

## PART 2

### The enslaved people

#### Chapter 3 An interregnum: the William Coker years (1761-1764)

*'... for most assuredly Negroes are the sinews of an estate ...'*  
William Coker, October 1762 <sup>1</sup>

With William Coker's arrival in Nevis a period began when close attention was, once again, paid to the running of Mountravers. For its inhabitants this brought many changes.

In addition to those who had survived since 1734, in 1761 another 89 new people are known to have lived on the estate. Their stories are told, as well as those of seven children born on Mountravers during Coker's managership and of ten new Africans whom he purchased in 1762. Of these 106 individuals, only one lived long enough to see slavery being abolished.



By the 1760s as many a third of all sugar plantations in the British West Indies belonged to absentee owners.<sup>2</sup> Some were managed by able men with energy and drive, but Mountravers had gone stale after almost thirty years of absentee ownership. The land had become neglected and the enslaved people who worked it were in poor shape. Those who had survived since 1734 had buried many of their friends and relatives, but children had also been born on the plantation and although fewer slaving ships called at Nevis, there were still new arrivals. A great number had been imported in the year 1755.<sup>3</sup> However, the last people bought for Mountravers probably were those purchased in the late 1740s during John Frederick Pinney's second visit to Nevis.

Year in, year out, the workers had harvested the cane and made sugar and rum. Several hurricanes had struck Nevis, and more than once they had to rebuild their houses and restore their gardens. They had worked under a succession of overseers and undoubtedly greeted the arrival of William Coker and Thomas Arthurton with mixed emotions.

While Thomas Arthurton took on the job of overseer at Mountravers, Coker's first task was to inspect Pinney's and Edward Jesup's properties. He had powers of attorney from both men (much to his dissatisfaction, Coker shared Pinney's with old Mr Browne),<sup>4</sup> and he set out to assess the state of the plantations. The 'blast' had attacked the canes in both estates but luckily not as badly as elsewhere in the island. Some planters lost their whole crop.<sup>5</sup> Coker saw that Pinney's properties had 'suffered neglect and

<sup>1</sup> PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 21 October 1762

<sup>2</sup> Ward, JR *British West Indian Slavery* p13

<sup>3</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 70 pp275-77

<sup>4</sup> PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 12 March 1761

<sup>5</sup> PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Edward Jesup, Writtle Park, to JF Pinney, 29 July 1761

mismanagement' and realised that the Brownes had left Mountravers in a worse state than anticipated.<sup>6</sup> To set everything right would require much energy on Coker's part, substantial financial investment on Pinney's and a lot of hard graft by the plantation workers.

Pinney was still undecided what to do with Choppin's, his estate in the parish of St George Gingerland. Should he sell it, or rent it out? For the time being it was left unworked. Pinney's other property, the small, 40-acre Mountain plantation in the parish of St John Figtree, Coker rented out to James Brodbelt<sup>7</sup> and concentrated his activities on Mountravers.

He set about to revitalise the run-down enterprise. He proposed to start a flock of sheep and put forward a revised plan of planting. But his priority was to acquire fresh workers. The plantation lacked skilled tradesmen - coopers, masons and carpenters - and many people were in a poor state of health. To the sick, he allotted extra food and fed them rice and honey<sup>8</sup> and administered the all-purpose cure, castor oil,<sup>9</sup> but held back on ordering plantation supplies until Pinney had endorsed the expenditure.<sup>10</sup> He realised that he could not initiate any substantial changes until he had complete control. This happened in due course when Pinney gave instructions to sack both Brownes: the father, the attorney, and the son, the manager. Coker set about ordering a multitude of 'sundries wanted on the estate' – everything from 'a strong dung cart' to sugar bags, chains for mules, tallow, thread, tools, and three pairs of cart wheels strong enough to withstand the rocky roads.<sup>11</sup>

When Coker arrived in mid-May 1761, 136 people lived on Mountravers. They represented about 1.6 per cent of the total enslaved population in Nevis.<sup>12</sup> Of those registered by James Browne in 1734, just under a third survived; others had either been bought or born in the intervening years.<sup>13</sup> A relatively large number from two particular groups had made it to 1761: three of those four children who had been born on the plantation in 1734 and nine of the twenty individuals who had previously belonged to Mrs Broom. Among the Broom people, a high proportion of women had survived, seven out of nine.<sup>14</sup> This supports other historians' research; Michael Craton, for instance, found that enslaved women lived at least five per cent longer than men.<sup>15</sup> Of those who disappeared from the plantation, a few may have managed to escape but it is highly unlikely that any were sold - unless they were sold into exile abroad because Browne found managing them too difficult. The overwhelming majority had died, and John Frederick Pinney was shocked to find that, despite the purchases and the births, since the 1730s the overall number had declined. He blamed the Brownes. According to him, the losses 'happened within these few years';<sup>16</sup> presumably basing his knowledge on inventories which the Brownes would have sent him occasionally but which no longer exist. Certainly between 1755 and 1761 the number had decreased by eight.

<sup>6</sup> PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Edward Jesup, London, to JF Pinney, 1 August 1761

<sup>7</sup> PP, AB 15 William Coker's a/c

<sup>8</sup> PP, WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney

<sup>9</sup> PP, AB 15 William Coker's a/c

<sup>10</sup> PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: William Withers, London, to JF Pinney, 13 September 1761

<sup>11</sup> PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 23 July 1761, and LB 3: An Invoice of Goods order'd by Mr Coker 1763

<sup>12</sup> In 1756, 1,058 whites lived in Nevis and 8,380 enslaved people (Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 70 pp275-77).

<sup>13</sup> 22 men and 24 women had survived since 1734 and were alive in 1761 and beyond. They represented 31.7 per cent of the 146 people registered.

<sup>14</sup> Broom's people probably consisted of 11 males and 9 females. Orange may have been male or female; Cancoo probably was male.

<sup>15</sup> Craton, Michael *Empire Enslavement and Freedom* p207

<sup>16</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney, Bettiscombe, to Wm Coker, 19 November 1761

Under the Brownes' management the estate had also lost animals. In 1761, for instance, a steer and two new mules perished.<sup>17</sup> 14 cattle and 29 mules remained on the plantation<sup>18</sup> but some of the mules were 'very old & low' and, although Coker believed that they would not give 'much more service', he was determined 'to get them into as good state as to make them hold out as long as possible.'<sup>19</sup> As it turned out, the mules had to last for another three years.

Carefully husbanding his employer's money, in his first year Coker did not call in any doctors but in the following year the system of medical care changed. Instead of paying a doctor for each visit, John Frederick Pinney wanted to employ a doctor on an annual sum. This scheme was more expensive but the new arrangement guaranteed that there was medical care when needed; managers would not be tempted to save money by delaying requests for doctor's assistance. Pinney had taken the decision reluctantly but 'the fatal reduction' of his people had driven him to it.<sup>20</sup> The timing was propitious; in the following year, when Coker engaged Dr Smith,<sup>21</sup> several people on Mountravers suffered from the smallpox. Once again, the outbreak was island-wide and in April 1762 the Nevis Council gave one man, John Brodbelt, the authority 'to remove all negroes and other slaves infected with the smallpox to a pest house provided for the purpose.' This quarantine was mandatory; non-compliant owners could expect fines of N£20 for every person they sought to conceal. Several planters refused or neglected to hand over their people - among them Coker.<sup>22</sup> He did not remove anyone from Mountravers and at the beginning of June there were 'five negroes in the smallpox'. Africans knew about inoculations against smallpox<sup>23</sup> and on some estates they may have carried them out, but it appears that on Mountravers this was not the case because during the outbreak Coker considered inoculating people and asked Pinney for guidance<sup>24</sup> - he would not have done so had the plantation people already undertaken the procedure themselves. While Coker was awaiting his employer's orders, a further seven caught the smallpox 'in the natural way'. One young woman, Ducks Jenny, died.<sup>25</sup> Others were left disfigured, their faces forever bearing the scars.

<sup>17</sup> PP, WI Box 3: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 28 July 1761

<sup>18</sup> PP, Cat 3 Domestic Box 1756-1762: 'Copy of Note sent to Mr Daniel at Beaminster to pay Mr Russell for Mr Browne of Frampton, 21 July 1762'

<sup>19</sup> PP, WI Box 3: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 28 July 1761, including a list of 'Negroes, Mules & Cattle'.

<sup>20</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 5 October 1761

<sup>21</sup> PP, AB 17 Nevis Cash a/c

<sup>22</sup> UKNA, CO 186/4: 24 April 1762

The N before the Pound sign indicates that this was Nevis currency, as opposed to Sterling. In 1762, N£20 was worth about £12 Sterling (£12).

<sup>23</sup> The procedure of inoculation with small doses of smallpox was known in Africa and China, where it had been used for centuries, and was introduced in England in 1721 by the wife of the British ambassador to Turkey, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Inoculations with smallpox matter were very successful. In Maidstone, for instance, deaths from smallpox declined from 16.3 per cent of total deaths in the period 1740 to 1751 to 1.3 per cent in the period 1788 to 1789 (Dawson, Ian and Ian Coulson (eds) *Medicine & Health through Time* p116).

The term vaccination (from Latin *vacca*, the cow) was not introduced until Jenner's discovery that *cowpox* protected against *smallpox* but the different processes of protecting against smallpox are often confused. Barbara Bush, for instance, wrote that 'smallpox vaccine' had been administered in parts of Africa before its discovery by Europeans (*Slave Women in Caribbean Society* p155, citing Kenneth Kiple *The Caribbean Slave, a Biological History* Cambridge University Press, New York 1984).

Edward Jenner (1749-1823), a country doctor who lived in Berkeley in Gloucestershire, discovered a procedure that was safer and more successful than using smallpox matter. He found that dairy maids were protected from smallpox by the cowpox virus and that, when the cowpox virus was used as a vaccine, it produced human antibodies which were effective against smallpox (Dawson, Ian and Ian Coulson (eds) *Medicine & Health through Time* p116).

In 1801 Jenner's vaccination was introduced in Jamaica (Higman, BW *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica* p115); by 1803 doctors were using his technique in America, where President Thomas Jefferson championed the cause, and by 1805 Napoleon had all his troops vaccinated. Dr Collins's instructions for planters to use smallpox matter, were, therefore, old-fashioned when they were first published in 1803, although his advice may, possibly, have been based on the assumption that cowpox matter was not readily available in the colonies (Collins, Dr 'A Professional Planter').

<sup>24</sup> PP, MSS in Red Boxes, Box 3B: Wm Coker, Nevis to JF Pinney, 6 June 1762

<sup>25</sup> PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 21 October 1762

Inoculation had been introduced in England in 1721<sup>26</sup> and in the West Indies in the following years. The procedure spread slowly at first but in the 1760s and 1770s became general practice on sugar estates,<sup>27</sup> and when John Frederick Pinney learnt of the smallpox outbreak, he issued 'a standing rule' that in future Coker was to inoculate as soon as he thought proper. Accordingly, everyone on the estate was inoculated in a relatively simple manner. The process started with collecting pocky matter from an infected person by drawing a cotton thread through the patient's ripe pustules. A one-inch piece of this thread was then deposited into a light incision which had been made in the arm above the elbow of a healthy person. This wound was covered with sticky material, and if the inoculation had taken, three to four days later it became inflamed and a small pimple appeared. Fever followed at about the ninth day and eruptions on the twelfth, or earlier. If these symptoms failed to appear it meant the person had had the smallpox already.<sup>28</sup> According to John Frederick Pinney, during the waiting period the inoculated people should be kept warm enough to encourage the fever but not too hot 'for by known experience it has been found erroneous and detrimental to the patients health and life.'<sup>29</sup>

Some planters refused to have their people inoculated because they lost their labour for a number of days, while others feared they would lose those that had been treated.<sup>30</sup> After all, the procedure was not without risk. Some individuals died from the small dose of pocky matter they had received, and this probably was the reason why Coker asked Pinney's advice (which amounted to asking his permission) and why he chose not to inoculate his own two people - the 'house wench and boy'. By then 'the distemper' had almost expired on the estate and in the island, and for the time being Coker 'laid aside all thoughts' of inoculating any more people.<sup>31</sup> While the urbane Pinney supported inoculations, Coker was among the doubters and reluctant to expose his personal servants to the dangers of the procedure although it meant, of course, that during the next smallpox outbreak they remained unprotected.

Inoculations were still controversial; in England some people refused them,<sup>32</sup> and in Norfolk, Virginia, their introduction led to riots. This vehement opposition resulted in the passing of a law which practically stopped the procedure in that colony<sup>33</sup> but enslaved people everywhere were expected to submit to whatever medical procedure their masters thought best – whether harmful or healing.

On Mountravers the smallpox outbreak did not lead to a significant reduction in numbers, but Pinney had already accepted Coker's assessment that the plantation was shorthanded. He was willing to spend money on new additions. Purchases were to be financed mostly from the sale of rum in the island and the rent collected from Pinney's tenants in the Charlestown, and only if there was a shortfall Coker was to draw on Pinney for the remainder.

Pinney pointed out that he did not want any 'French Negroes'; he had heard of their 'bad character'.<sup>34</sup> French colonies operated under the Code Noir, legislation that dealt specifically with enslaved people. It gave protection and rights unheard of in British colonies – for instance, marriage was actively encouraged and families were not split up through sales - <sup>35</sup> but what Pinney saw as the French Negroes' 'bad character' probably meant that he considered them spoilt and too demanding. He need not have worried

<sup>26</sup> Dawson, Ian and Ian Coulson (eds) *Medicine & Health through Time* p116

<sup>27</sup> Ward, JR *British West Indian Slavery* p164

<sup>28</sup> Collins, Dr 'A Professional Planter' p274

<sup>29</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Coker, 4 August 1762

<sup>30</sup> Aberystwyth Bodrhyddan MSS 2: John Robinson to Catherine Stapleton, 23 February 1774

<sup>31</sup> PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 21 October 1762

<sup>32</sup> Dawson, Ian and Ian Coulson (eds) *Medicine & Health through Time* p116

<sup>33</sup> Ranlet, Philip 'The British, Slaves, and Smallpox in Revolutionary America' in *Journal of Negro History* Vol 84 No 3 p218

<sup>34</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney, Bettiscombe, to Coker, Nevis, 9 April 1762

<sup>35</sup> Bush, Barbara *Slave Women in Caribbean Society* p28

because Coker had already decided that he wanted to buy Africans: 'I shall now begin to look out for Guinea Men in order to purchase a few negroes at a time, which I think a better method than to buy 15 or 20 at once.'<sup>36</sup> Coker wanted to pick them individually, rather than buy a job lot. It appears that he referred to a method of sale called the scramble in which a buyer would make a dash and grab a group of likely-looking captives, claiming them as his. In their haste buyers could easily overlook flaws or injuries. However, Coker may also have shied away from the risk associated with suddenly introducing a large number of people into the resident plantation population. Africans bought fresh from a slaver had to be seasoned first; they had to be integrated with those already settled. Until they were, they could upset any stability he might have achieved.

