for previous owners would be coerced from apprentices and they would be barred from negotiating wage rates. This limited freedom meant that former slaves would only really be free after being "educated and resocialized to accept the

[31] Mulgrave to Goderich, 2 Mar. 1833, B.M. Add. MSS. 40863/22. Quoted in Murray, *The West Indies and the Development of Colonial Government,* 197.
[32] Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 136.

discipline necessary to ensure the survival of the existing social order."[33] Emancipation may have been a defeat for the West Indian plantocracy, and a victory for British capitalists interested in free trade and increased consumption, but it was just "more of the same" for a disappointed and increasingly restless workforce.

One of the arguments for abolition was that slavery was no longer an economic success in the British colonies, but emancipation turned out to be even more of a financial disaster for plantation owners. From 1823 to 1843, 194 estates in Jamaica went into receivership.[34] The annual average sugar production dropped by about a half between 1833 and 1846, and the price of sugar also fell, owing to competition from Cuba, Brazil, and later Puerto Rico. In addition, sugar beet production in Europe also began to impact sales. Annual output continued to fall as planters took more land out of sugar cultivation, until, in 1887, it was down to 20,891 tons.[35] Table 2.1 records this decline in sugar production in Jamaica between 1824 to 1846.

Table 2.1: Average Annual Sugar Production in Jamaica 1824-46

Period	Annual Average in Tons	Change %
1824-33	68,465	
1834-38	54,225	-21.0
1839-46	33,431	-38.3

(Deerr, *History of Sugar*, 377)

The decline of the plantation system was a catastrophe for a Jamaican economy that depended on the export of staple products. Although it had begun before abolition, the decline was far greater after emancipation and apprenticeship. The rate of decline that was 21 percent from 1833 to 1838 (covering the apprenticeship period) nearly

[33] Holt, *Problem of Freedom*, 53.
[34] Butler, *Economics of Emancipation,* 145.
[35] Deerr, *History of Sugar,* 377.

doubled to 38 percent from 1839 to 1846 (the latter date marking the phasing out of preferential sugar duties). The disastrous decline between 1839 and 1846 also emphasized the post-emancipation problem of labor. In 1820, Jamaica produced 20 percent of the world's sugar cane. In 1830, Jamaica's share of world production had fallen to 11 percent, and by 1840 it was a mere 3 percent.[36]

Trade with Britain also declined. In 1815 the colonies in the West Indies accounted for 20 percent of British trade and 60 percent of sugar exports to Europe. By the 1820s trade with Britain had fallen to 10 percent, by the 1850s this trade was only 5 percent, and their share of the European sugar market had fallen to 20 percent, overtaken by Cuba and Puerto Rico.[37] In addition, the West Indian colonies were being replaced in their importance to Britain by the expanding empire in India. West Indian planters, no longer a force in parliament, were resented by the British public for their "conspicuous consumption" and for the rise in sugar duties from 15 percent in 1750 to 50 percent, or 30 shillings per hundredweight, in 1815.[38]

Although they exercised little control over the international market, much of the blame for Jamaica's decline during the apprenticeship years could be placed on the management decisions made by the planters. Convinced by their own propaganda and anticipating severe labor shortages, planters reduced the number of new canes and harvested others prematurely. These actions had disastrous long-term effects on sugar production.[39]

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[36] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 119.
[37] J.R. Ward, "The British West Indies in the Age of Abolition, 1748-1815," in P.J. Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 417.
[38] Ibid., 424.
[39] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 120.

The day of transition from bondage to partial freedom, August 1, 1834, passed peacefully in Jamaica according to the governor, the Marquis of Sligo. It was a day of celebration marked by church services and extra rations of rum and beef. Only on one estate in St. Ann were the troops called out to deal with strikers who wanted immediate "full freedom" rather than this half-measure.[40] Although it became immediately obvious that there would be no violence, it was not as easy to determine whether discipline could be enforced under a wage-labor system as it had been under slavery.

Dr. R.R. Madden, one of the special magistrates appointed to oversee apprenticeship, wrote cynically to a friend,

> The ides of August, however, are come,--and, what is more, they are passed, and not a single riot occurred throughout the island, and not a single man, woman, or child, was butchered to make a Negro holiday. This conduct of the great unchained was very provoking, to be sure; for a great many prophecies were to be fulfilled on the first of August, 'or thereabouts,' as Mr. Moore would say: but, somehow or another, the predictions have not been accomplished; and, unfortunately for the prophetic character of the Cobbetts of Jamaica, they are never likely to be accomplished.[41]

The Colonial Office ministers and the planters correctly anticipated that the biggest factor in determining whether apprentices would willingly work on the estates was the proximity and productivity of their provision grounds. As previously noted, the policy of providing enslaved workers with plots for satisfying their own subsistence was

[40] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 56.

[41] R.R. Madden, MD, *A Twelvemonth's Residence in the West Indies, During the Transition from Slavery to Apprenticeship* 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1835), 2, 6. After hearing of the proposal to grant slave holders 20,000,000 pounds for loss of their property, "Cobbett told the House of Commons that he would never consent to any scheme that would take an additional farthing from the pockets of the English, Irish, or Scotch people." Quoted in Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 120.

beneficial for both slaves and planters, especially following the American Revolution and the loss of cheap food supplies from the mainland colonies.[42]

The policy became even more of a necessity after the end of the slave trade and the need to reproduce the labor force, which meant supplementing the meager rations provided by the planters with home-grown vegetables, chickens, and pigs. Successful gardeners were able to sell or barter their surplus at weekly Sunday markets and they even provided much of the plantation owners' food requirements. This provision ground system obviously required concessions from the planters. Gardens that were in close proximity to the workplace could be tended during lunch breaks or after work, but those some distance away necessitated sufficient time for travel, working, and marketing.

The slave code of 1792 and the revisions of 1816 had prescribed one day off every fortnight, and, for practical reasons, planters adhered to this. Sidney Mintz and Douglas Hall argue that what began as a convenient system of feeding the population became a tradition "with which it would have been profitless and dangerous to interfere" by the late eighteenth century.[43] Post-emancipation disputes over rents and wages directly hinged on the former slaves attachment to these grounds. Slaves wanted to acquire and bequeath these provision grounds and be compensated for their loss.[44]

Officials were convinced that ownership of these provision grounds would result in apprentices abandoning all the estates. The rationale behind this belief was that much larger incomes could be made for less work in the internal marketing system than in task work on the plantations. But although they were desperately worried about retaining

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[42] For a discussion of the tradition and importance of the provision grounds see Sidney W. Mintz and Douglas Hall, "The Origins of the Jamaican Internal Marketing System," *Yale University Publications in Anthropology*, 57 (1970) 3-25.
[43] Mintz and Hall, "Origins of the Jamaican Internal Marketing System," 3-25.
[44] Ibid., 21.

their labor force, planters could not agree on fair and reasonable wages for their workers. The length of workdays ranged from eight to ten hours and wages from 1s. to 1s. 8d. per day.[45]

Some apprentices refused to work under disagreeable conditions, and others ran away. Absenteeism varied from estate to estate, and workers withdrew their labor from masters who did not treat them fairly. Others declined to work for their old masters and accepted lower wages from other planters. Most preferred task work that gave them more independence rather than working on gangs and being at the mercy of drivers and overseers. And parents were adamant that their children under age six who had been freed under the new law would not be voluntarily apprenticed to their formers owners. As a precaution against this possibility, many sent their children away to live with relatives and friends.[46] Only nine of the 39,013 children released on August 1, 1834 were signed to apprenticeships by their mothers.

Three months after the institution of apprenticeship, Governor Sligo claimed in a report to the Colonial Secretary Spring Rice that a survey he conducted revealed that masters who were fair to their workers had little trouble hiring extra help in their free time after the statutory forty and a half hours per week. Sligo found that on 68 percent of the estates apprentices were willing to perform extra labor, on 8 percent of the estates they refused, and on the balance they did not ask.[47]

The *Falmouth Post* in a comparison of 1834 and 1835 crop returns on twenty estates in Trelawny Parish found there was an overall increase of 9.7 percent with only

[45] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 68.
[46] This was also a danger in the U.S. South after emancipation. For a discussion of the practice of "forced apprenticeship" in North Carolina during Reconstruction, see Laura F. Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).
[47] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 69.

five estates reporting a decline.[48] These findings suggest there were significant variations from estate to estate even on individual properties in close proximity, indicating that management policies and a compliant labor force were crucial aspects in maintaining an adequate labor force. The opinions of the planters, however, strongly contradicted the governor's report.

Planters' original fears of the lack of adequate labor and the fact that apprentices would prefer to work in their provision grounds than on the estates appeared justified. The minutes of a meeting of proprietors and planters in the parish of Trelawny on May 4, 1835, nine months after the introduction of apprenticeship, revealed a very pessimistic scenario with white immigration suggested as the only solution to the labor problem. Owners complained that experience with the apprenticeship system "verified the worst anticipations of all practical men of its unprofitable working."[49] They warned that the cultivation of the staple crops would have to be abandoned, "occasioned solely by the very small portion of labor obtained from Negroes since the 1st of August last."[50] According to these planters, notwithstanding what they considered were liberal pay offers, apprentices refused to work after their compulsory forty and a half hours, preferring to work in their own provision grounds "to the total neglect of cane and grass fields." The planters argued that the only chance of preserving the island from destruction was to encourage the settlement of white families in the interior where the climate was more temperate and thus more agreeable to Europeans. The white settlers could not only perform all the labor required to cultivate provisions, coffee, and ginger,

[48] *Falmouth Post*, 23 December, 1835, in Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 69.
[49] Minutes of a Public Meeting of Proprietors and Planters in the Parish of Trelawny, May 4, 1835, *Anti-Slavery Papers,* Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
[50] Ibid.

but they could also "afford a valuable example of industry to the apprentices." At the same time, the males could form a police force and occupy land and prevent squatters in the form of "idle and dissolute Negroes" from doing so after the apprenticeship period ended. Those at the meeting implored the governor to appeal to the Colonial Office to help establish a program for the importation of white immigrants to settle the interior of the island and continue the cultivation of staple products.[51] Various immigration schemes were later implemented, but those involving Europeans met with little success.[52]

Apprentices knew their rights under the Emancipation Act and were not afraid to ask for a court hearing at which to air their grievances. At a Special Magistrates' Court held at Southampton, St. Elizabeth Parish, on October 21, 1834, apprentices lodged several complaints against their master, Thomas Mason.[53] At this time Mason was the owner of two properties, Content and Southampton, with a total of ninety-five apprentices.[54] Two years later he purchased an additional three properties in the parish of Manchester from the estate of Edward Owen, deceased--Wilderness, Hopetown, and Kingsland--with a total of 157 apprentices.[55] Judging from the number of stock, and the fact that the apprentices complained that Mason refused to fix his fences "which were in a rotten state" and allowed cattle to wander and destroy their provision grounds, Content was probably a livestock pen.[56] The apprentices further protested that their master sent them to work eight miles away so that they could not fix the fences themselves. In

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[51] Minutes of Public Meeting of Proprietors and Planters, *Anti-Slavery Papers,* Rhodes House, Oxford.
[52] These immigrations schemes are detailed in chapters 5 and 6.
[53] Depositions made by apprentices against Thomas Mason at a Special Magistrates Court, Southampton, St. Elizabeth Parish, Jamaica, October 21, 1834. *Anti-Slavery Papers,* Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
[54] Returns of Proprietors and Properties given-in to the parish Vestries, March 1832, *Jamaica Almanack* 1832, 141.
[55] Like slaves, apprentices came with the property.
[56] Depositions made by apprentices against Thomas Mason, October 21, 1834. *Anti-Slavery Papers ,* Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

addition, the apprentices claimed that they had been deprived of their usual clothing and salt allowances, neither of which really bothered them, but "what they really wanted was for the court to order their master to give them the time off allowed by law so that they could attend their provision grounds." Mason said that he would fix the fences when he had time, and countercharged the apprentices with not showing up for work. One apprentice, William Forest, replied that he had refused to work because he had "nothing to eat except cocoas."[57]

Magistrates reported numerous complaints made by apprentices against planters and overseers. The most common complaints listed in the Anti-Slavery papers fell into three main categories: concern over "personal space;" work-related problems; and violation of traditional agreements on provision grounds. Female apprentices accused owners of refusing them permission to nurse their infants and of not furnishing medical attention. And husbands, wives, and parents complained of being denied free access to neighboring estates where relatives resided.[58]

Working conditions became still more oppressive as overseers refused to provide water and customary breakfasts for workers, and declined to exempt the aged, infirm, or mothers of six or more children from field labor, as was the practice during slavery.[59] But it was the violation of traditional agreements on provision grounds that apprentices objected to most of all. The case against Thomas Mason was not an isolated one. Many planters withdrew watchmen from the provision grounds allowing livestock to trample

[57] Depositions made by apprentices against Thomas Mason, October 21, 1834. *Anti-Slavery Papers,* Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
[58] Depositions made by apprentices included in the *Anti-Slavery Papers*, Rhodes House, Oxford.
[59] "Abolition of Slavery Act 1833" (3 & 4 *Will. IV, cap.* LXXIII.) in Bell and Morrell, *Select Documents on British Colonial Policy,* 392. Article 11 of the Emancipation Act stated that owners were to continue to furnish their apprentices with food, clothing, lodging, medicine, and medical attendance. If the particular colony relied on slaves providing much of their own food from provision grounds, then they were to continue to provide these grounds.

the crops, and scores of apprentices were driven from their huts and gardens because they refused to work under prevailing conditions or to pay the high rents planters demanded.[60]

Some planters used humiliation to show their authority over their work force. R.H. Wallace, owner of Biscany Estate in St. Elizabeth Parish, was accused of refusing to let men, women, and children relieve themselves in the bush. According to a deposition, Wallace ordered his apprentices to go thirty minutes after breakfast—on their own time—to an open place all together, exposed to the views of the whole field gang.[61]

Female apprentices at Cabbage Valley Plantation lodged similar complaints. In their deposition they stated that they were deprived of nurses, refused water, not allowed to suckle infants, and, in fact, had to leave their babies in baskets exposed to the danger of dogs. They accused their master of retaliating because they refused to bind their infant children to him as apprentices.[62]

Another common complaint made against proprietors was over-valuation when apprentices applied to purchase their manumission. Owners demanded enormous sums—out of all proportion to apprentices' values as slaves—for unexpired terms of apprenticeship.[63] The valuations were made by appraisement tribunals that were hardly unbiased. These tribunals were composed of a planter-judge nominated by the owner, the closest stipendiary magistrate, and a second planter-judge agreeable to both. The system of valuations also penalized hardworking, reliable workers, because their value was based

[60] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries,* 54-55. Apprentices were particularly loathe to abandon the grounds where their relatives were buried. The burial places of ancestors were particularly important in West African religions that practiced ancestor worship and belief in the protection offered by ancestral spirits.
[61] Deposition sworn by apprentices against R.H. Wallace, Biscany Estate, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, 1836. *Anti-Slavery Papers,* Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
[62] Deposition sworn by apprentices at Cabbage Valley Plantation to the Special Magistrates' Court, *Anti-Slavery Papers,* Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
[63] Depositions sworn by apprentices. *Anti-Slavery Papers,* Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

on their strength, occupational skills, and age.[64] In one such case, George Davison, an apprentice of the parish of St. Thomas-in-the-Vale, was charged 300 pounds sterling to purchase his freedom,"…a sum not known to have been demanded during the last twenty years of slavery." As a consequence, unable to pay the price, Davison became "depressed and deranged," according to an account documented by the Anti-Slavery Society.[65]

Unfortunately, the results of these complaints are unknown, as the court decisions are not included in the collection of papers compiled by the Anti-Slavery Society. The details in the depositions, however, illustrate how vindictive many of the planters' actions were, especially those relating to working conditions.

The records show that more women than men and more domestics and tradespeople than agricultural workers sought manumission by purchase. Women seeking to buy their freedom were frequently the mistresses of supervisory staff, and many had children by them. And skilled tradesmen had more opportunity than field workers to earn money by utilizing their skills particularly in urban areas. Dr. R.R. Madden, the S.M. for Kingston, reported that "In Kingston, there have been more applications from Negroes to purchase their liberty, than, I believe, in all the rest of the island, with the exception of Spanish Town…eighty apprentices have obtained their freedom before me [between August and October], either by valuation or mutual agreement; and the average valuation has been 25 pounds [currency].[66] Nevertheless, during the entire apprenticeship period, the numbers were fairly low as apprentices

[64] Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 133.
[65] Deposition by apprentice George Davison to Special Magistrates' Court, St.Thomas-in-the-Vale, 1836. *Anti-Slavery Papers,* Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
[66] Madden, *A Twelvemonth's Residence,* 2, 148.

preferred to bide their time and save money for the purchase of land and stock after "full freedom" was achieved.[67]

Planters not only "rigged the system" in order to demand exorbitant appraisements for their apprentices; they also reclassified workers' occupations in direct defiance of the law. Under the Emancipation Act, apprenticeship for non-agricultural workers was to last four years and for field laborers six years. Apprentices complained that they were forced to perform agricultural labor so that they could be reclassified as field workers, and thus be bound for an extra two years of servitude.[68] A law passed by the Jamaican Assembly in 1834 gave the planters permission to reclassify their slaves' status.[69] This Act was disallowed by the Colonial Office, but planters continued to attempt to circumvent the system. A stipendiary magistrate (S.M.) in Barbados and St. Vincent, Major John Colthurst, reported that planters "had taken advantage of the difference in the length of the apprenticeship terms and made the problem 50 times worse, *by false registration upon oath.*" On one estate, he reported that "the owner claimed all his 150 slaves as field laborers."[70]

Governor Sligo expressed concern that details of the Abolition Act might be misunderstood and result in "litigation between master and apprentice and perpetual reference to the authority of the Special Justice." In order to minimize this possibility, Sligo ordered the Attorney-General to issue a circular on August 16, 1834, to all the magistrates emphasizing that "the Act for the Abolition of Slavery is a remedial statute; consequently you must on all occasions look to the intention of the Legislature, which

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[67] Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 134.
[68] Ibid., 132.
[69] Butler, *Economics of Emancipation,* 33.
[70] W.K. Marshall, ed., *The Colthurst Journal,* 111.

never could have contemplated placing the Apprentice in a worse situation than the Slave." Enclosed with the circular were extracts from the authorities of opinions on certain cases they expected the magistrates to encounter. For example, "what redress can be afforded to those apprentices whose grounds and the provisions contained therein are destroyed by their owner's cattle trespassing?" and "whether some indulgencies cannot be shewn to those mothers who have infant children?" Sligo's concerns were prescient. Complaints of the destruction of provision grounds by wandering cattle and the withdrawal of customary indulgencies proved to be two of the most common complaints brought by apprentices to the attention of the authorities. Finally, in an effort to avoid unnecessary confrontations, Sligo requested of magistrates that "you will in your intercourse with the managers and peasantry always preserve a calm, steady, and patient bearing and be very careful fully to explain to the latter their just rights." He promised to give the magistrates "the full support the Law will allow" if their authority was questioned. Sligo concluded by observing that "you are to consider yourself as appointed for the Special Protection of the Apprentices from wrong, but at the same time to enforce the legal rights of the Master to their services."[71]

In February 1836, on orders of the Colonial Office, the attorney-general issued a circular to the S.M.s informing them that "the law officers of the Crown in England have given it as their opinion that all persons who are not included in the Registry of 1832, although included in earlier colonial registries cannot now be compelled to labour as apprentices, but are entitled to immediate and unqualified freedom."[72]

[71] Circular (no. missing) from the Kings House, August 16, 1834. 4/47/8/156. Spanish Town Archives.
[72] Circular (no. missing) from the Kings House, February 12, 1836. 4/47/8/153. Spanish Town Archives.

Six months later, after many complaints of owners and overseers illegally confining apprentices on estates, the Secretary of State for the Colonies directed the governor to call the magistrates' attention to the practice. On August 3, 1836, the governor ordered the magistrates "to exercise the greatest vigilance to prevent and punish this abuse." He reminded them that the practice of confining apprentices without a warrant from a special justice "is neither more nor less than reestablishing in the hands of the employer the power of inflicting a summary and indefinite punishment of which he has been deprived by the abolition law." He concluded by requesting that "you will in all cases and in every visit you pay to any estate make most particular enquiries *just before you leave it* whether any person may have been confined since your last visit and whether the case rendered it justifiable."[73]

Sligo was a very "involved governor." There is no doubt that the S.M.s felt burdened by his constant requests for more reports on every detail of their daily activities. In addition, he had the magistrates fill out a 54-item questionnaire on the state of the island during apprenticeship. And the list of rules added to the original instructions of the governor to the magistrates grew to nearly fifty by 1836. The new rules were necessitated by the continuing violations of the Emancipation Law by planters and managers. These violations included denying husbands and wives of apprentices access to spouses who lived on neighboring estates, or being charged rent as a tenant when visiting a spouse; refusing clergymen access to the homes of apprentices "for the purpose of tendering religious service or instruction;" and making apprentices work on Saturdays, thereby forcing them "in order to raise food, to work on Sunday, in itself a most unadvisable

[73] Circular No. 4933 from the Kings House, August 1, 1836. 4/47/8/144. Spanish Town Archives.

measure…it prevents his attending Divine worship."[74] In the case of the latter complaint, planters were trying to accomplish two things: they were extracting more labor than was allowed under the law, and at the same time they were denying their adversaries--the nonconformist missionaries--the opportunity to preach to the apprentices. Attempts by planters and the Assembly to impose even stricter controls on the apprentices' movements necessitated a reminder to S.M.s that "the Vagrancy Act of 1833 [passed by the Jamaican Assembly] has been disallowed by His Majesty."[75]

Peter Howe Browne, the second marquis of Sligo, was an energetic, impulsive, tactless man with an explosive temper. A close friend of Lord Byron with whom he shared several traits, Sligo served time in jail in 1811 for offering asylum on his private yacht in the Mediterranean to seventeen British deserters.[76] He was a father of eight and owner of two plantations in St. Dorothy Parish. Sligo became frustrated with the lack of power the governorship wielded and the deviousness and obstructionism of the Assembly. Apart from conferring appointments, his only other authority was the power to dismiss the Assembly and call elections. But the restrictive voter qualifications rendered this dismissal an expensive exercise, as it meant the same people would be returned to the government.

In July 1835, Sligo wrote to his friend, Lord Suffield, "Unless you antislavery people make some demonstration I shall not be able to get on here at all. I fear in fact that I shall have 'ere long to strike my colours. I meet with so much opposition that I fear I shall not be able to do my duty and the moment I find that to be the case, I shall move at

[74] Circular No. 4492, the Kings House, July 12, 1836. Nunes to Thomas Davis, S.M. 4/47/8/147. Spanish Town Archives.
[75] Circular No. 3458, the Kings House, June 1, 1836, Nunes to Thomas Davis, S.M. 4/47/8/149. Spanish Town Archives.
[76] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 97.

once, or at least pray to be removed." Sligo felt that he had little support from the Colonial Office in dealing with the Assembly, and he was critical of the magistrates for failing to offer more protection to the apprentices. He continued, "Mulgrave [his predecessor as governor] gave good advice as to the necessity of watching the apprenticeship, but he did not could not know half as much as I do from the weekly reports of my specials, where all their infamous habits and passions appear in hideous truth." He despaired for the future of the island, "How this island could prosper under its former system, whether speaking with a religious view from the infamy of all sorts which prevailed, or in a worldly respect from the gross robberies of the proprietors, which has been going on – I do not know."[77]

Sligo's frustration with the Assembly is clearly evident in a speech he made to them in February 1836. The Assembly had ignored recommendations that more Courts of Assizes should be established and that there be a revision of the laws affecting discipline in jails and workhouses. "All these subjects have remained unnoticed. The *Whipping of Females* you were informed by me, officially, was in practice; and I called upon you to make enactments to put an end to conduct so *repugnant to humanity, and so contrary to law. So far from passing an Act to prevent the recurrence of such cruelty, you have in no way expressed your disapprobation of it."* He pointed out to the Assembly that the British Government had suggested that, "the taxation imposed by the local authorities on the property of apprentices was quite illegal; *you totally disregarded this suggestion.*" Sligo then moved to the topic of education. He accused the Assembly of ignoring four messages he had sent them on the question of an extended system of education, thereby concluding that they were totally indifferent to it. "I informed you

[77] Letter from Sligo to Suffield, Highgate, Jamaica, July 9, 1835. Spanish Town Archives.

that 25,000 pounds sterling had been voted by England for support of Education in the Colonies, with the promise of still further assistance being afforded, and *you have taken no steps to make it available.*" The Assembly had, according to Sligo, further ignored a dispatch from the Secretary of State to a repeal a law that prevented "*the increase of Religious Instruction in the Colony.*"[78]

Sligo did not quit as he had threatened in 1835. When he did resign, in August 1836, it was not because of his frustration with the planters and Assembly, but over his dismissal of an S.M. that was overruled by the Colonial Office.[79] Sligo was replaced by Sir Lionel Smith, the former governor of Barbados, who reduced the role of the S.M.s and the weekly reports they had to file. He also no longer required the wearing of uniform coats.[80]

Initially thirty-three S.M.s were assigned to Jamaica to oversee the apprenticeship system. This number was nearly doubled to sixty-three during the four years of apprenticeship, illustrating how much the British government underestimated the conflict the system would generate. The fact that almost half the total number of magistrates appointed were assigned to Jamaica emphasizes the problems of policing the island with its difficult terrain, restless workforce, recalcitrant planters, and obstructionist Assembly. To make the situation worse, at the start of apprenticeship fewer than half the magistrates were in place. Nevis, Monserrat, and Tobago had none, Grenada and St. Kitts had one each, and the large colony of Trinidad had just two: one of whom arrived too sick to

[78] Extract from the Speech of the Marquis of Sligo to the Legislature of Jamaica, February 1836. Institute of Jamaica, MS 1887.
[79] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 103.
[80] Ibid., 104.

work, and the other died six weeks later from "sickness and general fatigue."[81] The following table gives the numbers of magistrates the Colonial Office originally assigned to each colony, the numbers who had arrived ready to take up their positions at the beginning of apprenticeship, and the number that the government finally decided were necessary to carry out the duties listed in the Emancipation Act.