### **Seasoning the newcomers**

Seasoning was when the process of integration and assimilation was supposed to happen but, as Paul Lovejoy wrote, 'In practice, slavery involved a give-and-take between master and slave over how far the slave could be pushed and how much the slave could resist exploitation.'<sup>37</sup> From the day new people set foot on a plantation their relationships with their masters begun to be defined and, recognising this and wanting to get off to a good start, slaveholders attempted to attach reluctant newcomers by allowing them 'for some time a greater share of indulgence in smaller matters than others'.<sup>38</sup> They thereby created a divide-and-rule situation between new arrivals vis-à-vis existing inhabitants. Creoles added to this division by calling the recent arrivals 'saltwater negroes', 'bassals' or 'guinea birds'. They were, however, all united when they dismissed newly arrived white people as 'saltwater bakkro'.

To introduce the newcomers to the plantation regime, planters used those who had accepted their enslavement: mature and faithful servants who were past productive labour. These individuals could be trusted to impart values and principles that their owners endorsed. If a substantial consignment of new Africans was bought, there had to be a sufficient number of what planters considered reliable individuals to guide and instruct the latest arrivals. John Frederick Pinney recognised this when he wrote to Coker that 'It is very difficult to season a large lot of slaves without the assistance of your most sensible negroes.' He recommended, therefore, to 'have them parcelled out to such as you can most depend upon' and suggested that 'Old Mary at the Mountain may take a couple under her care.'<sup>39</sup> Old Mary's role was to train the newcomers so that they accommodated themselves to the needs of the plantation.

The first task was to integrate the young Africans. Acting as their culture guide, people like Old Mary would teach them the kind of social skills which would allow them to negotiate relationships with their fellow slaves as well as the white workers. Seasoning included the process whereby the Africans became socialised and integrated into the plantation community. They did so by taking part in communal activities, in work but also in entertainment such as dancing and drumming. As Edward Kamau Brathwaite wrote, 'from this would follow identification with the group ... and with local symbols of authority – the proprietor, the overseer, the driver, the obeah-man – according to temperament and circumstance.'<sup>40</sup>

Among the practical things which newcomers had to attend was to establish their own gardens and allotments. In St Croix it was said that new arrivals had to be given food for a year until they could harvest

<sup>36</sup> PP, LB 3: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 27 September 1762

<sup>37</sup> Lovejoy, Paul E 'Fugitive Slaves: Resistance to Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate' in Gary Y Okihio (ed) *In Resistance* p72

<sup>38</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p169

<sup>39</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney, Bettiscombe, to Wm Coker, 13 October 1762

<sup>40</sup> Brathwaite, EK *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica* p298

from their own provision ground,<sup>41</sup> and a similar length of time would have applied in Nevis. But in their second year they still needed much support, and John Frederick Pinney recognised this when he warned that ‘... there is as much danger of losing new negroes in the second year as in the first, often owing to our supposing them able to shift for themselves sooner than they really are.’<sup>42</sup>

Seasoning was as much about the new arrivals getting accustomed to the climate, their fellow workers and the ins and outs of life on the plantation as it was about getting them used to plantation work and, by allowing them a period of adjustment, planters protected their investments. Coker knew this and envisaged a gradual progress from light to the hardest kind of work. He confirmed that ‘it will of course be a few years before they will be able to go thro’ the extreme drudgery of plantation slavery.’<sup>43</sup> These ‘few years’ could have lasted as long as six or seven years, depending on how old the newcomers were when purchased. One planter believed that, if children were bought between the ages of 12 and 15, they would be fully seasoned by the age of 19 and ‘as handy as them that is born in the country’.<sup>44</sup>

Seasoning on Caribbean sugar estates is usually understood to have lasted from as little as one to as long as five years but generally it appears to have meant a period of around three years.<sup>45</sup> An arbitrary length of time, this would have been elastic and subject to several factors: how old the Africans were when purchased, what work needed to be done and who else was available to do it when they were first put to work. Three years was also the usual length for contracts of employment for overseers and for some apprentices in trades, and this may have been the foundation for the African’s period of preparation and adaptation.

### **Army conscripts**

Initially John Frederick Pinney wanted Coker ‘to take the first and earliest opportunity’ of buying ten new Africans,<sup>46</sup> but within a few months he changed his mind, wanting twenty, and soon after instructing Coker to purchase twenty, he changed his mind once more, and Coker had to acknowledge his instructions not to purchase any more Africans until the following year. And yet, despite the uncertainties and the shortage of good workers Coker complied with a call-up from the Nevis Council.

At this particular time slaveholders were required to provide ‘able-bodied negro slaves’ for conscription into the army. They were to take part in a military expedition against Martinique. Britain was at war with France, Martinique was considered a lucrative prize and, in order to head off their French competitors, it was in the interests of the planters that the island came under British rule. Accordingly the Nevis Council decided on 5 January 1762 to support the war effort by dispatching a number of enslaved people to join Major General Monckton’s forces.<sup>47</sup> Refusal to submit workers to public ventures attracted fines and

<sup>41</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p117

<sup>42</sup> PN 218, quoting JPP LB 1765-1767 f10: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 15 October 1762

<sup>43</sup> PP, WI Box D: William Coker to JF Pinney, 21 October 1762

<sup>44</sup> Harvard Stapleton MSS: David Stalker to Sir William Stapleton, 5 June 1730

<sup>45</sup> Craton, Michael *Empire Enslavement and Freedom* p152; S Lambert (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers Vol 71* Dr Robert Thomas’s evidence; also David Barry Gaspar ‘Slave Importation, Runaways, and Compensation in Antigua 1720-1729’, citing Robert Robertson *A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London*, J Wilford, London 1730, in Joseph E Inikori and Stanley L Engerman (eds) *The Atlantic Slave Trade* p312

<sup>46</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 5 October 1761; also WI Box D: JF Pinney to Coker, 19 November 1761

<sup>47</sup> NHCS, RG 2.1 Extract from Minutes

Other islands also supported Monckton’s forces. The Assembly in Barbados was requested to send cattle but, unable to supply them, sent enslaved people instead. Anyone who owned fewer than thirty people did not have to supply any; those who held more were obliged to make available one person for each 30, and one extra person for every hundred. Planters had to equip their people with ‘a backed bill, a hoe fixed, a basket; and clothed with a good jacket, a pair of trousers and a hat or Monmouth cap’. For each person required but not supplied planters were fined S£20. In total, Barbados made available 600 enslaved people and Antigua 300

Coker hired out two unnamed men from Mountravers; the 'Negro coats' he ordered from a white women on the neighbouring plantation <sup>48</sup> almost certainly were to equip these 'volunteers'. After fulfilling their military service, the two men returned to Mountravers and Coker accounted for N£32:8:0 'from the treasurer for the hire and equipment of two negroes that went to assist the Army in the reduction of Martinico.' The 'Kings Allowance' was paid at N2s3d a day per man for 78 days and came to N£17:11:0; the remainder covered the equipment.<sup>49</sup> To get a sense of what lay behind Coker's entry in the account book and what the men experienced one has to turn to the official dispatches from the Commander-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands Station, Rear Admiral George Rodney.

In December Rodney was lying off Barbados. Monckton's forces joined from North America and together they moved to Martinique. They arrived on 7 January 1762; the conscripts from Nevis must, therefore, have made their way separately. They probably arrived a few days afterwards but still in time to play their part in the actions that led to the surrender by the French in mid-February.<sup>50</sup>

Until 24 January the army was busily setting up their positions on the mountains near Morne Tortoson. They erected batteries and mounted canons which seamen drew up from the ships, and it is likely that the conscripts shared the heavy physical work of constructing the batteries and hauling the canon.

The British attack began at day break on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Monckton's army division achieved the vital first victory. Although under fire, his troops advanced so rapidly and tenaciously that the French abandoned their defences, and by eight o'clock in the morning Monckton's men were in possession of all the fortifications on Morne Tortoson, 'a port of prodigious strength, and which, if properly defended, must have cost many men.' The victory was all Monckton's; two other army divisions, having mistaken their routes, arrived too late to 'Pertake (sic) of the Glory of the day.'

Possession of Morne Tortoson gave the British forces command of the town of Fort Royal but the French were still threatening from Morne Garnie and the Citadel, and consequently more batteries had to be erected. Rodney granted Monckton's army the assistance of seamen who were, as Rodney put it, 'employed on the severe service of drawing cannon.' Monckton's men and the sailors, 'whose number seldom consisted of less than 1000 men', worked day and night. Over a distance of almost two miles they pulled cannons up extremely steep hills. Despite 'a hot fire from the enemy ... they got up twenty 24-pounders, three 13-inch mortars, and twenty Howitzers' and all the heavy ammunition. But after the men had struggled so long and so hard they found their shot fell short of the enemy. To solve the problem, in one night they hauled up the guns from Rodney's ship - powerful 32-pounders that could fire into the French lines. Having the right canons in place allowed the British forces to take Morne Garnie, 'which the enemy quitted with such precipitation that they left behind them very large magazines and their mortars and cannon unspiked.' The intact French weaponry was immediately turned against the Citadel and with the 32-pounders from the ships 'greatly contributed towards the reduction of that important place.'<sup>51</sup>

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(Pitman, Frank Wesley 'Slavery on British West Indies Plantations in the Eighteenth Century' in *The Journal of Negro History* Vol 11 No 4 (October 1926) p598, citing CO 152/46 Gov Pinfold to Pitt, Barbados, 15 November 1761; Kate Hotblack *Chatham's Colonial Policy* p64).

<sup>48</sup> PP, Misc Vols 3 AB 3: 12 January 1762

<sup>49</sup> On 3 March 1762 it was reported to the Council that Monckton was expected to come to Nevis soon to discharge the hire for the Negroes sent to Martinique (UKNA, CO 186/4); Coker accounted for the hire of the men on 2 June 1762, 24 July 1762 and 22 November 1762 (PP, AB 15 William Coker's a/c and WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney 1761 and 1762).

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.3876>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.staffordpastrack.org.uk/exhibit/atsea/anson-letter-martinique.htm>

Rodney was very impressed by the alacrity of the seamen, reporting that it 'would be incredible to most people if they saw the country and roads through which they [the canons] were drawn', but in this dispatch he did not mention the enslaved conscripts from Nevis who 'went to assist the Army in the reduction of Martinico.' Had it not been for Coker's entry in the account book, their contribution to the British cause would have gone unrecognised. It has to be remembered, though, that the men recruited to go to Martinique were not unique; they were soon followed by another 'detachment of negroes' which the Earl of Albermarle requested.<sup>52</sup> This time no one from Mountravers was dispatched.

The records do not reveal how the men were chosen, or whether they volunteered for this short-term military service, but being called up probably was a popular option: the men had an opportunity to escape plantation work, to travel to other parts of the Caribbean and, although subject to military discipline, they could enjoy a certain amount of personal freedom. It is not known how the conscripts from Mountravers and the other men from Nevis fared and whether they sustained any injuries but returning to the daily grind of the plantation routines must have been difficult for them. Some said that 'A negro is never of any use in the plantation after they (sic) have carried guns',<sup>53</sup> and returning to work on Mountravers could only have added to whatever disaffection the men may have felt previously. After all, in Martinique they had experienced excitement and comradeship, and they had worked alongside people from different Caribbean islands and from different nations. And they had been on the winning side. On their return they may well have been fêted as heroes but, as it turned out, all their efforts were in vain. In the following year the Treaty of Paris concluded the Seven Years War and, in exchange for parts of Canada, Martinique was returned to the French. But Britain also gained islands - St Vincent, Dominica, Grenada and Tobago – and many settlers from Nevis went there in search of new opportunities. The end of the war was welcomed by all in Nevis, except for one man: Robert Huggins, employed as a watch at the lookout on Saddle Hill, had his pay reduced.<sup>54</sup>



### ***Coker's management***

Coker settled down and got to grips with managing the plantation. His employer provided him with more instructions. Although since the seventeenth century some foodstuffs had been grown on the old Proctor plantation,<sup>55</sup> John Frederick Pinney stopped this practice. He was specific about not wanting potatoes, corn or provisions planted on his estates; instead, produce such as corn, beans, peas, as well as herrings should all be sent from England.<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, he dispatched 'kiln dried beans', peas, oats, and suchlike.<sup>57</sup>

John Frederick Pinney also shipped lime from Bristol which was intended for the Gingerland property.<sup>58</sup> He had decided to rent it out, but first the plantation infrastructure needed to be improved. He wanted a

<sup>52</sup> UKNA, CO 186/4: 3 March 1762

<sup>53</sup> Buckley, Roger Norman *Slaves in Red Coats* p38, citing CO 318/16: Milne to King, 6 November 1798

<sup>54</sup> NHCS, RG 2.1 Extract from Minutes, and UKNA, CO 186/4: 12 June 1763

<sup>55</sup> PP, WI Box A: Mary Travers to Azariah Pinney, 31 May 1701

<sup>56</sup> PP, LB 3: Instructions by John Frederick Pinney to Aeneas Shaw and William Coker, undated

<sup>57</sup> PP, WI Second 'Damaged or Fragile Box': Goods shipped to Nevis, sent to Wm Coker on account of John Frederick Pinney per *Nevis Planter*, 8 January 1762

<sup>58</sup> PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: James Laroche, Bristol, to JF Pinney, 3 October 1761, and 8 January 1762

The lime sent from Bristol caused a dispute between John Frederick Pinney and Captain Beach which was indicative of the breakdown in communications that could happen between the various parties. Pinney accused Captain Beach of neglecting to land lime at Indian Castle but shortly before William Coker's arrival Browne had sent instructions to the captain to land the lime at the Pond, at the bottom of Mountravers. Thomas Lucas in London joined in Beach's defence, saying that the charges were unfair and



new sugar factory erected at Choppins so that the produce from the upper part of Choppins, from Huggins's land and from Cressey's, could be taken there.<sup>59</sup> In his instructions he demonstrated a surprisingly detailed knowledge of what was kept on his properties: one set of mill cases was to be left at Choppins, and another complete set was to be brought from Choppins lower work to St Thomas Lowland, to be fitted up and erected at Sharloe's.<sup>60</sup> Coker engaged the carpenter John Bowrin to repair a store at Gingerland<sup>61</sup> but progress was slow. By September 1762 the building of the new sugar work had not yet begun. Some delays were caused by Coker having to order more materials from England, including a thousand tiles 'for curbing of coppers'.<sup>62</sup>

All the equipment and the building materials intended for the Gingerland property would have been landed at the harbour at Indian Castle. Everything had to be unloaded and many men but also women would have carried and hauled the items to the plantation. Their work, however, was only temporary. As yet Coker did not have enough people to commit to Gingerland on a permanent basis. As he pointed out to Pinney, 'tis impossible to make anything of Choppins estate to your advantage till you have added a considerable number of slaves to your present gang ...'<sup>63</sup>

As soon as Coker and Arthurton started work on Mountravers, Henry Jefford, the distiller, left, and Arthurton, initially employed as overseer, took over his duties. Coker engaged a local man, William Vaughan, as boiling house watch and overseer, and Vaughan was succeeded by Richard Gurley. But generally the turnover of white employees was not particularly high, suggesting that the men got on well with the work in hand and got on well with each other.