Table 2.2: Numbers of Stipendiary Magistrates Allotted by Colony

Colony	Original No.	Present 8/1/1834	Final No.
Jamaica	33	28	63
British Guiana	13	5	15
Trinidad	6	2	11
Bahamas	3	0	6
Barbados	6	6	8
St. Kitts & Anguilla	4	2	5
Tobago	2	0	4
Grenada & Cariacou	3	1	5
St. Vincent & Grenadines	3	3	3
Nevis	1	0	2
Montserrat	1	0	2
Dominica	3	1	5
Virgin Islands	1	0	1
British Honduras	1	1	2
Totals	80	49	132

(Source: Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 197)

The S.M.s were underpaid and overworked, most had little understanding of the law, and they were in the uncomfortable position of being resented by planters, overseers, and apprentices alike.[82] They received an annual salary of 300 pounds sterling, "about that of a third-rate clerk in a commercial house in Kingston," and a 75 pound allowance for their passage.[83] Aware of their poverty, in November 1834 Governor Sligo pressured the Colonial Office into raising the salaries to 450 pounds. The Colonial Office baulked

[81] Marshall, *The Colthurst Journal,* 137.
[82] Holt, *Problem of Freedom*, 57.
[83] Letter from Dr. Burke to the Colonial Office, December 1834, quoted in W.L. Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1937), 213.

at raising salaries, but agreed to add an allowance of 150 pounds "to cover the cost of house and horses."[84] The number of horses needed depended upon each S.M.'s district, but the magistrates could not get by with fewer than four (at a cost of about 200 pounds without the tack) and two pack mules. According to one report, an S.M. "having nine [horses] attributed his failure to visit the whole of his district to the lameness of seven of his stable."[85]

The initial expenses added up quickly. The S.M. also needed tropical clothing, a uniform coat, a furnished house, a waiting boy and groom, food for himself, his servants, and horses, taxes, stationery, and doctor bills. Dependents received no pension if the S.M. died while serving (and many did), and magistrates who were dismissed or resigned had to pay their own passage home.[86]

Magistrates were expected to visit all the estates in their districts with some frequency. This meant rides of many miles over rough terrain in boiling sun (wearing their uniform coats of course!) They had to visit estates with forty or more apprentices every two weeks, and respond to special summonses and complaints within twenty-four hours. They had to hold court once a week, inspect prisons and workhouses, and preside over valuations of apprentices applying to purchase manumission. In addition, Governor Sligo insisted that each magistrate keep a journal detailing distance traveled, estates visited, cases heard, and punishment ordered, along with a list of estates from which there were no complaints reported, and forward this information to Spanish Town each week.[87]

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[84] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 216.
[85] Ibid., 214.
[86] Ibid., 215.
[87] Circular No. 2782, Kings House 25 May, 1835: Nunes to the S.M.s . Spanish Town Archives, Jamaica, 4/47/8/171

It was a lonely life, and the health of the S.M.s, and that of their families, suffered greatly. Many resigned their posts and returned to England, but others, with no alternative employment prospects, were forced to stay on. Some cooperated with the planters enforcing punishments the owners were no longer able to apply, while others did their best to remain neutral, and a few openly sided with the apprentices.[88] Barrister and historian, W.L. Burn, who wrote the seminal work on the magistrates, calculated that of the 119 S.M.s who served in Jamaica from 1834 to 1838, twenty-seven died in service (some within days of arriving or just after leaving) and ten resigned due to ill health. Their dilemma was best summed up by S.M. Marlton who wrote in a report at the end of apprenticeship, "I have been acting nearly three years in this district but never troubled my head about pension or future employment, being satisfied that the chances of outliving the apprenticeship are against me."[89]

Who were the men who signed up to take an impossible job in an inhospitable climate and hostile environment many thousands of miles from home, and one that offered such miserable financial rewards? Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, wanted "men uninfluenced by the local assemblies, free from local passions…"[90] Most were military men. Of the 119 S.M.s who served in Jamaica, sixty were recruited in Britain, of these 50 percent were Army or Navy men retired on half pay. There were advantages to hiring military men: they were used to serving in rough conditions in foreign countries and they were trained in enforcing military discipline. But for those applicants who were hired, it was a two-edged sword: It was a job, but, as Burn noted, "too often a favorable

[88] Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, 132.
[89] Smith to Glenelg, No. 43, March 8th, 1838. C.O. 137/226 quoted in Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 219.
[90] Ibid., 198.

reply was in reality a death warrant."[91] To fill the remaining positions, Governor Sligo recruited locally from the "non-planter middle class." Of these local recruits, seven were British nationals recently resident in the island, seven were colored men, another seven had previously held official appointments in Jamaica, and twenty-four were white West Indians. The backgrounds of the remaining fourteen are unknown. In addition to military service, Whig patronage also helped in securing a position. Sligo himself sponsored three young fellow Irishmen, two of whom, unfortunately, found not fame and fortune in the colonies but "hard work and an early grave."[92]

Among those hired was Richard Hill, a colored justice whose father was an English merchant and his mother was reputed to be East Indian, but was more likely a mulatto.[93] He was appointed by Sligo's predecessor, Lord Mulgrave. Hill, educated in England, had spent two years working for the Anti-Slavery Society in St. Domingue. Both Mulgrave and Sligo had high regards for Hill's performance of his duties. At one time Sligo communicated to the Colonial Secretary that Hill was "a firm, resolute and able magistrate, not far from being the best I have."[94] But Hill was later criticized for his leniency toward the apprentices. When the governor ordered him to move to a different parish, Hill resigned. Loathe to lose his considerable administrative talents, Sligo appointed Hill Secretary to the Special Magistrates Department at Spanish Town, where he analyzed the magistrates' reports that were forwarded to London.[95] In 1837 he became the fifth colored man elected to the House of Assembly. In 1841 he was offered

[91] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 196.
[92] Ibid., 201.
[93] Marlene Manderson-Jones, *Richard Hill of Jamaica, His Life and Times, 1795-1872* (Unpublished dissertation, University of the West Indies, December 1973). Hill and his sister, Ann, were registered as quadroons, but his other sister, Jane, was registered as a mestee—the offspring of a quadroon and a white, although all three children had the same parents.
[94] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 237.
[95] Ibid.

a promotion and move to St. Lucia, but he declined, preferring to stay in Jamaica and write on history and science.[96]

Another magistrate who survived the job and the climate was the devout and dictatorial John Daughtery, a strong advocate of free labor, who went on to serve as the Jamaican General Inspector of Prisons from 1841 to 1861.[97] In a report he filed from the parish of St. Elizabeth in June 1835, Daughtrey stated that "complaints though still sufficiently numerous, have decreased on both sides." He then went on to list the most common complaints against the apprentices. Top of the list was insolence—especially by women, "…loose themselves from some of their former restraints, they set their unruly tongues also at liberty." In addition to insolence, the other most common complaints from supervisory staff included disobedience of orders, tardiness, pilfering, neglect of provision grounds, and "diminution of labor." Daughtrey was very disturbed by the fact that one year of apprenticeship had passed and there had been no attempt "to improve the race by the long-talked of system of education." He was, however, impressed by the "multitudes [of apprentices] preparing to marry, and in by far the greater number of instances they unite themselves with the proper persons, the mothers of their children. The woman feels elevated when she is a wife, and the man has more respect for himself

[96] Manderson-Jones, *Richard Hill of Jamaica,* 476. Hill wrote a history of Jamaica published in 1859, and many articles on natural science that were published in journals in Britain and America. In 1855 Hill spent a week in Port Royal recovering from pneumonia. While there, he wrote a reminiscence of Admiral Nelson's days in Port Royal and of the lodging housekeeper, Couba Cornwallis, the mistress of Admiral Cornwallis when he was a young naval officer. Couba apparently nursed the Duke of Clarence (later King William IV) when he was in the navy. She was buried in a gown given her by Queen Adelaide. Hill also visited Cabrita (Goat) Island in Old Harbor Bay that supplied the first seeds of Sea Island cotton to Georgia. *Richard Hill: A Week at Port Royal*, 1855. University of Georgia Library, MCF Z1201.S45 H7867 W43.

[97] Diana Paton, "The Penalties of Freedom: Punishment in Postemancipation Jamaica," in Ricardo D. Salvatore, Carlos Aguirre, and Gilbert M. Joseph, eds. *Crime and Punishment in Latin America: Law and Society since Late Colonial Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 277.

from having done what was right." Daughtrey blamed any failure of the system on bad managers.[98]

There was Dr. Archibald Palmer, a Scotsman who married his "colored" mistress, and who strongly identified with the apprentices' cause.[99] Palmer, who published a weekly paper in support of freed people, complained to Governor Sligo and the Anti-Slavery Society that apprentices were harshly punished by magistrates partial to the planters. Moreover, Palmer complained, apprentices were forced to work excessive hours and were deprived of allowances and medical care.[100] Palmer, who was a doctor in Port Royal, ran into trouble when he refused to transfer to another parish. After gaining a temporary deferment he finally agreed to move, but his problems continued because of his conduct toward the plantation staff and other magistrates. A commission set up by the governor to inquire into Palmer's conduct reported that, "He had given the first of August to the apprentices as a holiday and had told them that they had a right to that or any alternative day. He had never ordered apprentices to repay time to the estate beyond the equivalent of what had been lost and had therefore not discouraged them from losing time in the future, and he was more desirous of impugning the conduct of the other special justices, his predecessors, than of exculpating himself." Palmer, who carried on a lengthy correspondence with the Anti-Slavery Society, was dismissed in 1836 as a troublemaker. He then left for England and requested an interview with the Colonial Secretary who refused to see him. His backers in England, however, rewarded him with one thousand pounds and appointed him Secretary of the Central Negro Emancipation

[98] "Report of Special Magistrate Daughtrey" (P.P., 1835,1.) in Bell and Morrell, *British Colonial Policy,* 395-398.
[99] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 223.
[100] Letter from Palmer to Sligo, *Anti-Slavery Papers,* Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

Committee. Palmer stayed in London and used the appointment to campaign vigorously against apprenticeship, before returning to Jamaica in 1838.[101] On his return he edited a newspaper, *The Emancipator.*

Major John Bowen Colthurst was an example of the military men who were hired as magistrates. Colthurst was born into the Irish gentry and served in the British army for twenty-seven years. After leaving the army he turned to farming at which he failed miserably. He then applied for a position in the magistracy in desperation having a wife and five children to support. In 1835, he was appointed to Barbados and later transferred to St. Vincent. He was fifty-six years old at the time of his appointment and his health suffered terribly in the next few years. He returned to Britain in December 1838, four months after the end of apprenticeship. He did not give up, and was still applying for jobs in "cooler climes" at the age of 65. And in 1843 he was offered, and accepted, the post of Superintendent of Convicts in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), but had to turn it down owing to the illness of his daughter. Colthurst was one of the few S.M.s to leave a detailed journal of his experiences and the workings of the apprenticeship system. Colthurst returned to Ireland and became involved in the Cork Anti-Slavery Society. He corresponded with William Lloyd Garrison, and seventeen extracts from his journal were published in *The Liberator* in 1847 and 1848.[102]

Another S.M. who left a detailed diary was John Anderson, like Colthurst a magistrate in St. Vincent. Anderson was a Scottish lawyer, graduate of the University of Edinburgh, married with seven children. His position as secretary to the Scottish Society of Antiquaries left him in a financially precarious state. He took his wife, three of their

[101] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 251-2.
[102] Woodville K. Marshall, ed., *The Colthurst Journal: Journal of a Special Magistrate in the Islands of Barbados and St. Vincent July 1835-September 1838* (New York: KTO Press, 1977).

children and a nurse to St. Vincent, leaving the other children in the care of relatives. Anderson continued on as an S.M. after the end of apprenticeship, but in 1839 while on duty he was seriously injured in a fall from his horse and died three weeks later, leaving his family destitute.[103] The lieutenant governor appealed to the Colonial Office on Mrs. Anderson's behalf and she was awarded "75 pounds to defray [her] expenses home from St. Vincent."[104]

Perhaps the S.M. with the most diverse career was Dr. Richard Robert Madden, who was assigned to Kingston. Although a magistrate for only four months, Madden lived in Jamaica for a year and later published a two-volume memoir of his experiences.[105] Madden was a surgeon from Dublin who lived in Italy, Egypt, and Portugal, and who worked for the Colonial Office for six years in Jamaica and Cuba. While in Cuba he collected data for the Anti-Slavery Society and gave evidence for the Africans in the *Amistad* trial in Connecticut. He then went to West Africa, and was Colonial Secretary in Western Australia from 1847 to 1849. In addition, to his careers as a surgeon and diplomat, Madden was an accomplished author and poet, with forty-seven published volumes to his credit, and a translator of other works. The best known of his translations was a volume of poems by the Cuban slave, Juan Francisco Manzano, to which Madden prefixed his own descriptions of Cuban slavery and the slave trade.[106]

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[103] Roderick A. McDonald, ed., *Between Slavery and Freedom: Special Magistrate John Anderson's Journal of St. Vincent during the Apprenticeship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 4-8.

[104] R. Vernon Smith to Elizabeth Anderson, 13 February 1840, CO 261/14, Entry Books of Commissions, Instructions, Correspondence, etc., 1824-1842, 361, quoted in McDonald, *Between Slavery and Freedom,* 8.

[105] R. R. Madden, M.D., *A Twelvemonth's Residence in the West Indies, During the Transition from Slavery to Apprenticeship; With Incidental Notices of the State of Society, Prospects, and Natural Resources of Jamaica and Other Islands,* 2 Vols. (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1835).

[106] *Poems by a Slave in the Island of Cuba, Recently Liberated; translated from the Spanish by R..R. Madden, M.D. with the history of the Early Life of the Negro Poet, written by Himself; to which are*

Madden was one of six magistrates sent out in October 1833, to spend "nine months'observation of the state of the country, and experience, as general magistrates, to prepare us for our new duties."[107] Not surprisingly, he was particularly critical of the medical treatment afforded the apprentices. They were treated by hot-house [plantation hospital] doctors, who are "generally a negro disqualified by age or infirmity for labour in the field." And, although they could neither read nor write, they were in charge of compounding and dispensing medicines. It also depended on what the relationship was like between patients and hot-house doctors as to "how they were attended to, and whether they were looked upon as sick men or shammers."[108]

Madden conceded that some apprentices "were prone to shamming when they wanted to escape from labour" but that this propensity resulted in "every sick Negro being suspected of shamming." On a visit to one plantation an overseer pointed out a woman who was limping. When Madden asked what was wrong with her, the overseer informed him that "the woman was shamming lameness." When he asked if she had been seen by a doctor, he was told that she had and the recommended treatment was "a dose of salts." As the woman was dragging her left leg, Madden asked her to lift her left arm which she could only do by using her other hand to raise it. Madden told the overseer that she was not shamming but "she is dead of one side, and she is not able to work." The overseer assured him, if that were the case she would not be required to work. Three weeks later when he returned from a trip, his wife informed him that the

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prefixed Two Pieces Descriptive of Cuban Slavery and the Slave Traffic (London: Thomas Ward and Co., 1840).

[107] Madden, *A Twelvemonths' Residence,* 1, 5.

[108] Ibid., 117.

woman had turned up at his house crying, and saying, "that for refusing to work she had been flogged on her paralytic hand."[109]

Many of the ills of the island, Madden believed, could be blamed on absenteeism. He anticipated that emancipation would require a new system of plantation management and he fully expected absentee owners would travel to Jamaica to work out new arrangements with the labor force to "ensure a continuance of labour." The most obvious change was that "Hitherto, coercion was necessarily employed to obtain labour; but the new law, in making coercion the legal penalty of its infraction, instead of an arbitrary punishment, summarily inflicted, has deprived it of the character which chiefly constituted its terrors." No longer would punishment be inflicted "in the heat of passion…the stimulus to labour is therefore in the hands of the special justice, not what it was in those of the overseer." But, to his amazement, very few proprietors traveled to Jamaica to supervise the transition from slave to wage labor.[110]

One of the most disturbing cases Madden ruled on was that of a free black asking that a runaway slave and her four children be returned to him. It turned out that the runaway was his own sister. To Madden's amazement the man did not deny the relationship, "but, on the contrary, in support of his claim, said that her mother and his [mother] had been his slave also, and had died in servitude to him." Madden searched the public registry and, finding all the paperwork in order, was forced to order the woman and three of her children back to her brother. The youngest child was under six years of age and thus freed. Madden then told the court that he was putting off a final decision on the case for two days in order "that all the coloured population of Kingston might be

[109] Madden, *A Twelvemonths' Residence,* 1, 118.
[110] Ibid., 2, 23-24.

afforded the most public opportunity that could be given them, of witnessing an event of so much importance to her brother as the recovery of the services of the daughter of his own mother." The claimant protested saying that he did not want Madden to go to so much trouble and would receive his apprentices back without any public ceremony. Madden assured him it was no trouble. By this time people attending the court were so disturbed that the claimant said he would free his sister (or sell her very cheaply) but he would not give up the children. Madden again manipulated the claimant by promising more publicity of the case "so that it should be out of the power of any human being in Jamaica to ever dispute his claim to them, or call into question the title by which he had held his own mother in slavery to the hour of her death." The claimant eventually signed manumission papers for the whole family.[111]

Madden's career as an S.M. was unfortunately cut short when he was assaulted after dismissing a case brought by a corporate magistrate against an apprentice for lack of evidence. There was a serious riot following the dismissal. Supporters of the magistrate dragged Madden into the street and attempted to tar and feather him. A short time later Madden was again assaulted on a Kingston street by colleagues of the magistrate. When the mayor of Kingston refused to interfere to guarantee his safety, Madden resigned.[112]

Following his resignation, Madden wrote a letter to the governor in which he laid out what he perceived were the difficulties that prevented the apprenticeship system from receiving a "fair trial." They included: absentee proprietors; inability of the majority of resident proprietors to pay wages for overtime; conflicting interests of attorneys who manage the estates of absentees from those of the owners; importunity of merchants at

[111] Madden, *A Twelvemonth's Residence,* 2, 118-120.
[112] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 223. David R. Murray, "Richard Robert Madden: His Career as a Slavery Abolitionist" in *Studies* (Spring, 1972), 41-53.

home (to whom two-thirds of the estates are mortgaged); jealousy of the local magistrates whose jurisdiction is superseded by that of the special magistrates, and irritation of the overseers, whose power over the slaves has been taken away by the new law. He believed that these conditions were the main causes of the opposition from the white population. For the apprentices, there were three main obstacles: inability or unwillingness to comprehend prospective advantages; reluctance to labor without wages, and withholding their labor as retaliation for past grievances.[113] Unfortunately, none of the conditions Madden listed as contributing to the failure of the experiment changed during the remaining years of apprenticeship.

Madden was one of the fortunate ones. In spite of spending so many of his years in the tropics, he had a long healthy life, returning to Dublin in 1849. He continued to write and died in 1886 at the age of 88.[114]

Another S.M. who kept a personal diary of his experiences in Jamaica was Frederick White. White's diary, which unfortunately covers only the first six months of apprenticeship, is the most useful of all the accounts left for its detailed daily record of the working life of an S.M. and of all the cases brought before him. Unlike the other magistrates who wrote letters and left journals, White rarely offered advice or recorded his opinions on apprenticeship, politics, his family, or the geography of the terrain he traversed daily. It appears that he was a married man, as he mentioned being accompanied by his wife when he was summoned to Spanish Town by the governor.[115]

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[113] Madden, *A Twelvemonth's Residence*, 2, 193-194.
[114] Thomas More Madden, ed., *R.R.Madden* (New York: Catholic Publication Society Co., 1892). Madden was buried under four cypress trees he had brought earlier from Napoleon's tomb in St. Helena. His wife who had accompanied him on all his travels, died two years later aged 86.
[115] *Diary of Frederick White*, 1834, St. George, Jamaica, 184. MS. W. Ind. V.1, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

The only other references to her were a couple of terse entries: Wednesday, January 7, 1835, "Sarah very ill, had doctor previous week." Three days later, "Took Mrs. White up the mountain to see Dr. Robertson."[116] There is no mention of what was wrong with his wife or when she recovered, or if they had any children. The only other personal detail White included in the diary was his terror at living through a severe earthquake that badly damaged his house.

Frederick White was a former naval lieutenant, and his naval experience made him "extravagantly free with the lash."[117] He arrived in Jamaica on April 17, 1834 to take up his appointment and lived on Kildare Estate, St. George Parish. His district encompassed St. George Parish and part of St. Mary Parish on the north coast of the island. Every day White recorded the estates he visited, the mileage he covered, the courts he held, the complaints he heard, the punishments he handed down, and the number of constables he swore in.[118] One thing White could not be accused of was laziness. He carried out a prodigious amount of work everyday without complaint. He took a few hours off to attend church on Sundays and spent the rest of that day filling out the reports the S.M.s had to file with the governor each week. He also appeared to have been healthy during his stay in Jamaica. The only reference to any indisposition was a mention that he missed church one Sunday owing to an attack of gout.

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[116] *Diary of Frederick White*, 211-213.

[117] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship*, 236. The connection between the quantity of flogging and those S.M.s who had served in the military was noted by many of those "monitoring" apprenticeship. "The special magistrates also frequently resort to flogging. Many of them, as has been mentioned already, have been connected with the army or navy, where corporal punishment is practiced, and flogging is not only in consonance with their feelings and habits, but is a punishment more briefly inflicted and more grateful to the planters, as it does not deprive them of the apprentices' time." *The British Emancipator*. Wednesday, July 11, 1838. Institute of Jamaica, MST 321.

[118] Each estate had to have a constabulary made up of free blacks. These men, rather than the overseers, carried out the punishments handed down by the S.M.s

An analysis of the complaints made to White by planters or overseers reveals that they fell into six main categories:

1) Running away or general absenteeism (slightly more females than males).
2) Insolence (many more females than males).
3) Refusing to work and incitement of others to strike or rebel (males and females equally).
4) Thieving from plantation stores (mostly males) or from provision grounds (males and females equally).
5) Not completing task work (more males than females).
6) Neglect of duty by watchmen and cattlemen allowing animals to stray and destroy provision grounds and cane fields (all males).

There were three main categories of complaints brought by apprentices against planters and overseers:

1) Made to work overtime and not getting Saturdays off as proscribed under law.
2) Cruelty and withdrawal of customary allowances.
3) Failure to prevent cattle from destroying provisions grounds.

The third class of complaints (much smaller than the other two) were those brought by apprentices against other apprentices. These were mainly accusations of stealing from provision grounds, with a few complaints of assaults.

White's diary reveals that from the outset he was "very free with the lash" when punishing men, and equally free in sentencing women to hard labor in the house of correction. On August 7, 1834, (one week after the start of apprenticeship), he sentenced Tecchia Henry "for general disobedience of orders in not weaning her sixteen month old

child…committed her to the workhouse at Buff Bay for 14 days hard labour."[119] On August 12, Frances Sterling of Orange Vale Estate was accused by the overseer of "general insolence and bad conduct, and teaching her daughter to disobey all orders she might receive…14 days hard labour."[120] On September 11, White sentenced Fanny Gordon of Cromwell Estate "a young girl with no family…to 14 days hard labour for missing one hour of work and [being] very insolent to the constable."[121] Sometimes it was the males who were insolent. The overseer on The Cottage Plantation, St. George, for example, complained that an apprentice, Thomas Catney, "was very insolent and refused what he was told and would not go to work." White sentenced him to receive 36 lashes, "this man then had the impudence to tell me I was paid by the white man and not by the King, for which I gave him an extra 12 lashes."[122]

Many of the complaints involved runaways. It appears that this type of resistance was as common during apprenticeship as it had been during slavery. Both runaways and those found harboring them were punished. On September 9, White traveled to Hopewell Estate, St. Mary Parish, and heard four complaints of apprentices running away. Two of the accused were males and two were females. On this occasion, White's sentencing indicates that he was far more lenient with the males than he was with the females. The journal entry stated that William Russell, "a notorious runaway" who had been absent from the property for 14 months, "…admonished very severely and ordered him to make up his time from 1st August." Although Governor Sligo had proclaimed a general amnesty for any runaways who turned themselves in prior to August 1, 1834, Russell did

[119] *Diary of Frederick White,* 9.
[120] Ibid., 21.
[121] Ibid., 100.
[122] Ibid., 37.

not return until September 9, 1834. Likewise, William Kerridge, "a notorious bad character and runaway, been from the estate one month…from the solicitation of the overseer, admonished him very severely and pardoned him." There is no record of why the overseer intervened in the sentencing. The two women from the same estate were not so fortunate. Jenny Browne, "a notorious bad woman and runaway and insolent with all…one month hard labour – nothing can be done with her." And Justina Hudson, "a notorious runaway and otherwise a bad woman, very insolent…one month hard labour." It was also a bad idea to be caught hiding a runaway. White rode straight from Hopewell to Richmond Estate, also in St. Mary Parish, and there he charged Wiltshire McClean with "harboring Justina Hudson for three months. The case full proved upon oath and upon the confession of the woman herself." McClean received 36 lashes.[123]

One of the most serious accusations was that of refusing to work and inciting others to strike and rebel. White held his weekly court at Annotto Bay on August 18 where he heard complaints from the overseer of Aqualta Vale Estate against three male and three female apprentices for disorderly conduct, refusing to obey orders, and causing the rest of the apprentices to refuse to work. He sentenced the men to 24 lashes each and the women to 14 days hard labor in the workhouse. Hours later he was summoned to Fort Stuart Estate by the overseer to hear a similar complaint. Fort Stuart was one of the more troublesome estates and White visited it frequently. Three male apprentices were charged with "being badly disposed and the whole cause of the [other] apprentices being dissatisfied with their lot." According to White, the reception he met with from the apprentices "called for me to make a very severe example of them. I of course sentenced

[123] *Diary of Frederick White,* 96-97.

each to receive 36 lashes."[124] Four days later he was called to Golden Grove Estate where the apprentices had gone on strike, "stopping the mill and refusing to work at all on the Friday, and absenting themselves from the estate." White believed that the apprentices "were planning to join those from Fort Stuart who were absent from that estate." He sentenced the four male ringleaders to 48 lashes each and one month hard labor in the Rodney Hall workhouse. Three women received 7 days hard labor.[125] On September 23, he sentenced seven apprentices from Fort George Estate to 48 lashes each for "incitement to rebel."[126]

Complaints of apprentices inciting rebellion increased. On October 17, White was called to Gibraltar Estate where the apprentices had gone on strike. He tried to reason with them, "I mustered them up and found they would come to no terms…gave Francis French for exciting [sic] Negroes 48 lashes…Negroes all ran off." White then sent for the police and placed one of the estate's constables and the head driver "in confinement. The police arrived at daylight, according to White, under the orders of a sub-inspector. The apprentices were still absent at 9 a.m. when White observed the Works were on fire. They managed to put the fire out without sustaining much damage, "could get no one to assist but police and house servants." Everything was quiet on the estate the following day. Most of the apprentices were still absent. White sentenced the head constable to 18 lashes for "neglect of duty and refusal to obey orders." Two other constables received 36 lashes and two women were sentenced to one month of hard labor.[127] Four days later, on October 22, White returned to Gibraltar Estate and ordered "all prisoners who had

[124] *Diary of Frederick White*., 116.
[125] Ibid., 120.
[126] Ibid., 123.
[127] Ibid.,, 161.

returned to be sent to Fort Stuart Estate in the morning accompanied by the police." At a court White convened at Fort Stuart on October 23, he sentenced the head driver, who was accused of "exciting Negroes to rebel and leave the property [Gibraltar]…to 50 lashes and [ordered him to] return to work."[128] Fifty lashes was the maximum number allowed by law. Not known as a magistrate sympathetic to the apprentices, White began to increase the sentences he handed down. As he was restricted to 50 lashes maximum, he added time in the house of correction on the treadmill, along with solitary confinement on bread and water, and ordered that time lost from work should be added to the end of the apprenticeship term.

At the same court, another apprentice was sentenced to 24 lashes and one month on the treadmill at Kingston for an assault on a bookkeeper. Robert Hill, a runaway, received 18 lashes, one month in the Kingston house of correction—14 days to be spent on the treadmill and 14 days in solitary confinement on bread and water. White sentenced nine young women, four from Gibraltar and five from Fort Stuart, who were absent an average of 28 days, to "one month in the house of correction, 14 days on the treadmill and 14 days in solitary confinement on bread and water…and to make up their lost days."[129]

Stealing, both from plantation stores and from apprentices' huts and provision grounds, was another common complaint. All those accused in White's diary of stealing from the plantation store—usually items such as herrings and salt--were men. Both males and females stole cane from the fields, and corn, plantains, yams, cocoas, and hogs from other apprentices. Not surprisingly, those who stole from the planters received

[128] *Diary of Frederick White,* 166.
[129] Ibid., 168.

heavier sentences than those who stole from their fellow apprentices. One apprentice who stole sugar from the boiling house at Nuffield Estate, St. Mary Parish, was sent to Port Maria workhouse for trial. Another received 48 lashes for stealing salt fish.[130] White sent two young boys accused of breaking into a store and stealing salt fish, rum, and sugar, for trial, as the most severe punishment he could hand down was a switching. [131]

William Robinson of Albany Estate, St. Mary, was accused by a fellow apprentice of "thieving from his grounds. The case clearly proved sentenced him to 14 days hard labor." Robinson's overseer then stepped forward and accused him of "taking a mule from the pen at night to ride to the next estate [Water Valley] and there committed theft. The case fully proved by seeing a sack full of cocoas on the mule returning home." The hapless Robinson then received 24 lashes added to his 14 days hard labor.[132]

In a more unusual case of theft, George Moore, a watchman about the house at Cromwell Estate, St. Mary, was found by the overseer with a large silver spoon and steel fork in his possession. As the spoon was engraved with the planter's family crest, "the case fully proved …the prisoner says he found the spoon in a field…one month to hard labour."[133] Occasionally apprentices stole money. On August 19, Betsey Burges was accused by her master, a Mr. Browne of Buff Bay, of "leaving his service on 14th January last taking with her a letter containing 3 pounds which he sent her with and which she did not return." Betsey and the money were missing for seven months. White sentenced her

[130] *Diary of Frederick White*, 162.
[131] Ibid., 218.
[132] Ibid., 91.
[133] Ibid., 76.

to "14 days hard labour and to make up from her master the lost time after her apprenticeship expires."[134]

In a similar case, Catherine Ball, an apprentice who was on loan to Charles Town Estate, was taken by the owner, Mr. Hampston, to Kingston along with another servant "to bring things home which he might purchase." Hampston claimed to have 15 pounds on him in one and two-pound notes. He later found two of the notes missing. Suspecting the prisoner, he "looked over her box and there found three pieces of calico." Ball claimed to have found the calico in the yard under a tree. Unfortunately for her, the other apprentice testified that, "she saw Ball take the money from her bosom. She accompanied her [Ball] to a shop where she bought the calico in question, and a handkerchief and gave her [the witness] half a dollar to hold her tongue." Ball's mistress also testified at the trial, "she will not swear to her honesty or whether she was stealing, but when she was a little girl she was good." White sentenced her to two months of hard labor in the house of corrections at Buff Bay.[135] In another case involving a money transaction, a male apprentice was accused by his owner of receiving 5 shillings for shoeing someone's horse and keeping the money. White admonished him and ordered him to return the money.[136]

Margaret Cookely, a thirteen-year old apprentice at Retirement Plantation, St. George, was accused by her owner of stealing trinkets from her mistress. Another apprentice testified that she "suspected the prisoner, looked into her box and there found a pair of gold earrings and buttons etc." Cookely acknowledged she had stolen the

[134] *Diary of Frederick White,* 44.
[135] *Ibid.,* 61.
[136] Ibid., 219.

trinkets and said "she took them to give her mother to purchase her freedom." White "admonished her very severely and sentenced her to one week of solitary confinement"[137]

One of the most common complaints was that of accusing watchmen (and a few cattlemen) with neglect of duty for allowing cattle to wander and destroy provision grounds. This was a complaint that was made by overseers against watchmen and also by apprentices against owners and overseers. Many of the watchmen were old men unfit for any other job. White showed some compassion for age, and mostly let them off with "a severe admonition." Of course most of the losses were incurred by apprentices rather than planters, a possible reason for his magnanimity. This was not the case, however, when a watchman from Paradise Estate allowed "a valuable horse to be taken and ridden to death." The watchman received 36 lashes.[138]

During the six months that Frederick White kept his diary, he recorded only two instances of successful complaints made by apprentices against owners or overseers. On his first visit to Mount Vernon Estate on August 7, the apprentices all complained about their mistress. She had ordered one boy to be flogged (which he was) by one of the drivers. Flogging ordered by anyone but an S.M. and carried out by anyone but a constable was now against the law. White recorded that "taken her general harsh conduct I thought it my duty to fine her 5 pounds."[139] This was the maximum allowed under the law. One week later, White visited Bedington Estate, St. George Parish. All 55 of the apprentices complained about their master's treatment of them. According to White, "this unfeeling man has not given to these poor beings the necessities of life for some years past." Obviously years of cruelty and neglect only merited a threat. White

[137] *Diary of Frederick White.,* 107.
[138] Ibid., 217.
[139] Ibid., 6-7.

"admonished their master to treat his apprentices as he ought, if not I would inflict the heaviest punishment the law allows me upon him."[140]

Although during slavery the overwhelming majority of violent acts were committed by whites on slaves, there was some slave-on-slave violence. White only recorded three complaints of violence by apprentices against fellow apprentices. An apprentice at Water Valley Estate, St. Mary, swore that he was just eating his breakfast when another apprentice endeavored to pick a quarrel with him. When he would not quarrel, the prisoner stabbed him in the head. In his testimony, the overseer "gave him a bad character for being a violent man, but not an ill-disposed one." White sentenced the man to be kept in solitary confinement for 20 days on bread and water.[141]

The other two cases were more disturbing. The owner of Carlton Wood House in St. Mary brought Harry Hare, the hot-house doctor, before White and swore that "the said apprentice was constantly in the habit of getting drunk, abusing every person when so and beating the sick under his care, and he was altogether a very bad man." Obviously, to his owner, beating the sick was not a serious enough crime to warrant appointing a replacement. White ordered Hare to spend one month on the penal gang at the workhouse in Buff Bay.[142] The third complaint of violence against an apprentice was brought by Elsey Graham of Rodney Hall Estate. Graham accused fellow apprentice, Joseph Sherwood, of "beating her about the head with a firestick causing 3 head wounds, after that he knocked off her right hand forefinger." White sentenced Sherwood to the house of correction for trial.[143]

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[140] *Diary of Frederick White,* 13.
[141] Ibid., 34.
[142] Ibid., 19.
[143] Ibid., 136.

Unlike Madden's experience in Kingston, very few apprentices in White's district applied to purchase their freedom. On October 20, he valued Rebecca Barnes, aged eight, at 8 pounds. There is no comment as to whether she was manumitted. Augusta Charlotte Moore, an apprentice at Mount Vernon, applied to purchase her freedom. "She being a non-praedial, valued her at 60 pounds being at the rate of 15 pounds per year [of apprenticeship]." White added that Moore did not purchase her freedom (presumably because she could not afford it), but "I hired her of her master at 15 pounds per year…left me when I returned to England, September 1, 1835."[144]

Few of those seeking manumission could pay the amount of the valuation. Some apprentices tried other ways. Maria Louisa and her daughter Ledia appeared before White, and claimed they should be freed because they were Indian. White referred to the parish books and found they had been sold as slaves. He ordered them to Annotto Bay for a hearing at the next court. When they appeared in court, Maria Louisa changed her testimony and claimed her freedom "because her master (who is now dead) was an Indian." Maria Louisa and Ledia refused to go to a Mr. Fisher (who claimed to be their rightful owner). White then committed them to the house of correction "till I hear from the Kings House. They had been referred to me by Doctor Madden – him they told all their documents were at St. George Parish – now they say they are at Kingston." [145] White sought advice on the case from the attorney general. Unfortunately, there is no record of the outcome of the case in his diary.

White's diary indicates that it only took him two or three weeks to become "a planters' S.M." His punishments became increasingly severe and his diary entries more

[144] *Diary of Frederick White*, 81.
[145] Ibid., 91.

terse. He dismissed virtually all complaints brought by apprentices against planters and overseers. On occasion he would return home to find an entire great gang waiting to complain about overwork and abuse. Even these "shows of solidarity" failed to spur him to intervene with their masters. Beginning on October 25, he made it a habit to sleep at planters' houses while riding around his district. Few planters offered their hospitality without wanting something in return, and White's acceptance of their beds placed him in their debt.

White's inability to rule impartially in the cases brought before him is evident in the answers he gave to questions concerning the working of apprenticeship posed by Governor Sligo to all S.M.'s, in November, 1834. On being asked his opinion of the general conduct of the apprentices, White replied, "It does not appear to me that any Negroes work cheerfully during the hours for labour limited by law, nor do I think that they are gratified for the boon which has lately been bestowed upon them, because they do not understand it." He denied that, "any opposition [had] been offered on the part of the gentlemen in charge of estates to the carrying into effect [of] the provisions of the Abolition Act." In White's opinion, those parents who refused to apprentice their children under six year of age who had been freed by the Act, "were living on the bounty of their former owners, who continued to provide all former allowances of clothing, medical care and nourishment, herrings, extras at Christmas etc., to those children…also to the aged, diseased and infirm (a numerous class), as well as to the individuals who work."[146]

[146] Extract from the Examination of *Frederick White*, special Magistrate, residing in the Parish of St. George; November 1834.

As early as October, Sligo, concerned at the number of complaints he was receiving against White for severity toward the apprentices, wanted to dismiss him. Since White was so popular with the planters because of his harsh punishments, Sligo looked for a different reason to get rid of him. On November 18, during a trial at Buff Bay courthouse, the Rev. Bolton, Rector of St. George's, criticized a flogging sentence handed down by White. White turned on Bolton and accused him of being a rascal, a liar and a hypocrite. In addition, White had supposedly "prevented Bolton from catechizing his congregation."[147]

Sligo dismissed White on February 6, 1835. The planters, grateful for his services to them, rewarded Frederick White with a service of plate. In a dispatch to the Earl of Aberdeen, Sligo reported, "With respect to the parish of St. George's, I have only to say that it has been the scene of Mr. White's exertions; and as the result has not been as favourable as he thinks it, I have the more to lament that so much severity should have been so uselessly adopted. I deprecate in the most anxious manner that gentleman's restoration to the magistracy."[148] White returned to England seven months later. In March 1836, the Colonial Office turned down his petition for reinstatement. This was not, however, the end of White's government career. Later that year, he secured a position in the Coast Guard Service as an Admiralty agent.[149]

Some of the magistrates were sponsored by powerful patrons in Britain. These patrons, mostly Whig abolitionists, wanted to send like-minded men to oversee the transition, and act to protect the interests of the apprentices. One of the more famous and interesting patrons (because of the detailed diaries he wrote) was Lord Holland. The

[147] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship*, 236.
[148] Sligo to Aberdeen, 27 March, 1835. PP (Look up how to list)
[149] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 236.

third Lord Holland, Henry Richard Vassall Fox, had married the daughter of a wealthy planter, Richard Vassall, and through her inherited vast Jamaican estates. An absentee landlord, he was nonetheless a strong supporter of the abolition of the slave trade and emancipation.

Lord Holland, a grandson of Henry Fox, the former leader of the Whig Party, was extremely influential in Whig politics. When the Whigs were in opposition, he held leadership meetings at Holland House.[150] He vigorously opposed any policies against personal liberty, and championed the rights of Jews, Catholics, and evangelical Dissenters. He was concerned with the welfare of his slaves and issued strict instructions to his overseers on the abuse of corporal punishment, and condemned the slave trade as "repugnant to the principles of natural justice."[151] Lord Holland also instructed that his workers were not to be referred to as slaves but as "people" even before abolition, and during apprenticeship he offered premiums and bonuses to improve productivity.[152] It should be noted, however, that these sympathies did not extend to freeing his slaves before official emancipation.

A series of letters written between 1834 to 1838 by two stipendiary magistrates, Edward Baynes and Stephen Bourne, to their mentor, Lord Holland, give palpable first-hand accounts of both the workings of the apprenticeship system and the difficulties encountered by the magistrates. Both men frequently stated how homesick they were and told Lord Holland they were willing to take positions in England at much-reduced

[150] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 83.
[151] Abraham D. Kriegel ed. *Holland House Diaries 1831-1840* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), xxi.
[152] Letter from Lord Holland to his estate manager, Thomas McNeil, 17 November, 1836. *Holland House Papers,* Add. MS 51819.

salaries.[153] It appears that neither of them managed to secure alternative employment, as both men still resided in Jamaica in 1839, one year after the end of apprenticeship.

Baynes was the more pessimistic of the two, which is not surprising in the light of the fact that he lost four of his eight children to disease and had to pay two-thirds of his salary in doctor fees.[154] He wrote that some weeks he was never out of the saddle. He found the island in a "critical situation" but not hopeless, and thought that with wise legislation the successful cultivation of sugar was possible after apprenticeship.[155] In the same letter Baynes mentioned that his brother, also a special justice, "has got tired of the office after five months and is returned to England."

Baynes believed that the probationary six years were insufficient for preparing the population for full emancipation. He cautioned that laws should be passed to protect the freed men and offer them guidance and restraint. If this were not done, he believed that "he [the freed person] will again relapse into a state of perfect barbarism," and Jamaica, because of the disparity between the white and black populations and the unhealthiness of the climate for Europeans, would be a total loss to Great Britain. Baynes stated that his chief objective was to preserve the colonies for the mother country and protect British interests. He appeared to show little empathy for the apprentices, "…the Negro is yet a child, little intelligence and no foresight."[156] In an effort to tackle the problem of a compliant labor force, he recommended that provision grounds should be surveyed and

[153] Letter from Baynes to Lord Holland, London, 25 February, 1835, *Holland House Diaries*, Add. MS. 51819. Letter from Bourne to Lord Holland, 24 May, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51,817.
[154] Letter from Edward Baynes to Lord Holland, 25 February, 1835.*Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51819.
[155] Baynes to Holland, 25 February, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* MS. 51817.
[156] Ibid.

only a sufficient size for the subsistence of each family should be allowed. Any extra land, he suggested, should be rented.[157]

Baynes also believed in strict discipline. In answer to questions from Governor Sligo, he expressed the opinion that less was produced on estates where the former management was paternal than where "regular discipline accompanied by strict justice" was observed.[158] Baynes thought apprentices only worked because they were compelled to. He disagreed with the governor's statement that women were more violent than men and the main exciters of insubordination. On the other hand, he argued that proper cells, treadmills, and places of confinement were initially necessary to restrain them.[159]

Baynes also attacked the influence of the Baptist clergy ("which has to be checked by the stipendiary magistrates") and encouraged the quadrupling of Church of England places of worship and district schools.[160] To prevent squatters taking over land, Baynes suggested internal immigration, but he strongly discouraged European immigration in light of what the climate had done to his own family.[161] And yet the tone of Edward Baynes' letters to Lord Holland belied his actions. While an S.M. "he suffered intense vilification for his alleged partiality to freedmen," and he published a newspaper, the *West Indian*, (assisted by two of S.M. Bourne's sons who were printers), in which he encouraged freed people to resist ejection from their cottages and provision grounds as "no power [on earth] could simultaneously evict 300,000 people."

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[157] Baynes to Holland, 25 February, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS 51817
[158] Baynes to Governor Sligo, Spanish Town, 30 June, 1836, *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51819.
[159] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 106. It was Governor Sligo who advocated the introduction of the treadmill when apprentices were sentenced to hard labor. The treadmill, an 1818 invention of Samuel Cubbitt, was used in prisons throughout England as the result of reforms advocated by the Prison Discipline Society.
[160] Letter from Baynes to Sligo, 30 June, 1836. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51819.
[161] Letter from Baynes to Lord Holland, 25 February, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51818.

Baynes applied to Governor Smith for permission to print the paper. He justified it by stating that he wanted to offer apprentices useful information and "teach them their public and private obligations; their duties to God, and to their neighbours; to themselves, and to their employers; to know their own rights and respect those of others." He suggested a price of 1-1/2d.[162] Baynes also criticized those he termed "Attorney Planters" for failing to provide the customary allowances. This criticism infuriated Lord Seaford, who complained to Lord Holland that the charges against the "Attorney Planters were a great exaggeration. He conceded that "some attorneys and proprietors have curtailed the allowance of salt fish and some articles of clothing – but I do not believe they are many." In Seaford's opinion, the extra time given to them by the new law afforded the apprentices "the means of earning the value of any extra allowances that can be curtailed almost 10 times over." He accused Baynes of "such hostile spirit that unless the effect of a temporary excitement should subside, I fear it will disqualify him from administering justice between the planters and their apprentices."[163]

Money problems continued to haunt Baynes. On hearing a rumor that several police magistrates were to be appointed from the senior S.M.s (at a higher salary), in August 1837, he was again entreating Lord Holland to use his influence to procure him a nomination to the new force. He enumerated what it had cost him to move his family to Jamaica from Malta, the costs incurred in outfitting himself as an S.M., his unpaid doctor bills, and the costs of a court case in which he was embroiled. In what he describes as "a succession of systematic and persevering prosecutions" by planters, " I have been presented by the Gran [sic] Inquest of the country as a calumniator, a tamperer with

[162] Letter from Baynes to Lord Holland, 10 August, 1837. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51818
[163] Letter from Seaford to Holland February 4, 1837. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51818.

evidence, and as a public nuisance." Baynes' crime had been to remove the heavy iron chains and collars from female apprentices (not convicted of any offences) lying "grievously sick" in hospital. He had also declared in another case that "a few ounces of corn were not sufficient for the sustenance of a full grown person for four whole days.[164] Baynes was not alone in claiming persecution, many of the S.M.s regarded as favorable to the apprentices were indicted by grand juries on charges brought by planters. In such cases, the S.M.s were "on their own." The Colonial Office did not offer financial assistance to help defray these costs.

In September 1838, John Gurley, an S.M. in St. Elizabeth Parish who was accused of trespass while carrying out his duties by planter Samuel Glanville, appealed to the governor, the Colonial Office, and finally to Joseph Sturge of the Anti-Slavery Society for assistance in paying his court costs of 582 pounds. Gurley made four trips to Spanish Town to attend court. He had to pay for an attorney, for board and lodging, for the upkeep of witnesses who traveled to Spanish Town, and for the delivery of subpoenas. In addition, on one journey his horse (valued at 50 pounds) was killed. Like Baynes, Gurley failed to get relief from British authorities.[165]

The problems of S.M. Baynes were not over. In December 1838, Stephen Bourne, a fellow S.M. and like Baynes a protégé of Lord Holland, wrote to inform his lordship that one of the young officers who used to attend parties at the Baynes' house had seduced one of his daughters. Baynes challenged the officer to a duel and "had three shots but failed to hit him." He then prosecuted the officer for rape. Bourne doubted if the case would succeed with either the Grand or Petty Jury, as there was a rumor that

[164] Letter from Baynes to Holland, September 28, 1837. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51818.
[165] Letters from John Gurley to the Kings House, 1838-1841, MS 1877. Spanish Town Archives.

"she [Baynes' daughter] went to the officer's lodgings."[166] Baynes later lost the case. But, for all the family's misfortunes, far from returning to England following the apprenticeship period, as he had desired, Baynes stayed in the Caribbean and went on to become President of Montserrat.[167]

Stephen Bourne on the other hand was much less critical of the apprentices than Baynes. One reason for this may have been that his territory only incorporated coffee estates and not the harsher sugar estates that suffered more absenteeism, and, unlike the Baynes' family, Bourne's wife and children remained healthy. Although he did consider the apprentices indolent, Bourne blamed the white overseers, bookkeepers, and attorneys whom he considered conceited and impetuous, for any problems.[168] He wrote to Lord Holland, "If the attorneys were all honest and overseers and bookkeepers intelligent and virtuous men, then there would be very little difficulty in preparing the people for enjoyment of perfect freedom."[169]

Bourne was convinced that the apprentices were eager for education and willing to work extra labor on their own provision grounds in order to help defray the costs. He thought what Jamaica needed was "books, schools, teachers, kind overseers and honest bookkeepers…if I had five such teachers as Mr. And Mrs. Morris at the Potteries [presumably teachers he knew in Staffordshire], and five thousand spelling books, within a year I could get five thousands readers, and I <u>think</u> their eagerness to learn is so great that they would cheerfully defray the expense by a little extra labour on their own

[166] Bourne to Holland, 3 December, 1838. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817.
[167] Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 195-96.
[168] Letter from Bourne to Holland, 1 January, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817.
[169] Letter from Bourne to Holland, 2 May, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817.

grounds…"[170] A little later he wrote, "I like the Negroes better and better. In many of them there is an honesty…I find them superior to what I find in the white people."[171] And Bourne changed his mind about the apprentices' seeming indolence, "At present I depend for labour on the Negroes, in their own time…I am sure they do as much work as a like number of English labourers."[172]

Bourne returned to the subject of education in 1839. This time he was advocating that the government confine grants for education to schools on the "Irish plan." He noted that the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists "are equally anxious to educate the people in their own tenets, and although all may be right in the main and all might do good, yet the government might do more good by securing education of the best kind on a principle and plan such as all good men of all sects must approve. Bourne then went on to lobby Lord Holland for a position of Inspector of Schools and Prisons. As Jamaica was divided into three counties, he suggested that the government appoint "the three oldest and most successful of the English magistrates, Daughtrey of St. Elizabeth Parish, Baynes, and myself…I think we might do a great deal of good both to the country and the government."[173]

Bourne had also lobbied hard for a government job for his eldest son. And in 1838, Stephen Bourne Jr. secured a position in the Customs Service in Nassau. He had only held the position for three months, however, when, without any explanation, a

[170] Bourne to Holland 2 May, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817.
[171] Bourne to Holland, 29 September, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817.
[172] Bourne to Holland, 2 May, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817.
[173] Bourne to Holland, undated . *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817. John Daughtrey was awarded this position for the whole island.

replacement was sent from England. He wrote to Lady Holland informing her he was sailing for London "as he had no way at present of returning to Jamaica."[174]

Bourne's district was generally less troublesome than most. He reported in August 1835 that there was only one estate "which is an exception to the perfect quietness." He considered the "overseer a fool, the bookkeeper a false accountant and false accuser, and the head driver a most worthless cruel wretch." The estate, Clifton Mount, was owned by an Irish clergyman. Bourne sent the bookkeeper for trial at the next assize for "a brutal assault on a poor old watchman," and removed the driver from his additional position as a police constable.[175]

In his enthusiasm, Bourne also came up with some "unusual" employment schemes. One of his ideas involved bringing over hemp to grow (from the Duke of Devonshire), but on one of his rides he found it "growing on this mountain in huge quantities like a weed…little machines and a thousand English Boys I could soon make them independent."[176] Another was to sell Crown lands in the mountains to Europeans, "…no industrious man with 5 acres of land in cultivation need fear want. The quantity of plantains and yams [neither of which figure in the European diet] which may be produced from an acre of new land is prodigious, and I can see no more reason why the mother country should not relieve herself of her surplus population here in preference to America or Australia."[177] Apparently, others did not share Bourne's enthusiasm for either scheme. There would be no English boys growing hemp nor surplus Englishmen and women enjoying plantains and yams in the Jamaican mountains.

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[174] Stephen Bourne Jr. to Lady Holland, 7 October, 1838. *Holland House Diaries*, Add. MS.51817. To the relief of his family, he later secured a position in Montego Bay, Jamaica.
[175] Bourne to Holland, 7 August, 1835. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Bourne to Holland, 19 July, 1837. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817.

Like Baynes, Palmer, and Gurley, Bourne also had to defend himself in a work-related trial. Bourne claimed that the attorney-general and the chief justice agreed that he had done nothing wrong, "but the jury punished me for being an Englishman and for not excusing every fault in a white man." The white man Bourne punished had a history of abuse. He had flogged a white bookkeeper, been jailed for beating his commanding officer when serving in the militia, and was a "drunken, lawless, vulgar, ignorant Highlander, kept on the estate as a kind of bully by the overseer."[178]

Life for the magistrates was both dangerous and difficult. Fifteen of them died in Jamaica within a space of six months, and both Baynes and Bourne complained of the way magistrates were treated by members of the legislature and the majority of the island's white population.

Another problem with the system was that governors had to get permission from the Colonial Office to dismiss S.M.s. That took time and too few of the bad ones were terminated. Many magistrates drank too much—but this was not considered grounds for dismissal—and several drank themselves to death. Apprentices complained about individual magistrates to other magistrates, missionaries, anti-slavery activists, and the governor. Anti-slavery activists took these complaints back to Britain and used them in their fight to end apprenticeship. Planters, in turn, complained to the governor and the Assembly when they perceived magistrates were sympathetic to the apprentices. W.L. Burn calculated that twenty-three magistrates in Jamaica were dismissed, or would have been if they had not died or had apprenticeship not ended in 1838: three for general

[178] Bourne to Holland, 13 February, 1836. *Holland House Diaries,* Add. MS. 51817.

uselessness, seventeen for undue harshness to the apprentices, and three for refusal to carry out the provisions of the Abolition Acts.[179]

A particularly egregious case of abuse took place in St. Ann Parish and was brought to the attention of the Colonial Office (most probably by Joseph Sturge) in June 1837. A pamphlet entitled *A Narrative of Events since the First of August 1834 by James Williams, an Apprenticed Labourer in Jamaica* was sent to James Stephen.[180] The pamphlet detailed terrible cruelty inflicted in the House of Correction with the apparent complicity of the four S.M.s who served the parish. Not only was there real abuse of Williams, but another elderly watchman was flogged to death and several women badly injured on the treadmill. One S.M. passed sentences totaling 2,000 lashes in one three-month period.[181]

Joseph Sturge provided the money for James Williams' manumission and took him to England where his narrative was sold and then reprinted in newspapers. Abolitionists used the narrative in their speeches to appeal for the ending of apprenticeship.[182] On June 28, 1837, Lord Glenelg sent a dispatch to Sir Lionel Smith, who had replaced Governor Sligo, in which he questioned the allegations contained in the pamphlet. "On the contrary, I feel it my duty to express considerable distrust of a statement of this nature, put into public circulation at a distance from the spot where the facts are alleged to have occurred. Glenelg requested that Smith investigate the

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[179] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 262. The debates about dismissal and appeals by some of the magistrates are recorded in the letters from the governor to the Colonial Office and the debates on the subject are recorded in the Parliamentary Papers.
[180] James Williams, "Narrative of Events since 1 August 1834, by James Williams, an Apprenticed Labourer in Jamaica" (London, 20 June ,1837) MS321R. National Library of Jamaica, Kingston. A version of the pamphlet edited and with an introduction by Diana Paton was published by Duke University Press in 2001.
[181] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship*, 256-260.
[182] Paton, *A Narrative of Events*, xiii.

allegations and "report the result at as early a period as possible."[183] Four months later Smith reported to Glenelg, "I have the honour to inform you, that the commissioners of inquiry on the case of James Williams have closed their proceedings, and I am sorry to say, the whole barbarous case of that individual is fully proved and confirmed."[184] In April 1838, Governor Smith, ordered the prosecution of one of the S.M.s and Williams' master, but the Grand Jury refused to indict them. As Burn so aptly noted, the other three S.M.s and the superintendent of St. Ann's workhouse "were by this time dead, facing, the missionaries no doubt thought, a less considerate tribunal."[185]

Apprenticeship officially came to an early end on August 1, 1838, by a vote of the Jamaican Assembly. For once politicians, planters, and abolitionists were in agreement. Abolitionists wanted to end the abuse inflicted on the apprentices, planters wanted to rid themselves of the stipendiary magistrates, and both planters and politicians wanted to put an end to what they saw as British meddling in Jamaican affairs. Ironically, it was the abuse of the justice and prison systems rather than the labor system that caused the demise of apprenticeship.

The Emancipation Act had laid down rules ameliorating the punishment of apprentices. These rules were mostly ignored. Instead of being flogged by drivers or overseers on the plantations, apprentices were sent to the workhouse to be punished by constables. Although flogging of women was outlawed, they continued to be whipped, placed on penal gangs and treadmills and had their hair cropped so short that they had no protection from the sun.[186]

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[183] Glenelg to Smith, 28 June, 1837. PP (look how to cite)
[184] Smith to Glenelg, 2 November, 1837. PP (look how to cite)
[185] Burn, *Emancipation and Apprenticeship,* 260.
[186] Holt, *Problem of Freedom,* 105.

In June 1835, the Baptist missionary William Knibb wrote to Governor Sligo about conditions in the Falmouth workhouse. Knibb had received information that "females as well as men were frequently flogged while working on the treadmill…by the order and under the inspection of Mr. Sloly the supervisor of the workhouse." Knibb reported that a member of his church, Jane Reid, an apprentice from Wakefield Estate, had been severely flogged while working on the wheel "though she was considerably indisposed." He enclosed a deposition signed by Charles Atherton, who was present during the time that Jane Reid was on the treadmill. Atherton swore that "he saw two drivers flog a woman who was working [the] wheel about her head and across her waist, one driver being on the mill steps and the other on the ground, and both flogging the woman at the same time." Atherton spoke to Mr. Sloly, the supervisor, who witnessed the flogging, and was ordered to leave. When Atherton refused to go, the supervisor said that "the mill would soon be walled in, and that then he will keep all from coming to see it."[187]

Conditions in the workhouses were grim. Prisoners were not fed, but given allowances to purchase their own food from hucksters. Male and female prisoners were only separated at night and female prisoners frequently reported being raped by wardens. But it was the treadmill, introduced by Governor Sligo, that became the symbol of abuse. Prisoners were strapped by their wrists to a bar above the treadmill, and forced to walk continuously. Many fell and were badly injured. In an account of a visit they made to the St. Andrews' Parish house of correction in 1837, the Rev. James A. Thome and Joseph H. Kimball, described the scene they witnessed:

[187] Knibb to Sligo, June 30, 1835. *Anti-Slavery Papers*, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

> The first sound that greeted us was a piercing outcry from the treadmill. On going to it, we saw a youth of about eighteen hanging in the air by a strap bound to his wrist, and dangling against the wheel in such a manner that every revolution of it scraped the body from the breast to the ankles. He had fallen off from weakness and fatigue, and was struggling and crying in the greatest distress, while the strap, which extended to a pole above and stretched his arm high above his head, held him fast. The superintendent in a harsh voice ordered him to be lifted up, and his feet again placed on the wheel. But before he had taken five steps, he again fell off, and was suspended as before. At the same instant, a woman also fell off, and without a sigh or motion of a muscle, for she was too much exhausted for either, but with a shocking wildness of the eye, hung by her half-dislocated arms against the wheel.[188]

According to the warden, the woman, who had a small baby and two or three other children, was being punished for being an hour late for her work in the fields. At this time there were forty-eight inmates in the house of correction, eighteen of them women. Twenty inmates were on the treadmill or in solitary confinement; the remainder were working on a public road chained together with iron collars around their necks.[189] This was not an isolated incident. Thome and Kimball visited most of the houses of correction in their six-month tour of Jamaica and described many similar scenes:

> Some who had been sent to the treadmill, had actually died from the injuries they there received. They were often obliged to see their wives dragged off to Morant Bay, and tied to the treadmill, even when they were in a state of pregnancy…the magistrates would not take any notice of their complaints besides, it made the masters treat them still worse.[190]

In September 1837, the British government ordered an investigation into the system of prisons in Jamaica. After hearing a chronicle of abuses of prisoners, Parliament gave the governor the power to prohibit such abuse. Female apprentices were

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[188] James A. Thome and J. Horace Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies* (New York: The American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838), 91. The use of the treadmill was abolished in Jamaica in 1840 but continued to be used in British jails until the late nineteenth century. See Paton, "The Penalties of Freedom," 282.
[189] Thome and Kimbell, *Emancipation,* 91.
[190] Ibid., 100.

no longer to be punished on treadmills or penal gangs, and they were not be whipped or have their hair cropped. And male apprentices were only to be whipped if the crime they were convicted of carried the same punishment for free men. In the first twenty-two months of apprenticeship, 58,417 apprentices (35,536 males and 22,881 females) had been punished. These punishments included 10,770 floggings for a total of 242,311 lashes (an average of 22-1/2 stripes each) in addition to 47,647 other types of punishments handed down.[191]

In his pamphlet, *Jamaica Under the Apprenticeship System,* the Marquis of Sligo discussed the abuse of the system by the white population, and used an example of the misuse of the vagrancy laws:

> An overseer, a bookkeeper, a policeman, an estate constable, or even any idler riding out for amusement, sees a black man walking along the road with a bundle, or, what is most frequent, a basket of provisions on his head; he stops him, questions him--and if the man does not give an explanation *satisfactory to the enquirer*,--if the Negro does not succeed in giving *what he considers* to be sufficient explanation,--he takes him up, for which he is entitled to a certain premium, and brings him generally before the nearest *local* magistrate for examination; and in order to get the reward to which he is entitled for apprehending a runaway, urges the man's committal to the workhouse.[192]

Sligo went on to detail what happened when the person was arrested for vagrancy and had no means at hand of proving to the magistrate who and what he was. Workhouse inmates were chained together with collars around their necks and sent out to work on public parish projects. Under the law, the newspapers had to advertise the name of the inmates for four weeks so that they could be claimed. For these four weeks, the inmates

[191] Punishments inflicted on Apprenticed Labourers in Jamaica from 1st August, 1834, to 31st May, 1836, compiled from Parliamentary Returns. Institute of Jamaica, MS 1887.
[192] *Jamaica Under the Apprenticeship System,* By a Proprietor (London: J. Andrews, 1838). Institute of Jamaica, MST 321, 28.

worked for the benefit of the parish and "perhaps at the end [they] turn out to be a free person."[193]

The investigation of the prison system and the British government's orders to stop further abuse of inmates infuriated the planters and members of the Assembly. The two sides ended up with a common goal. Abolitionists wanted to stop the continuing abuse of apprentices, and the planters and the Assembly wanted to prevent what they considered to be the British government's meddling in the island's affairs. To this end, the Jamaican Assembly voted to abolish apprenticeship on August 1, 1838, two years early. One month later Parliament passed an "Act for the Better Government of Prisons of the West Indies," giving control over prisons to the governor.[194]

S.M. Edward Baynes wrote to Lord Holland about the Assembly's actions:

> The House of Assembly has voted to do away with the remaining term of apprenticeship; not from any sense of justice, not from any feeling of humanity, not even because they are apprehensive that it cannot be continued after July, but with a ludicrous spirit of bravado and notion that they are foiling by undoing the Act of the British parliament and revenging themselves on West Indian proprietors resident in England whom they are pleased to say have deserted and betrayed them. We will have laws, and your Lordship will remark they will be inforce for several months however expeditiously and diligently they may be considered and disallowed: vagrant laws, trespass laws, rent laws, labour laws, police laws so constructed to cause the free Negro to lament the days of the apprenticeship.[195]

Apprenticeship in Jamaica was a failure in every way. It was supposed to ease the transition from slavery to freedom; instead it brought mistrust and continuing mistreatment. There was no change in the social order, the same personnel were in charge of the estates and apprentices were mostly employed in the same occupations,

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[193] *Jamaica Under the Apprenticeship System,* 28.
[194] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom,* 108.
[195] Baynes to Lord Holland, 1 June, 1838. *Holland House Diaries.* Add. MS 51819.

except for those previously in skilled positions who were demoted to field labor. Planters refused to cooperate in reforming the system or in educating their former slaves. The four years of the apprenticeship system were four years of wasted opportunity, and any feelings of good will generated by emancipation were squandered. The planters were granted a breathing-space between slavery and freedom that they failed to capitalize on. The apprentices gained little. There was no training for the workers and no foundation laid for the future.