Coker, however, was struggling to maintain discipline among the plantation workers, especially during his first two years. An incident took place that required the constable's attention and several people made off. Between May 1761 and December 1764 seven documented incidents of absconding took place, with some people gone for long periods. Coker shelled out five relatively high rewards for capturing fugitives; payments ranged from N7s6d to N£3:6:0. He always expected them to return or be returned because he included them in the second inventory of enslaved people which he drew up for his employer.

The known runners were almost all men - workers Coker could ill afford to lose for any length of time. He was still short of labour. Since his arrival in the previous year, the number of people on the plantation had increased by six but this increase was due to the arrival of ten African children he had purchased. They were still undergoing seasoning. Others were unproductive because of illness or disability. Coker had noted on both his lists those he considered 'useless' and Pinney addressed these people in a 'PS', stating that, so as to avoid paying public taxes on them, old men and women who were of no further service should 'have their freedom'. However, their freedom was only freedom from profitable, productive work; they were still expected to contribute to the running of the plantation by performing useful tasks: seasoning new arrivals, running errands, minding children, carrying food and water to the people in the fields, looking after fowl, or collecting rotten vegetation for composting<sup>64</sup> – there was always something to do on the plantation and another pair of hands always came in handy. Pinney asked that they carried on

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that Captain Beach was undoubtedly honest and obliging (WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Capt John Beach to JF Pinney, 29 June 1761 and Thomas Lucas to JF Pinney, 29 July 1761).

<sup>59</sup> PP, LB 3: Instructions by John Frederick Pinney to Aeneas Shaw and William Coker, undated

<sup>60</sup> PP, WI Box D: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 19 November 1761

<sup>61</sup> PP, AB 15 William Coker's a/c

<sup>62</sup> PP, LB 3: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 27 September 1762

<sup>63</sup> PP WI Box D: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 21 October 1762

<sup>64</sup> Aberystwyth Bodrhyddan MSS 2: John Robinson to Catherine Stapleton, 23 February 1774

living on the estate and that they be given their usual allowances of provisions and clothing.<sup>65</sup> In effect, they were retired, with housing and other essentials provided, but until they died they remained enslaved and were not legally enfranchised.

The letter outlining this, written in October 1762, was the last Coker received from his employer. Pinney died before Coker's renewed plea for more workers had reached him, but once John Pretor was in charge, instructions soon followed 'to purchase no more negroes, without an absolute necessity ...'<sup>66</sup> The estates were deeply in debt.<sup>67</sup> Accordingly, Coker made no further acquisitions. He found it difficult having to stretch his small pool of strong, able-bodied adults, particularly as he was expecting his first reasonable crop.<sup>68</sup>

So far Coker had not been very successful at getting the right kind of sugar to the right kind of market. When he had arrived in Nevis, the boilers had produced mediocre sugar that had sold to a dull market,<sup>69</sup> the next crop had been short because of 'the blast' - although at least Mountravers had been doing better than neighbouring Jesup's where half the crop was full of the vermin.<sup>70</sup> In 1761 81 hogsheads had gone to market, in 1762 only 45 but, when in the following year the estate produced a reasonable 100 hogsheads,<sup>71</sup> they sold to an indifferent market,<sup>72</sup> and 15 out of 80 hogsheads consigned to Coker's old contacts in London, Messrs Coleman & Lucas, were lost along the way.<sup>73</sup>

Coker was relieved to learn that John Pretor had suspended all plans for Gingerland until he came out to Nevis and considered it 'very prudent' that the new man had laid aside 'all thoughts of settling Choppins plantation'. It would have put too much pressure on the existing operations.<sup>74</sup>

For his new employer Coker prepared a list of all the plantation people and this time also included the animals on the estate: 28 mules, 12 cows, ten steers, four heifers, four bulls, seven bull calves, seven heifer calves, and two young steers. Except for the, as yet, unnamed calves and the steers, all the animals had names similar to those of enslaved people: Sue, Jack, Tom, etc, and there was also one mule whose name included its origin, Long Point estate - rather like enslaved people might have been known by their region of origin in Africa. Cattle appears to have bred on Mountravers in sufficient numbers - there is no record of cattle being imported from England - but, in preparation for settling the Gingerland estate, Coker asked for six more mules to be sent. John Pretor, 'quite unacquainted with the purchasing of mules', asked John Frederick Pinney's old friend Edward Jesup to supply these from his rented estate in Essex.<sup>75</sup> Jesup obliged and prepared six mules for their journey to the West Indies. He put them 'at dry meat for a month part to enable them the better to bear the fatigue of a winter passage' and arranged for them to be taken to Tilbury harbour for shipment.<sup>76</sup>



<sup>65</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Aeneas Shaw and William Coker, 15 October 1762

<sup>66</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Thos Lucas, 18 February 1763, enclosing a letter to Coker

<sup>67</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Coker, 11 March 1763

<sup>68</sup> PP, Dom Cat 2 Summary: Edward Jesup to JPP, 14 March 1763

<sup>69</sup> PP, Dom Cat 2 Summary: Edward Jesup to JF Pinney, 26 September 1761

<sup>70</sup> PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Edward Jesup, Writtle Park, to JF Pinney, 29 July 1761; see also UKNA, CO 186/5: 4 February 1763

<sup>71</sup> PP, LB 3: An Account of Sugars made on my Estate in the Island of Nevis 1763

<sup>72</sup> PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: William Withers, London, to John Pretor, 14 May 1763

<sup>73</sup> PP, LB 3: An Account of Sugars made on my Estate in the Island of Nevis 1763

<sup>74</sup> PP, WI Box D: Coker to JPP, 26 March 1764

<sup>75</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Edward Jessup, 4 July 1764

<sup>76</sup> PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Edward Jesup to JPP, 10 July 1764, and Edward Jesup to JPP, 2 November 1764

A cooper had been killed and, to replace him, a young man was instructed in 'the Art of Cooperage',<sup>77</sup> but otherwise Coker did not apprentice any other young men; he was still under orders to keep plantation expenditure to a minimum. He overcame the shortage of skilled men by hiring a carpenter from the neighbouring Oliver's plantation and a cooper from Daniel Dasent,<sup>78</sup> and the lack of general labourers by taking on six people from the nearby Cruft's estate. At a cost of N£48 a year, this was equivalent to the price of one new person.<sup>79</sup>

In March 1762 Coker bought seven African boys and three African girls. As Michael Craton observed, an influx of Africans often meant that established plantation communities suffered an increased risk of diseases brought by the new arrivals,<sup>80</sup> and this may have affected the survival rate of new-born children. Two children were born on Mountravers in February 1762, then none for another eighteen months. The gap may, however, also have been due to the smallpox outbreak which then occurred in Nevis and which would have disrupted the normal social relations between people, many of whom would have been in low spirits and bad health. Movement of people between the estates was also curtailed, making night-time visits less likely. There may have been other, or additional, factors, such as poor assistance during delivery, inadequate post-natal care and insufficient nutrition. Equally, the gap in surviving births may also have occurred if Coker introduced a particularly oppressive new work regime from which he later exempted women of child-bearing age.

Overwork, and possibly also poor nutrition, may have contributed to some of deaths in 1764, when 'five able negroes' died.<sup>81</sup> After John Frederick Pinney had stopped food being grown on the plantation, Coker tried to make up for the shortfall and increased the order from thirty barrels of herrings, ten hogsheads each of beans and peas and two of oats<sup>82</sup> to forty barrels of herrings, twenty hogsheads of beans, ten of peas and five of oats (some of these were intended for John Pretor's use).<sup>83</sup> The total annual ration per person amounted to about ten gallons of dried food plus herrings, as well as flour and beef 'for the negroes at Christmas' which Coker bought locally.<sup>84</sup> Although people were provided with an increased amount of dried food, they had lost fresh produce which had formerly been grown on Mountravers. However, they would still have had small plots around their houses in which to grow vegetables and the non-productive elderly could go out and fish, or collect crabs and suchlike.

In October 1764 a number of people had to move their houses. It is not recorded why this was thought necessary, where the dwellings were located previously, or where they were repositioned. It is possible that Coker wanted to clear an area around the Great House in preparation for the arrival of John Pretor but, equally, he may have wanted to shift people's homes so that he could get his new plan for planting canes underway. To remove their houses, he paid 38 inhabitants N3s9d each.<sup>85</sup> Although the compensation was small, this gesture does, however, suggest that planters did not normally interfere with people's living arrangements. Plantation folk were strongly attached to their homes, particularly as they may have buried family members underneath them, or in their yards.

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<sup>77</sup> PP, Misc Vols 3 AB 3

<sup>78</sup> The cooper was hired from Daniel Dasent for two months at N£5 a month. The man's victuals came to N12s (PP, AB 15: 18 May 1764).

<sup>79</sup> PP, AB 18 JA Cruft's a/c

<sup>80</sup> Craton, M *Searching for the Invisible Man* p21 and p389, Appendix A

<sup>81</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Thomas Lucas, 15 January 1765

<sup>82</sup> PP, WI Box 3: Wm Coker's order 1761

<sup>83</sup> PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker to JPP, 6 June 1763

<sup>84</sup> PP, WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney 1762; also AB 15 Wm Coker's a/c

The calculations for the allowances are based on one hogshead containing 63 gallons which was the rate set in 1707.

<sup>85</sup> PP, AB 15 Wm Coker's a/c

Coker was manager for 1,332 days. During that time ten people died and seven children were born, which meant that, on average, one person died every 133 days and one child was born every 190 days. At this rate the births could not compensate for the deaths. The gap in numbers widened; of the seven children born during Coker's managership two died at the ages of three and five years and one was killed young. Only four survived into adulthood, and of these only one until the abolition of slavery.



## BIOGRAPHIES

**147 Jemmy Richards** was probably born around 1720, perhaps earlier, and one of nine people mortgaged in 1741 by Henry Richards to John Frederick Pinney. The only other person in that group who may have survived was Castile (No 162). The others had died: Will, Cromwell, Jack Evans, Frank, Andrew, Mary and Kitty. The mortgage amounted to N£450.<sup>86</sup>

Jemmy Richards was one of two drivers. Both he and the other, Creole Jemmy, were 'infirm' and may have been promoted to their posts when their health was fragile already. Dunn found that on Mesopotamia plantation in Jamaica drivers '... were not by any means the strongest or healthiest members of the workforce, being usually middle-aged or elderly.' They 'were elevated to this post in middle life, having been selected at least in part because of their proven durability.'<sup>87</sup> A St Croix planter, however, chose 'generally the biggest, strongest',<sup>88</sup> and on the Stapleton plantation in Nevis the drivers were healthy men in their thirties although a 60-year-old also held the post. On Mountravers it appears that the drivers started their line of work in any condition: as healthy young men, in later life, or in frail health.

Most of the drivers' work was supervisory and did not involve the daily hard, physical graft. Unsurprisingly, on Mesopotamia drivers 'had the longest careers and died at the most advanced ages',<sup>89</sup> but on Mountravers the drivers' longevity was not exceptional. Creole Jemmy probably died in his sixties, and Jemmy Richards was probably in his fifties or sixties when he died between July 1774 and July 1783.

**148 Mingo.** By the mid-1760s Mingo was 'much ruptured' and employed as 'cane watch & boiler'. Between 1766 and 1768 he was moved to the Gingerland estate while the other three boilers - Old Kersey, Paul and Castille - remained on Mountravers.

A few months after he returned to Mountravers, Mingo killed a little girl, Agree. She had also lived on the Gingerland plantation. On Wednesday, 8 March 1769, he forced her to drink a gallon of rum. Agree was four and a half years old when she died. Having killed the girl, Mingo then hanged himself. He was at least aged around thirty.

On the same day Dorchester, a 12-year-old African boy, died from 'eating dirt', but John Pretor Pinney (JPP) did not mention these appalling events in letters he wrote shortly afterwards. Admitting to three tragic and possibly avoidable losses in one day would have eroded the confidence of his financial

<sup>86</sup> PP, WI Second 'Damaged or Fragile Box'

<sup>87</sup> Dunn, Richard S "Dreadful Idlers" in the Cane Fields' p805

<sup>88</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p176

<sup>89</sup> Dunn, Richard S "Dreadful Idlers" in the Cane Fields' p810

backers. Without any further details, many questions remain. Did Mingo murder the girl out of desperation, or was it purely a criminal act? Was Mingo mentally ill? He was 'ruptured' - did his poor state of health drive him to despair? Did something happen that finally made him give up hope and commit suicide? But why did he also murder the girl? Were they related? He may have been her father, and was the murder possibly linked to the death of Agree's mother? If this was the case, Sally could have been Agree's mother; she died while on Gingerland between May 1766 and July 1768. However, it is also possible that Santee's Kitty was Little Agree's mother. There is nothing in the records that might suggest a connection between Sally, or Santee's Kitty, and Mingo, and nothing that might explain Mingo's actions. Another question is whether the events could have had something to do with Dorchester's death. He was an 'Ebboe', bought three years earlier. Mingo might have been especially attached to the boy. They may even have been related. Thomas Coke recounted an incredible incident where two sisters were reunited on Walter Nisbet's plantation. One girl had just come from Africa, the other was on the plantation already, and it was reported that on seeing each other again, they were 'screaming and crying for joy.'<sup>90</sup> A similar reunion took place between brothers in St Kitts: a man heard that his two brothers had arrived on a Guinea ship and his owner agreed to buy them.<sup>91</sup> Although these were astonishing coincidences, they are, nevertheless, evidence that occasionally such meetings did take place and, very possibly, may have taken place between Mingo and Dorchester. However, the sequence of events that led to the Mingo's and Dorchester's actions will never be known.<sup>92</sup>

People on the plantation must have been overwhelmed and utterly downhearted after these terrible incidents. Returning to the daily routines would have been especially hard.

**149 Caesar, Ceesar, and Old Caesar.** He was born in or before about 1740, worked in the great gang and was described as 'good and able'.

He was among those people JPP trusted; in November 1770 Caesar borrowed N4s 1½d from his employer,<sup>93</sup> but there is no record that he ever repaid the money.

After JPP went to live in England, he decided to supplement his workers' food by letting them grow their own coconuts and Caesar was charged with getting the project off the ground. JPP instructed his manager to 'oblige Ceesar to preserve a great many coconuts (sic) of the large size until they are dry; you may have a large number planted in a bed, and when they are high enough out of the ground, give them to each negro to plant at his house, which will be of great service to them.'<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Coke, Thomas Dr *A History of the West Indies* pp15-6

<sup>91</sup> Yorke, Philip Chesney (ed) *The Diary of John Baker* p15

<sup>92</sup> It is possible Mingo kept his own name – it is easy to spell and pronounce – but it is difficult to establish its origin. According to Handler and Jacoby, the name Mingo has been identified as a male name among a group of Bantu speakers in West and west central Africa, the Bobangi, but, doubting its African etymology, Handler and Jacoby believed instead that it may have been a contraction for Domingo (Sunday). However, as it was in use in the seventeenth century, they dismissed the idea that it derived from St Domingue, in commemoration of the late eighteenth century slave revolt (Handler, Jerome S and JoAnn Jacoby 'Slave Names and Naming in Barbados, 1650-1830' in *William and Mary Quarterly* Vol 53 Issue 4 (October 1996) p699 fn4 and p707). On Mountravers, the first Mingo, a female, was recorded in 1701, and males of that name lived on several Nevis plantations. On Jesup's were two men called Mingo Ned and Mingo Quaw and this may point towards Mingo denoting one of the African people groups. This is strengthened by the fact that some people on Jesup's had names that linked them to their people group, such as Congo Jemmy, Mandingo Sarah, Ebbo Nelly, Mucko Ned and Bambra Chloey.

<sup>93</sup> PP, AB 17 Nevis a/c 20 November 1770

<sup>94</sup> PP, AB 27: JPP to Joseph Gill, undated but 1783

At that time Caesar was already working as a watchman at the pond, having taken over from Peter (No 50). In modern days coconut palms grew by the pond and along the shore, and it is likely that they did so in Caesar's days.

Caesar was guarding the area closest to the sea, which was the most vulnerable to invasion or attack. JPP had given him a bell with which to sound the alarm but, never one to spend money unnecessarily, wanted it returned: 'I delivered Caesar ... the hand bell which I used at Bettiscombe to collect the servants to dinner. I wish you would get it from him and send it to me ... as it will now answer the same purpose again and save me the expense of purchasing a new one.'<sup>95</sup> On Mountravers, later a speaking trumpet served the purpose,<sup>96</sup> but in the meantime Caesar would have used a conch shell. Lady Nugent described how, when there was a fire, the neighbouring estates sent assistance 'the instant that one of our blacks blew his shell',<sup>97</sup> and in the twentieth century conches were still used in Nevis when marauding monkeys encroached upon the lands.<sup>98</sup>

In 1783, before JPP returned to England for good, he appraised all his people. Caesar's value of N£90<sup>99</sup> was still holding up although his health was declining already. His first recorded treatment, however, was not until some years later when Dr Thomas Pym Weekes charged N£10 for five weeks 'Attendance and Medicines for Caesar in a scrophulous case'.<sup>100</sup> This lasted from 16 April until 21 May 1788, and it may be sheer coincidence that his next treatment, ten years later, was also in April. First he received six 'spec. boluses' and a 'spec. plaster' and ten days later 'a box of spec. pills' and another plaster. The treatment came to N£3:8:0.<sup>101</sup> Doctors Archbald & Williamson did not note whether Caesar was still suffering from scrofula but repeatedly applying plasters may suggest some kind of skin disorder.<sup>102</sup> Kiple and King wrote that some 'intended the term "scrofula" to mean skin lesions in a general sort of way' and that it included a wide variety of medical conditions: pellagra, kwashiorkor, marasmus and tuberculosis, as well as pica and worms, and 'nuisances such as lice and flees'. They noted that enslaved adults in North America were much more liable to 'scrofula' than their West Indian counterparts.<sup>103</sup>

Caesar was still able to work as a watchman for another few years but was moved to the 'boiling house piece', with Frank then guarding the more exposed and dangerous pond piece on the very edge of the plantation.

Old Caesar died on 24 January 1799.<sup>104</sup> He was at least in his late fifties.

**150 Greenwich.** Born in or before at least 1740, Greenwich worked in the field and was categorised as 'indifferent'. This may have been due to failing health; by the beginning of 1769 he had become 'useless'.

Greenwich died between January 1769 and July 1783. Greenwich (b 1804) may have been his grandson.

<sup>95</sup> PP, LB 5: JPP to Joseph Gill, 22 January 1784

<sup>96</sup> PP, AB 47 Cash a/c

<sup>97</sup> Cundall, Frank (ed) *Lady Nugent's Journal* p209

<sup>98</sup> Hanley, Lornette 'I remember when ... Interview with Robert Griffin' in *NHCS Newsletter* No 39 (November 1995) p10

<sup>99</sup> N£ means Nevis currency

<sup>100</sup> PP, AB 35 TP Weekes' a/c; also AB 30 TP Weekes' a/c

<sup>101</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>102</sup> Dawson, Ian and Ian Coulson (eds) *Medicine & Health through Time* p96

<sup>103</sup> Kiple, Kenneth F and Virginia Himmelsteib King *Another Dimension* p132 and p78

<sup>104</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

**151 Achree**, perhaps born in the 1690s, probably was an African man. His name suggests a Ghanaian origin. Otchere, or Okyere, is a Fante and Twi personal name,<sup>105</sup> although his may also have been a mis-spelling of Accra, the city. On Woodland plantation a man's name was alternatively spelt Accra or Acraw. This may have been an instance where a place name was used according to West African custom.<sup>106</sup>

Said to have been 'very old', Achree died on 3 October 1763. He was the first person who died after JPP inherited the estate.

**152 Yankey, later Old Yankey**, was born in or before about 1740. His name, too, suggests a Ghanaian origin.<sup>107</sup>

Described as 'good and able', he worked in the field. By 1783 his health had declined and he was appraised at only N£50, over N£30 less than the average value for a man. Ten years later he did not work any more and in July 1794, when JPP was visiting Nevis, Yankey was manumitted. He continued to live on the estate.

Although manumitted and therefore as good as worthless as a worker, when the Pinneys sold Mountravers in the early 1800s, Old Yankey was sold along with the plantation to the new owner, Edward Huggins. The woman Tyty (No 118), who long ago had also been freed from work, was transferred to Huggins as well.

During the transfer to their new owner some ambiguity arose over Yankey's and York's name when someone noted 'Old York alias Old Yankey' and, elsewhere: 'Old York supposed to be Old Yankey'. Old York, an Ebboe, was also sold.

Given his advanced age, Old Yankey may have been one of the nine people who were said to have died within six months of Huggins taking over in August 1809. He was at least about seventy years old.

**153 Portsmouth**. When this man was at least in his twenties but probably older, Coker paid a reward of N£1:10:4 'for catching Portsmouth who had been run away a great while'. This was on 23 November 1762.<sup>108</sup> Not long before he had paid out this prize money, three men had been caught: Rhadnor (No 154) and Ephraim (No 171), who probably had been absent for a short time, and Billey (No 58), who had been 'away 14 months'. Rewards appear to have depended on the length of time anyone was absent. The money Coker paid for Billey's capture was double the sum he gave for Portsmouth's, and Portsmouth's was four times as much as the amount paid for returning Rhadnor and Ephraim. It is possible that all or some of the men had been hiding out with other fugitives near the top of the mountain in Nevis, or that they had fled to St Kitts.

Portsmouth and Billey were mule keepers. Their job provided them with good opportunities for absenting themselves, and both had been away for extended periods. They had a reputation for being 'runaways'.

<sup>105</sup> Pers. comm., Agyenim Boateng, 25 May 1999

<sup>106</sup> Handler, Jerome S and JoAnn Jacoby 'Slave Names and Naming in Barbados' in *William and Mary Quarterly* Vol 53, Issue 4 (October 1996) p708

<sup>107</sup> Pers. comm., Agyenim Boateng, 25 May 1999

<sup>108</sup> PP, AB 15 Wm Coker Manager in Nevis a/c; also WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney 1762

But while there is no recorded evidence of Billey trying to escape again, Portsmouth certainly did. Five years later he was caught by none other than William Coker, who was managing Mountravers again during one of JPP's brief visits to England. For 'bringing home Portsmouth' Coker received the sum of N8s3d.<sup>109</sup>

While JPP was away, one of his two camels had died. Perhaps the two incidents were connected because, given that Portsmouth and Billey were mule keepers and grown men, it is likely that they were responsible for looking after the camels on Mountravers. After one camel died, a few months later the other fell sick and Dr Boddie was called in to administer medicines.<sup>110</sup> JPP bought more camels and by 1776 there were three in total on the estate. JPP then acquired another four from another planter, Magnus Morton,<sup>111</sup> but these were destined to be shipped to Antigua. They were intended for Governor William Mathew Burt. A distant relative of JPP's (a cousin of JPP's father-in-law), Burt was grateful that the animals would be looked after on Mountravers but also asked JPP to 'be kind enough to let a negroe of yours who understands it, break them for me.'<sup>112</sup> This suggests that Burt did not have such a skilled person to hand in Antigua, and Portsmouth or Billey may well have done the stabling as well as the training. For this they would have used the 'three pair of camel breakers' stored on the plantation.<sup>113</sup> However, it is possible that Portsmouth was dead by then; Burt's camels were on Mountravers in 1778 and Portsmouth died some time between July 1774 and July 1783. He was at least in his thirties but most likely he was older.

Camels had first been used in Barbados but they died quickly and the experiment did not last beyond the 1640s. The animals probably lacked the right kind of diet and may have suffered from diseases.<sup>114</sup> When planters in Antigua tried working with camels in the eighteenth century, date palms were said to have been imported in an effort to enhance their diet, but camels did not take to the comparatively damp soil and died from hoof disease.<sup>115</sup> This is a foot rot caused by bacteria in which the tissue around the hooves becomes inflamed and ulcerated. A frequent cause of foot rot is the irregular wearing away of the hoof, which is common on soft pastures, and while Governor Burt's camels, which had been looked after on Mountravers, arrived safely in Antigua<sup>116</sup> they, too, may have succumbed to hoof disease.

It is likely that in Nevis the stony soil provided more favourable conditions for the animals, and certainly later another attempt was made at utilising them. In the 1850s a visitor remarked that there were 'about eleven camels in Nevis, which are said to work well'.<sup>117</sup> Pound keepers who looked after stray animals then charged a shilling a day for keeping camels and horses but only sixpence for goats, sheep and hogs.<sup>118</sup> It is not known when camels stopped being used in Nevis.

**154 Rhadnor.** Given his name, it is very likely that he was bought from a ship called the *Earl of Radnor* (sic) when John Frederick Pinney visited Nevis in the spring and summer of 1749.<sup>119</sup> Rhadnor is

<sup>109</sup> PP, AB 18 and AB 20 Wm Coker a/c

<sup>110</sup> PP, AB 18 Dr John Boddie's a/c

<sup>111</sup> PP, AB 20 Magnus Morton's a/c

<sup>112</sup> PP, Dom Box S4-9: William Mathew Burt to JPP, June 1778

<sup>113</sup> PP, Miscellaneous Lists of Deeds and Papers in Nevis 1783

<sup>114</sup> Watts, David *Patterns of Development* p198

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.antiguamuseums.org>

<sup>116</sup> PP, Dom Box S4: JPP to WM Burt, 3 July 1778

<sup>117</sup> Day, Charles William 'A Visit to Nevis – 1852' in *NHCS Newsletter* No 89 (September 2009-January 2010)

<sup>118</sup> UKNA, CO 187/33 Blue Book 1859

<sup>119</sup> PP, DM 1841/7

The Earl of Radnor owned Wimpole Hall in Cambridgeshire, a property John Frederick Pinney may well have known.



also the name of a Welsh town, and it is easy to imagine how, having gone down the geographical route, John Frederick Pinney continued on a mental voyage through Britain – a trip repeated by Coker in 1762 - and named his new purchases after towns and counties: Greenwich (No 150), Portsmouth (No 153), Dover (No 159), Chester (No 163), Harlow (No 164), Oxford (No 168), Gloster (No 169) and Essex (No 170). In need of strong workers, it is likely that from a shipload of Africans Pinney would have chosen those most capable of heavy plantation labour: boys in their teens and young men in their twenties. In addition, he would also have wanted to purchase a number of girls but it is not known who they were.