Parliament could have intervened more aggressively but, J.R. Ward argues, the Revolutionary War and the loss of the North American colonies chastened Britain and "made ministers more reluctant to challenge representative institutions where they were already firmly entrenched."[196] Stephen especially, although referred to as "the friend of the Negroes,"[197] was unwilling to overrule legislative assemblies that had existed for nearly two hundred years.

It is hard to judge how successful the stipendiary magistracy was or how well each man performed. A majority did carry out their duties to the best of their abilities, and the administration of the Emancipation Act could not have been done without them. As S.M. Baynes claimed, "The duties of a stipendiary magistrate were the most dangerous and the most difficult, and…the most thankless that have every fallen to the lot of any magistracy."[198] Magistrates acted as a barrier between what were frequently "two warring sides" under very difficult conditions with little support and a great deal of animosity from the planters. They were Jamaica's "Machine of Government," its experimental bureaucracy. In the opinion of James Spedding whose job it was to

[196] Ward, *The British West Indies, 1748-1815*, 434.
[197] Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 124.
[198] Ibid., 139.

summarize the S.M. reports sent to the Colonial Office, "taking them as a body of men—who have to ride two or three hundred miles and dispose of five or six hundred complaints every month, and to receive only 450 [pounds sterling] a year—we must say that they have discharged their most important, but at the same time most difficult, laborious, harassing, and thankless duties, with a degree of zeal, ability, and integrity which deserves some other reward than these idle aspersions."[199]

The Colonial Office bears much of the blame for the failure of apprenticeship by underestimating the number of magistrates who would be needed, misjudging how difficult their jobs would turn out to be, and miscalculating the strength of planter opposition and obstructionism. The problem that James Spedding identified at the beginning of apprenticeship remained a problem at its end. What emancipation and apprenticeship did achieve, and this was no small achievement, was to carry through a humanitarian experiment with little loss of life. In answer to William Green's questions, 800,000 slaves in 19 colonies could be set free with relatively little violence, in contrast with the U.S. experience some thirty years later. But no, they did not sustain a plantation economy and its related institutions. Sugar and coffee production declined rapidly although for slightly different reasons, and in the following years many more plantations were abandoned.

[199] James Spedding, *Reviews and Discussions, Literary, Political, and Historical, Not Relating to Bacon* (London, 1879), 62. Quoted in Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 144. Spedding was a senior clerk in the Colonial Office who read and summarized all the reports from the S.M.s forwarded by the governor to London.

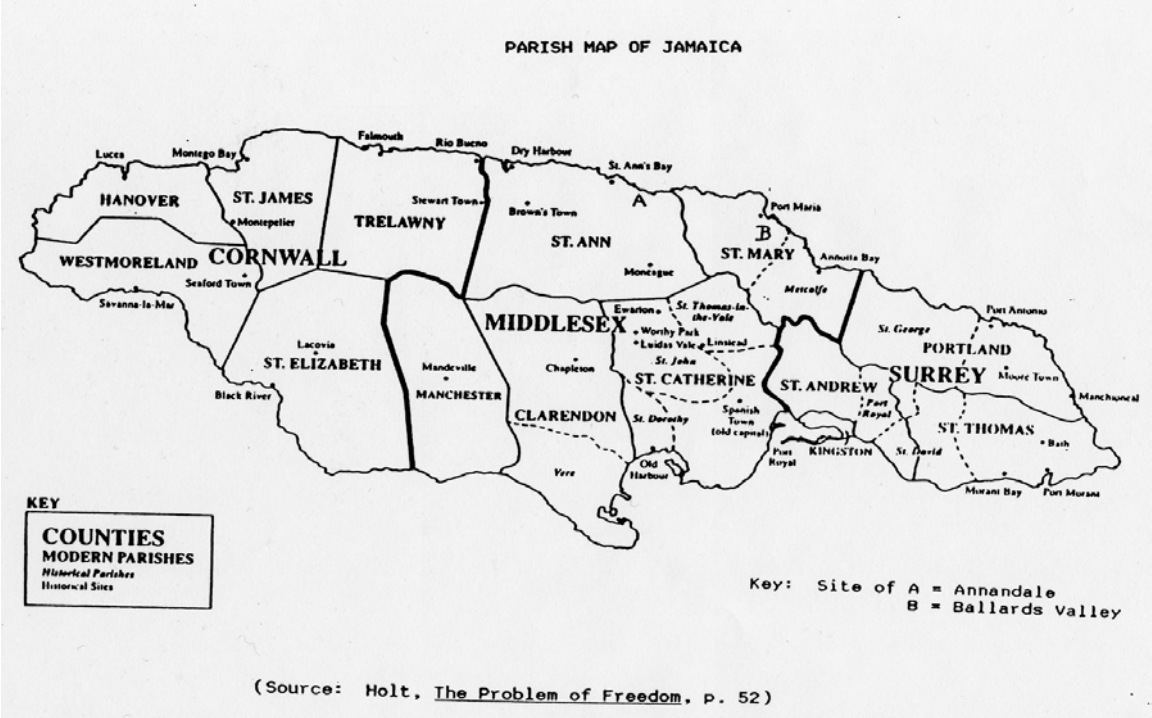
CHAPTER 3

A CASE STUDY OF BALLARDS VALLEY PLANTATION

AND BERRY HILL PEN

Ballards Valley was an 1178-acre sugar plantation located on the fertile coastal plain of St. Mary Parish on the north coast of Jamaica.[1] The exact location of Berry Hill livestock pen (farm or ranch) is unknown, but it had to be located in the vicinity of Ballards Valley as it supplied jobbing gangs and working stock to the sugar estate.

Fig. 3.1



In 1791, brothers John and James Cruikshank inherited the properties from their father. John Cruikshank died in 1812, leaving James the sole proprietor. James died in

[1] St. Mary Parish tax return, 10 September, 1847. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers, 1840-48.* William Perkins Library, Duke University.

1832 and left the properties to his widow, Mary Cruikshank of Portman Square, London, and Charles Ellis, Lord Seaford, the powerful leader of the West India interest in parliament.[2] It is not clear whether this was a temporary arrangement while Seaford assisted Mary Cruikshank until she felt capable of running the properties, but sometime between 1833 and 1836 James Dansey replaced Seaford as joint-owner with Mary Cruikshank. The properties, which were accounted for separately, were managed by a succession of agents and overseers, and returned satisfactory profits until the post-emancipation period.

In 1834, S.M. Richard Madden, who was a friend of the proprietors, made a trip to Berry Hill and Ballard's Valley. He found the overseer absent, but "I took the liberty of visiting the larder, and getting the Negroes to set a very excellent dinner before me. Here I took my ease, the same as if I had been in mine own Pen, in the enjoyment of a comfortable repast, and a very different sort of scenery to that which I had left at Marley," (an estate virtually in ruins). Madden continued," Everything here gave evidence of a flourishing plantation: the Negroes looked happy--the fields were covered with a luxurious growth of maze [sic] and Guinea grass. In short, I was on the first plantation I had yet visited which had neither debt nor mortgage."[3] The fact that these were the first solvent estates that Madden had visited testified to the economic problems of the planters, as he had made his way around most of the island before taking up his duties as a magistrate.

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[2] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom,* 83-84. At the time of emancipation Charles Ellis owned Old *Montpelier* and New Montpelier estates in St. James and Shettlewood Pen in Hanover with a total of 791 slaves. *Parliamentary Paper, 1837-38,* "Compensation Payments," 66, 306, quoted in Higman, *Montpelier, 58.*
[3] R.R. Madden, M.D., *A Twelvemonth's Residence in the West Indies, During the Transition from Slavery to Apprenticeship,* 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1835), 1, 171-2.

With the ending of the slave trade in 1807, the ability of the enslaved population to reproduce itself became crucial to the continued viability of the plantations. To achieve this end, a variety of measures were adopted to ameliorate conditions and improve fertility. At the urging of abolitionists, these measures included the registration of all slaves.

In a move to preempt interference by the British Parliament, the Jamaican Assembly passed its own Slave Registration Act in 1816. The Secretary of the Jamaica completed returns every three years from 1817 until 1832, and filed duplicate copies with the Slave Registry Office in London. The original return of 1817 was a census listing the slave's name, sex, age, color, origin, and sometimes the stature, occupation, and any bodily marks. Subsequent returns recorded changes in the slave population, for example, births, deaths, manumissions, sales, purchases, runaways, and those sentenced to transportation.[4] Authorities levied heavy fines on proprietors if any slaves were omitted from the lists. In Barbados the fines were 100 pounds per unlisted slave. If the slave was African born, the authorities concluded that he or she was illegally imported, and the slave was freed.[5]

The impact of these amelioration measures will be assessed by comparing the populations of Ballards Valley plantation and Berry Hill pen to determine what, if any, changes in occupation, health, and production took place in their work forces between 1829 and 1836 when the population's status changed from slave labor to apprenticeship.

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[4] Ian Duffield, "From Slave Colonies to Penal Colonies: The West Indian Convict Transportees to Australia, *Slavery and Abolition,* 7, 1, (May 1986) 25-45. Just over 200 West Indians were shipped as convicts, not slaves, to Australia (52 of them residents in Britain), most of them transported between 1831-1838. The years are significant: 1831 marking the date of the Baptist War and 1838 the end of Apprenticeship.

[5] Higman, *Slave Populations,*6-14.

The effects of emancipation and the change in labor status on the profitability of these estates will also be examined. Whether the changes on Ballards Valley and Berry Hill reflect the trend on similar plantations, or prove to be an anomaly, will then be determined. The evidence presented is drawn from the business accounts and lists of slaves and apprentices in the Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.[6] These lists contain details of names, color, age, country of origin, occupation, condition, and material supplies issued.

Although the Jamaican economy was far more diverse than that of many of the Caribbean's sugar islands, on the eve of emancipation almost half of the enslaved population lived on 670 sugar estates, with an average of 223 slaves each. In contrast, Louisiana--the largest sugar-producing area in the American South--averaged 85 slaves per estate at the height of its sugar production.[7] The Jamaican sugar plantations generated nearly 60 percent of slave-produced income. Another 12 percent were settled on 400 livestock pens (with an average slave population of 100.)[8] In 1834, pens contributed over 10 percent of slave-produced income. In addition, enslaved people classified as members of jobbing gangs on the livestock pens were hired out to perform the labor-intensive work on sugar estates, particularly during planting season, and those employed on pens were raising the livestock needed to supply the plantations. For this reason, many plantation owners also owned neighboring pens in order to ensure a reliable supply of both working livestock and beef. Pens were mostly located on marginal land in the

[6] *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers, 1766-1873.* Unbound documents, 1840-48
[7] Roderick A. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 3. Approximately 75 percent of the Jamaican slave population lived on estate of 50 or more slaves. On the sugar plantations of Louisiana, the average number was 52 slaves per estate in 1830, and 87 in 1853, although some estates had populations comparable to those in Jamaica.
[8] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy*, 71.

hills and backlands.[9] Table 3.1 shows a breakdown of the population by economic activity, in 1832.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Enslaved Population in 1832 by Economic Activity

	No.	%
Sugar	155,000	49.5
Coffee	45,000	14.4
Livestock Pens	40,000	12.8
Urban	25,000	8.0
Minor Staples	23,000	7.3
Jobbing Gangs	20,000	6.4
Wharves	1,000	.3
Other	4,000	1.3
Total	313,000	100.0

(Source: Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 16)

Livestock raising in Jamaica dated back to Spanish colonization. The Spanish used the island as a supply post and introduced cattle, horses, and hogs. When the British captured the island in 1655 they took advantage of the livestock that had been left behind and developed specialized pens. These pens were unique to the British Caribbean. [10] Barry Higman argues that there was "a symbiotic relationship of pen and plantation" in which "the production of draft animals by specialized pens constituted the most important example of backward linkage within the Jamaican plantation economy, while the production of meat by the same units was a type of final demand linkage."[11]

Slaves laboring on these plantations and livestock pens lived in houses they built themselves on land designated by the estate owners. The most common construction

[9] B.W. Higman, "The Internal Economy of Jamaican Pens, 1760-1890," *Social and Economic Studies,* 38, No. 1 (1989) 61-86.

[10] Philip D. Morgan, "Slaves and Livestock in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica: Vineyard Pen, 1750-1751," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Series, 52, 1 (1995), 47-76. The term "driver" used to describe the slaves in charge of the great gangs originated with slaves who captured the wild horses and sold them. "Maroons" were those who hunted cattle. The term "pen" dates from the late 17th century. Planter/historian Edward Long refers to "breeding-pens," "grass-pens," and "breeding farms or penns'" in his 3-volume *A History of Jamaica* quoted in Higman, "The Internal Economy of Jamaican Pens, 1760-1890," *Social and Economic Studies,* 38, No. 1(1989) 61-86.

[11] Higman, "Internal Economy of Jamaican Pens," 63.

materials were wattle and plaster walls with roofs thatched with palm leaves and hardened earth floors. Inside there were typically two rooms—one for cooking and one for sleeping—or two rooms with a passage. According to Barry Higman who has surveyed the archaeology of plantations in Jamaica, slaves frequently chose to build their houses grouped in compounds "in a conscious attempt to recreate African forms of spatial organization."[12] The land set aside for slave housing was some distance away from the houses of the owners and overseers and surrounded by garden plots. The privacy this afforded and the fact that there was no "expanding frontier" of slavery as there was in the United States, meant that the slave population could put down roots in these villages with little threat of being sold away.[13]

The slave population in Jamaica was required to produce its own food, unlike Barbados, for example, where land was at such a premium that nearly all food was imported. Slaves raised poultry and hogs and grew plantains, ackee, mangoes, oranges, cocoas, yams, and corn for their own consumption in their garden plots, and also supplied the entire estate population with produce grown on estate kitchen gardens or farms. In addition, planters allocated plots of land—usually in mountainous areas not fit for growing sugar and often several miles from the plantations—on which slaves could grow produce on their own time, and sell the surplus at Sunday markets. The Consolidated Slave Acts of 1792 stipulated that slaves in Jamaica had Sundays off and one day per fortnight (except during crop time.) The crops grown on these provision grounds, or polinks,[14] allowed slaves to participate in the internal marketing system of the island,

[12] Higman, *Slave Populations,* 219.
[13] Higman, *Montpelier,* 3.
[14] Brathwaite, *Development of Creole Society,* 133. From 1678 planters were required by law to provide these grounds. The amount of land varied from 1 acre per 5 slaves to 1 acre for every 10 slaves.

which also afforded them the freedom to travel and socialize with slaves from other plantations. Whether on the way to market or on their owner's business, slaves had the freedom to travel on foot and also in small boats along rivers and shorelines.[15]

Slaves participated so successfully in the internal marketing system that, by the time of emancipation, Douglas Hall & Sidney Mintz calculated that twenty-five percent of the island currency was in the hands of the enslaved population. Planter/historian Edward Long calculated that as early as 1774, one-fifth of the currency in Jamaica was held by the enslaved population. Slaves had informally recognized rights to save and make use of this money--rights that constituted a "moral economy."[16] Sidney Mintz credits the provision ground/marketing system in Jamaica with facilitating the formation of a proto-peasantry, and also with offering the opportunity for a certain degree of independence. Mintz argues that "Caribbean peasantries represent a mode of response to the plantation system and its connotation, and a mode of resistance to imposed styles of life."[17]

One of the few food items that planters supplied, apart from rations of sugar and rum, were saltfish, almost always herring, sometimes mackerel, or occasionally cod. The fish was imported from England, Ireland, or Canada in barrels and was frequently putrid by the time it arrived. The 1834 accounts show that Ballards Valley received three

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[15] Douglas Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica 1750-86* (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1989) 26. Thistlewood's slaves seemed to have a fair amount of freedom. They went crabbing and fishing and frequently visited other plantations overnight. Thistlewood rarely restricted their movements even when rebellion was rumored.

[16] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica,* 3 vols. (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), 537. Also on the concept of "moral economy" see E.P. Thompson, *The Makings of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963) and James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

[17] Sidney W. Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago, Aldine Press, 1974), 132-133.

shipments of 40 barrels of herring, in January, May, and July, and one barrel of mackerel and three hogsheads of codfish in December.[18]

Absentee ownership was the rule rather than the exception in Jamaica. By 1834, 540 of the 670 sugar plantations--80 percent--were owned by absentee proprietors (most of them living in England), and typically run by a handful of white supervisors many of whom stayed on the job only a few months. This is certainly true of the turnover rate for overseers at Ballards Valley and Berry Hill. Typically, the planting attorney, who was not a lawyer but a manager of the estate, hired and fired the overseers, bookkeepers, and some artisans. Their lives were very austere, and not surprisingly they suffered from isolation and alienation. Thus, the nature of the job, the unhealthy climate, and the low compensation meant that these supervisors were a "transitory class of sojourners" with no vested interest in the estate or its slave population, a fact that added to the instability of the whole system.[19] Whites were also acutely aware of the tenuous control they exercised over an enslaved population that outnumbered them by an average of more than 10 to 1.[20] In addition, owners had to comply with the Deficiency Laws that mandated each estate employ one white supervisor for every thirty slaves as a precaution against insurrection.[21] Failure to comply with these laws, which were renewed each year, resulted in hefty fines.

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[18] Ballards Valley statement of accounts 1834. Salt fish is today considered a delicacy, "saltfish—preferably cooked with ackee—is 'soul food' in Jamaica today, as are chitlings, hamhocks, and collard greens in the U.S.A.!" quoted in Craton and Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation*, 153 n.51.
[19] Higman, *Montpelier,*3.
[20] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 144. At Worthy Park the ratio varied between 34 to 1 to 63 to 1. Craton and Walvin, *Worthy Park,* 145.
[21] The Deficiency Laws were renewed every year and by 1750 had become "an invaluable source of revenue" for the government. F.W. Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies, 1700-1763* (Yale University Press, 1917) quoted in Craton and Walvin, *Worthy Park,* 68, n.16.

In 1834, Ballards Valley's white population numbered seven: the planting attorney who was not resident on the estate, the overseer—responsible for the day-to-day running of the estate—four bookkeepers, one doctor, and one carpenter.[22] A letter written from a Mr. S.L. Simmonds to his sister in England, in 1832, described his life as a junior bookkeeper on a nearby estate, Fort Stewart plantation: "I was kindly welcomed by the overseer, or as the Negroes call him Busha/Mr. MacGregor, a more gentlemanly aimiable young man I never say. I was introduced to my brother bookkeepers of whom there are five…I am the key keeper which is the lowest office. I have plenty to do, no idleness here. I have a good deal of responsibility - but what I dislike most is catering. I have to provide dinner everyday."[23]

Simmonds went on to describe the rest of his duties. He was in charge of the stores of provisions--food, rum, wine, and porter, as well as supplies of clothing, tools, and nails for the artisans. He supervised a large garden of fruit and vegetables, the granary, and the poultry yard. He was also in charge of the hospital, which entailed giving a list of those who were sick to the overseer every morning, and dispensing medication. Another aspect of the job included "reading the funeral service over any person who dies, black or white, you may wonder at this. I was astonished to find that the dead are buried in unhallowed ground, in fields or gardens. The nearest church (and that has no church yard) is 4 miles distant." As if that was not enough, Simmonds was also in charge of seeing the sugar loaded and shipped to the wharf.[24] The bookkeepers

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[22] *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers, 1834-1840.* Attorneys who had charge of 15 to 20 plantations could become wealthy in their own right, and many of them ended up as planters. Most attorneys managed 5 or 6 estates and had to travel many miles between the various properties. Brathwaite, *Development of Creole Society,* 139.

[23] S.L. Simmonds, St. Mary, Jamaica, to Serine Simmonds, Falmouth, England, 2 January, 1832. Institute of Jamaica, MS 1261.

[24] Ibid.

worked rotating night shifts in addition to their day shifts. "Your time is your own during that time, at least you may write or read, if you but keep a sharp look out, for they [the slaves] are very knowing and will steal before your face." For all these duties, bookkeepers earned an average of 70 pounds a year. The attorney/manager, Robert Fairweather, received 350 pounds a year. Planting attorneys frequently managed several estates and went on to become planters themselves. Overseers on Ballards Valley were paid average annual salaries of 250 pounds, and those on Berry Hill, 140 pounds; the carpenter, James Russell, was paid 160 pounds.[25] White doctors, who were sometimes resident on the estates, were paid annual fees per slave for services rendered. The statement of accounts for 1833 records that a Dr. Peter Innerarity was paid an annual fee of five shillings for every slave he treated. For the 1834 calendar year, Dr. Innerarity was paid seventy-six pounds fifteen shillings for his attendance on 307 slaves at Ballards Valley and twenty-five pounds five shillings for his care of 101 slaves at Berry Hill. The absentee owners, however, recouped much of this cost by renting Dover Castle, the Ballards Valley "Great House," to Dr. Innerarity for 50 pounds a year.[26]

In addition to the sugar works and livestock pen, the Ballards Valley complex also housed a butchery.[27] Richard Lewis, the overseer at Ballards Valley during the emancipation period, was paid an additional 80 pounds a year to supervise the butchery,

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[25] Ballards Valley and Berry Hill statement of account with Robert Fairweather, managing attorney. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers,* 1834-1840. These salaries appear to have been the customary rate for the time. At Montpelier the overseer was paid 200 pounds and the bookkeepers 60 to 70 pounds each, while two artisans, a mason, and a plumber and blacksmith were paid 160 pounds each. Higman, *Montpelier,* 40.
At Worthy Park the overseer was paid 200 pounds (later increased to 300 pounds in an attempt to slow the rate of turnover), and bookkeepers and artisans received 30 to 50 pounds. Craton and Walvin, *Worthy Park,* 111, 145.
[26] Ballards Valley and Berry Hill statement of account, 1833.
[27] Only 5 pens had their own butcheries in 1820 according to Verene Shepherd, *Pens and Penkeepers in a Plantation Society,* Ph.D. dissertation (Cambridge University, 1988).

and Hugh Mackay, the overseer at Berry Hill pen, was paid an additional 20 pounds a year to assist him. Ballards Valley butchery not only supplied beef for the populations of the sugar estate and pen, including the great house and hospital, but also for surrounding estates and ships docking at Port Maria.[28]

A statement of accounts for 1832 shows that the Ballards Valley butchery purchased fat steers for 18 pounds each and heifers for 17 pounds each from Berry Hill and other livestock pens. The butchery slaughtered the livestock and sold the beef, heads, tripe, and other delicacies for 80 shillings a hundredweight. In the first six months of 1832, the butchery supplied beef products to eighteen estates and twenty-six individuals at a profit of 1,722 pounds.[29] In 1834, the profit for the whole year was 2,536 pounds.[30]

Berry Hill, unlike many pens, did not diversify into growing crops, but concentrated on supplying working stock for the plantation; fat stock for the butchery, and buying "meager" stock from the plantation to fatten for resale. A major share of Berry Hill's income, however, came from the hiring out of its jobbing gang.

The jobbing gang was "sub-contracted" to the great gang (or sugar gang) at Ballards Valley to dig cane holes during the planting season. The going rate for this labor was two shillings and one penny per day, while the rate for sub-contracting the second gang was one shilling and eight pence per day. Digging cane holes was one of the most arduous tasks on sugar estates, and owners frequently employed outside jobbing gangs to perform this work and save the wear-and-tear on their great gangs. An entry in the statement of accounts on December 31, 1833, records that Berry Hill charged

[28] Ballards Valley and Berry Hill statement of account 1832.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ballards Valley and Berry Hill statement of account 1834.

Ballards Valley for 5,590 days of labor at the great gang rate, and 614 days of labor at the second gang rate, for a total of 633 pounds. In addition, the jobbing gang frequently worked on building and maintaining public roads, most probably a form of parish taxation.[31] Table 3.6 records the taxes that estates paid to a variety of authorities. Proprietors paid quit rent on land, in addition to a land tax. They were also assessed poll taxes, road taxes, and parish taxes on all slaves and stock.

Table 3.2: Berry Hill Pen, 1834 Contingency Account

1834				
March 20	Island Secretary for recording last year's proceeds		8s.	9d.
April 26	Quit Rent on 650 acres @ 1/2d/acre Land Tax on 650 acres @ 3d/acre Poll Tax on 101 slaves @ 10s/ea. Poll Tax on 340 stock @ 2s. 6d/ea. Less 10 percent discount =	92	7s.	4d.
May 31	Duty on 9 gallons of wine	1	1s.	6d.
June 28	Stand of Infantry Arms from the arsenal	4	10s.	0d.
June 30	Ballards Valley Butchery for fresh beef and tripe supplied year to date	37	13s.	4d.
	George Davis for spaying 20 head of horned stock @ 10s/ea.	10	0s.	0d.
August 1	Asher & Fuctado for 2 canisters of gunpowder	1	0s.	0d.
August 11	Fees of a Negro named George Osborne in St. Mary's Workhouse	1	5s.	0d.
August 18	Road Tax 1833 on 100 slaves @ 4s. 2d/ea Road Tax 1833 on 314 stock @ 1s./ea Parish Tax on 102 slaves @ 4s./ea Parish Tax on 360 stock @ 1s./ea Less discount of 10 percent Additional Road Tax on 100 slaves @10s. 8d/ea Additional Road Tax on 314 stock @ 3d./ea	80	4s.	6-1/2d

[31] Berry Hill statement of accounts, 31 December, 1833.

	Copy of Abolition Law		3s. 4d.
December 31	John Stannell for salary as overseer for year to date	140	0s. 0d.
	Usual allowance for Christmas	5	6s. 8d.
	Carried forward	374	10s. 5-1/2d.

(*Ballards Valley Plantation Papers, 1776-1873. A*mounts quoted in pounds, shillings and pence)

In addition to these taxes, there were also duties imposed on new slaves imported and sold in the island; a duty on rum; taxes on wine and rum licences, transient traders, public officers, house rents in towns, wherries, and wheels. Money collected by these taxes was used to pay for the established church, i.e. the Church of England, to help defray the cost of troops stationed on the island, provide for the poor, and repair barracks and bridges.[32]

The daily lives of slaves were affected not only by outside pressures such as the taxes levied on owners, the state of the market, and even wars, but also by internal decisions made by individual planters and supervisors. Plantation owners imposed a definite hierarchical order on the slave community, based on occupation. For purposes of this analysis, occupations in this hierarchical structure are grouped in seven categories.

1. Skilled: Drivers of the great gang were at the top of the slave elite. This position was always held by a male slave. Women were occasionally drivers of the second gangs, and were usually responsible for the youthful grass or hogmeat gangs. This category also includes carpenters, masons, those who worked in sugar processing, doctors, and domestics.

[32] Long, *History of Jamaica,*1, 68. Long compared all the various taxes levied in the British Caribbean with those of the French West Indian colonies which he claimed paid no taxes except "when, upon an extraordinary emergency, taxes are raised, they are very moderate." According to Long, new settlers in the French islands were exempted from taxes. Duties on exports from the French colonies were two percent and there was no duty on imports, whereas duty on British sugar exports were one-third and rum two-thirds of their cost.

2. Part-time Skilled: These individuals were skilled but were employed much of the time on the great gang.

3. Low-Value Skilled: This category included cooks for the field gangs, nurses, watchmen, and individuals who minded the livestock. Watchmen led fairly isolated lives in huts away from the slave villages on the margins of the property. They spent their time guarding crops from intruders, setting traps, and looking out for wandering livestock.

4. Great Gang or First Gang: These were the strongest, healthiest slaves, both male and female. They prepared the soil for planting by digging the cane holes, cut the cane during harvest, assisted in its transportation to the sugar mill, and fed the canes into the mill rollers. The latter occupation was dangerous, and it was not uncommon for slaves to be crushed when limbs or clothing got caught between the rollers.

5. Second Gang: This gang was made up of adolescent males and females not yet strong enough for the great gang. They worked in the fields weeding and in the sugar mills removing the "trash" produced by crushing the cane.

6. Marginal Non-Productive: Included in this category were young children on the third gang (hogmeat or grass gang) who gathered grass for the livestock, and slaves who were too sick to work on the great gang, but who could carry water or assist the cooks.

7. Invalids: Those listed in this category were not working.

Males were more likely than females to benefit from what little upward mobility existed, as evidenced by the fact that they filled most of the skilled occupations, for

example, as carpenters, masons, coopers, and stillermen (they distilled sugar in the boiling house). The head housekeeper was female, as were most of the domestics, and females occupied what were considered low-skilled positions, such as nurses, midwives, and washerwomen. These occupations were considered low-skilled for the purposes of this analysis, as they were assigned to slaves classified as aging/weakly rather than being young and healthy enough for the field gangs. The majority of females, however, labored on the great gang until they were too old, too sick, or had given birth to six or more children. During the years leading up to emancipation and the push to increase sugar production, planters frequently withdrew the privilege of a release from the great gang for mothers of six or more children.

Color also had a bearing on occupation. The lighter the skin the more likely the slave was to be employed as an artisan or a domestic. This meant that a higher percentage of slaves of color lived in urban rather than rural settings. Although the overwhelming majority of slaves were recorded as Negro or black, the 1829 lists of Ballards Valley record 5.7 percent of the males and 4.8 percent of the females as "slaves of color." Among the eight males there was one sambo carpenter and seven mulattoes (a carpenter, a cooper, a cattleman, a domestic, an invalid, an eight year old on the hogmeat gang, and a four year old). Of the eight females, three were sambos (one was "at the fences," one cleaned the mule pen, and one was a domestic), three mulattoes and two quadroons were domestics.[33] In 1836, among the apprentices at Ballards Valley six males (5.3 percent) were mulattoes (one mason, one cooper, two watchmen, one waiting boy, and one member of the hogmeat gang). Among the females, a total of five (3.8 percent) were

[33] The following gradations of color were used in Jamaica: mulatto (offspring of black-white union), quadroon (offspring of white-mulatto union), mustee (offspring of quadroon-white union) and sambo (offspring of mulatto-black union).

people of color: two sambos (one an invalid, the other a member of the hogmeat gang); two mulattoes (one domestic, and one cleaned barracks); and one quadroon (domestic). At Berry Hill in both years the entire population was recorded as black except for one mulatto female aged eight, a member of the hogmeat gang in 1829, she is missing from the 1836 list of apprentices. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 list the occupations of male and female workers at Ballards Valley in 1829, when they were slaves, and then in 1836, halfway through the apprenticeship period.

Table 3.3: Occupations of Male Slaves/Apprentices at Ballards Valley

	1829	1836
Occupation	No.	No.
Head Driver	1	1
2nd Driver (Boatswain)	1	1
Head Cattleman	1	1
Cattleman	5(4)	4
Cattle boy	-	2
Waggonman	1	-
Ploughman	5	1
Head Blacksmith	-	1
Blacksmith	2	2(2)
Doctor	1	1
Head Carpenter	-	1
Carpenter	10	6
Head Cooper	-	1
Cooper	10	6
Head Mason	-	1
Mason	4	3(2)
Head Stillerman	-	1
Stillerman	7(6)	1
Head Boilerman	-	1
Boilerman	2	1
Muleman	3(2)	1
Great Gang	10	20
2nd Gang/Wainboy	15	8
Head Wainman	-	1
Wainman	14(13)	5(5)
Grass Gang Driver	-	1
3rd Gang	8	7
4th Gang	-	3
Hogman	2	-

Domestic	1	-
Minding Sheep	1	-
Minding Small Stock	-	4
Follows Grass Cutters	1	-
Waiting Boy	-	2
At the Fences/Barracks	2	-
Head Watchman	-	1
Watchman	15(3)	16
Invalid	3	5
Runaway	-	4
Child (under 6)	14	-
Total	139	114

Figures in parentheses indicate those also employed part time on the great gang

Table 3.4: Occupations of Female Slaves/Apprentices at Ballards Valley

	1829	1836
Occupation	No.	No.
Driveress 2nd Gang	1	1
Driveress 3rd Gang	1	1
Head Housewoman	1	-
Domestic	7	2
Midwife	1	1
Great Gang	53	45
2nd Gang	8	19
3rd Gang	14	11
4th Gang	-	5
Cook for Great Gang	3	6
Cook for Carpenters	1	-
Cook for Small Gang/Grasscutters	1	1
Cook for 3rd Gang	1	-
Cook for children	1	-
Cook for Hothouse	1	-
Cook for Tradesmen	-	1
Domestic Cook	-	1
Cook	-	2
Boiling Oil	2	-
Grasscutters	7	11
Day Nurse	1	-
Nurse for weaned children	1	-
Washerwoman	2	3
Minding children/4th Gang	1	1
Minding Negro houses	1	-
Cleaning mule pen	1	-
Cleaning barracks	-	1
Minds provision grounds	-	1

Picks cotton	-	1
At the fences	10	-
Minding fowls	2	-
At the mountain	1	-
Invalids	16	14
Runaway	2	3
Insane	-	1
Child (under 7)	27	-
Total	168	132

Tables 3.5 and 3.6 list the occupations of workers at Berry Hill in 1829 and 1836.

Table 3.5: Occupations of Male Slaves/Apprentices at Berry Hill Pen

	1829	1836
Occupation	No.	No.
Head Driver	1	1
2nd Driver	1	1
Head Cattleman	1	1
Field/Great Gang	23	11
Carpenter	1	2
Cattleman	1	2
Apprentice Mason	1	-
2nd Gang	-	11
3rd Gang/Hogmeat Gang	8	3
Domestic	-	1
Houseboy	1	-
Minds cattle	-	1
Minds small stock	-	1
Watchman	6	3
At the fences	-	5
At the valley	-	1
Invalid	-	2
Child (under 6)	8	-
Total	52	46

Table 3.6: Occupations of Female Slaves/Apprentices at Berry Hill Pen

	1829	1836
Occupation	No.	No.
Doctress/Midwife	1	1
3rd Gang Driver	-	1
Field/Great Gang	36	23
2nd Gang	-	8
3rd Gang/Hogmeat Gang	6	1

Domestic	1	2
Cook	1	2
Washerwoman	-	1
Watches huts	-	1
Invalid	4	4
Child (under 5)	1	-
Total	50	44

(*Ballards Valley Plantation Papers, 1776-1873)*

The percentage of individuals at Ballards Valley and Berry Hill in each occupational category in 1829 and 1836 is recorded in Tables 3.7 and 3.8.

Table 3.7: Distribution of Total Population at Ballards Valley and Berry Hill By Occupational Category

Occupation	1829 No.	% Workforce	1836 No.	% Workforce
Skilled	75	18.3	62	18.5
Part-time Skilled	28	6.8	10	2.9
Great Gang	112	27.4	100	29.8
Low Value Skilled	46	11.3	51	15.2
Second Gang	38	9.3	47	14.0
Marginal Non-Productive	37	9.0	37	11.0
Not Working	73	17.9	29	8.6
Totals	409	100.0	336	100.0

(Source: *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers)*

On the 1829 slave list, seventy-three individuals, or nearly 18 percent of the population, was categorized as not working. Forty-nine (or 67 percent) of those not working were children under seven and the remaining twenty-four (or 33 percent) were listed as invalids. The main reason for the drop to only twenty-nine, or less than 9 percent of the workforce listed in this category in 1836, is that the 1834 Emancipation Act freed children under the age of six. When this fact is taken into consideration, the

numbers of adults not working remained virtually the same. In 1836, of the twenty-eight not working, twenty-five were described as invalids and three were listed as runaways.

The most stable occupations were the categories of skilled and the great gang. Skilled slaves remained the same in number (54), but only 64.8 percent of those in this category in 1836 had been classified as skilled in 1829. Several of those classified as skilled and healthy in 1829 were described as "weakly" in 1836 and downgraded to part-time or low-value skilled. Bad health and aging accounts for the large increase in those categorized as low value skilled, especially among males. Stillerman was one occupation in particular that showed a steep decline. Nine slaves were listed as stillermen in 1829, but only two stillermen remained in 1836. This may have indicated a drop in the production of rum during this period, but it probably had more to do with the (illegal) practice of re-categorizing some non-praedial slaves as field workers in order that plantation owners could bind them to a six-year apprenticeship rather than the four years for all non-praedial workers. This was certainly true in the case of Ballards Valley, where four of the former stillermen were assigned to the great gang part-time in 1829, but by 1836 they were no longer listed as skilled, but as full-time members of the great gang. Although recategorization was against the law, the practice was fairly widespread and the bases of many complaints brought by apprentices to the stipendiary magistrates.

Only seven of the fifty-four listed as skilled in 1829 were females. In 1836 the number categorized as skilled remained fifty-four, but the number of these who were female dropped from seven to four. There are a couple of possible explanations for this drop in the number of skilled females. First, five of the female domestic servants had either purchased their freedom or been manumitted between 1829 and 1836. Second,

women were relegated to low skilled and field labor with little upward mobility. The overall size of the great gang increased from eighty-eight in 1829 to ninety-eight in 1836, and the proportion of the workforce on the great gang increased by 5.3 percent, signifying a move into more intensive sugar production. The frequency of occupational mobility in the Ballards Valley and Berry Hill labor forces between 1829 and 1836 by gender is summarized in Tables 3.8 and 3.9.

Table 3.8: Occupational Mobility of Ballards Valley and Berry Hill Slaves By Gender

Males

Occupation	1829 No.	1836 No.	% Same	% Up	% Down
Skilled	47	50	70.2	0	29.8
Part-time Skilled	21	10	23.8	38.1	38.1
Great Gang	28	30	50.0	17.9	32.1
Low Value Skilled	7	27	28.6	42.8	28.6
Second Gang	22	14	31.8	59.1	9.1
Marginal Non-Productive	8	7	0	0	0
Not Working	15	10	-	-	-
Totals	148	148	40.9	39.5	27.5

Table 3.9: Occupational Mobility of Ballards Valley and Berry Hill Slaves by Gender

Females

Occupation	1829 No.	1836 No.	% Same	% Up	% Down
Skilled	7	4	28.6	0	71.4
Part-time Skilled	0	0	-	-	-
Great Gang	60	68	60.0	1.7	38.3
Low Value Skilled	26	32	50.0	19.2	30.8
Second Gang	24	26	20.8	75.0	4.2
Marginal Non-Productive	13	13	7.7	92.3	0
Not Working	31	18	25.8	74.2	0
Totals	161	161	32.2	43.7	24.1

(Source: *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers)*

It should be noted that only the 336 slaves who appeared on both the 1829 slave lists and the 1836 lists of apprentices were used in this analysis of occupational mobility. In 1829 there were 139 males and 168 females at Ballards Valley. In 1836 there were 114 males and 132 females (a decline of 25 males and 36 females). At Berry Hill in 1829 there were 52 males and 46 females. In 1836 these numbers had dropped to 50 males and 44 females (a decline of 6 males and 6 females). Over two-thirds of the members of the great gang at Ballards Valley and Berry Hill were female. Their percentage showed a slight increase from 68.2 percent in 1829 to 69.4 percent in 1836.[34] The policy of consigning females to the field gangs was self-defeating for planters interested in encouraging natural increase in their slaves. Concentrating females on labor-intensive sugar gangs was a leading cause of infertility, miscarriages, and numerous other gynecological problems.[35] Even paternalistic owners like "Monk" Lewis, who tried to institute reforms such as banning whipping, purchasing a plough, hiring jobbing gangs to perform the heaviest work, and building a new hospital, still failed to achieve a natural increase in their slave populations.[36]

The large increase in the number of individuals of low-value skilled, especially among males, can be explained by aging. Those individuals who were reclassified from healthy to “weakly” were reassigned to occupations such as watchman whose duties were to guard provision grounds from theft and damage caused by straying animals. Females

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[34] Michael Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man,* 75. Craton suggests that at Worthy Park one reason was the fact that enslaved females lived on average at least 5 percent longer than their male counterparts, a tendency that accelerated between 1808 and 1838.
[35] For further discussion of this topic see Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society;* Mathurin, *Women Field Workers in Jamaica during Slavery;* Michael P. Johnson, "Smothered Infants: Were Slave Mothers at Fault?" *Journal of Southern History,* 47 (1981), 510-515; Kenneth Kiple and Virginia Kiple, "Slave Child Mortality: Some Nutritional Answers to a Perennial Puzzle," *Journal of social History,* 10, 3 (Summer 1976), 284; Richard Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves: A Medical and Demographic History of Slavery in the British West Indies, 1680-1834,* (London, 1985).
[36] Lewis, *Journal of a West India Proprietor,* xxv.

were not utilized in part-time skilled positions, as these were mostly occupations associated with the sugar works. Of the males who were classified as part-time skilled in 1829, 38 percent were transferred full time to the great gang by 1836 for reasons previously discussed, that is to extend the period of their apprenticeship. William Elmslee, for example, a mason in 1829, was reclassified as being a part-time mason and a member of the great gang, and Frank Nugent, a ploughman in 1829, was downgraded to full time on the great gang in 1836.

From the Ballards Valley and Berry Hill records it appears that the rates of occupational mobility were primarily governed equally by the gender, age, and condition of the slaves and apprentices. It is also significant that most of the "caregivers" of children--nurses and cooks--listed in 1829 were no longer in these positions in 1836. This is an example of planters' withdrawal of many of the customary benefits during the apprenticeship period, and a major cause of complaints brought before the magistrates. It is not possible to ascertain from the available information whether occupational mobility was passed from generation to generation, as there is no record of who fathered the slaves, and the birthrates were so low that there was a net decrease in the population.

Privileged slaves were given preferential treatment. The Consolidated Slave Acts of 1792 stated that "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."[37] The Ballards Valley slave lists show that the quantities of material allowances issued annually depended upon the slave's position in the hierarchy. Yardages of osnaburg (or oznaburgh), baize, and check cloth, and

[37] Quoted in McDonald, *Economy and Material Culture,* 111.

quantities of hats, scissors, needles and thread were all recorded by individuals' names on the annual slave lists.[38]

Considered the slave elite, the head driver and second driver received twenty yards of osnaburg, while the remainder of the skilled workforce received ten to twelve yards apiece. There was no differentiation in the quantities of cloth issued to males and females on the great gang. All of them received ten yards each. The only indication that gender made any difference was that, for some reason, males on the third gang (or grass/hogmeat gang) received three yards of check material, whereas the females received none. All slaves received one hat, one cap, and one handkerchief except the head driver and second driver who received two hats and two handkerchiefs. In addition, each adult slave received one knife, six needles, and ten spools of thread, children four needles and four spools of thread. Female slaves also received a pair of scissors and a thimble each. Presumably they were expected to sew the garments for the rest of the enslaved population. At Berry Hill pen quantities issued were slightly smaller, perhaps because the work at the pen was not considered as labor intensive, and therefore not as hard on items of clothing.[39]

Further evidence of the preferential treatment accorded slave elites is discussed by Michael Craton and James Walvin in their study of Worthy Park plantation. At Worthy Park, slave elites were fed more regularly and more substantially than the mass of the enslaved population. In addition, their share of the annual rum ration was much larger. Out of 480 slaves on the Worthy Park estate, the 5 percent who constituted the elite

[38] Osnaburg was a coarse linen, and baize a coarse cotton or woolen with an appearance like felt.
[39] *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*

received 25 percent of the rum allocation. .[40] This was a standard ploy used by planters to co-opt drivers and retain their loyalty. The fact that the majority of the leaders of slave revolts were these elite slaves indicates that cooption was not a successful policy.

An entry in the Ballards Valley statement of accounts records that 116 gallons of rum were supplied to Berry Hill in 1832 for "House and Negroes" at a charge of three shillings and six pence per gallon, but unfortunately there is no indication of individual allocations. Another entry is for "two fat cattle purchased for Negroes at Christmas at a cost of 32 pounds." There are, however, also records of bonuses paid to individuals. One entry records "allowances for Christmas Cheer" of nearly eleven pounds for each overseer.[41] And what was an exceptionally large payment of three pounds six shillings and eight pence was recorded on December 31, 1833, made to "a woman for curing one of the carpenters on Ballards Valley of disease." Another entry for 2 pounds stated "paid the old ploughman for his good behavior."[42]

Reproduction of the enslaved population became a necessity after the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. Slave women who had been valued solely for their labor now became valued for their productive and reproductive contributions. Planters gave bonuses to reward females for their fertility. There are several entries for cash paid to mothers of young children and midwives. On December 31, 1832, six sums of thirteen shillings and four pence were paid to mothers who had given birth to six children.[43] The payments of rewards in currency illustrates how "money capitalism" was a part of the slave system.

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[40] Craton and Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation,* 141.
[41] Berry Hill statement of accounts, 31 December, 1832.
[42] Berry Hill statement of accounts, 1833.
[43] Planters were not alone in offering financial rewards to increase the birth rate. After World War II, many European governments worried about falling birth rates introduced family allowances to encourage couples to have more children. These allowances are not only still in place, but have been increased substantially over the years.

Planters did not put a value on monogamous relationships among slave couples, but they did list promiscuity as a cause of the low fertility of the enslaved populations.

Following the abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade, the internal slave trade replaced the inter-colonial trade. It was possible to purchase slaves when estates were "thrown up;" there was a change in crop production, for example, from sugar to a less labor-intensive crop; or on the death of a proprietor. The slave lists for Ballards Valley show that between 1829 and 1834 eight males and three females were purchased. Of the males who were purchased, four were classified as skilled, two were on the great gang, and two youths were assigned to the third gang. Of the three females, one was on the great gang and the other two were listed as domestics. There is no mention of whether they were related and no last names were recorded.

These purchases may have been connected to an entry of November 24, 1832, in the statement of accounts for Ballards Valley that detailed a payment of 5 pounds 10 shillings and 7 pence "for Title for Negroes purchased from the Executor of John McPherson deceased." If this surmise is correct, at less than 6 pounds, it would appear that the owners of Ballards Valley struck quite a bargain. Unfortunately, there are no details of the number, name, gender, or occupation of those purchased from the estate of the late John McPherson[44] A similar purchase was made on June 28, 1828, for Berry Hill. The statement of accounts records two males and two females purchased from a J. Cameron: Hector, a twenty-year old carpenter, George aged seventeen and Dolly, thirty-seven, both on the great gang, and Sarah, aged thirteen.[45]

[44] Ballards Valley statement of accounts, 1832.
[45] Berry Hill statement of accounts, 1828.

Selective purchasing was difficult, and, unlike the North American practice, planters were restricted by law from dividing families. The law of 1735 provided that all slaves sold under writs of *venditioni exponas* be in families. The law of 1791 extended this provision to all sales. Family life was, therefore, more stable in Jamaica than in the American south. Slaves in Jamaica could usually count on spending their entire life on one plantation. According to Barry Higman, between 1829 and 1832, only 4,838 slaves (approximately 1.5 percent of the island's enslaved population) were moved from one parish to another. St. Mary parish where Ballards Valley and Berry Hill were located made the greatest net gain—of 343—in this internal trade. Even so, this net importation failed to offset St. Mary's very high rate of natural decrease.[46]

In 1829, the plantation records list 307 slaves at Ballards Valley (139 males and 168 females) and 242 head of livestock, and 102 slaves at Berry Hill (52 males and 50 females) and 332 head of livestock.[47] The two locations differed in the gender composition of their labor forces. At Ballards Valley the females outnumbered males by 55 to 45 percent, whereas at Berry Hill the numbers were almost even. The sex ratio was the result of differences in purchasing practice, manumissions, fertility, and mortality rates. The fact that Ballards Valley was a large sugar plantation with a high percentage of its labor force on the great gang, coupled with the fact that females were traditionally in the majority on these gangs, may have had a significant bearing on purchasing practices and fertility rates.[48]

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[46] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 63-64.

[47] Nothing emphasized the slaves' status as chattels more than the fact that they were included on the same lists as the livestock. In some cases they even shared names.

[48] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 74. The sex ratio fell as slave-holding size increased. According to the Accounts Produce for Jamaica, the ratio fell in a constant pattern from 110 in the 1-50 size group to 92 in the units of more than 500 slaves.

Table 3.10 indicates that the sex ratio at Ballards Valley showed a more severe imbalance than that of St. Mary Parish, and the country as a whole.[49]

Table 3.10: Slave Sex Ratios in 1817, 1829,1832, and 1836

	1817	1829	1832*	1836
Ballards Valley	-	82.7	-	86.3
Berry Hill	-	104.0	-	104.5
St. Mary parish	102.2	97.7	93.9	-
Jamaica	100.0[21]	96.4	94.5	-

*1832 statistics not available for Ballards Valley and Berry Hill
(Sources: Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 72, and *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers*).

Another factor with a bearing on fertility was the number of African-born compared with the number of Creole slaves on an estate. In general slaves identified as African-born were less fertile, perhaps from the trauma of capture and shipment, and also the increased difficulty of finding a mate. Of the seven women at Ballards Valley who gave birth in 1829, only one was African-born although Africans constituted 37 percent of the female population. Tables 3.11 through 3.14 record the breakdown of the populations of Ballards Valley and Berry Hill by gender and country of origin in 1829 and 1836.

Table 3.11: 1829 Ballards Valley Population by Origin

	Males		Females	
Country	No.	%	No.	%
Creole	105	76	105	63
African	34	24	63	37
Totals	139	100	168	100

[49] By 1817 there were only 74 more male than female slaves in Jamaica. *Parliamentary Papers,* 1833 (539). This is surprising in light of the fact that during the Atlantic slave trade many more males were imported than females. According to Higman, a larger proportion of Africans in the population meant larger numbers of women, as far more male Africans died early. He speculates that in the last years of the Atlantic slave trade, the proportion of males did not exceed 60 percent.

Table 3.12: 1829 Berry Hill Population by Origin

	Males		Females	
Country	No.	%	No.	%
Creole	41	79	45	90
African	11	21	5	10
Totals	52	100	50	100

Table 3.13: 1836 Ballards Valley Population by Origin

	Males		Females	
Country	No.	%	No.	%
Creole	89	78	89	67
African	25	22	43	33
Totals	114	100	132	100

Table 3.14: 1836 Berry Hill Population by Origin

	Males		Females	
Country	No.	%	No.	%
Creole	37	80	38	86
African	9	20	6	14
Totals	46	100	44	100

The sex ratios at Ballards Valley and Berry Hill were only marginally affected by the slaves and apprentices who were sold, manumitted, or died between 1829 and 1836. A total for both properties of thirty-one males and forty-two females listed as slaves in 1829 were not listed as apprentices in 1836. As these annual summaries of apprentices do not give details of annual increase and decrease, as they did under slavery, it is impossible to ascertain for sure what happened to the majority of those missing, but it is safe to assume that mortality accounted for many of the missing individuals. Of the thirty-one males who were not included on the 1836 lists, twelve were described as "weakly" and three were invalids in 1829. Age was also a factor. One third of the males were not only in bad health, but were over fifty years of age. Another two were only six months old and therefore avoided apprenticeship.

It is likely that some of the male slaves were sold before 1834, or purchased their manumission, although there is no verification of this. A total of eighteen of the missing were listed as healthy in 1829, and of these ten were skilled and eight were on the great gang. Two of them were listed as "incorrigible runaways." Jack Maitlin, a thirty-one year-old field hand, valued at 39 pounds, and Emanuel Green, also thirty-one, employed part time as a stillerman and part time on the great gang, and valued at 50 pounds, were both sentenced to the workhouse for life. Their incarceration was a double loss for Ballards Valley: the owners were deprived of their future labor, and they were charged 35 pounds each for their upkeep in the workhouse.[50]

Of the forty-two females who no longer appeared on the 1836 lists of apprentices, twelve were described as "weakly" and six were invalids in 1829, and another ten were over the age of fifty. It is most likely that they died or were manumitted. Although some owners were accused of manumitting slaves who were old and sick and therefore a burden, there is no indication that this took place at Ballards Valley or Berry Hill. On the contrary, in 1836, twenty-four of the male apprentices and thirty-two of the female apprentices were over the age of fifty—many of them in their mid-sixties. Four of those not listed in 1836 were under three months of age in 1829, making them too young for apprenticeship. Five domestics, including the head housewoman—all between the ages of fourteen and thirty-five and all classified as healthy—were no longer at Ballards Valley in 1836. The head housewoman was listed as Negro, and as a member of the slave elite she had more means with which to purchase her freedom. Of the remaining four, two were classified as mulattoes and two were quadroons.

[50] Ballards Valley statement of accounts, 31 December, 1832.

Slaves and apprentices were either manumitted on payment of an agreed-upon sum of money, or else as the result of action by a benefactor. Color, gender, occupation and birthplace, all had a bearing on the rates of manumission. Manumission was the one area in which female slaves had an advantage over their male counterparts. The manumission ratio in Jamaica was three females to every two males. Slaves who purchased their own freedom were predominantly urban, because urban slaves had more ability to earn cash from their occupations than did rural slaves. Skilled male slaves had more opportunities to earn extra money and purchase their freedom, but female slaves and their colored children were more likely to be freed by white men with whom they had a relationship, either "husbands" or fathers. It is probable that this is what happened to the four domestic slaves who left Ballards Valley between 1829 and 1836, who were listed as mulattoes or quadroons.

Manumission laws in the British Caribbean were far more restrictive than those that applied in the French and Spanish colonies. Of the British Caribbean possessions, Jamaica had a lower annual rate of manumission—1.4 per 1,000 slaves—than any other island except tiny Barbuda (the average being 4.03).[51] Owners were generally reluctant to manumit their slaves, not only because of the loss of their labor, but because they also had to pay a lump sum to the local vestry for each slave they manumitted.[52] As a general rule artisans who had the ability to earn extra money, urban slaves, and slaves on smaller properties, were more likely to purchase their freedom than slaves on the large sugar estates.

[51] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 178.
[52] Bush, *Slave Women,* 32.

The number of slaves or apprentices manumitted at Ballards Valley and Berry Hill is unclear, and the records only indicate that one slave and three apprentices purchased their freedom between 1829 and 1836. It is highly unlikely, however, that they were the only ones manumitted because the population on the estates was reduced by a total of seventy-four.

According to the statement of accounts on February 28, 1832, Rosie Hunter, a thirty-seven year old member of the great gang, was manumitted on payment of seventy pounds, over twice the rate being charged four years later. No explanation was given, and there is no clue as to how a member of the great gang could have earned seventy pounds. A further entry, on December 31, 1834, was for "Cash received for three Apprentices belonging to this Property as valued by Messrs. Cocking Cooper et al for the remainder of their apprenticeship." There was no indication of their names, genders, or occupations, but they purchased their manumission for just over 124 pound sterling/lot.[53]

Included in the Ballards Valley Plantation Papers was "A Valuation of the Negroes on Ballards Valley estate." The list included the name, occupation, and condition of each slave along with the amount of their valuation. Among male slaves, the blacksmith carried the top valuation of 250 pounds, whereas the head driver was valued at 180 pounds. Eight carpenters were valued between 100-200 pounds, according to their condition, as were the masons. Those on the field gangs were valued at 100-170 pounds. Even "Old Frank" was included on the list. He was a runaway suffering from "Boneach" and was valued as "useless." Among the females, those on the field gangs and domestics carried the highest values. Most great gang members averaged 140-160 pounds, and all

[53] Ballards Valley statement of accounts for 1832 and 1834.

the domestics were listed as worth 160 pounds each. Children--both male and female--carried average values of 30 to 80 pounds.[54]

The 1836 lists of apprentices indicate that the labor force had dropped by just over 17 percent in the intervening seven years, from 409 to 336: 246 at Ballards Valley and 90 at Berry Hill. The sex ratio at Ballards Valley reflected a barely perceptible change, 114 or 46.3 percent were male and 132 or 53.7 percent were female. At Berry Hill there was no change at all. Males again comprised 51 percent and females 49 percent of the total labor force. Obviously, with more deaths than births, and the inability to import new slaves or move apprentices from one estate to another, the labor force had aged. The mean age of both populations rose almost exactly reflecting the seven year difference between the two dates, but the age range changed as no children under seven were listed (although they were probably in residence) in 1836. At Ballards Valley the mean age rose from 28.3—with a range of 0.1 to 76-- in 1829, to a mean of 33.3—with a range of 7 to 70—in 1836. Berry Hill recorded similar statistics. The mean age of 23.4—with a range of 0.1 to 60—in 1829, rose to 29.2 in 1836—with a range of 8 to 65.

The slave population in Jamaica that had never shown a natural increase, declined after the abolition of the Atlantic Slave trade in 1807 and continued to fall steadily until the post-emancipation period beginning in 1838.[55] The reasons for the decline were both internal and external. The main external factors were the nature of the labor and the disease environment, and the significant internal factors were the sex ratio and the aging of the enslaved population. The result of these combined factors was that the population decreased during these years in all but three parishes: Manchester, St. Elizabeth, and St.

[54] *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[55] Higman, *Slave Populations,* 3. between 1807 and 1834 the slave population of the British Caribbean fell 110,000 from 775,000 to 665,000.

Ann, which were largely coffee and pen parishes. St. Mary Parish where Ballards Valley and Berry Hill were located showed the largest natural decrease, symptomatic of its intensive sugar production. The population figures taken from the registration of slaves and the triennial censuses taken between 1817-1832, record that only in 1820 and 1823 was the parish of St. Mary edged out by Westmorland as the parish with the largest decrease in population. St. Mary suffered a 7.5 percent decrease between 1823 and 1826, a 12 percent decrease in the following three years, and a 14 percent decrease between 1829 and 1832.

Ballards Valley and Berry Hill recorded the same dismal trend as the rest of St. Mary Parish. Although increase and decrease figures are not available for 1836 for the two properties, because they are no records of children under six, the slave lists of 1829 record seven births and ten deaths at Ballards Valley, and three births and six deaths at Berry Hill. Table 3.15 compares the rate of natural increase in St. Mary Parish and Jamaica as a whole between 1817-1832.

Table 3.15 Rate of Natural Increase 1817-1832
Per 1,000 per annum

	1817-20	1823-26	1826-29	1829-32
St. Mary	-6.1	-6.9	-10.2	-12.8
Jamaica	-0.7	-2.1	- 3.4	- 4.8

(Source: Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,* 102)

There are some obvious explanations for the fertility and mortality rates. The rate of decrease at Ballards Valley depended a great deal on the nature of sugar production and the large number of women on the labor-intensive great gang. Similarly, at Berry Hill the majority on the field gang—which was the jobbing gang—were females. And, according to Higman, the only units that experienced the same high rate of natural

decrease as the great gangs on the sugar estates were the jobbing gangs that were frequently employed on the sugar estates.[56] The intensity of the labor may have rendered many females infertile. In addition, their reluctance to give birth to children who would in turn be enslaved resulted in the practice of contraception and abortion.[57] St. Mary, a parish with its large sugar plantations and high percentage of females on the great gang, showed the largest decrease in population.

Dropsy and consumption were two major causes of death in Jamaica. Of the ten deaths recorded at Ballards Valley in 1829, six were due to old age and debility; two to dropsy; one to convulsion; and one to dirt eating. At Berry Hill the six deaths were evenly divided between old age and consumption. However, it was not just a high mortality rate that created a problem for the planters, but also the declining health of a large portion of the labor force. Males experienced a greater deterioration in condition than females. There was a drop of 14 percent in the number of males who had been listed as able in 1829, whereas the number of females listed as able in 1829 only declined 4.6 percent by 1836. The downward trends in condition were smaller at Berry Hill 9 percent for males and 2.7 percent for females. As in occupational mobility, the main reason was the aging of the population. The changes in condition experienced by the populations of Ballards Valley and Berry Hill between 1829 and 1836 are detailed in Table 3.16 and 3.17.

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[56] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,*122.