The *Earl of Radnor* called at St Kitts and then at Nevis for two successive years. On her first voyage she left Bristol in June 1747, sailed to Africa (most likely Nigeria), then to St Kitts and arrived back in Bristol at the beginning of July 1748 – just over a year after leaving port. Eight weeks later the vessel set sail again. Captain Thomas Williams, who probably had also been the master for part of the previous journey, and his crew of 25 sailed to Bonny in Nigeria. They would have taken on board over 300 captives. By the time the ship arrived in Nevis about a fifth of these people would have died. The *Earl of Radnor* left the West Indies before the onset of the hurricane season and returned to Bristol on 31 August 1749, having been away exactly a year to the day. Again, it had been a fast journey.<sup>120</sup> A few years later a South Carolina slave trader, Henry Laurens, offered Africans for sale in St Kitts from another voyage of the *Earl of Rhadnor* (sic). They 'were so sickly and unable to work that the firm could not sell them even 'at so low a limit as £21 per head'.<sup>121</sup> Rhadnor and the other men – if they had indeed been bought together in 1749 - appear to have been in reasonable health.

On 7 November 1762 Coker paid a relatively low reward of N7s6d to someone who had apprehended Rhadnor.<sup>122</sup> He was the second of four men captured within a three-week period. Ephraim had been returned about a week earlier - Rhadnor and Ephraim probably had not been away for very long - and Billey was caught four days later. The last to come back was Portsmouth, who possibly was Rhadnor's shipmate. Coker went to some lengths to recover the men. He probably travelled to St Kitts to search there and advertised rewards for apprehending them. Frustrated, Coker suggested setting an example by selling two of the runners - most likely Rhadnor and Ephraim – and JPP agreed with him.<sup>123</sup> The men, however, remained on the plantation. Ephraim died before he could be sold and, as a 'good and able' field hand, Rhadnor was too valuable to sell. An uncooperative young woman, Grace (No 200), could be spared more easily and some years later she was shipped off to North America.

Between 1766 and 1768 Rhadnor worked on the Gingerland estate. Soon after his return from there, at the end of October 1768, he sold a hen to JPP. Usually JPP bought animals and produce from people who were good and trusted workers and this purchase may suggest that Rhadnor had given up trying to abscond. The hen was worth N2s3d, less than a third of the last reward Coker had paid for his capture.<sup>124</sup>

By July 1783 Rhadnor was manumitted. At least in his forties but probably older, he died some time before July 1794.

<sup>120</sup> Eltis, David *et al* (eds) *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade CD-ROM Voyages Numbers 17175 and 17202*

<sup>121</sup> Evans, JAH 'Nathaniel Wells of Piercefield and St Kitts: From Slave to Sheriff' in *Monmouthshire Antiquarian* p93, citing David Richardson *18<sup>th</sup> Century Slave Trade* p68, citing Laurens Vol 1 p257

Although sickly 'refuse slaves' were difficult to shift, particularly if a long period of quarantine was ordered, Henry Laurens appears to have taken regular consignments from the Caribbean. Demand could be seasonal. Writing in May 1755 to the St Kitts firm of Wells, Wharton & Doran, he informed his correspondents that 'in the month of October and November last' there had been a great demand for healthy Calabar individuals 'in good flesh'. Indigo had fetched high prices on the market and planters wanted to cash in and quickly needed more workers (Donnan, E *Documents* Vol 4 p319).

<sup>122</sup> PP, AB 15 Wm Coker Manager in Nevis a/c; also WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney 1762

<sup>123</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Coker, 11 March 1763; also PN 218

<sup>124</sup> PP, AB 17: 28 October 1768

**155 Scipio, Abbott's Scipio, later Old Scipio.** He was another 'good' field labourer who sold produce and borrowed money from JPP. In April 1765 he sold his employer a hen worth N3s and in September that year he borrowed from JPP N9s - a relatively large sum.<sup>125</sup>

He was known as Abbott's Scipio, to distinguish him from Scipio (No 53), who already lived on Mountravers. He probably fell due in a mortgage. His previous owner may have been Richard Abbott, who in 1755 paid tax on 51, or Thomas Abbott, who paid tax on 22 people,<sup>126</sup> but there was also a Charles Abbott, on whose death JPP commented.<sup>127</sup>

In March 1766 JPP bought a 15-year-old girl called Scipio's Leah (No 297). It is possible she was his daughter. Both she and Abbott's Scipio were among those who were transferred to the Gingerland estate where they worked until 1768. Not long after he had returned to Mountravers, on 31 August 1768, a reward of N6s was 'paid for catching Scipio'.<sup>128</sup> This is the only recorded instance of him trying to absent himself from the plantation.

Scipio's Leah died in 1769 of a fever.

His health in decline, Scipio could be spared from field work and he was used as a courier. He was trusted to deliver large amounts of cash to John Taylor, who lived a couple of miles away: in November 1782 he carried N£6:12:0<sup>129</sup> and a few months later N£23:1:6.<sup>130</sup> It may have been Scipio who had been sent to St Kitts on a particular errand: to get bills of lading signed by one of the ships masters. The captain had taken sugar on board but had failed to complete the necessary paperwork.<sup>131</sup>

In July 1783 Old Scipio was manumitted. He died some time before July 1794. He was at least in his forties but most likely he was older.

**156 Little Robin, Robin and later Old Robin** (b c 1740). It is very likely that his father was Old Robin - he died in October 1766, probably in his seventies – and that he had a son, also called Robin (b 1777). The mother of Robin junior was a purchased slave.

Little Robin had JPP's trust and in October 1765 was sent out by him as a hunter. He was charged with catching a young woman, Morote (No 209), and earned N1s6d for returning her to the plantation.<sup>132</sup>

According to Richard Dunn, on Mesopotamia plantation in Jamaica drivers usually started out as field workers and were the only people promoted to higher job categories in mid-career.<sup>133</sup> As a field worker of an obedient disposition - he was a trusted hunter and generally judged to be 'good and able' – Little Robin was well suited for promotion and, following Jemmy Richards's death, some time before July 1783 he became one of two drivers. As the driver for the great gang, JPP valued him at N£150; Kersey, the other, was worth N£20 less. Kersey's health may have been declining already; he died within a few years.

<sup>125</sup> PP, AB 17: 13 April 1765 and 12 September 1765

<sup>126</sup> PP, Dom Box P: General's Tax Notebook 1755

<sup>127</sup> PP, LB 7: JPP to WB Weekes, Edinburgh, 13 August 1786

<sup>128</sup> PP, AB 17: 31 August 1768

<sup>129</sup> PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f89

<sup>130</sup> PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f110; also AB 26 John Taylor's a/c

<sup>131</sup> PP, WI Box O-1: 30 July 1780

<sup>132</sup> PP, AB 17: 30 October 1765

<sup>133</sup> Dunn, Richard S "Dreadful Idlers" in the Cane Fields' p804

Drivers held key positions. Subordinate to the white managers and overseers, they ensured that field labourers worked in an orderly manner and on schedule. They received instructions as to what work was required, allotted tasks accordingly and chose when to rest and whom to punish.<sup>134</sup> They had to keep alert at all times. One driver described how he let a man 'go to one side to ease himself' and when that man stayed away rather too long, he went to look for him.<sup>135</sup> In the evening drivers reported incidents such as these, along with matters relating to progress, sickness and accidents.<sup>136</sup>

Drivers maintained discipline by physical punishment. They might strike people with their bare hands<sup>137</sup> but mostly used whips. The whip was the symbol of their authority. During her stay in St Kitts Lady Schaw observed how the drivers walked behind the gangs of workers, 'holding in their hands a short whip and a long one'.<sup>138</sup> Their licence to inflict punishment on their fellow workers made them reviled figures. The abolitionist William Wilberforce was outraged that drivers had the power 'of prostrating them (women as well as men) on the ground, causing them to be held firmly down by other negroes, who grasp the hands and legs of their prostrate companion, when he may inflict upon the bare posteriors such a number of lashes as he may deem the fault to have merited.' Drivers may have been in situations where they had to chastise their wives, children, or elderly parents. They could only administer a certain number of lashes; to punish more serious misdemeanours they had to inform the manager, who could then order them to carry out the chastisement.

A visitor to Antigua wrote that there drivers were commonly called 'dog-drivers' and that they were 'mostly black or mulatto fellows of the worst dispositions',<sup>139</sup> but a visitor to St Croix observed that they were 'trustworthy, active men'. One particular Crucian planter chose not only the strongest and most dependable but selected his drivers from 'the smartest, of all the slaves; otherwise the other slaves would have no respect for him.'<sup>140</sup> Here a slightly different picture emerges of men who had the power to inflict degrading, painful punishments but who also had to earn their authority – not just from the owners. When Bitchey on Ward's estate told the driver that 'you are not my master; Mr John Warde (sic) is my master',<sup>141</sup> she refused to accept his control over her. If his fellow workers failed to follow his instructions, or questioned his right to dole out whatever correction he saw fit, this could have grave consequences for the driver, who, after all, was accountable to his white bosses.

As the long arm of their owners' authority, drivers were accused of conniving in the system of slavery, of becoming oppressors themselves. Wilberforce thought that theirs was 'an office which no one, not destitute of every manly and generous feeling, could wish to hold.'<sup>142</sup> But while some men may have thrust the job upon them, others may have actively sought to hold such office because it meant that, at the very least, they were freed from physical labour. They may also have believed that it was better they did the job rather than the next man. Perhaps it was from a 'manly and generous feeling' that some men thought they could operate within the system of plantation slavery while, at the same time, try to ameliorate the situation of their fellow workers in whatever ways possible - for instance by allowing them a bit more slack and dishing out fewer punishments. Chosen for their abilities and in a position of trust, they

<sup>134</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* pp8-9

<sup>135</sup> NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p300

<sup>136</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* pp8-9

<sup>137</sup> HoCPP 1826-1827 Vol xxii 'Reports by Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Slaves in HM Colonies under Acts Abolishing Slave Trade, St Christopher, Nevis and Tortola' Chadwyck-Healey mf 29.176-177: 'The Return and Report' by TH Bowles and JPP Gannon, Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Captured Africans, concerning 28 people taken from Tortola by GC Forbes

<sup>138</sup> Andrews, Evangeline Walker and Charles McLeon Andrews (eds) *Journal of a Lady of Quality* p127

<sup>139</sup> Buckley, RN *The British Army in the West Indies* p45, citing EV Goveia *Slave Society* p131 Luffman Letter XXIII)

<sup>140</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p176 and p9

<sup>141</sup> NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p316

<sup>142</sup> Wilberforce, William *Slavery in the West Indies; Part I* p45

could also act as intermediaries in disputes between the plantation people and the masters if they had reasonable relationships with both sides. And they could lobby for improved conditions. Once JPP left Nevis, Robin's relationships may have changed and he may have had to re-negotiate any concessions already won with the subsequent managers, Gill and Coker.

Apart from possibly being able to influence some of the conditions on the plantations, drivers could also gain considerable personal benefits, not just for themselves but also for their families. They generally had better housing and greater food and clothing allowances, and they received small presents, such as 'the piece of check' for shirts that JPP sent to Robin and Kersey 'as an encouragement'.<sup>143</sup> While drivers could protect their families from the hardest work by allocating lighter tasks and overlooking small transgressions, they were always in danger of being punished for neglecting their duty. This was the case on the Stapleton plantation. There the manager accused a driver of allowing a man to work less hard because he was a member of his family.<sup>144</sup> Being a driver required maturity, good judgment, quick thinking and skilful handling of people – both subordinate and superior.

Old Robin, who died in 1766, had kept chickens, and Robin owned at least one, if not more, pigs. During JPP's visit to Nevis in 1790 he sold him over twenty pounds of pork, for N12s.<sup>145</sup> Little Robin, who probably was his son, died between January 1791 and November 1793, aged 16 at the most, and around that time Robin's health also declined. He did not hold the post of driver any more but, aged about 50, had become a watchman in what was later known as 'Robin cane piece'.<sup>146</sup> A few months after his return to England, JPP wrote to his manager: 'I approve of your choice of drivers, but as Robin is not older than myself, I think he may do for a principal canewatch, instead of being considered as an assistant, which will save another negroe, at a time you will want any hand you can muster about my windmill and to pay proper attention to the duties of my estate.'<sup>147</sup>

Robin sustained an injury, which he might have acquired on his watch duties – either from an intruder or from the manager. A manager on another estate in Nevis recorded how he punished watchmen for various misdemeanours: he whipped Mattais 'for letting corn be stole in the night', Ebo Dick 'for letting his cane be brook where he watched' and Somerset 'for not locking Dubling up with an intent to let him git away'. Another man, who was not at his post at night, also got thrashed. This particular manager was accused of whipping the people under him too freely and they complained to the attorney,<sup>148</sup> but any watchmen who failed in their duties would have been subject to some sort of punishment. Whatever the cause of Robin's injury, on 2 August 1797 doctors Archbald and Williamson treated him and charged £N6:12:0 for 'a visit and reducing a fracture'.<sup>149</sup> A few months later Robin was not working but his injury was not sufficiently severe for him to be freed from all labour.

By then known as Old Robin, in the early 1800s he was sold with the plantation to the new owner, Edward Huggins.

Old Robin died before December 1816. In his late sixties or seventies, he may have been one of the nine people who were said to have died within six months of Huggins taking over Mountravers in August 1809.