[57] For discussions on the subject of female resistance and the use of contraception and abortion see Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society;* Darlene Clark Hine and Kate Wittenstein, "Female Slave Resistance: The Economics of Sex," in Chioma Steady, ed. *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally* (Cambridge: Cambdrige University Press, 1981); Raymond Bauer and Alice Bauer, "Day to Day Resistance to Slavery, *Journal of Negro History,* 27 (1942) 388-419; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Strategies and Forms of Resistance: Focus on Slave Women in the U.s.," in Gary Okihiro, ed., *In Resistance: Studies in African Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean History* (Amherst, 1986); Lucille Mathurin, *The Rebel woman in the British West Indies During Slavery* (Kingston: The Institute of Jamaica, 1975); Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, *Women and Slavery in Africa* (London, 1983).

Table 3.16 Change in Condition of Population
Males

	Ballards Valley				Berry Hill			
	1829		1836		1829		1836	
Condition	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Able	105	75.5	70	61.5	42	80.7	33	71.7
Runaway	1	0.7	4	3.6	1	2.0	0	-
Weakly	30	21.6	35	30.3	9	17.3	11	23.9
Invalid	3	2.2	5	4.5	0	-	2	4.4
Totals	139	100.0	114	100.0	52	100.0	46	100.0

Table 3.17: Change in Condition of Population
Females

	Ballards Valley				Berry Hill			
	1829		1836		1829		1836	
Condition	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Able	107	63.7	78	59.1	40	80.0	34	77.3
Runaway	2	1.2	3	2.3	0	-	0	-
Weakly	44	26.2	37	28.0	10	20.0	7	15.9
Invalid	15	8.9	14	10.6	0	-	3	6.8
Totals	168	100.0	132	100.0	50	100.0	44	100.0

(Source: *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers,* 1829 slave lists and 1836 apprentice lists.)

It was not just problems with the supply of labor that concerned the planters. Also problematic was the fact that due to external factors, Jamaican sugar production was declining rapidly.[58] Table 3.18 records how sugar production in Jamaica rose steadily from 1780 to 1809 before beginning to decline. The decline accelerated between 1830 to 1839, until it was only just above the level of production in 1780.

Table 3.18: Annual Jamaican Sugar Production 1780-1839

Period	Annual Average In Tons	Change %
1780-1789	54,162	
1790-1799	60,105	+ 11.1
1800-1809	84,400	+ 40.4

[58] Higman, *Slave Population and Economy,*215.

1810-1819	76,139	- 9.8
1820-1829	72,047	- 5.3
1830-1839	58,841	- 18.3

(Source: Deerr, *The History of Sugar,* 198)

Ballards Valley did not, however, follow this trend for several years. An analysis of the crop returns and sugar production for 1832 to 1836 shows that, far from being the disaster the planters predicted, the sugar crop at Ballards Valley for 1834—the first year of apprenticeship—was higher than the preceding two years. Even in 1838, the last year of apprenticeship, Ballards Valley plantation was still producing a good crop. This compares well with Worthy Park plantation, where production fell from 589 hogsheads in 1832 to 406 hogsheads in 1838.[59] The story was the same at Lord Seaford's Montpelior Estate, where sugar production fell by over 30 percent in 1837 and 1838. Seaford's attorney reported that the apprentices were short of food and refused to work on the plantation outside their required number of hours, "I cannot yet even encourage them to work otherwise in their own time than in making provision for sufficient food for themselves and in the repairs of their houses."[60] Table 3.19 records the annual number of hogsheads of sugar produced at Ballards Valley between 1832-1838.

Table 3.19: Ballards Valley Crop Returns and Sugar Production 1832-1838

Year	New Plants	Ratoons	Total HHds of Sugar
1832	141	170	311
1833	99	178	277
1834	174	146	320
1835	85	190	275
1836	100	200	300
1838*	84	216	300
Average	114	183	297

*Figures for 1837 crop returns are missing.

(Source: Annual Crop returns 1832-38, *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers*.)

[59] Craton and Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation,* 209.
[60] Higman, *Montpelier,* 57.

It is obvious from looking at the sugar crops that the years when the most new canes were planted were the years of the highest yields. Only in 1832 and 1834—the years of the largest yields—were fourth-year ratoons not used. Ratooning was the practice of leaving cane that had been cut in the ground to throw up suckers that then grew into new canes. This was a false economy that saved the labor of digging new cane holes and planting new canes, but it exhausted ground that needed to lie fallow in the fourth year. The low crop in 1833 was largely the result of fewer new canes being planted and the harvesting of ratoons, some of which were six years old.

On the surface, Ballards Valley and Berry Hill seem to fit the profile of any other medium to large size Jamaican sugar plantation and pen: absentee proprietors; frequent turnover in white overseers, and a net natural decrease in the population. An analysis of changes in the occupation and condition of the labor force at Ballards Valley and Berry Hill from 1829 to 1836 confirms that these estates seemed to reflect the general trend both in St. Mary's and the other sugar producing parishes of Jamaica. The aging of the labor force is reflected in the trend of downward mobility in many of the occupations coupled with a large decrease in the number (especially males) described as able. It also indicated that Jamaica was no longer a frontier society. Sugar production continued to decline as the country lost its importance as a sugar producer to Cuba and Puerto Rico. However, differences do emerge in the sex ratio, profitability, and the reliability of the labor force.

Ballards Valley suffered from an even greater imbalance between the sexes than the parish and national average, which resulted in an exceptionally large proportion of females (over two-thirds) on the great gang. But even with a labor force reduced by

nearly 10 percent at Ballards Valley, there was only a slight fall in sugar production overall. In addition, the butchery continued to show a profit each year. Records indicate that neither Ballards Valley nor Berry Hill appear to have suffered from the labor problems that beset so many estates during the apprenticeship period. The management of Ballards Valley may have ameliorated conditions more than that of many other plantations. The records indicate that only three apprentices were sent to the workhouse to be punished in 1836—two of them for being incorrigible runaways. There were some attempts to reclassify skilled or domestic workers as field workers in order to bind them to the estate for an extra two years apprenticeship, but no large-scale practice of reclassification. No stipendiary magistrates' reports containing complaints of harsh treatment of apprentices at Ballards Valley or Berry Hill were recorded.

The most significant evidence that there were few problems with the labor force during this period was contained in a letter written by manager Richard Lewis to the agents in London. On June 23, 1838, Lewis describes "agitation in the Negro population" after the Jamaican House of Assembly passed a bill declaring an end to apprenticeship. Lewis wrote that he had not been idle, but had:

> Fully explained everything to the Negroes on Ballards Valley, and from the feeling that now exists and from all I see I am in good hopes we will continue to make tolerable Crops. The outlay for Labour will indeed be very high particularly at first but the main point is to induce them to begin working as free men and I shall make them liberal offers as I hope by that means and kind treatment to succeed.[61]

Obviously Richard Lewis is presenting his management of Ballards Valley in a positive light to the proprietors, but there is also no record at Berry Hill of the problems

[61] Letter from Richard Lewis to Messrs. Litt & Bushby, London, June 28, 1838. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers*.

that beset many of the pens. According to stipendiary magistrates throughout the island, by 1836 apprentices were increasingly indolent and disrespectful, especially on the pens and small estates. Pens suffered from a shortage of labor, and magistrates reported that apprentices increasingly abused and ill-treated cattle and neglected pastures.[62]

The seven years that separated the populations of 1829 and 1836 covered emancipation and the transformation from an enslaved labor force to a labor force that was still subjected to the same social control while in theory being partially free. Apprenticeship in the British colonies was never meant to be a time for imparting new skills, but simply a waiting period during which time the owners could continue to extract almost as much labor from their workforce as they had done during slavery. Apprentices did not take this control passively. They exercised their independence in a variety of ways: by running away, by resisting when they could, and by participating in the internal marketing system and taking advantage of the freedom to travel and socialize that this afforded them.

At Ballards Valley and Berry Hill many ex-slaves asserted their independence by assuming new identities. The 1836 lists of apprentices include both the old slave names and the new "Christian" names. Of the total of 160 males on both estates, 116 (72.5 percent) changed their first names. Among the total of 176 females, 127 (72 percent) chose new Christian names. What stands out on these lists is the popularity of two surnames: Cruikshank and Green. Eighteen males and thirty females took the surname of Cruikshank, and thirty-four males and forty-seven females took the last name of Green. The former was the name of the current owner, but there is no indication of why so many adopted the name Green. There are no white supervisory staff listed with

[62] Stipendiary magistrates reports, Sligo to Glenelg 17 april, 1836 C.O. 137/210.

that name and there is no record that it was the previous name of either the plantation or pen. Jean Besson argues that "slaves appropriated master's surnames to serve as titles of the Afro-creole cognatic descent groups forged during and after slavery with their powerful symbolism of generational continuity, freedom, personhood, empowerment, and recreation of identity." At Martha Brae, landholding families are not know by their married names but by the names of their descent group.[63]

In sum, Ballards Valley exhibited many of the same traits as other similar-sized sugar plantations in St. Mary Parish. But, through the general cooperation of the labor force and a more enlightened management than that of the majority of estates, the crop production and profitability at Ballards Valley and Berry Hill remained relatively stable during these unstable years. Although this was true up to the end of apprenticeship in 1838, the rate of sugar production could not be sustained and the labor problems grew.

[63] Besson, *Martha Brae*, 24.

CHAPTER 4

POST-EMANCIPATION AND THE PROBLEM OF LABOR

> But there is on both sides a tenacity to the old connexion, which keeps them together. The Landlord does not like to eject those whom he still regards as his proper Labourers, although he cannot obtain Labour from them, and the Labourer clings to his House and Ground on the Estate where he has long held them, although he is harassed by vexatious demands on account of Rent.[1]

On August 1, 1838, 311,000 apprentices became "full free" by an Act of the Jamaican Assembly. This Act passed because it had the support of both the abolitionists who objected to the continued severe punishment of the apprentices, and the planters who resented the British government's interference in their affairs. The British Parliament, in a further attempt to prevent the continued abuse of apprentices, had passed the West India Prisons Act on April 11, 1838, taking control of the prisons away from the parishes and placing them directly under the control of the governor, Sir Lionel Smith.[2] Having already lost the authority to commit apprentices to jail without trial, and to punish them on the estates, this Act was the final straw for the planters who appeared determined to prevent a smooth transition from an enslaved to a wage-based labor force.

The argument of this study is that the labor problems that followed emancipation were not inevitable, but rather the result of the planters' desire to maintain complete control over the labor force, a control that mimicked slavery in all but name. This

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[1] Governor Charles Metcalfe to Lord John Russell, 30th March, 1840, quoted in Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 114.

[2] Anton V. Long, *Jamaica and the New Order,1827-1847* (Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1956), 23.

chapter examines the planters' actions, the laborers' "flight from the plantations" as they lost faith in the bargaining system, and the role played by the non-conformist missionaries in the establishment of free villages and the formation of a freedmen peasantry.

Evidence that the loss of labor from the plantations was not inevitable is illustrated in letters written by Richard Lewis, by this time the manager of Ballards Valley and Berry Hill, to the proprietors in London.[3] These documents and another collection of letters written by Robert Johnston--also an absentee proprietor, who owned estates in the neighboring parish of St. Ann--provide clues to the planters' attitudes and their attempts to control a free labor force.[4] When direct coercion failed, the planters turned to more subtle methods of control, and, finally, to the importation of indentured laborers from Asia.

The feelings of good will on the part of the labor force and the optimism expressed by authorities after the peaceful transition from slavery to apprenticeship did not last. By 1838, an antagonistic relationship had developed between the planters and the labor force, resulting in a severe decline in the number of productive estates. In the twenty years from 1834 to 1854, the total number of sugar estates in Jamaica declined by nearly 50 percent from 646 to 330, while in St. Mary Parish the decline was even steeper, from 86 to only 39.[5] The majority of planters failed to reorganize their labor supply after 1838 and introduce more innovative methods of production. Instead, they responded to

[3] Letters from Richard Lewis, Ballards Valley, to Mary Cruikshank and Messrs. Litt & Bushby in London, 1838-1841. Letters from Henry Westmoreland, who managed the estate from 1845 to owner James C. Dansey in London, 1845-1848. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[4] Robert Johnston letters and plans for a church 1837-1839, *Robert Johnston Papers, Powel Collection,* The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
[5] Douglas Hall, *Free Jamaica, 1838-1865*, 82.

the impending change by harsher exploitation of the work force, and vindictive and ultimately self-defeating acts that included the charging of high rents for houses and gardens, the withdrawal of food rations and material allowances, and restrictions on the cultivation of provision grounds.[6] These actions further soured relations between planters and workers reluctant to leave their homes and grounds, and strengthened the resolve of the labor force in the bargaining process that followed. Even more important, planters' actions were a major factor in the decline of the sugar industry and the development of a strong peasantry in Jamaica.

Nineteenth-century travelers, and later scholars, blamed the decline of the sugar plantations on a variety of factors. Among these factors were absentee ownership, excessive debt, obsolete technology, soil exhaustion, poor management, low wages or non-payment of wages and high rents, and the relatively easy access to unoccupied land.[7] Historians Douglas Hall and Richard Sheridan contend that a few enlightened owners did make a concerted effort to introduce mechanical and technological innovations after 1838. Some managers, like Richard Lewis, attempted to introduce mechanical assistance before labor problems developed.

Recognizing that the free laborers would no longer agree to dig cane holes by hand, Lewis wrote to Ballards Valley's London agents, in 1838, “May I therefore request you to order out by first vessel one of Wilkeys double mould Ploughs complete with six spare Points and one of Ransoms single Ploughs complete with Two sets of Iron Work,

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[6] Gisela Eisner, *Jamaica, 1830-1930: A Study in Economic Growth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 192.

[7] Sheridan, “Changing Sugar Technology and the Labour Nexus,” *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 63, (1989), 75. See discussions by Bigelow and Sewell on the "evils of absenteeism" and planters complaints of an unreliable supply of labor in John Bigelow, *Jamaica in 1850* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1851), 79-82, and William G. Sewell, *The Ordeal of Free Labor in the British West Indies* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1861), 237, 276.

bolt and screws for same and a screw wrench – also cattle chains."[8] Lewis was not alone in advocating mechanization as a way of retaining the labor force. George Price, the second-youngest son of Rose Price, who managed Worthy Park from 1843 to 1865 (when he retired to the Isle of Wight), ordered ploughs, harrows, and even a light railway that ran between the canefields and the factory. Despite family opposition, (his brother publicly castigated him as an inexperienced English country gentlemen whirled up in the enthusiasm for steam engines and railways which had transformed his native Cornwall,) Price believed that, "By an investment, even to an equal amount in value of slaves, in simple machinery, subject to very trifling wear and tear, I should always be able to produce sugar cheaper than the slaveholder could. It was in consequence of the general complaint in the country of a want of labour, which could only be overcome by the introduction of machinery."[9]

Unfortunately, Price had underestimated the problems that accompanied the introduction of all this mechanization. Shipping charges were high, and many oxen were lost hauling the loads over the mountains.[10] Much of the machinery was either defective or unsuitable for its intended use and the climate (the rails were too light and prone to rust). The result was that sugar production at Worthy Park fell at the same time as the price of sugar declined. With the economy in a recession, the government in London passed an Act in 1846 that equalized the duty on all foreign sugar and called for the phasing out of the 7 shillings per hundredweight preference granted West Indian sugar by

[8] Letter from Richard Lewis, Ballards Valley, to Messrs. Litt & Bushby, London, 23rd June, 1838. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[9] Quoted in Craton and Walvin, *Worthy Park,* 219-220. One unforeseen outcome was that mechanization reduced the need for so many cattle and at the same time reduced the amount of manure needed for fertilization.
[10] Ibid., 220. "In one year the estate lost no less than 100 draught animals, partly from a drought but mostly from the extra exertions laid upon them."

1851.[11] In addition, slave-produced sugar from Cuba, Brazil, and Puerto Rico was cheaper, by as much as 3 pounds 10 shillings a hogshead.[12] According to Craton and Walvin, as a result of a recession in England, in 1847, caused by bad harvests, stagnant money markets, and failing banks, "Forty-eight sugar houses in England went bankrupt in eighteen months and, inevitably, with them tumbled the marginal estates."[13]

Not everyone, however, viewed the introduction of the plough as positively as Richard Lewis and George Price. Planter/writer "Monk" Lewis complained in 1816 that, "The awkwardness, and still more the obstinacy, of the few Negroes, whose services were indispensable, was not to be overcome; they broke plough after plough, and ruined beast after beast, till the attempt was abandoned in despair.[14] Edward Brathwaite argues that "the plough was never effectively used in Jamaica…clay soils made ploughing slow and difficult; the rock-based soil…could be costly on the implement."[15] It is no wonder that the most highly-valued worker at Ballards Valley was the blacksmith.[16] What neither Brathwaite nor "Monk" Lewis mentioned was that this may also have been a form of resistance. Breaking tools and injuring animals was a way of slowing down the work process.

Mechanization was expensive. Owners were hampered in large part by the lack of capital and credit, although the slave compensation money (over 6 million pounds to

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[11] Slave produced sugar from Cuba, Brazil, and Puerto Rico was produced much cheaper and thus gained the advantage.
[12] Craton and Walvin, *Worthy Park,* 223.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Quoted in Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-182* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 130.
[15] Ibid., 129.
[16] The blacksmith was valued at 250 pounds. The next most valuable slaves were the "hot-house doctor" and the head carpenter valued at 200 pounds each. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*

Jamaican planters) was theoretically to be used to fund these innovations.[17] In practice much of the compensation money went to pay off debts with the British factors who kept the system afloat. These merchants had extended credit to purchase labor and supplies, handled the sale of the sugar crops, and made annuity payments to owners.[18] After payment of these debts, planters again pleaded poverty when faced with bargaining over wage rates.

Planters continued to assume that coercion would successfully ensure a compliant labor force. When, in 1838, the Jamaican Assembly threatened to use the militia to intimidate recalcitrant workers, Governor Lionel Smith placed the militia under his direct command. Smith complained to Lord Glenelg of the Colonial Office that, "The planters are disappointed I do not send troops about the country and issue proclamations to coerce labour."[19] The planters then resorted to issuing notices evicting laborers from their huts and provision grounds on the estates. Planters were aided in these actions by the passing of the Ejectment and Trespass Acts by the Jamaican Assembly in 1839. These Acts were designed to prevent freed people from buying land (and thus becoming independent), and they also provided for the charging of high rents on houses and grounds and for the ejection and imprisonment for workers who did not comply. Under the terms of the Act that ended apprenticeship, three months advance notice had to be given, in writing, to secure an eviction. Backed by a decision from the Jamaican attorney-general, planters began to charge tenants rent during this three-month grace period.[20] The amount of rent was not fixed and some planters demanded rents that exceeded wages, while others

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[17] Hall, *Free Jamaica,* 65. Steam and water replaced cattle and wind power source in cane-crushing mills.
[18] Holt, *The Problem with Freedom,* 131. See his discussion of Kathleen Butler's findings that 15 percent of this compensation money was paid directly to 23 of these merchants.
[19] Long, *Jamaica, The New Order,* 27.
[20] Smith to Glenelg, 10th September, 1838: 4.C. 1839 XXXV, (107-I), 82-83.

charged rent for every member of the household over the age of twelve. The governor reported that, before the Crown could intervene, hundreds of laborers had been forced from their homes.[21]

In the initial bargaining over wage rates laborers stated that they were willing to work for "fair" rates which they considered to be a minimum of one shilling and sixpence per day, the amount they had earned working in their free time during apprenticeship.[22] Planters in the same parishes banded together and offered uniform rates in an attempt to show solidarity and keep wages as low as possible. The most common rate in St. James was seven and a half pence per day plus two days labor in exchange for continued occupation of huts and provision grounds on the estates.[23] In the majority of parishes the rate was one shilling, but in St. Mary and St. Dorothy it was one shilling and sixpence.[24] Planters who refused to offer the going rate, and those who antagonized workers by charging exorbitant rents and banning task work, continued to have problems getting workers even after agreeing to their wage demands. Workers wanted to be fairly treated from the start, and they were not afraid to strike or go to court over their grievances.

The most troublesome parish was St. George in the northeast. Workers were so alienated by very low wage rates and very high rents that, even when they were offered one shilling and sixpence per day, free accommodation, and task work, they refused to return to work. High rents were the cause of much litigation. If workers refused to pay,

[21] Long, *Jamaica New World Order*, 28.
[22] Swithin Wilmot, "Emancipation in Action: Workers and Wage Conflict in Jamaica 1838-40." *Jamaica Journal,* 19, 1986, 55-62.
[23] Ibid, 55.
[24] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom,* 126.

planters took legal action in the courts of Common Pleas. There juries of the planters' peers, not stipendiary magistrates, decided the outcome.[25]

Planters in Jamaica had a long history of defying British authority. They fiercely resented any attempts from London to meddle in what they considered were the island's internal affairs. They wanted protection from attacks by other colonial powers and their own slave populations, and preferential trade agreements, but that was it. They adopted a variety of strategies to achieve their goals. These strategies included passing local laws annually in defiance of Colonial Office dispatches, delaying votes on legislation in the Assembly until it was too late for the governor to exercise his veto, and continuing to flout laws they opposed. The distance from the mother country gave planters and the Assembly an advantage in their struggles for autonomy, just as it had the mainland colonies in the revolutionary war. The Colonial Secretary, Lord John Russell, commented on the frustration of dealing with the Assembly, "who did not choose to listen, and whom you cannot compel to alter their course."[26] When Parliament passed the Prisons Act in 1838, the Jamaican Assembly went on strike and refused to conduct public business, prompting Henry Taylor, a senior clerk in the Colonial Office, to argue that the Assembly should be suspended, as it was not fit to govern, and Jamaica should revert to Crown Colony status.[27]

John Candler, a prominent English Quaker, traveled to the West Indies and North America in 1849-1850 "to observe social and religious conditions and give philanthropic

[25] Wilmot, "Emancipation in Action," 58.
[26] Minute, L.J. Russell, 10 December 1839, C.O. 28/128, 102. Quoted in William A. Green, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment 1830-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 91-92.
[27] Ibid.

aid."[28] Candler noted in his journal that there was a great variation in the numbers of complaints made by workers on the different estates and the treatment they received, "I found that where the labourers were wisely and fairly treated, there was generally very little complaint on the part of the masters of the want of continuous labour…not coercing labour by means of rent, paying an average rate of wages, and paying those wages duly.[29]

Candler's observations appear to be borne out by the experiences at Worthy Park and Ballards Valley plantations. In analyzing the wage records of 1842 and 1846 at Worthy Park and comparing them with the apprentice lists of 1838, historian Michael Craton found that approximately 80 percent of the apprentice labor force still worked full time on the estate.[30] There was no shortage of labor, but reflecting a general trend, the number of females still employed on a full time basis had dropped by 25 percent. Wages were not high, but they were paid regularly and, after a scheme to extract rent for houses and provision grounds failed, residents lived rent-free.[31] Lords Seaford and Holland also decided that separating rents and labor was the best solution. They both introduced policies of charging rent on the value of the houses rather than on the occupations of the tenants. Rents on houses and gardens were low, whereas rents charged for provision grounds were high. The rationale for this differential was to attempt to encourage workers to spend their time laboring on the estates for wages rather than supplementing their incomes by spending time growing extra provisions for the market.[32] These policies

[28] John Candler, "A Good Friend in Our Midst," *Jamaican Historical Review*, 3, 2 (March 1959) 1-33.
[29] Ibid, 19.
[30] Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man,* 283.
[31] Ibid, 288.
[32] Higman, *Montpelier,* 59-60. Lord Seaford set the rents at one-sixth of the weekly wage, and although this kept the workers living on the estate, they were still only willing to work four days a week.

were only partially successful, as laborers still preferred to spend their time working in their provision grounds.

Ballards Valley, like Worthy Park, seems to have experienced no labor problems as a result of the transition from apprenticeship to freedom. The wage rate offered was considerably higher than the rates in the other parishes. Richard Lewis described this transition to the London agents in a letter written three weeks after emancipation:

> The 1st August has passed quietly away but up to this hour the Negroes on nine-tenths of the Estates have refused to resume work under these circumstances. I have been particularly fortunate on Ballards Valley, Union and New Ramble [two other estates he managed] the Negroes on these three Estates have been at work for ten days and are now making sugar. The Negroes have been advised by our enemies [the missionaries] to demand 6/8 currency per day and to refuse to work unless they got that sum notwithstanding I have got them out at 2/6 per day for able people but it is only on account of the good feeling which existed between them and I that I have succeeded for on the neighbouring Estates Staminny, White Hall, Esher, Nonsuch, Friendship, Heywood Hall etc. not a single Negroe is at work altho' the same wage is offered.[33]

Lewis went on to state that he had drawn on the Ballards Valley and Berry Hill account for 500 pounds to pay the laborers. There is no indication as to why Lewis settled on the rate that he offered, which at two shillings and six pence per day seems incredibly high compared with the island average of one shilling to one shilling and six pence. Individual charges for rent are not listed, but an audit of the books by the London agents mentions "the sum of 741 pounds, 1 shilling and 4 pence should at all events have been deducted, being for rent of Negro houses etc."[34] Not surprisingly, Mrs. Cruikshank complained to Richard Lewis in June 1840 about the cost of labor: "You must set about

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[33] Letter from Richard Lewis, Ballards Valley, to Messrs Litt & Bushby, 20th August, 1838. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.* The enemies he refers to are presumably the non-conformist missionaries who encouraged the laborers to hold out for higher wages. Friendship was owned by Lord Holland.
[34] An audit of Ballards Valley and Berry Hill accounts by Messrs. Litt & Bushby, June 2, 1840. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*

reducing your Expenditure in every way you possibly can or we shall all be ruined beggars."[35]

The accounts for Berry Hill for 1839 show that laborers' wages amounted to two-thirds of the receipts, a huge burden. Mary Cruikshank ordered Lewis to reduce the expenditure of the overseer at Berry Hill, who received an annual salary of 140 pounds, 25 pounds for fresh beef and Christmas cheer, and kept "two Women servants, and a Waiting Boy."[36] These extravagances, however, were part of the cost of being an absentee proprietor. The accountants assured Mrs. Cruikshank that the estates were in good order and that: "It is to be expected that the large charge for Negro labour: 5,191 pounds 6 shillings will be reduced in the following years as more labourers are expected to be on the market so many estates being nearly out of cultivation."[37]

Fifteen months later Lewis wrote to the agents in London on the problems of labor and what he considered were the solutions:

> I shall repeat my opinions, the High price of labour is the greatest evil we have now to contend with & parties here have been writing that it can at <u>once</u> be reduced - People so writing have ends of their own to serve & are not stating facts the price of labour will only be reduced as follows. First by Negroes acquiring more wants and becoming more industrious which they <u>will</u> do for they will labour to supply these wants when they have acquired them (of this we have already proof). Secondly by the numbers of labourers being increased by migration & by natural increase & thirdly by some of the very poor Estates being thrown up as sugar properties when few Negroes will be required on them and the bulk of the people located there must seek for employment on the working estates.[38]

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[35] Letter from Mary Cruikshank, London, to Richard Lewis at Ballards Valley, June 1, 8140. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[36] Ibid.
[37] Letter from Litt & Bushby to Mary Cruikshank, June 2nd, 1840. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[38] Letter from Richard Lewis, Ballards Valley, to Messrs. V & H. Mayo, London, 27th October, 1841. *Ballards Valley Plantion Papers.*

Unfortunately Lewis did not go on to detail what proof he had of the freed people acquiring "wants" or what these "wants" might be. Lewis went on to caution that, before attempting to decrease the price of labor and increase the task work, the managers must ensure that there was an abundant supply of labor so that the estates would not be left uncultivated for even a short period of time.[39] Ballards Valley apparently managed to continue to pay these rates and return a profit, albeit a steadily decreasing one, until the phasing out of sugar duties began in 1846. Lewis's argument about acquiring wants echoes that of a speech given by British Member of Parliament, Rigby Watson, on June 10, 1833:

> To make them labour, and give them a taste for luxuries and comforts, they must be gradually taught to desire those objects which could be attained by human labour. There was a regular progress from the possession of necessaries to the desire of luxuries; and what once were luxuries, gradually came, among all classes and conditions of men, to be necessaries. This was the sort of progress the Negroes had to go through, and this was the sort of education to which they ought to be subject in their period of probation.[40]

Richard Lewis and the London accountants were correct in their surmise that many estates would no longer be cultivated, but this did not release a mass of workers into the labor pool. Freed people preferred to work in their provision grounds and squat on available land rather than go to work on other plantations.

As the price of sugar declined in the 1840s, planters reduced wage rates by as much as one third and many of them failed to pay regularly. On October 14, 1838, two months after the end of apprenticeship, S.M. Baynes informed Lord Holland that, "The want of silver to pay the negroes is an inconvenience now cruelly felt, indeed so scarce

[39] Lewis to Mayo, 27 October, 1841. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[40] Quoted in Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 54.

has change become that shopkeepers where you do not purchase considerably demand a bonus of 1s in the pound for changing paper."[41] In the parishes of St. James and St. Mary workers withdrew their labor and refused to return to work until planters agreed to reinstate the old rates.[42] Special magistrate Charles Lake reported that failure to pay wages was a major problem.[43] Unable to control either the supply or the cost of labor, the planters increasingly turned to immigration as the solution.

The early schemes to import indentured laborers from Europe and Africa were not successful. Europeans disliked the agricultural labor and the majority could not tolerate the climate.[44] One of the first of these schemes offered bounties for the importation of German workers beginning in 1834. This scheme failed for several reasons: many Germans died of disease, there were too many craftsmen and not enough field laborers, and accommodation was inadequate. Lord Seaford, who had championed the idea that white immigrants would set an example of how wage labor worked in a free society, gave 500 acres for the establishment of a town for 250 new German immigrants who arrived in 1835. The settlement, named Seaford Town after its benefactor, was never a successful venture. According to planting attorney, Thomas McNeil, "the settlers included too many craftsmen and too few field laborers." But the town retained its unique culture over the next century.[45] In addition, the planters' attempts to exploit new Africans--as they had their predecessors--were equally unsuccessful.[46]

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[41] Baynes to Holland, 14 October, 1838. *Holland House Diaries,* MS 51817.
[42] Wilmot, "Emancipation in Action," 61.
[43] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom,* 128.
[44] Hall, *Free Jamaica,* 22.
[45] B.W.Higman, *Montpelier, Jamaica: A Plantation Community in Slavery and Freedom 1739-1912* (Jamaica: The Press University of the West Indies, 1998), 55.
[46] Monica Schuler, *"Alas, Alas, Congo:" A Social History of Indentured African Immigration into Jamaica, 1841-1865* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) 9. See also Mary Elizabeth Thomas, *Jamaica and Voluntary Laborers from Africa 1840-1865* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1974).

In her study of indentured African immigration after emancipation, Monica Schuler traces the experience of these new immigrants. From 1841 to 1865, nearly 32,000 Africans went to the British Caribbean to work on the plantations. Approximately eight thousand of them were "liberated" by the British from slave ships probably en route to Cuba and Brazil, and taken first to Sierre Leone and the island of St. Helena before being shipped on to Jamaica as indentured laborers. Many died in epidemics of cholera, smallpox and measles in the early 1850s. Some died at sea and only a small percentage of them (253) managed to return to Africa after their period of indenture ended.[47] During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, indentured servants worked for grants of land when their period of servitude was over. But in the nineteenth century, indenture did not mean settlement, rather it meant low wages with the promise of a small bonus and a passage home.

John Candler, writing about Jamaica in 1850, expressed his opinion that it was not just a shortage of labor that had caused planters to turn to indentured immigrants but the desire to cut costs: "a number of Africans have been brought with a view of beating down the wages of Creole laborers."[48] On his visit to Rhine Estate, owned by George William Gordon, Candler reported: "On the estate are forty African laborers, some of whom were released from their captured slave ship two years ago, and some of them rather more than twelve months. All of them were indentured to G.W. Gordon for three years, on the condition of receiving lodging, food and clothing." According to Candler, "They seem to have found out that their indentures are not binding in law, as they now refuse their food, and refuse to work, and insist on money wages…It seems to be their policy to refuse for a

[47] Schuler, *"Alas, Alas, Kongo,"* 1-2.
[48] Candler, "A Good Friend in our Midst," 19.

time the accustomed portion of food, and the clothing provided by the Estate, that they may bring their master to terms."[49]

In 1844, the Indian government had passed an Act to legalize emigration to Jamaica, Trinidad, and Demerara (Guyana). And in 1845, after the first schemes to import indentured workers failed, the planters turned to Asia for their labor supply. Agents were sent to Calcutta and Madras to recruit Indian laborers. A direct tax of twenty shillings per year was levied on employers for each immigrant they hired to offset the cost of the passage that averaged sixteen pounds. Laborers were offered wages of one shilling per day with free housing, medical attention, and rice at cost price. Jamaica received 261 Indians in 1845, 1890 in 1846, and 2,400 in 1847. After 1848 the scheme was abandoned due to financial crises in the colonies.

Under the law, at the end of their five-year contract, immigrants were supposed to be given a free passage home or bonus money to set up as residents of the colonies. In practice, at the end of their indenture many Indians who qualified for a return passage discovered that Jamaica was bankrupt and could not afford to pay for their return voyages. Authorities persuaded 1,463 Indians to drop their "right of return" for bonuses of ten to fifty pounds. Finally in 1853, a loan was secured from London to cover the cost of returning the remaining immigrants to India. Only 1,570 Indians returned home, and 269 were recorded as having died in Jamaica. This left a balance of nearly 30 percent

[49] Candler, "A Good Friend in our Midst," 23. George William Gordon was a former slave—freed by his father—who became a wealthy planting attorney and then the owner of several estates. He married an Irishwoman, joined the Anglican Church, and was elected to the Assembly in 1844. In the 1860s he took part in the religious revival and became a Native Baptist. He fell into debt and was forced to mortgage his properties. In a travesty of justice, in 1865 he was charged with inciting the Morant Bay Rebellion, found guilty, and hanged.

who were missing, most of them presumed dead, according to the Agent-General for Immigration.[50]

Worthy Park estate also suffered from a labor shortage despite the fact that all rents for houses and provisions grounds had been abolished. George Price turned to immigration, first of Europeans, and later of Africans and Asians. Unfortunately, Price only managed to hire two white (English) indentured servants, neither of whom fulfilled his original purpose: one expeditiously drank himself to death, and the other managed to get himself promoted quickly from ploughman to bookkeeper and thus out of the fields. A small number of "freed" Africans went to Worthy Park, as well as some fugitive American slaves who had escaped to Canada, but those who did not die of disease soon left the estate.[51]

By 1846, Ballards Valley was finally experiencing labor problems similar to those on other sugar estates. The new manager, Henry Westmorland, applied to hire indentured Indian laborers.[52] In June he wrote to absentee owner, James Dansey, that:

> The Scotia with 290 Coolies arrived at Port Maria about ten days ago & I have obtained 28 adults besides children for Ballards Valley - I saw them at work the day before yesterday cleaning and banking plants, which they were doing <u>well,</u> but rather slowly - however when they become more accustomed to the Cane cultivation, I think will do a greater quantity per diem. It is a great desideratum having them located on the Estate and <u>always</u> at command.[53]

In his letter Westmorland expressed the main desire of all planters: to have a compliant labor force resident on the estates and always under the manager's control.

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[50] Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas 1830-1920* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 87.
[51] Craton and Walvin, *Worthy Park*, 218.
[52] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom,* 132. Henry Westmorland began managing estates and investing in Jamaica in the 1840s, and later became a very successful planter and a powerful political figure in the Jamaican Assembly.
[53] Letter from Henry Westmorland, Ballards Valley, to James Dansey, London, June 20th 1846. *Ballards Valley Plantation* Papers. The shipment from the *Scotia* consisted of 21 adult males and 10 adult females between the ages of 15-36, and 4 boys and 10 girls under the age of 8.

Further signs of labor problems are indicated by Westmorland's statement two years later. In February 1848, Westmorland wrote that he was "going to Port Maria by boat on Tuesday to look after the Africans, which arrived yesterday." He then mentions that the bookkeepers and the overseer would live off the property after 1st March, and that he was reducing the overseer's salary by 25 percent.[54] One has to wonder, given the difficulty of finding and retaining good supervisory staff, what type of man would agree to stay when faced with losing one quarter of his salary and having the added cost of setting up and maintaining a household. In July 1848, Westmorland confirmed that he had reduced the salaries of his overseers 25 percent: "I have not intimated this to Mr. Haughton [an overseer] waiting for your sanction, bit if you approve the reduction will take place from the date I gave my other overseers notice." He then added, "Do you wish me to apply for some Africans out of the expected ship?"[55]

In a series of letters to the proprietors in London, Westmorland discussed the repairs and improvements that needed to be made to the plantation and the stock at the pen. Apparently, the properties had been neglected by the preceding manager who had replaced Richard Lewis. In November 1845 Westmorland wrote: "The Engine works and gives satisfaction, but sometimes there is not even water sufficient for it…the Waterwheel cannot hold on much longer…the tradesman patching it says he will not warrant it for any time." He feared that production would be down as "There are ploughs sufficient on the Estate, but not worked for want of Cattle." He requested that cattle cake be sent with the next shipment of supplies so that he could feed the cattle 3 lbs a day,

[54] Westmorland, to Dansey, 9 July, 1848. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[55] Westmorland to Dansey 19 July, 1848. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*

which he thought would be of considerable benefit.[56] Westmorland considered the Great House too far from the Works "even for the overseer to reside," but he could not afford to repair the old house. And he blamed the decline in Rum crops on the small size of the still, which he considered "ruinous."[57]

The first thing Westmorland purchased was a new still from England so that, "not only the quantity but the strength of the rum will be increased." In the letter dated April 6, 1846, he reported that, "In respect to the repair of the Buildings, I shall do nothing the present year but what is absolutely necessary – the gutter I fear will prove an expensive job, it must be done, as at present we have neither water for the Engine or Wheel, entirely owing to the gutter being out of repair." It was not just the buildings, but the stock needed immediate attention. "The Cattle at the Pen have evidently deteriorated in size from breeding in and in – since I have been in charge, I have changed two Bulls and as there are some fine Cows on the place, I think we will shortly produce Stock of a fair size…had Berry Hill been properly managed, Ballards Valley would never have had to purchase elsewhere -- head of working Cattle." Westmorland then discussed the production of sugar and rum: "the quality of the produce I am paying particular attention to, you are however in error in supposing that highly manured land produces <u>better</u> liquor – plant Canes seldom make such good sugar as Ratoons, tho' of course much more of it." Later he asked permission to visit England as it had been eight years since he was home. He requested a personal interview with the owners to discuss his plans for restoring Ballards Valley to "a paying system of cultivation."[58]

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[56] Westmorland to Dansey, 21 November, 1845. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[57] Ibid.
[58] Westmorland to Dansey, 6 April, 1846. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*

Westmorland continued to manage the estates until 1848, when he offered to lease Ballards Valley (but not Berry Hill) from James Dansey for 450 pounds per annum. He knew that he was not offering much but, "In respect to the rent of the Estate the sum I offer I grant is low, if times were good, but I look upon it as a speculation that it will turn out a very good or a very bad bargain." He asked what the terms would be and how Dansey "would manage about repairs…no tenant would do them himself, and if left as they are for 3 years, they would get into a sad state."[59] Westmorland cautioned Dansey that," I fear you will scarcely get 600 pounds a year for the estate in these times."

Dansey contacted his lawyers and requested them to complete the lease and go ahead and pay 1,500 pounds (presumably for other repairs, supplies, and wages) as this was holding up the lease. "I think it would be advisable to state that Mr. Westmorland has declined executing the lease till it is paid. And that if I am unable to enforce the lease in consequence, that I shall endeavour to make Mrs. Danseys's annuity bear the loss, which I might be able to do, as it is by her account that the West India Estate would be rendered unavailable."[60]

Apart from his opinion that he did not need the extra stock, another reason for Westmorland's decision not to lease the livestock pen may have been the labor problems that surfaced on the pens two years into apprenticeship. Many of these problems stemmed from the refusal of most pen-keepers to implement the task system of work that sugar estates had previously adopted.[61] As workers deserted the pens, some pen-keepers, like the planters, turned to immigrant labor. According to Verene Shepherd, some pens in the parish of St. Ann had tried importing German and English workers during

[59] Westmorland to Dansey, 18 July, 1848. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[60] Dansey to Messrs. Mayo, 24 July, 1848. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[61] Verene Shepherd, "The Effects of the Abolition of Slavery on Jamaican Livestock Farms," 199.

apprenticeship. This experiment, like others using European laborers, turned out badly. Pen owners accused the Europeans of refusing to work and noted that some traveled all the way to Spanish Town "to complain to the stipendiary magistrate about their overseer."[62]

In an effort to force workers to remain on the pens, pen-keepers then introduced a system of charging rent for houses, gardens, and provision grounds, as well as for pastures on which workers kept their livestock. These rents had to be paid in work hours on the pen.[63] But it was not just the need for labor that was a problem on the pens, there was also less of a need for livestock as the number of sugar estates declined and many converted their mills to steam power, thereby forcing pens to switch their focus to cultivating crops like logwood, coffee, and pimiento.[64]

Coffee plantations also suffered from labor problems, but of a different nature. There was no large movement away from the coffee plantations by the freed people but, as the international market for Jamaican coffee declined, planters did not need a pool of continuous labor and started turning away workers. They also instituted the practice of limiting occupation of houses and plots located on the estates to those who agreed to give day-labor whenever needed.[65] Some planters sold plots of land to former slaves in the hope that their proximity to the plantation would encourage them to work during crop season. But this scheme, too, was unsuccessful as crop time on the plantations coincided with harvest time on provision grounds and workers chose to labor on their own produce.

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[62] Shepherd, "Effects of the Abolition of Slavery on Livestock Farms," 200.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 205.
[65] Kathleen E.A. Monteith, "Emancipation and Labour on Jamaican Coffee Plantations, 1838-48," *Slavery and Abolition,* 21, (December 2000): 125-135.

Between 1840 and 1850 the price for coffee plummeted 50 percent, and 159 plantations in Jamaica were abandoned, as the British government phased out the duty on coffee as it had on sugar.[66] Planters eventually agreed to revert to the task system of labor that had been used for coffee cultivation during slavery, and this resulted in a better availability of labor.[67]

As coercion proved increasingly unsuccessful, many planters turned to more subtle methods of labor control and more of them offered to sell acreage on their estates to laborers. On June 20, 1846, Henry Westmorland wrote to inform James Dansey that a neighboring plantation was selling lots to laborers at six pounds an acre, but he added, "…to this date only 16 acres have been purchased."[68]

As relations between the planters and workers deteriorated, the subsequent actions of the planters only exacerbated the tensions and contributed to the workers' movement away from the estates. This flight from the estates to small freeholds--many of them just three to five acres--marked the beginning of the formation of a peasantry.

Peasantries in the Caribbean differ from other peasantries in that they did not evolve from an indigenous population. Anthropologist Sidney Mintz, who has written extensively on Caribbean peasantries, refers to them as "reconstructed" peasantries. That is, they were formed not from an indigenous population, but from immigrants (in this case involuntary ones: emancipated slaves and some indentured servants) who became peasants in response to an external system, such as slavery, imposed on them.[69] In Jamaica this movement from an enslaved labor force to a peasantry was facilitated by the

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[66] Monteith, *Emancipation and Labour,* 131.
[67] Ibid., 133.
[68] *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*
[69] Sidney W. Mintz, "Slavery and the Rise of Peasantries," Michael Craton, ed. *Roots and Branches* (Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1979) 218.

long-standing control slaves exercised over the provision grounds and the internal marketing system.[70]

Under slavery, the provision ground system had benefited the planters who did not have to feed their slaves, but the system was even more beneficial to the slaves who not only had the ability to earn cash but also to gain a degree of autonomy over their lives.[71] Their position in the internal provision and marketing system afforded the former slaves the flexibility to choose to work part time on the estates while cultivating their own freeholds.[72] Ironically, a policy that planters initiated during slavery to save themselves money ended up being the main reason free workers--especially women--could choose not to labor on the plantations.

What distinguished Jamaica from other British Caribbean colonies such as Barbados, Antigua, and St. Kitts, and was a primary reason for the planters' failure to secure a compliant workforce, was the availability of idle land. The former slaves purchased plots in "free villages" or on sub-divided properties, or they squatted on abandoned estates or marginal land in the less accessible mountain regions.[73] The number of small landowners increased dramatically and the size of their freeholds

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[70] Sidney Mintz, "Was the Plantation Slave a Proletarian?" *Review,* 2, 1 (1978), 81-98. These slaves in fact constituted a "proto-peasantry."

[71] A.J.G. Knox, "Opportunities and Opposition: The Rise of Jamaica's Black Peasantry and the Nature of Planter Resistance," *Caribbean Review of Sociology and Anthropology,* 14, 4 (1977) 381-395. In 1832, the slaves material contribution to the five million pound Jamaican GDP was one and a half million pounds, and over half that was food from provision grounds.

[72] The vast majority of participants in the internal marketing system were female. This fact enabled a greater percentage of females to withdraw from the plantation labor force after emancipation. For discussions on "higglers" who bought local produce to re-sell in the town markets see Margaret Fisher Katzin "The Jamaican Country Higgler," *Social and Economic Studies, 8, 4 (December 1959):* 421-435*;* Melvin R. Edwards*, Jamaican Higglers: Their Significance and Potential* (Swansea: Centre for Development Studies, 1980); Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

[73] Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed,* 17.

decreased from just over two thousand holders of under 50 acres each in 1838, to nearly twenty thousand holding less than ten acres in 1845.[74]

As Governor Metcalfe expressed in his memorandum to Lord John Russell, many laborers were reluctant to leave the houses and grounds on their old estates even when they were harassed by managers and overseers.[75] There were two main reasons for this reluctance: first, the houses were their homes and they risked losing the crops on their provision grounds; and secondly, they were the burial ground of many of their ancestors. But in spite of these constraints, ex-slaves did leave in large numbers. Historians agree that there was a desire on the part of many laborers to leave the plantations, and that this was facilitated by the availability of land in Jamaica, but they are divided on the reasons.

One theory is the "pull" explanation, which is that former slaves wanted to leave the plantations for psychological and cultural reasons because of the experience of slavery.[76] This was the official view expressed by both the Colonial Office and the planters. The "push" interpretation (which currently seems to have more support) was first expressed by abolitionist William Sewell in 1859. According to this theory, flight from the plantations was the result of the inequities meted out under early freedom rather than treatment received under slavery.[77] The adoption of a variety of legislative

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[74] Eisner, *Jamaica, 1830-1930,* 220.

[75] Douglas Hall in an analysis of slaves, tenants, and laborers on Fort George Pen from 1832-1843 found that over one quarter of the former slaves still worked on the property five years after they were fully free to leave. "Fort George Pen, Jamaica: Slaves, Tenants & Labourers, 1832-1843." Paper presented at Eleventh Conference of Caribbean Historians, Curacao, 5-10 April, 1979.

[76] For further information on the "pull" factor see Herman Merivale, *Lectures on Colonies and Colonization* (London, 1841); W.L. Mathieson, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment 1830-1865* (Oxford, 1976); R. Farley, "the Rise of a Peasantry in British Guiana," *Social and Economic Studies,* 2:4 (1954): 52-61; W.E. Riviere, "Labour Shortage in the British West Indies after Emancipation," *Journal of Caribbean History,* 4, (May 1972): 1-31.

[77] For more information on the "push" theory see W.E. Sewell, *The Ordeal of Free Labour in the British West Indies* (London, 1861); G.E. Cumper, "Labour Demand and Supply in the Jamaican Sugar Industry 1830-1950," *Social and Economic Studies,* 2:4 (1954), 76-106; D.G. Hall, *Free Jamaica 1838-1865: An Economic History* (New Haven: 1959): S. Wilmot, "Emancipation in Action: Workers and Wage Conflicts

mechanisms such as vagrancy laws, a strong police force, and granting only limited rights to houses and provision grounds, acted to support the planters' desire for complete control of the labor force. However, far from granting planters this control, what these coercive tactics did achieve was to drive many of the laborers permanently from the plantations to settle on marginal land, or in the "free villages" set up by the non-conformist missionaries.

The relationship between the planters and the non-conformist missionaries was less than cordial. The original attack on slavery had been led by the Quakers when they formed the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787. This movement to abolish slavery threatened both the structure of society and the planters' livelihoods. As anti-slavery propaganda stressed the need for religious instruction, preachers of all denominations migrated to Jamaica. Moravian missionaries from Germany were the first to establish a mission to preach the gospel to the enslaved population in 1754.[78] They were followed by the Wesleyan Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians. The missionary societies initially steered clear of political involvement and were tolerated by most planters. In fact, unlike the abolitionists, missionaries did not condemn slavery, they wanted to "improve life for the slaves within the parameters defined by the slave system."[79]

By 1824, the missionary societies had abandoned their political neutrality and were preaching to their congregants against slavery. As Baptists and Wesleyans began to

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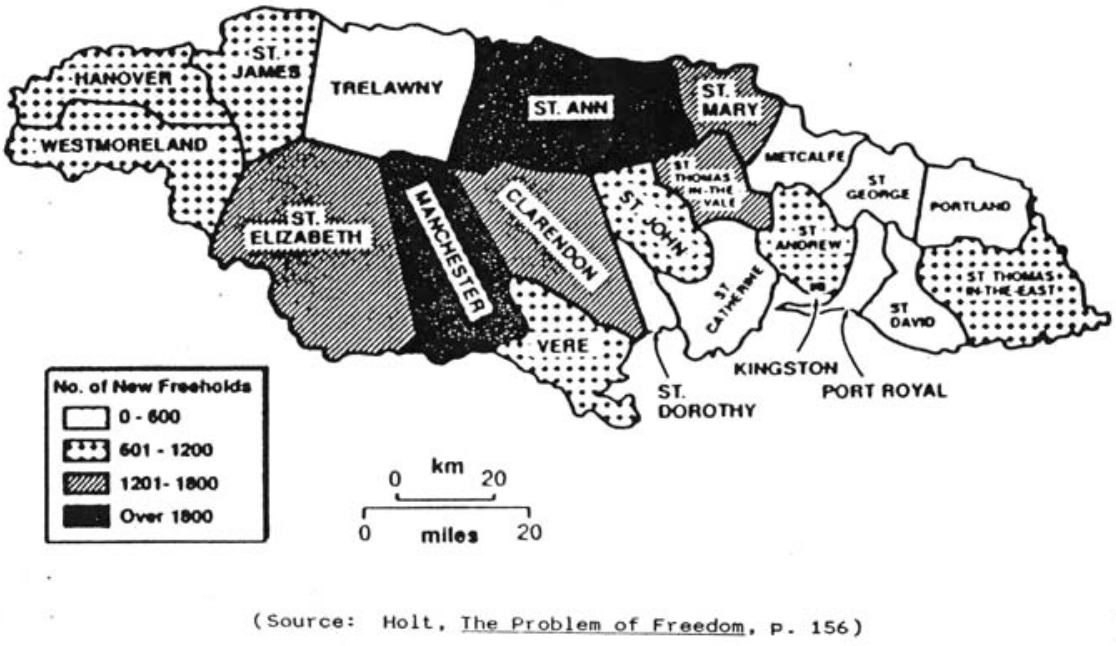
in Jamaica, 1838-1848," 16th Annual Conference of Caribbean Historians, Barbados, 1984; V. Shepherd, "The Effects of the Abolition of Slavery on Jamaican Livestock Farms, 1834-1845," *Slavery and Abolition,* 10:2 (1989), 187-211; W.K. Marshall, "The Post-Slavery problem Revisited," 1990 Elsa Goveia Memorial Lecture, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.

[78] Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982) 7.

[79] Ibid., 65.

make use of lay preachers recruited from their black congregations, the planters blamed the missionaries for inciting the increasing numbers of slave conspiracies that culminated in the 1831 Baptist War. Baptist and Wesleyan missionaries were arrested along with rebel leaders. The missionaries were later released but many of their chapels were destroyed. Two of the Baptist missionaries arrested were William Knibb and James Phillippo, both of whom went on to play major roles in the Emancipation Movement and in the establishment of free villages.[80]

Figure 4.1: Map of New Peasant Freeholds, 1840-1845



(Source: Holt, The Problem of Freedom, p. 156)

The idea behind free villages was to encourage former slaves to become independent farmers. In order to do this Knibb and Phillippo realized the laborers had to have access to land. So the missionary churches bought abandoned estates, divided up the land into small plots of one to three acres which they sold to individuals, and

[80] Sidney W. Mintz, "The Historical Sociology of Jamaican Villages," in Charles V. Carnegie, ed., *Afro-Caribbean Villages in a Historical Perspective* (Kingston: Jamaica Publications Ltd., 1987), 1-19.

formed church communities. In two years Knibb purchased 70,000 pounds worth of abandoned estates and ruinate for resale to freed persons.[81] Between 1838 and 1844, 19,000 former slaves and their families settled in these free villages.[82] Knibb claimed that forty-three free villages had been founded just in the parish of St. Ann by 1845. The price of the plots ranged from two to three pounds an acre and could be paid off in installments.[83] Even today the majority of peasant farmers have very little land. Of the 214,000 farmers in 1988, the largest number, 50,000, farmed only one to two acres.

In research that has spanned over thirty years, anthropologist Jean Besson has studied the free village of Martha Brae in Trelawny parish on the north coast of the island. Besson argues that freed people in Trelawny were "the vanguard of the island's free-village system through their alliance with Baptist missionary William Knibb in a land/labor struggle with the planters that was the bitterest on the island."[84] In the eighteenth century the village was a slave port on the Martha Brae River about a mile inland. Once the capital of Trelawny, it lost the title to neighboring Falmouth owing to the latter's deep harbor able to accommodate larger vessels for the importing of slaves and exporting of sugar.[85] Following emancipation squatters started settling on Vestry-owned land in Martha Brae, and what subsequently developed in this free village was a complicated pattern of land tenure that had its roots both in Africa and the slavery experience.

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[81] Knox, "Opportunities and Opposition," 388.
[82] Ibid, 3. See also Hugh Paget, "The Growth of Villages in Jamaica and British Guiana: The Free Village System in Jamaica," *Jamaican Historical Review,* 1, 1, 38-51.
[83] Knox, "Opportunities and Opposition," 388.
[84] Jean Besson, *Martha Brae's Two Histories: European Expansion and Caribbean Culture-Building in Jamaica* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 107.
[85] Ibid.,, 73.

Villagers who owned land were mostly "Born Ya," meaning born in Martha Brae. Those not born in the village were designated "Strangers" and were landless tenants. Some practiced "landless farming" which Besson contends is a form of squatting that originated during slavery when slaves grazed their livestock on the master's land. As the strongest desire of the peasantry was to own land, the settlers in these villages passed on their land as "family land." What differentiated family land (also known as "generation property," "children's property", or "succession ground,")[86] from freehold land was that whereas freehold property passed to a designated heir (usually the first born male), all descendants of the original purchaser had a right to family land. This right as Besson defines it is that "all children and their descendants are considered heirs regardless of their gender, birth order, "legitimacy," or residence, and marriage is not regarded as a basis for inheritance."[87] She argues that "family land is the spatial dimension of the family line, mirroring its identity and continuity." It also represents both a response to slavery and resistance against "imposed culture."[88]

Houses are not considered family property and can be individually owned, but everything else is shared by the family members. All descendants have the right to build a house, cultivate a kitchen plot, and pick fruit in a shared yard. In addition, they have the right to return whenever they want to live and be buried on the family land.[89] This right of return even applies to those who have emigrated and lived abroad all their lives.

Martha Brae's inhabitants successfully gained their independence from the plantations and supported themselves from the time they settled the free-village as they

[86] Besson, *Martha Brae,* 141.
[87] Ibid.,, 140.
[88] Ibid., 143.
[89] Ibid.

still do today: by cultivating their plots and provision grounds and selling the surplus at the local markets. Typically men cultivated the provisions and women marketed them. The market in neighboring Falmouth has been the largest rural market in Jamaica for over two hundred years. The marketing system is linked by a network of "intermediaries" or "higglers" who buy and sell goods and produce at the various markets.

During slavery, female higglers would buy small amounts of excess produce from other slaves (rather than grow their own provisions) to sell at the Sunday markets. They would also purchase goods at the markets to sell elsewhere. There is a remarkable continuity within the marketing system. Higglers still engage in their trade but have now become drawn into the globalized economy. Since the 1980s many higglers, responding to the demands of the marketplace, have become linked to the international marketing system. They typically travel several times a year to purchase clothes, shoes, jewelry, cosmetics, and household goods from Miami, New York, and other major cities. One higgler in Kingston told me that she purchased goods from the Kingston market every Saturday for her mother to sell at a small rural market. She also traveled frequently to Miami to pick up larger quantities of more expensive products to resell. Recently, however, she stated that the U.S. embassy has refused to issue visas to many of these higglers (fearing they will stay on in the U.S.) and so now they fly to Panama instead to purchase their goods.[90] These "international" goods are sold at Falmouth's dry goods market known as Ben' Down Market because goods for sale are typically spread out on the ground.[91] Besson contends that, as higglering has become a larger commercial undertaking, so the gender lines within the marketing system are becoming more blurred,

[90] Interview with Barbara (Maxine) Davidson, May 1996, Kingston, Jamaica.
[91] Besson, *Martha Brae,* 206-207.

as men have become increasingly involved in what was once solely the purview of women.[92]

There is no evidence that Martha Brae was established by the Baptist Church as a free village, although most residents are Baptist today and worship either at Knibb's church in Falmouth or at the local Revival Tabernacle.[93] However, a majority of the free villages were founded by non-conformist missionaries. In an effort to counteract the influence these Baptist, Methodist, and other non-conformist ministers exercised over the labor force, planters turned to their old ally, the Church of England. By establishing Anglican schools and places of worship on their estates the planters hoped to retain the labor force still resident on their plantations.

The Anglican Church was established by the first English settlers in Jamaica and, as the state church, was supported by taxes levied on the whole community. According to an editorial in the *Jamaica Despatch and New Courant* of December 2, 1835, "We have a (Anglican) Bishop, and Archdeacon, Rural Deans, Rectors, Curates, and Catechists which cost the country annually about 30,000 pounds."[94] The size of the Anglican Church staff and congregation in Jamaica compared with that of the non-conformist missions was out of all proportion to the congregation it administered. Despite having a staff of approximately 800 in 1840, Anglican clergy tended to serve only whites and ignore the African-Jamaican population in much the same way as they did the lower classes in Britain.[95] This practice was confirmed by stipendiary magistrate

[92] Besson, *Martha Brae*, 212.
[93] Ibid., 131.
[94] *Jamaica Despatch and New Courant,* Kingston, Wednesday, December 2, 1835, 1054.
[95] Long, *Jamaica, the New Order,* Appendix B.

Stephen Bourne who wrote to Lord Holland, "The established church stands here as there [England] aloof from all the rest."[96]

The established church had always been firmly on the side of the planters and frequently acted as their mouthpiece, ensuring that measures against vagrancy, stealing and illegitimacy were enforced.[97] In fact, the Anglican Church did not even prohibit the ownership of slaves. According to Mary Turner, in 1826, seven of eighteen rectors owned properties worked by slaves or jobbing slaves, and all but two owned domestic slaves.[98] On the eve of emancipation when the British government paid compensation to individual planters for the loss of their slaves, the (Anglican) Bishop of Exeter is listed as owning 665 slaves and receiving compensation totaling 12,728 pounds.[99] Table 4.1 records the membership of the various denominations.

Table 4.1: Church Membership in Jamaica in 1840

Church	Ministers	Teachers	Stations	Congregants
Baptist	32	76	41	100,000
Native Baptist	14		25	8,000
Wesleyan	31			50,000
Moravian	10		10	7,000
Presbyterian	4	6	10	7,000
London Mission	8		12	8,000
Congregation	5			3,000
Church of Scotland	2			2,000
Mission Society	8	17		6,000
Jewish				5,000
Roman Catholic				1,000
Anglican	800 (Total Staff)			46,000
Totals	914	99	98	243,000

(Source: Long, *Jamaica and the New Order,* Appendix B)

[96] Letter from Stephen Bourne, Jamaica, to Lord Holland, London, 28th October, 1839. *Holland House Papers.*
[97] Knox, "Opportunities and Opposition," 391.
[98] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries, 32.*
[99] Butler, *Economics of Emancipation,* 144.