<sup>143</sup> PP, LB 5: JPP to Joseph Gill, 5 January 1784

<sup>144</sup> NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p300

<sup>145</sup> PP, AB 33

<sup>146</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

<sup>147</sup> PN 221b, quoting 1788-92 - B7 f199 JPP to TP Weekes, 24 January 1791

<sup>148</sup> MLD, Mills Papers, Vol 4 2006.178/10 (12 September 1776, 23 October 1776, 6 June 1776, 17 September 1776 and 21 October 1776)

<sup>149</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

**157 Congo Will** was born at least in 1740, if not before. He was bought, rather than plantation-born.

From 1762 Will was 'Afflicted with y. Evil'. 'Evil' here was shorthand for King's Evil, a term commonly used to describe scrofula (a form of tuberculosis). It derived its name from the belief that the touch of the royal hand would cure the disease. Queen Anne was the last British monarch to touch for the King's Evil but in France the practice continued until around 1830.<sup>150</sup>

For several years Congo Will seems to have been ill intermittently. In January 1765 his name was added to the sixteen 'old & useless' workers who were due to be manumitted but then was crossed out again, although during the period from 1766 to 1768 he did not work on either Mountravers or the Gingerland estate. In 1769 he was again listed among the 'useless men' but was sold on 10 September 1772 as a 'plantation negro'. JPP sold Congo Will to his friend John Hay Richens.<sup>151</sup> He still fetched N£33 and may have possessed additional skills that made up for his poor physical condition. Richens, by that time, had already acquired several people from JPP and William Coker: Judy and her child Molly, Blandford, Violet Wells and Kitty and her child. They all had to move away from Mountravers; Richens's estate lay either in the parish of St James Windward or in St George's Gingerland.

In the summer of 1775 Richens mortgaged his enslaved people but not Congo Will. Given his poor health, it can be assumed that he had died some time after being sold in September 1772 and before June 1775. Congo Will was at least in his thirties but he may have been older.

**158 Minah Jemmy, also Great Minah Jemmy** was perhaps born around 1700. It is likely that he replaced a man of the same name. In February 1732 that man had had intensive and costly medical attention,<sup>152</sup> and it is likely that he had died (he was not on the September 1734 list) and that Minah Jemmy was acquired some time afterwards and given his name.

The prefix Minah was added to distinguish him from Jemmy, Creole Jemmy and Jemmy Richards. It implies that he was from the Gold Coast, or at least shipped from the slaving port of Elmina. Little Minah Jemmy (No 160) may well have been his son.

By the early 1760s Minah Jemmy was 'very old' and 'past labour', and in January 1765 he was freed from work. He survived his retirement for almost five years. Aged perhaps about 70, Minah Jemmy died on 6 December 1769.

**159 Dover** was born around or before 1740. It is possible that he came to the plantation in the late 1740s, with Portsmouth (No 153), Rhadnor (No 154) and several others.

A member of the great gang, he was judged as 'able but lazy'. Between 1766 and 1768 he worked on the Gingerland estate. By the late 1760s he probably was ill already.

Dover died between June 1772 and 25 July 1774. He was at least in his early thirties but may well have been older.

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<sup>150</sup> Porter, Roy *Enlightenment* p152

<sup>151</sup> PP, AB 21 Plantation a/c 1772; also AB 20 Plantation a/c

<sup>152</sup> PP, WI Box C: Receipt for Mary Pinney, dated 28 March 1832, signed by John Latoysonere

**160 Little Minah Jemmy** probably was a Creole and may well have been the son of Great Minah Jemmy (No 158), a man manumitted in 1765. It is likely Little Minah Jemmy was born between late 1734 and about 1740. He worked in the great gang and was considered 'able but lazy'.

Little Minah Jemmy died between 25 July 1774 and July 1783. He was at least in his early thirties but may have been close to 50.

**161 Quomina.** It is likely Quomina was born between late 1734 and about 1740. His father may have been the man of the same name who died before 1761 (No 12).

Probably not yet 30 years old, Quomina's health was so bad that he was too ill to work in the field. Originally assessed as 'able but lazy', he became a canewatch.

Quomina died between 25 July 1774 and July 1783. He was probably at least in his mid-thirties but may have been in his late forties.

**162 Castile, or Castill.** It is likely that he was one of nine individuals mortgaged by Henry Richards to John Frederick Pinney, in 1741.<sup>153</sup> By the early 1760s the only survivors from that group were Castile and Jemmy Richards (No 147).

Castile, who worked in the field and as a boiler, was described as 'good & able'. Between 1766 and 1768 he worked on Mountravers with two other boilers, Old Kersey (No 24) and Paul (No 62) – the man who in the early 1760s had caused the accidental death of Tom Bossue. The fourth boiler, Mingo (No 148), meanwhile worked on the Gingerland estate.

Castile was ill and at the beginning of November 1767 someone was paid N£1:13:0 for 'curing Castile'.<sup>154</sup> The treatment either did not work or came too late; a year later he was declared 'useless'. At times his condition may have improved and he may have been fit enough to work occasionally: in April 1781 he was paid N8s8d 'for expediting change of coppers'.<sup>155</sup> This was probably about four days' work and consisted of assisting the masons. The money he earned was his.

Castile died between 28 April 1781 and July 1783.

**163 Chester** may have been bought in the late 1740s from the *Earl of Radnor* with several others during John Frederick Pinney's second visit.

Chester, 'a young fellow ... in a deep consumption',<sup>156</sup> died between 24 July and 15 September 1761. He was at least aged around twenty.

Almost certainly he had suffered from tuberculosis. This is transmitted by coughing, sneezing, or spitting and spreads easily in overcrowded conditions. Its terminal stage was also called consumption (because it

<sup>153</sup> PP, WI Second 'Damaged or Fragile Box'

<sup>154</sup> PP, AB 20 William Coker's a/c and AB 18 William Coker's a/c

<sup>155</sup> PP, AB 17: 28 April 1781

<sup>156</sup> PP, WI Box D

consumed people from within), and while he wasted away, Chester would have suffered from fevers and a bloody cough.

The town after which he was presumably named was known to have been a Royalist stronghold during the Civil War. After being besieged for three years, Chester finally fell to Parliamentary forces. To whoever named this young man (and, most likely, this was John Frederick Pinney), the town may have symbolised strength and steadfastness – characteristics slaveholders would have valued in their people.

**164 Harlow** was born in or before at least 1740. He died on 27 July 1764.

Harlow, too, was at least in his early twenties and may have been bought in the late 1740s from the *Earl of Radnor*. When naming him, John Frederick Pinney could have had in mind the town in Essex but also Uncle Harlowe, a character in a popular, contemporary novel, Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*.<sup>157</sup>

**165 Range**, born in or before at least 1740, was a carpenter and until the late 1760s the only man working in that trade on Mountravers. This shortage cost John Frederick Pinney over N£17 when, for two months, the plantation had to employ enslaved carpenters from Rowland Oliver's neighbouring estate.<sup>158</sup> Range may have worked with John Bowrin on building a house at Gingerland. It is likely that he taught his trade to the boys Codando (No 185) and Harlescombe (No 286).

Range kept pigs and had at least one sheep. In May 1765 and March 1768 he sold JPP 14 pounds and 9 ½ pounds of pork for N10s6d and N7s1 ½d, and in June 1765 N6s9d worth of mutton. On 6 November 1766, on the same day that JPP spent N8s3d 'at the tavern', he gave (not lent) Range N1s6d.<sup>159</sup> Were the two connected? In the eighteenth century taverns often doubled up as brothels, and hotel-taverns formed 'part of the social organisation of West Indian port towns',<sup>160</sup> but was Range, a skilled man with a 'good' disposition, also visiting the tavern? Had JPP even stood him a drink? The fact that Range was given the money during the time he was hired out may be significant; perhaps JPP was paying him an occasional allowance in the same way that Codando was later paid his during the time he was hired out.

Range was the first skilled man who could be spared and hired out. In 1766 the carpenter and millwright Benjamin Lees employed him for seven months, at N£3 per month.<sup>161</sup> Mr Lees had already done work on the mill at Sharloes,<sup>162</sup> probably with Range. Benjamin Lees also bought the 'refuse boy' Daniel from JPP during the time Range was hired to him, and Range and Daniel may have worked together. Lees's own enslaved people would also have been part of the team. In the mid-1750s he had owned three.<sup>163</sup> The men, most likely, were employed to build a set of works at Gingerland.<sup>164</sup>

From the autumn of 1769 until the spring of 1770 Range was hired out again, this time with Glasgow and Codando. They worked for another carpenter, the free man John Cornelius.<sup>165</sup> The men were employed

<sup>157</sup> Harvey, AD *Sex in Georgian England* p67

<sup>158</sup> PP, Misc Vols 3 AB 3: 2 June 1762

<sup>159</sup> PP, AB 17: 10 May 1765, 13 March 1768 and 18 June 1765

<sup>160</sup> Buckley, RN *The British Army* p166

<sup>161</sup> PP, AB 18 Wm Coker's a/c; also AB 18 Benjamin Lees' a/c

<sup>162</sup> PP, WI Box D: Receipt dated 27 February 1765

<sup>163</sup> PP, Dom Box P: General's Tax Notebook 1755

<sup>164</sup> In 1768 Benjamin Lees was paid £90 for 'building boiling house in Gingerland and millworks' (PP, AB 20 f25).

<sup>165</sup> PP, AB 20 f66 John Cornelius' a/c

to improve the house at Mountravers but before the job was completed, Range succumbed to the smallpox. He died on 2 February 1770. This was during an outbreak in Nevis, and a month after Range's death two more of JPP's people died from smallpox. John Cornelius also died later in the year, just when Little Primus and Jack were apprenticed to him.

It is likely that Range had a son, Range's Will (No 354). Ten days after Range died, JPP bought the boy 'as per agreement' from John Williams Sanders. If this was, indeed, Range's son, it is tragic that Range died before the deal was completed. Range's Will was then probably about six or seven years old. His mother, if alive, would have remained with John Williams Sanders, or on Woodland, the plantation Sanders owned at the time.

**166 Lewy** was probably born between 1734 and 1740. He was a cooper. Galled by the high charges and the cost of feeding Mr Rowse, a white cooper who then worked on the plantation, John Frederick Pinney had in 1755 fired off a letter to his manager: 'For God's sake good Sir buy me a negroe cooper or two in any of the four islands if you can at any price or put out two or three young negroe boys prentice to that trade immediately.'<sup>166</sup> It is likely that Browne then apprenticed a couple of boys, Lewy and Tom Bossue. They may have been brothers.

Tom Bossue died in 1761 and, again, the plantation was short of coopers. Coker anxiously wrote to John Frederick Pinney – who died before the letter reached him – that he wanted to buy 'particularly a cooper ... for there is but one on the plantation, which will not be enough for us in the crop time.'<sup>167</sup> To make matters worse, Lewy became 'infirm' and by 1765 he spent part of his time working as a cane watch. However, Little Fido and Glasgow had been trained in the trade in the meantime, and while they remained on Mountravers to do the coopering work there, between 1766 and 1768 Lewy was temporarily moved to the Gingerland estate.

Unsurprisingly - given his state of health - in 1783 his value of N£66 was considerably lower than that of the other coopers. That year Lewy was briefly hired to 'Capt Johan Trangberg and the Owners of the snow *Gustaf Adolph*', along with several other men: Glasgow Wells, Primus, Harlescombe, Santee, and Charge.<sup>168</sup> Working aboard ship and being in close contact with the crew had its advantages. The men were well positioned to trade with the sailors and exchange fruits or craftwork for money or European-made articles. These could then be sold in the island at a profit. But there were also less tangible benefits, such as getting to hear the news and stories from across the Atlantic and, if the seamen had travelled widely, from all over the world. Men like Lewy also had the opportunity to gain new skills and to strengthen their sense of self-worth if they were able to pass on theirs to the Europeans. By communicating with a range of people they shifted their attentions away from the confines of plantation life and broadened their experiences which would have set them apart from the people who spent their lives toiling in the fields. Working aboard ship, no doubt, intensified the men's desire for freedom while at the same time it offered them the prospect of getting to know a comrade who might assist if they sought to escape to Europe. But there were drawbacks, too. Men could be called upon to work long, irregular hours, sometimes day and night,<sup>169</sup> and, particularly if they were tired, ships could be dangerous

<sup>166</sup> PP, LB 1: JF Pinney, Bath, to Browne, Nevis, 27 October 1755

<sup>167</sup> PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 21 October 1762

<sup>168</sup> PP, AB 26 Capt Johan Trangberg and the Owners of the on the snow *Gustaf Adolph*, Sterling a/c; also Negro Hire a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f117

<sup>169</sup> Bolster, W Jeffrey *Black Jacks* p134



workplaces. And if the plantation men were cheated or mistreated by the crew, there was no redress other than an appeal for justice to the captain.

Lewy possibly was the father of some, if not all of Nelly's children: Jibba (b April 1783), Little Lewey (b 23 September 1785) and Tom-Bossu (b November 1787). Nelly (No 234) may have been a domestic.

Aged at least about 50 but perhaps as old as 60 years, Lewy died between January 1791 and July 1794. During that time Little Lewey also died. He was eight years old at the most.

**167 Tom Bossue**, perhaps born between 1734 and about 1740, may have been Lewy's brother. Both men were coopers.

In June or July 1761, Tom Bossue was fatally wounded by the sugar boiler, Paul. The new manager, William Coker, had only recently arrived from England. He informed John Frederick Pinney: 'Since I made out the within list, Tom Bossue one of the coopers accidentally received a stab from Paul & died after 13 days living; notwithstanding Dr Brownes utmost efforts to save him. - He was a fine slave, & one of the most valuable on the plantation.'<sup>170</sup> No further details about this event exist.

Coopers were among the most important of the craft workers: without them there were no hogsheads, casks, tierces and puncheons in which to store and ship the sugar, molasses, and rum. They worked largely indoors, in the cooper's shop at Sharloes,<sup>171</sup> which set them apart from those who laboured outdoors. Their raw materials were wooden staves and iron hoops, which were valuable commodities imported from abroad. Handling these also set them apart from the other workers. The ready-made staves were imported from North America by the thousands; the iron hoops mostly came from England. On Mountravers these 'were kept on the beams over the still house and boiling house'.<sup>172</sup> It took between 42 and 50 oak staves to make one hogshead, and they required skilful handling.<sup>173</sup>

A cooper worked with tools for cutting the wood and smoothing it out - an adze, a bucksaw, chisels, and iron wedges - but he did not use any measuring devices; his body was the basis for most of his measurements. Coopering was a craft that required judgment, strength and a good eye. A cooper's first task was to select each piece of wood for its purpose and then heat the stave so that it reached the right degree of flexibility and could be bent into shape. If he heated it too much, it burnt; if he heated it too little, it was not pliable enough and snapped. Having laid the staves inside a metal hoop that served as his assembly jig, he would then force the iron hoops over the carcass, using just the right amount of pressure. Then he carefully heated the staves some more. This rendered them flexible so that he could gradually arch them and form them into a barrel shape. By the end of the process the joints had to be tight and the heads had to fit snugly at either end - the final product was a work of utmost precision. A cooper used specialist tools to finish off the barrel: a croze, to cut the groove around the top for securing the barrel lid; a head shave for levelling the head of the barrel and in-shaves to smooth the inside, and a bung borer to make a hole for the spigot that was inserted so liquid contents of the barrel could be tapped. With so much workmanship going into vital plantation equipment it is not surprising that coopers were among the most highly valued people. And as they had access to workshops and tools, plantation

<sup>170</sup> PP, Box D: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 23 July 1761

<sup>171</sup> PP, Misc Vols 7 1783-1794 List of Deeds and Papers at Nevis, from an inventory taken 1 August 1790 by James Williams and from a description dated 1807

<sup>172</sup> PP, LB 19: JPP to JF Pinney, 8 January 1805

<sup>173</sup> Caines, Clement *Letters on the Cultivation of the Otaheite Cane* p205

coopers had the opportunity to earn some extra money. One planter claimed that negro coopers regularly stole staves and were involved in an 'immense traffic' selling 'pails, tubs and piggins'.<sup>174</sup>

Throughout his working life, Tom Bossue would have made and repaired hundreds of wooden vessels of all shapes and sizes, not just the big hogsheads for the export products but also small containers for storing other goods – anything from flour to gunpowder. To lose such an experienced man on the plantation was a severe loss indeed.

After Tom Bossue's death his name lived on - it probably was his nephew, Nelly's son, who was named after him. However, there was also a Tom Bossu on at least one other estate in Nevis.<sup>175</sup> The name may have originated from boatswain, or from bossu, French for hunchback. To this day, Bosso has survived as a family name in Nevis.

**168 Oxford** was born at least around 1740, but more likely before. Together with Gloster, Essex and others, he may have been bought in 1749 from the *Earl of Radnor*.

The only reference to him was from 11 October 1761. That day Coker accounted for a shilling which Oxford was said to have stolen.<sup>176</sup> The incident occurred not long after Coker had arrived in Nevis and no doubt, as an example to others, Oxford would have been punished severely. It may be no coincidence that after that incident he did not live much longer. He was dead within five months; he died some time before 8 March 1762. Oxford was at least in his early twenties but may well have been older.

**169 Gloster** was born at least in, if not before, 1740. His name almost certainly was an allusion to the Earl of Gloucester in Shakespeare's *King Lear*; he was blinded by having his eyes plucked out.

Although blind, in 1761 Gloster was still considered 'useful in crop'. Over the next seven years he became 'blind and useless'.

Gloster died on 4 November 1769. He was at least in his late thirties but he probably was older.

**170 Essex, also Great Essex**, was perhaps in his twenties or thirties when his son Little Essex was born on Tuesday, 18 December 1753. It is likely that he was an African – probably from today's Nigeria - who had been bought with several other men from the *Earl of Radnor*.

Essex worked in the field, was 'good and able' and between 1766 and 1768 was, with his son, on the Gingerland estate. In 1771 Little Essex and a man from a neighbouring plantation were stolen off the island and a year later, in an effort to recover them, JPP was going to send Great Essex to Martinique, where the young men were held. Great Essex was to travel there with a white overseer to identify his son. This, however, did not happen, and Little Essex and the other captive did not return to Nevis until 1775.

<sup>174</sup> Caines, Clement *Letters on the Cultivation of the Otaheite Cane* p207

<sup>175</sup> ECSCRN, CR 1789-1790 f1; see also Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 f69

<sup>176</sup> PP, WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney 13 May 1761

The fact that Great Essex was known as Little Essex's father suggests that he was in a stable relationship. Great Essex was also among those people who acquired sufficient wealth to keep animals. He owned at least one pig; in August 1780 he sold a large quantity of pork to JPP: 33 pounds, worth N24s9d.<sup>177</sup> At N9d per pound, this was half the amount JPP paid a man from a neighbouring plantation at Christmas that year; during the festive season fresh pork was more in demand and therefore more expensive.

Essex died between 1 September 1780 and July 1783. He was in his fifties or sixties.

**171 Ephraim** was born at least around 1740, but probably before.

On 31 October 1762 someone earned a reward of N7s6d 'for catching Ephraim'.<sup>178</sup> He was the first of four runaways who were captured after Coker had put up the reward. Two of the men, Billey (No 58) and Portsmouth (No 153), had been at liberty for a long time, but Ephraim and the fourth man, Rhadnor (No 154), probably absented themselves for short periods only. It is likely that Coker had these two in mind when he wrote to John Frederick Pinney in a 'PS', almost as an afterthought:

There are two very able slaves belonging to you who never will stay a fortnight at a time on the estate, but are continually running away. Those whenever I can lay hands on them I'm determined to sell and purchase others in their room ... such runaway fellows are good for nothing but to corrupt others, that would otherwise be well disposed; and by selling them it will be a means of deterring others from heading in their steps - I've advertised rewards for apprehending them.<sup>179</sup>

But Coker sold none of the men. Before his letter reached John Frederick Pinney, his employer died and Coker had to await instructions from the new owner, JPP. Although he had JPP's approval,<sup>180</sup> nothing happened for another two years. And then JPP was expected to arrive in Nevis soon, but a month before he arrived, Ephraim died, some time in November 1764. He was at least in his twenties but probably older.

Ephraim was among those JPP had in mind when, trying to raise credit, he informed his merchant house in London that he 'had the misfortune to lose five able negroes last year.'<sup>181</sup>

**172 Dinney** was born at least, if not before, 1740. A field labourer in the small gang, he was described as 'very bad, being very lazy'. Other 'lazy' men worked in the great gang and he might have been moved to the small gang because he was ill: Dinney died between January 1765 and May 1767. He was at least in his mid to late twenties but may well have been older.

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<sup>177</sup> PP, AB 17: 31 August 1780

<sup>178</sup> PP, AB 15 'Wm Coker Manager in Nevis' a/c; also WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney 1762

<sup>179</sup> PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 21 October 1762

<sup>180</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Coker, 11 March 1763; also PN 218

<sup>181</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Thomas Lucas, 15 January 1765

**173 Dick** was born probably around 1740. He worked in the field and was considered 'good & able'. His value of N£110 suggests that in 1783 he was a healthy man although in 1770 he had been ill. Dr Jesse Foot had administered an 'electuary for Dick'. This medicine cost N16s.<sup>182</sup>

In 1789 Dick was ill again. On 10 August Dr Thomas Pym Weekes visited Dick, two days later he gave him six 'repellent powders', and after a week visited again and gave him six 'corroborant powders'.<sup>183</sup> These corroborant, or strengthening, powders did not save Dick; he died, probably soon after receiving the treatment, certainly before December 1790. He probably was aged around fifty. It is likely that William Coker, the manager, had delayed calling in a doctor until it was too late.

**174 Boan** was born probably between 1746 and 1751. Considered a 'good for nothing', he worked in the small gang.

Boan died in his teens, on 29 July 1765.

**175 Quashee** was born probably in 1743 or 1744. His father may have been Quashey (No 10), a man who died before 1761.

'Good and able', Quashee worked in the field but he died between July 1774 and July 1783. He was probably aged from about 30 to 40.

**176 Charge, later Old Charge**, born about 1743/4, may have been an African man. He worked in the field. Said to have been 'good and able', JPP chose him to do some work on a Sunday. As the Sabbath was the workers' only regular free day, planters had to pay for any extra labour. Charge received N1s6d.<sup>184</sup> This would have been enough to buy a chick, or some dishes.

Charge briefly ran away, possibly together with Betty (No 247), a young African woman who had been bought five years earlier and who worked in the second gang. She remained on Mountravers while from 1766 until 1768 Charge was temporarily sent to the Gingerland estate. It was during this period that Charge and Betty ran away. On 12 March 1767 a reward of N6s was paid for their capture.<sup>185</sup>

In March 1781 Charge made a determined effort to leave the island, probably together with Polydore (No 301), an African in his late twenties. Although JPP offered a reward for capturing Polydore, the young man managed to get away on a ship. Charge, however, returned voluntarily. JPP wrote: 'Charge came to my lower work on Monday evening and promised the fire-man to come home the next morning - since which, to this day April 1st 1781 either of them has been heard of.' But 'Charge returned April 8,'<sup>186</sup> and 'Polydore soon after got off the Island.' This incident did not stop JPP from hiring out Charge a couple of

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<sup>182</sup> PP, AB 20 Jesse Foot's a/c

<sup>183</sup> PP, AB 30 TP Weekes' a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger (Mt Zion) 1789-1794 f34

<sup>184</sup> PP, AB 17: 7 March 1775

<sup>185</sup> PP, AB 17

<sup>186</sup> PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f17

years later, with five other men, to the snow *Gustaf Adolph*.<sup>187</sup> The name of the vessel and its captain, Johan Trangberg, suggest that it was a Swedish ship.<sup>188</sup>

Charge had suffered from 'negro worms', which Dr John Springett had cured in May 1778,<sup>189</sup> but this – nor the fact that he had run away - affected his value. In 1783 JPP appraised him at N£100. Ten years on, in 1793, Charge was in Wiltshire's gang – the great gang - but in the late 1790s he did not work in the field any more.

Sold with the plantation to Edward Huggins, Old Charge died between 1817 and 1822. He was in his seventies.

**177 Andrew** was probably born in 1743 or 1744. Andrew (No 2) could have been his father, or grandfather.

Andrew was a field hand and described as 'indifferent'. While he worked on the Gingerland estate, he absented himself, around the time of the Christmas holidays. But he was caught and on 6 January 1767 someone received a reward. A year on, and he ran away once more. On 6 April 1768 another N3s was paid 'for catching Andrew'.<sup>190</sup>

Andrew died between June 1772 and July 1774. He probably was in his late twenties. Andrew (b 1781) may, possibly, have been his nephew.

**178 Little Jemmy**, also **Jemmy**, was likely to have been born between 1745 and 1750. He may have been Creole Jemmy's son, the grandson of Old Mary (No 138), and the nephew of Great Sheba (No 139) and Nanny (No 140).

In his teens, Little Jemmy was so badly 'afflicted with y Evil', or 'King's Evil', that he could not do any work. In January 1765 he was freed from work, at the same time as Old Mary and Great Sheba.

Jemmy died some time before January 1769. He was aged between about 16 to 24 years. Creole Jemmy died not long after.

**179 Little Hannibal**, also **Hannibal**, was probably born between 1750 and 1753. He may have been the son of Hannible (No 61) who died before July 1761.

Although in 1765 he was a 'cattle keeper at Gingerland', between 1766 and 1768 Hannibal worked on Mountravers. It is likely JPP wanted to keep an eye on this young man: he, like the mule keepers Billey and Portsmouth, had a reputation for absconding. However, the first reward of N3s was not paid until the end of March 1770, and the next a full twelve years later, in November 1782. JPP then accounted for N6s

<sup>187</sup> PP, AB 26 Capt Johan Trangberg and the Owners of the on the snow *Gustaf Adolph* Sterling a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f117

<sup>188</sup> It is possible that the *Gustaf Adolph* ended up in French possession, operating from the port of Bordeaux as the *Gustave Adolphe*. Over a seven-year-period, between February 1785 and May 1792, that vessel did four slaving voyages (Eltis, David *et al* (eds) *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade CD-ROM Voyages Numbers* 31667, 31713, 31793 and 31813).

<sup>189</sup> PP, AB 26 John Springett's a/c

<sup>190</sup> PP, AB 17 Nevis a/c

for 'Catching Hannibal and Quaw'.<sup>191</sup> They may have escaped together. Quaw, an African in his twenties, had taken himself off twice already. Hannibal may have made further attempts or may have rebelled in other ways that resulted in him being fitted with five clogs. This was in the mid- to late-1780s, under Coker's management.

Clogs were heavy pieces of wood that were either fastened around a leg or the neck, or people were chained to them. Some fixings were made of wood; others consisted of manacles or chains with padlocks. The wooden blocks could weigh 40 or 50 pounds, with the chains weighing perhaps as much again. As one observer recorded, movement was extremely difficult and painful: 'When they walk they take the chain in their hands, pluck it 2 or 3 feet at a time and walk to perform their labour.'<sup>192</sup>

The fixings had to be hammered into place, and later removed, by a blacksmith. On estates that had their own smithy, such as Morning Star,<sup>193</sup> the fitting and removing was done by the slave-blacksmith, who thereby became forced to partake in the brutal punishment regime. Mountravers did not have its own blacksmith but on neighbouring Scarborough's Estate worked John Jones, a white man. He had been sent from Bristol a couple of years earlier, was a mature and experienced man who had sailed in an Indiaman but had taken to drink -<sup>194</sup> which may have been the reason why Coker preferred to call in Joseph Powell from Charlestown instead. The Powells were familiar with Mountravers. The millwright Job Powell, who probably was the blacksmith's brother, had in the previous year purchased from JPP the woman Bess and taken on a young man from the plantation as an apprentice.

On 9 December 1788 Joseph Powell fitted five clogs on Hannibal and was back a fortnight later to take them off one leg and put them on the other. The blacksmith returned on 15 January and on 15 April 1789 and each time worked on three people. Fitting their clogs cost N2s each, taking them off N3s.<sup>195</sup> It seems that by mid-April – after four months - Hannibal's fetters had been finally removed and also those of the other two people who had been punished around the same time, Nero and Violet.

It may be no coincidence that Hannibal survived this harsh punishment for no more than eighteen months. He died some time before the end of December 1790. He was in his late thirties, aged 40 perhaps. This was a relatively valuable man; seven years earlier JPP had appraised Hannibal at N£90.

**180 Cursoe, later 'Cursoe alias Pompey' and Old Pompey.** He was born around 1743/4. About the time he came of age, Cursoe acquired the alias of Pompey. A Roman politician, Pompey was also a character in Shakespeare's plays *Measure for Measure* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and by the 1750s had 'virtually become a generic term for a black servant.' Peter Fryer wrote how 'It was the fashion for black slaves owned by ... people with social pretensions to be given high-sounding Greek or Roman names', and the commonest among them was Pompey.<sup>196</sup> These were personal or household servants, and it is therefore likely that Pompey acquired his alias to underline his status as a domestic servant. Certainly by 1765 he worked 'in the house'.