While the Baptists managed congregations totally 100,000 with only thirty-two ministers, Anglicans, with less than half the number of congregants had a staff of 800.

In further vain attempts to establish their hegemony over the laboring population, planters began to build Anglican churches on their properties. In a letter to James Dansey dated March 2,1848, Henry Westmorland wrote:

> I shall be most happy in assisting you on carrying into execution your laudable design of establishing a chapel of the Church of England & a school on Ballards Valley, agreeing with you that such would be of much benefit to the surrounding peasantry. I however entertain some fear of raising the means requisite. You would require first to erect a chapel which could not be done at the very least estimate for less than 300 pounds…this chapel could also answer for a schoolroom.[100]

Westmorland went on to discuss the salary for a clergyman: "250 pounds would be the lowest you could offer him, and the fact that with two other churches within four and a half miles it is unlikely that Ballards Valley would receive church assistance."[101] He also expressed doubt that the workers would contribute their labor as, "I fear you will find them mostly Baptist & unwilling to secede from that persuasion." What both Westmorland and Dansey omitted to mention was that this church was planned for the benefit of the owners rather than the workers. It was not until Ballards Valley was finally having a problem keeping a sufficient supply of labor that the building of a church was even considered. The same motives were behind Robert Johnston's plans to build a church on his property, Annandale, in the parish of St. Ann, where labor problems were emerging during apprenticeship.[102]

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[100] Letter from Henry Westmorland, Ballards Valley, to James Dansey, London, 2nd March, 1848. *Ballards Valley Plantation Papers.*

[101] Ibid.

[102] Baptist Minister James Phillippo had founded a free village in St. Ann's parish during the Apprenticeship period. St. Ann had the largest population of apprentices of all the parishes (over 25,000) and the Baptists were very influential.

Robert Johnston of Rhode Island inherited Annandale on the death of his brother in 1837. He traveled to Jamaica to inspect the estate and restore the Great House where he had been born. The links between the Caribbean colonies and the North American mainland were strong. Edward Brathwaite points out that it was common for planters to own estates in both places, and that, "For many American merchants, it became almost *de rigueur* to serve apprenticeships in the West Indies, going as supercargoes from one island to another, getting to know the local merchants, the local market, and the customers."[103]

In an effort to ensure that his apprentices continued to reside and labor on his estate after emancipation, Johnston announced plans to build a town to be named Annandale after his plantation. He proposed to donate between 50 and 100 acres for Annandale town, including three acres on which to build a church and a 20 acre site for a manual school. The plans were ambitious. The complex was also to include a burial ground--patterned after "Pere la Chaise in Paris or the interesting cemetary [sic] at Liverpool"--a public market, and cottages for laborers and their families.[104] Johnston thought that apprentices who were domestics "will find in the possession of a neat cottage with 2 or 3 spare bedrooms a profitable scheme in accommodating invalids or boarders from the towns for a change of air."[105] Johnston was obviously a very resourceful man, but on a practical level the scheme he proposed was more appropriate for a middle class widow in an English spa city like Bath, Leamington, or Harrogate than for a newly freed slave in rural Jamaica. The manual labor school he planned to establish was to teach

[103] Brathwaite, *Development of Creole Society,* 64. So important were these links, that between 1631-1776 the postal route between New England and England went via Barbados.
[104] Robert Johnston plans for a church, 1838. *Robert Johnston* Papers*, Powel Collection.*
[105] Ibid.

"practical agricultural and horticultural labour…boys brought up in this establishment will become useful members of the island."[106]

While Johnston contributed the land and raw materials for the erection of his church, he solicited the labor from his apprentices. This had the dual purpose of not only saving money, but also of giving the labor force a personal stake in the town. By the time the church's foundation stone was laid on April 7, 1838, apprentices had signed up to contribute over 1022 days of labor and 100 pounds in cash.[107] The plans obviously generated enthusiasm among the governing authorities. When Rev. Henry Browne delivered a sermon on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone, he announced that the Jamaican Assembly had granted 300 pounds and St. Ann Parish 500 pounds "the entire grant of the Assembly to the Parish" towards the cost of the plan.[108] The fate of this ambitious project is not clear, however. On 6th January, 1839, a Mr. W.M. Cook of Pimento Grove, St. Ann, wrote to Robert Johnston, who had returned to Rhode Island:

> With regard to the proposed Church at Annandale, the times & people here are so altered, that I do not believe the volunteered labour will ever be performed and the Gentlemen you appointed to Superintend the building appear to be of the same opinion and seem to have abandoned it. The Act of our Assembly giving up the remaining term of the Apprenticeship, disbanded my Gang on the 1st August, and I have declined Contracting since that time; but as you wish to know what I think the Mason work could be done for taking the high rate of wages now demanded by tradesmen and labourers, and everything else into consideration - I believe It will cost from 2,000 to 2,500 pounds Currency.[109]

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[106] Parallels can be drawn between Johnston's proposals and the later ideas of Booker T. Washington expressed in his Atlanta Compromise Speech delivered September 18, 1895, at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta.

[107] Robert Johnston's plans for a church. *Robert Johnston Papers. Powel Collection.*

[108] An address delivered by the Rev. Henry Browne, on the occasion of the laying of the Foundation Stone of St. Paul's Church, Annandale, St. Ann's Jamaica, 1838 (Kingston: Shannon & Lunam). *Robert Johnston Papers, Powel Collection,* 5. It would be interesting to know the thoughts of parish members at the news that the entire annual grant from the Jamaican Assembly to their parish was to be given to build an Anglican church mostly for the benefit of one planter.

[109] Letter from W.M. Cook, Pimento Grove, St. Ann, Jamaica to Robert Johnston, Newport, Rhode Island, 6th January, 1839. *Robert Johnston Papers, Powel Collection.*

Robert Johnston's ambitious scheme was halted by something he could not have foreseen--the Jamaican Assembly's premature termination of apprenticeship. Had the church and school been completed as planned, it is difficult to project how many of the apprentices would have attended them. The apprentice population was very loyal to the Baptist missionaries who had supported its cause for so long. In evidence given before a British Government commission in 1848, Lord Howard de Walden claimed that one planter established a school at considerable expense on his estate. When he left, "Emissaries were sent to the Negro villages warning all the Negroes not to send the children to our school, saying the object was to make slaves of them again." Consequently, the children were taken away and sent back to the Baptist school. The planter claimed this action was taken because the Baptists charged fees and every child they lost represented a loss of revenue.[110]

On his visit to Jamaica in 1849-1850, John Candler spent some time at Government House looking through the "Blue Book" for statistics on education. He reported that a total of 14,331 children were listed as attending school. The largest number (5,460) attended Church of England schools; 2037 attended "endowed " schools; 1,557 attended Moravian schools; 115 attended Roman Catholic schools, and 60 attended Jewish schools. Baptists and Methodists had not reported their numbers. Candler calculated that this meant only about "a fifth part of the poor children of Jamaica receive daily instruction…ignorance is the rule in Jamaica, educational instruction, the exception.

[110] Deerr, *The History of Sugar,* 372.

No wonder that morals are perverted, and the moral sense is in large numbers of the people scarcely known, or at least, but little cherished."[111]

Robert Johnston and Henry Westmorland were not alone in their belief that building Anglican churches on their estates would offer them more control over their labor force. In 1829 George Price had built an Anglican church in the village of Lluidas Vale to serve his Worthy Park estate. Whether or not it served its purpose is not clear, but according to Craton and Walvin it was "Lluidas Vale's most substantial building" and in 1884 was "greatly extended."[112] Perhaps bricks and mortar were an acceptable substitute for a fervent congregation.

The problem of post-emancipation labor, the steps taken to ensure an available workforce, and the bargaining that ensued differed from colony to colony according to local conditions. In Guyana and Trinidad, newly developing plantation economies that were sparsely settled, land was available for the establishment of free villages, so the solution to labor problems was to import large numbers of indentured Indians. Between 1842 and 1870, over 76,000 Indians went to Guyana and over 42,000 went to Trinidad.[113] In Barbados, most of the Leeward Islands, and British Honduras (Belize) land was more tightly controlled in an effort to prevent the formation of a peasantry. Barbados had a dense population, and the island was dominated by plantations, so there were few places for the freed people to move to. The same was true of the Leeward Islands of Antigua, St. Kitts, Montserrat, and Nevis. British Honduras was a still different case. There was land, but freed people had no access to it owing to a monopoly by mahogany planters.

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[111] Candler, "A Good Friend in our Midst, 3.
[112] Craton and Walvin, *Worthy Park,* 254.
[113] Tinker, *A New System of Slavery,* 113.

While in the Bahamas, something akin to sharecropping developed with "credit and truck" systems that kept workers "in a position of 'practical slavery.'"[114]

The populations of the British Caribbean were not the only slaves freed in 1834. The Emancipation Act also applied to the Cape Colony in South Africa, where the enslaved population included the indigenous descendants of Khoisan, and Africans "liberated" from slave ships and apprenticed to Cape settlers.[115] Slaves in the Cape were also subject to a four-year apprenticeship administered by special magistrates. But, unlike the British West Indian colonies where all children under seven were freed, a loophole in the law allowed Cape farmers to indenture apprentices' children.

During the four years of apprenticeship, 2,364 children in the Western Cape were indentured. Cape farmers attempted to bond the children for terms of over twenty years, and one farmer even applied to a magistrate to indenture "the unborn baby of his pregnant apprentice until the child was twenty-one."[116] When apprentices refused to agree to bond their children, farmers reacted by refusing to allow the children to reside on the farms at the same time that they refused to release the mothers. When mothers applied for help to the magistrates they were forced to prove that they were "good" mothers fit to care for their children. In 1838, as the result of a special inquiry ordered by the Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Glenelg, the indenture of apprentices' children was outlawed. Cape farmers subsequently found another way to solve their labor problem, when the Masters

[114] Besson, *Martha Brae*, 96.
[115] Pamela Scully, *Liberating the Family? Gender and British Slave Emancipation in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823-1853* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1997), 9.
[116] Ibid., 53.

and Servants Ordinance of 1842 allowed child bonded labor, and children were brought illegally to the Cape and held "in de facto slavery."[117]

At the end of apprenticeship, the freed people in the Cape adopted similar strategies to those of the newly freed apprentices in the Caribbean. In order to escape their former owners and with the hope of obtaining land of their own, they moved to the mission stations run by Moravian, Wesleyan, and Rhenish missionaries.[118]

The reactions of former slave owners to the problem of labor in the post-emancipation world appear shortsighted and inflexible. Often planters' responses to the predicament of ensuring an adequate labor supply in a free society seem to have been governed by racism rather than good sense. Planters' unwillingness, or inability, to recognize that their own long-term interests lay in caring for the best interests of their work force, and their consistent underestimation of the determination and ingenuity shown by their former slaves, resulted in a labor crisis of the planters' own making. What the freed people wanted was land of their own and the space to carve out an autonomous future. If planters had had the foresight to compromise on these issues and allowed the workers to remain on their land, then there was a chance that more of the labor force would have agreed to perform wage labor on the plantations. But once resident workers were forced off the estates and settled on land of their own, it was unlikely they would return.

Schemes to import indentured workers from Asia might have solved the labor shortage, but they were too few, too late. Likewise, an Anglican church that showed no interest in the spiritual welfare of the black population never posed a threat to those

[117] Scully, *Liberating the Family,* 59.
[118] Ibid., 76.

churches that really did appeal to the masses, particularly the Baptists. In the end, the majority of planters had trapped themselves in a downward spiral of debt by mismanagement on all fronts --political, economic, and cultural, and set the stage for escalating unrest that culminated in the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion and the imposition of direct rule from London.

EPILOGUE

The "mighty experiment" that abolitionists hoped could be used to launch an attack on American slavery was closely watched by all slave-holding societies, but few of them adopted the provisions of the British plan when they emancipated their own slaves. France and the Netherlands, however, did agree with the idea of paying compensation to slave holders.

Slavery had originally been abolished in the French colonies in 1794, following the revolution, but was reinstated by Napoleon in 1802. In 1848, when France abolished slavery for the second time, a commission proposed that 300 million francs be awarded, half of it in cash, and the balance as a 6-year apprenticeship. The government refused and settled on an immediate payment of 6 million francs with no apprenticeship.[1]

In 1855, the Dutch government proposed to pay slave owners in Surinam compensation based on the value of their slaves, while in the rest of the Netherlands Antilles, compensation was to be based on the age of the slaves. The thrifty Dutch planned to shift the cost onto the ex-slaves who would work for their masters for a year and repay the Dutch government the cost of their emancipation. The objection to this plan was that the freed slaves in Surinam could run next door to British Guiana where the slaves had been free for twenty years, and thus avoid repaying the government. After

[1] Kathleen Mary Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation: Jamaica and Barbados, 1823-1843* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 142.

procrastinating for eight years, in 1863, Dutch slave owners received 300 guilders per slave, about half their value, with no apprenticeship or repayment requirements.[2]

Unlike the French and the Dutch, the Spanish did institute a period of apprenticeship in Cuba. By 1860, Cuba was the world's largest sugar producer (with 25 percent of the market) and had an enslaved population of 370,000. The population failed to increase naturally, and by the mid-nineteenth century, the illegal slave trade had finally been cut off. Cuba imported some Chinese indentured laborers, and attempted to ameliorate slave conditions, but neither action had much effect. In 1868, small planters burdened with taxes revolted against the Spanish. The Ten Year War ended in 1878, and Spanish authorities freed all slaves who had fought on either side, and passed the Moret Law, which freed all children born after 1868 and all slaves over sixty years of age. In 1879, the government converted all remaining slaves into apprentices and bound them to their owners (who had to pay from one to three pesos per month to their workers) until 1888.

The Spanish government ended apprenticeship two years early, in 1886, after it proved nearly as problematic in Cuba as it had been in Jamaica.[3] In contrast to the Jamaican experience, however, Cuba's annual sugar production increased rapidly in the post-emancipation years. Between 1886 and 1892, fueled by increased demand from the U.S., output nearly doubled to over 1 million tons. The ability to handle this rapid increase in production resulted from mechanization and the centralization of processing.

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[2] Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation,* 142.
[3] Rebecca J. Scott, "Explaining Abolition: Contradiction, Adaptation, and Challenge in Cuban Slave Society, 1860-1886," in Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Frank Moya Pons, and Stanley L. Engerman, eds. *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 25-53.

Centralization, however, came at a price for small farmers who were forced to become simply suppliers of cane to the *centrales* rather than processors themselves.[4]

In Puerto Rico, where the number of slaves had fallen to 40,000--just 10 percent of the total population by 1860, the state instituted the practice of *libreta* (workbook system), which forced landless laborers and those without jobs to work on the plantations. In 1868, there was an uprising on the island that coincided with the rebellion in Cuba. The Spanish government passed laws calling for immediate abolition, in 1873, and the introduction of stricter vagrancy codes. Workers had to serve three-year apprenticeships by signing contracts with their former owners or the government. At the end of the apprenticeship, the Spanish government ignored planters' pleas for an extension of the *libreta* system and passed a new penal code that made vagrancy no longer a crime. As a result, the sugar industry declined disastrously and was replaced as an export crop by coffee.[5]

Brazil, in 1888, became the last country in the Western hemisphere to abolish slavery. The British government and abolitionists had pressured Brazil for over forty years to end slavery. Manumission in Brazil had always been easier than in the British colonies, and, by 1850, freed slaves constituted 50 percent of the total population. In 1871, the Brazilian government passed a "free-womb" law to free all future children born to enslaved women. This was followed, in 1885, by the passage of the Sexagenarian Law that freed all slaves aged 65 and over. It was obvious from these actions that slavery would gradually die out. This process was accelerated by a series of mass runaways

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[4] Rebecca J. Scott, "Labor Control in Cuba after Emancipation," in Malcolm Cross and Gad Heuman, eds., *Labour in the Caribbean from Emancipation to Independence* (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1988), 80-87.

[5] Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, "The End of Slavery and the End of Empire: Slave Emancipation in Cuba and Puerto Rico," *Slavery and Abolition,* 21, 2 (2000): 188-207.

between 1887-1888. In 1888, the remaining enslaved population (720,000) was freed under the terms of the Golden Law.[6] Planters demanded the equivalent of the 20 million pounds for their lost property that the British government had paid in compensation. The Golden Law granted neither compensation nor a transition period, but the planters were given increased powers of control over workers. These powers included draconian vagrancy laws, permission to establish "penal colonies" on plantations, and the right to maintain private police forces.[7]

The Brazilian government also turned to immigration not because of a shortage of labor, but in order to keep wages down.[8] Unlike the British colonies, Brazilian authorities decided against recruiting from Asia and turned to Europe instead. They also only recruited family units, wishing to avoid a large force of single males and hoping to benefit from cheap female and child labor. Between 1890 and 1900, over 1 million Europeans immigrated to Brazil, and in the first three decades of the twentieth century, another 2.3 million Europeans arrived with their passages paid and promises of jobs, housing, and land.[9]

The United States government decided against an apprenticeship period for ex-slaves, but put in place a Freedmen's Bureau that in many ways mimicked the magistracy in the British colonies. Both organizations were charged with acting to protect the interests of newly freed slaves, while ensuring that the emancipated laborers continued to work on the plantations or be subject to punishment specified in the draconian laws against vagrancy. Orphaned or abandoned minors, however, could be bound to an

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[6] David Baronov, *The Abolition of Slavery in Brazil: The 'Liberation' of Africans Through the Emancipation of Capital* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2000), 158-9.
[7] Ibid., 160-1.
[8] Barabov, *Abolition of Slavery in Brazil,* 163.
[9] Ibid., 164.

apprenticeship until they reached the age of twenty-one. Like the S.M.s, the agents of the Freedmen's Bureau were overworked and underpaid, and subjected to harassment and sometimes violence by a white population determined to maintain control over a newly freed black labor force. Unlike the British magistracy, however, the Freedmen's Bureau lasted only four years.[10]

On June 28, 1838, the Jamaican governor, Sir Lionel Smith, sent a request to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, asking for instructions "as to the disposal of the Special Magistrates after the 1st August next." To the request for instructions, Smith attached a "List of Gentlemen proposed by the governor to be retained as Stipendiary Magistrates in Jamaica, to be paid by the British Government." There were forty-two names on the list, sixteen of which had an "A" beside the year of their appointment. Smith added a footnote stating that, "Out of these 42 Magistrates the letter A denotes those who have strong claims by having been persecuted, or thwarted in their Duties by the Planters or the Public Press." Among those so designated, were S.M.s Baynes, Bourne, Daughtrey, and Hill.[11]

Lord Metcalfe, who replaced Smith in 1839, was not a supporter of the magistracy and suggested to the Colonial Office that the S.M.s be replaced by local magistrates as their positions became vacant.[12] In 1842, the Jamaican Assembly backed the governor and proposed abolishing the magistracy and using their salaries to fund education, after Parliament ended the education grant. A proposal that James Stephen

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[10] See Paul A. Cimbala, *Under the Guardianship of the Nation: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Reconstruction of Georgia, 1865-1870* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); William S. McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather: General O.O. Howard and the Freedmen* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1968); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988); and Jonathan M. Bryant, *How Curious a Land: Conflict and Change in Greene County, Georgia, 1850-1885* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).
[11] CO 137/231 Smith to Glenelg, No. 128, 28 June, 1838.
[12] CO 137/249 Metcalfe to Russell, No. 99, 29 July, 1840.

commented would "at once secure a favourite object and get rid of an Establishment they dislike."[13] The Colonial Office agreed to offer other "healthier and more lucrative positions" to qualified magistrates as they came open. The number of S.M.s was down to twenty-eight by 1845, and the detailed weekly reports that they filed were discontinued in 1847. When they were resumed in 1854, the reports were not as comprehensive. According to the Jamaican census of 1861, only six stipendiary magistrates and one stipendiary justice and member of the Privy Council (presumably Richard Hill) remained.[14]

It was not just their ability to obtain and retain sufficient labor that concerned Jamaican planters, but also the profitability of their estates. There was a crisis following the phasing out of sugar duties in 1846, when the reduced tariff and oversupply on the world market caused the price of sugar to plummet from 37s. to 22s. 6d. a cwt. Forty-eight West Indian merchant houses filed for bankruptcy and the Planters' Bank of Jamaica suspended cash payments. Plantations were sold for 20 percent of their value as planters unsuccessfully appealed to have the sugar duties reinstated.[15]

On December 18, 1846, the Jamaican Assembly sent a Memorial to Queen Victoria outlining some of their complaints against the British parliament, which they blamed for most of the island's problems:

> The establishment of Slavery was not our act, but that of the parent Government, the lands of Jamaica having been patented by your royal ancestors on the special condition that they should be cultivated by slaves for the promotion of the national wealth; and

[13] CO137/261 Metcalfe to Stanley, No. 42, 7 January, 1842. Quoted in Marlene Manderson-Jones, *Richard Hill of Jamaica, His Life and Times, 1795-1872* (Unpublished dissertation, University of the West Indies, 1973).
[14] B.W. Higman, ed. *The Jamaican Censuses of 1844 and 1861* (Mona: University of the West Indies, 1980).
[15] William A. Green, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 234.

> this policy was continued under sanction of British laws equally sacred as those under which any other class of your Majesty's subjects held their property. It is unnecessary for us here to enter into the history of the trade by which those slaves were procured; it is enough to say that, after having been most vigorously and profitably carried on for one hundred and fifty years by British ships, British merchants, and British capital, it was abolished by Act of Parliament in the year 1807. *This was the first check to the hitherto extending cultivation and prosperity of Jamaica.*[16]

The Memorial then stated that, immediately after the abolition of the slave trade, the House of Commons passed a bill requiring the registering of slaves, "professedly to prevent their illegal introduction…but covertly to pave the way for subsequent emancipation." These facts were basically true, but members of the Assembly went on to accuse the British government of destroying their former prosperity. As Secretary of State, Earl Grey, pointed out, "the former prosperity of Jamaica was always of a very precarious kind, and chequered by periods of severe distress. Even while the British Colonies enjoyed not only the monopoly of our market, but the unrestricted power of using slave-labour and carrying on the slave trade, the Planters of Jamaica were frequently compelled to make urgent applications to Parliament for relief; and their business was so hazardous, that, in spite of the great gains of some seasons, there were few who realized money by it in a series of years."[17]

While acknowledging the further blow dealt the planters by the phasing out of sugar duties beginning in 1846, Earl Grey blamed them for failing to establish a new system of social organization following emancipation, as quickly and efficiently as possible. The Jamaican Assembly had fought everything parliament had proposed for

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[16] Memorial of the House of Assembly to the Queen, of the 18 December, 1846. Quoted in Earl Grey, *The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration.* 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1853), 167-8.
[17] Grey to Russell, August 14, 1852. *Colonial Policy*, 169.

thirty years, and, as a result, while the Jamaican economy was in dire straits, the sugar colonies of Trinidad and Guiana (both Crown Colonies and not self-governing) were increasingly prosperous. Even the "old" sugar colony of Barbados increased its sugar production. The annual sugar exports from Barbados for the years 1844 to1846 averaged 23,306 hogsheads. Following the phasing out of sugar duties, average annual sugar exports from 1849 to 1851 rose to 35,703 hogsheads, an increase of 53 percent. By the end of the nineteenth century, annual production in Barbados had reached 50 thousand tons, while Jamaican production was a meager 20 thousand tons. Grey attributed Barbados's successful transition to free labor to the willingness of the plantocracy and the legislature to cooperate with the various governors of the island in adopting measures that were beneficial to the labor force and the whole community.[18]

In Jamaica there was no cooperation, but further unrest, as rumors circulated that there might be another rebellion. In July 1848, the archdeacon of the county of Cornwall wrote to the bishop that he had heard "a prevalent report that there was to be a rising of the peasantry…the groundwork of the whole matter is the belief of the peasantry that the United States of America are likely to take possession of this Island, and to reduce them to slavery."[19] The rumor originated in opinions expressed in some American papers that, because of the depressed state of Jamaica, it should be annexed, with Cuba, to the United States. This was not, of course, the first time that this had been proposed, but the previous circumstances were slightly different. Then (at the time of the American Revolution), it was Jamaican planters in a bid to rid themselves of what they saw as interference by the

[18] Grey, *Colonial Policy,* 196.
[19] Ibid., 179.

British parliament in their internal affairs, who suggested that the island become part of the United States.

Still believing that plantations were the bedrock of the West Indian economy, in 1854 Parliament passed the Encumbered Estates Act to facilitate the selling of indebted estates. Special courts were set up and, in Jamaica alone, 148 estates were sold, most of them purchased by London merchants.[20]

In 1863, sugar prices fell 21s. 7d. a cwt, their lowest in the nineteenth century. Wages also fell, while the cost of clothing and food rose sharply as a result of trade problems with America during the Civil War, and damage to provision grounds caused by two years of drought.[21] In 1865, the workers in the parish of St. Ann petitioned the Queen to rent them Crown land at very low rates. The Colonial Office, exhibiting little sympathy for their plight, advised the workers that their way to prosperity lay in laboring continuously on the plantations.[22] This lack of sensitivity on the part of authorities and the worsening economic conditions created the perfect atmosphere for an uprising. Native Baptists preachers, Paul Bogle and George William Gordon, encouraged the workers to protest. A crowd of about 400 marched to the Court House at Morant Bay, and when the *custos,* Baron von Ketelhodt, read the Riot Act, they stoned him and set the Court House on fire. Ketelhodt and some of the militia were beaten to death.

Governor Eyre brutally put down the rebellion. He called in the Maroons and sent to Barbados for troop reinforcements. Eighty-five people were killed without trial, a total of 354 were tried and executed, and another 600 were flogged, and 1,000 houses were destroyed. Bogle and Gordon (the latter had not been in Morant Bay at the time)

[20] Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 257.
[21] Ibid., 382.
[22] Ibid., 385.

were among those executed.[23] In an extraordinary move, Eyre appealed to the Assembly to abolish itself and agree to strong executive rule. The Assembly was divided on the question, but eventually concurred. The Morant Bay rebellion gave the Colonial Office the excuse it had been looking for, and Jamaica became a Crown colony. It had taken twenty-seven years and a bloody uprising to achieve the type of government that Henry Taylor of the Colonial Office had advocated for all colonies to guard against abuse.

In the years between the Morant Bay rebellion and the end of the nineteenth century, there was a shift in Jamaican trade that again impacted the peasant population. In the northeastern parishes of St. Mary, St. Thomas-in-the-East, and Portland, bananas became the dominant crop. Thousands of peasant growers in these parishes supplied 80 percent of the bananas exported to the United States, and they thrived. Their prosperity did not last, however, as the banana trade attracted the attention of an entrepreneur from Cape Cod, Captain Lorenzo D. Baker, who owned a fishing fleet. Baker believed he was on a "divine, evangelical mission" to move to Jamaica, and that, as he became wealthy in the banana trade it was proof of his "doing God's work."[24]

Baker's company, Boston Fruit, merged in 1899 with a company in Central America owned by another American, Minor Cooper Keith, and became United Fruit. Baker secured other sources of supply in Costa Rica, enabling him to monopolize the banana trade. He bought up or leased estates and rented land to peasant growers who, in a very short time, were unable to afford the rising rents. Within ten years, Baker managed to force most of his competition out of business by manipulating prices. This monopoly of course depressed prices paid to growers. To aid the small growers, colonial

[23] Green, *British Slave Emancipation,* 391.
[24] Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 350.

authorities helped them set up a collective to make them independent of United Fruit. United was not about to accept any competition no matter how small, and it eventually forced the collective to stop shipping bananas to England, and market them all through Baker's conglomerate.[25] Historian Thomas Holt argues that what this proved to the workers was that they could no longer subsist on their small plots, and chronic unemployment left them no bargaining power with the estate owners. Large numbers of Jamaican men emigrated to Panama to work on the construction of railroads and the canal.[26]

The years from 1866 to 1900 saw a reorganization of land ownership. Squatting was so widespread that historian Veront Satchell characterized it as "almost an institution…not confined to the small settlers and laboring population, but indulged in by members of the upper classes."[27] Squatters were ejected when the government decided to repossess the land and pass laws to encourage foreign investment in agriculture. To this end, the government repaired roads and bridges and extended the railway. The result was that small farmers lost their leases, most of the prime arable land was concentrated in the hands of large landowners or conglomerates, and there was a revival of the plantation economy at the expense of small settlers.[28]

One hundred years after full freedom, in 1938, there were strikes and serious labor riots on the docks. At a new central sugar mill owned by British conglomerate Tate and Lyle, police opened fire on a crowd that attacked the estate. There was a series of

[25] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 361.
[26] Ibid., 379.
[27] Veront M. Satchell, *From Plots to Plantations: Land Transactions in Jamaica, 1866-1900* (Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies), 152.
[28] Ibid., 155.

hunger marches and more demonstrators were killed. The 1938 labor riots produced two future Jamaican leaders, cousins, Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante.

In 1944, Jamaicans won universal adult suffrage and a national legislature (for the first time since 1865), and on August 6, 1962, Jamaica gained its independence.[29] Coincidentally, it had taken just over a hundred years for the former slaves to gain all their civil rights, just as the Civil Rights Movement in the United States resulted in the signing of the Voting Rights Act a century after emancipation.

For thirty-five years after independence, Jamaicans no longer celebrated Emancipation Day on August 1. However, in 1997, the tradition was revived with a huge celebration in front of the Kings' House in Spanish Town, the former home of the governors and the site of the 1838 Emancipation Proclamation.[30] Both emancipation and independence are now given equal prominence and their own public holidays.

[29] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom,* 399.
[30] I was fortunate enough to attend these celebrations as I was spending that summer in the Spanish Town archives.

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