<sup>191</sup> PP, AB 17: 22 November 1782

<sup>192</sup> Evans, *Chris Slave Wales* p122

<sup>193</sup> BULSC, WI Collection DM 41/104/5

<sup>194</sup> PP, LB 37: P&T to JL Scarborough, 25 April 1787

<sup>195</sup> PP, AB 30 Joseph Powell's a/c and AB 35 Joseph Powell's a/c

<sup>196</sup> Fryer, *Peter Staying Power* p24

He was another 'good and able' person who got money from JPP: a shilling on 18 June 1766. This was for unspecified goods or services. It could also have been a present to make up for a shortfall in tips, which certain domestic servants received from visitors to the house. The custom was first abolished in Scotland in 1759, and in the coming years England followed suit. Vails constituted an important part of servants' wages and in Britain employers recognised that they had to raise wages in order to compensate for the loss,<sup>197</sup> but in the West Indies where the slave-servants received no wages at all, the tradition of tipping servants probably prevailed longer. Tipping was a useful tool to reward and, at the same time, encourage obedient individuals, and if the visitors did not oblige, then the master willingly assisted. Judge John Baker recorded in his diary how he gave his servant Jack Beef cash to make up the loss when a mean or forgetful visitor failed to hand over some small change, and JPP himself recorded in the same week in which Pompey received his shilling, that, when out visiting, he 'Gave Mrs Cottle's negroes N9s' and 'Mr Stanley's servants N8s8d'.<sup>198</sup>

When JPP left for England in July 1783, he scaled down the domestic staff and Pompey became redundant. However, he was rewarded for his loyalty and was appointed as a carter. He was one of two men employed in that job on Mountravers. Both were appraised at N£130. JPP reinforced Pompey's favoured status by buying pork from him - worth N3s4d and N4s9d - during one of his visits to Nevis.<sup>199</sup>

A 'box of liniment', prescribed for Pompey in July 1783 and costing N6s,<sup>200</sup> was the only recorded medical attention he received but by 1798 his health was clearly failing. No longer fit enough to work as a carter, Pompey had become the driver<sup>201</sup> of the third gang. This was later amalgamated with the second gang, the so-called small gang and generally consisted of children and weak adults. His gang's duties included a lot of weeding and carrying. In mid-February, for instance, and again on the 5<sup>th</sup>, the 6<sup>th</sup> and on the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> of March, they did the weeding, while in the afternoon he and his gang were employed in 'carrying canes to the mill'. Next day Pompey's Gang was 'weeding young canes by the mill at Sharloes', and for the following few weeks they were either weeding various plots, such as the one behind the Great House, or carrying canes to the mill, taking away ashes from the copper holes, or moving dung from the pens. A month before he died, the small gang consisted of over thirty people, and they were engaged in 'carrying dung to make two dung hills. Stumping. Holing' and 'carrying tarries [tarrass] at Sharloes to hang the coppers'.

James Williams, the manager, recorded in the plantation diary that 'Old Pompey died on 20 December 1799'.<sup>202</sup> He probably was in his mid-fifties.

After his death, the third gang became known as the 'mill gang'.

**181 Creole, Creole Will and Old Creole Will.** He was probably born about 1743/4 and, as his name suggests, island-born. Until JPP added 'Will' on a list in 1767, his name had been simply recorded as 'Creole'.

<sup>197</sup> Marshall, D *English People in the Eighteenth Century* p35

<sup>198</sup> PP, AB 17: 14 and 15 June 1766

<sup>199</sup> PP, AB 33

<sup>200</sup> PP, AB 30 Archbald & Williamson's a/c

<sup>201</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary Front cover

<sup>202</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

Although in the 1760s Creole Will was an 'able' field hand, his 1783 value of N£120 seems too high for a field worker aged around forty and, although not stated, he must have possessed other skills that warranted such generous appraisal.

By the late 1790s Creole Will was one of eleven watches and engaged in guarding the 'old negro house piece'.<sup>203</sup> He probably suffered from some kind of illness; except for Cudjoe Stanley and Jacob, all the watchmen were ill or known to have had medical interventions. In fact four watches (Anthony, Jacob, Caesar and Cudjoe) were on their last assignment; they all died in the late 1790s.

Sold to Huggins as Old Creole Will, he died before December 1816, probably in his sixties to early seventies. Given his age, it is likely that he was one of the nine people who were said to have died within six months of Huggins taking over in August 1809.

**182 Little Fido, Fido and Old Fido.** Born probably about 1744/5, he almost certainly was Great Fido's son.

After Tom Bossue died in the summer of 1761, there was only one cooper on the plantation – Lewy - and Coker wanted to use money raised from the sale of runners to purchase another. He purchased and earmarked an African boy, Glasgow, for the trade but also apprenticed Little Fido to James Carroll, a white cooper. Carroll was paid N£15 on 17 February 1763 to 'shew (sic) young negro Fido the Trade of a Cooper'.<sup>204</sup> In 1763 and 1764 Coker was still forced to hire an additional cooper for several months, but a year later Little Fido had mastered the skills and qualified as a 'good and able' cooper. Between 1766 and 1768 he remained on Mountravers with his father while the other cooper, Lewy, was moved to the Gingerland estate.

His father became a gardener in his old age and sold foodstuffs to JPP. Little Fido also sold their employer a small amount of pork, worth N10s 1/2d.<sup>205</sup> Other payments he received were likely to have been for services rather than goods,<sup>206</sup> but may also have been gifts to encourage him to use his raw materials sparingly. JPP once reminded him not 'to leave any super flous (sic) wood on the staves, that the Hhds [hogsheads] may be made as light as their size can possibly admit'.<sup>207</sup> The hogsheads had to be perfect and the sugar filled (rammed) properly, otherwise too much was lost through drainage during the sea voyage to England. One absentee reminded his manager of the importance of good quality hogsheads and asked that they 'be well ram'd, as it is a complaint too common to Nevis casks in general, when they are landed the hhd wants 1/2 of being full, w.ch is a great detriment to the owners of sugar estates...'<sup>208</sup> On the other hand, if during curing the molasses did not drain well and too much remained in

<sup>203</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary Front cover

<sup>204</sup> PP, AB 15; also WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney 1762

<sup>205</sup> PP, AB 17: 30 June 1781

<sup>206</sup> PP, AB 20 Plantation a/c 1768 and AB 17: 24 February 1774

<sup>207</sup> PP, LB 6: JPP to William Coker, Nevis, 16 December 1785

<sup>208</sup> Thoms, DW *West India Merchants and Planters*: Letter 504 John Mills junior, London, to JR Herbert, 4 March 1771

It has been estimated that as much as a tenth of the sugar was lost through drainage and other causes (Ward, JR *British West Indian Slavery* p195 fn16), while the Jamaican planter Bryan Edwards even claimed that, on average, an eighth was lost in wastage *en route* (Sheridan, RB *Sugar and Slavery* p43, citing Bryan Edwards Vol 2 pp571-72). The firm of Tobin & Pinney even recorded the loss of a fifth (PP, LB 38: T&P to Monsieur Texier, Bergerac, France, 28 December 1789), but their calculation may have included theft which occurred during storage in the British harbours. They alleged that in the 'King's warehouses' sugar was subject to 'amazing plunderage' while private warehouses were said to provide safer storage (LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Manning, 22 August 1780; also LB 39: T&P&T to Revd Martin Stafford Smith, Prior Park, nr Bath, 7 January 1796; also RB Sheridan *Sugar and Slavery* p33).



the barrels, then the sugar was too dark and inferior to the 'fine bright straw colour' produce that could be sold at top prices. The coopers, therefore, played a crucial role in the process of achieving a high-grade product. Their importance (as well as their training) was reflected in their value. Coopers were expensive. Little Fido was in 1783 appraised at N£150; he was the highest valued of the three coopers on the plantation.

In 1783 Great Fido was freed from work and from then on Little Fido became known as Fido. He remained a cooper for at least another ten years but he then fell ill and was demoted to watchman. He was responsible for the 'old copper hole piece'.<sup>209</sup> The medication Fido received from doctors Archbald and Williamson suggests that he suffered from several complaints; in September 1798 he was prescribed four laxative boluses, a box of liniment, and 'material for a quart gargle'. The doctors charged N£2:10:0.<sup>210</sup> His father died before 1794 but Fido, then known as Old Fido, was sold with the plantation to Edward Huggins. Given his advanced age, it is likely that he was one of the nine people who were said to have died within six months of Huggins taking over in August 1809. Old Fido certainly died some time before December 1816. He probably was in his early sixties to early seventies.

**183**     **Jerry** died on 16 September 1764. At the most he was twenty years old.

**184**     **Ducks Jemmy** was probably born around 1750. It is very likely that he was a Creole and Ducks Jenny's younger brother. She died of smallpox in 1762.

Ducks Jemmy was a 'good' field hand and worked on the Gingerland estate between 1766 and 1768. Later he became a distiller. In the 1760s three distillers worked on Mountravers but by 1770 two had died - London and Old Harry - and by 1783 the third, Cato, no longer had to do any work. In 1777 the white distiller and overseer, Thomas Arthurton, had left Mountravers and so, some time before 1783, Ducks Jemmy had been promoted to distiller.

At N£200 Ducks Jemmy and the 37-year-old mason Tom Jones were the highest valued people on the plantation. Then in his early thirties, Ducks Jemmy was healthy but, in the autumn of 1789 and early in 1790, he began to receive intensive medical treatment. It started on 13 October 1789 with a 'visit and 8 oz balsamic mixture'. This was repeated the next day. He suffered from some intestinal problems and was given a herb or a preparation to combat flatulence; on 27 November 1789 and again on 5 December he twice took six carminative boluses. These were followed on 15 January 1790 by six powders and six draughts, and then, in the following fortnight, by two more lots of powders and draughts. Altogether his treatment came to almost N£10.

On 3 March, Dr Thomas Pym Weekes (before he became plantation manager) made a final, desperate attempt at curing him. He charged N£2:13:0 for 'A visit in the country and opening Jemmy'.<sup>211</sup> The previous year Barbai also had been prescribed a 'visit in the country', which had cured her. Ducks Jemmy, however, did not survive. He probably died soon after the operation; certainly before the end of the year. He was around forty years old.

<sup>209</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary Front cover

<sup>210</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>211</sup> PP, AB 30 TP Weekes' a/c; also AB 12 TP Weekes' a/c

During Ducks Jemmy's illness rum production on Mountravers declined. In 1794 it was down to only 6,257 gallons a year. This compared to an annual average of 7,720 gallons which the distillers used to make during the last six full years when JPP lived in Nevis.<sup>212</sup>

It is likely that Ducks Jemmy was succeeded by Jacob, a man who had fallen due in a mortgage to JPP. Jacob had previously belonged to William Burt Weekes, the father of the new manager, Dr Thomas Pym Weekes.

**185 Codando** may have been born between 1752 and 1755. In the mid-1760s he worked in the small gang and was said to have been 'good'. He was another individual who borrowed money from JPP: N8s3d at Christmas 1768.<sup>213</sup>

It is likely that Range (No 165) trained Codando as a carpenter. Although not officially apprenticed, his value of N£110 in 1783 suggests that he possessed competences beyond those of a field hand, and when he was hired to John Cornelius, with Range and Glasgow, he probably was a skilled man already. For several months, from the autumn of 1769, Codando worked on JPP's house on Mountravers. It was a big, expensive job. JPP paid John Cornelius N£128 which was the balance 'for building my dwelling house, after deducting the labour of negro carpenters' and another N£200 for 'building a lofted house and altering the old house'. But JPP found that the work was not finished to his satisfaction: 'if it had been compleat' he would have paid more but as it was not, he offset some money against 'the alteration he made in the parlour etc for the deficiency'.<sup>214</sup> The building work was done around the time JPP contemplated getting married.

Range, one of the men with whom Codando worked, died from smallpox at the beginning of February, but Codando continued working. For some of the time he was rented out on his own but also worked with Sam, a young Gold Coast slave, and with Glasgow. For a while he was ill or otherwise absent, and from the total hire charge of N£27:6:0 JPP deducted N£5:4:0 for lost days.<sup>215</sup>

Unusually, Codando received allowances: N18s on 30 October 1769, another two weeks allowance of N6s15d on 20 November 1769 and on 31 January 1770 another one. Range also got paid during the time he was hired to Benjamin Lees, but these were the only references to tradesmen getting irregular allowances while being rented out. Their hire arrangements usually stipulated that their employer should supply them with food and drink, and it is likely that, when the victuals were not forthcoming, JPP stepped in and made up the shortfall.

Codando worked out again six years later, once more with the carpenter Glasgow. The merchant Robert McGill employed them briefly.<sup>216</sup> McGill had earlier that year bought a property in Charlestown known as 'the Lower House',<sup>217</sup> and the men may have been employed to repair damage caused by a recent hurricane.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Pares, Richard *A West India Fortune* p145

<sup>213</sup> PP, AB 17: 24 December 1768

<sup>214</sup> PP, AB 21 and AB 20 John Cornelius' a/c

<sup>215</sup> PP, AB 20 John Cornelius' a/c

<sup>216</sup> PP, AB 20 Plantation a/c

<sup>217</sup> ECSCRN, CR 1776-1777 f90

<sup>218</sup> Handlist of *The Stapleton-Cotton Manuscripts*, Box 2/9

The next opportunity for Codando to work away from the plantation did not come until 1794 when he, with five other men, was hired out to Captain Maies's ship, the *Nevis*.<sup>219</sup> The vessel arrived on Thursday, 8 May, with JPP, his son and his servant Pero on board, and Codando and the other men started work the next day. The 24-year-old Daniel had to leave early because of a sore leg but the others carried on working. They worked for a total of 68 days - exclusive of Sundays – and finished at the end of July, three days before the *Nevis* and its passengers set sail again.

Not long after this assignment Codando died. He drowned on Wednesday, 8 October 1794. He was aged between about 39 and 42 years.

Codando lost his life during the rainy season. JPP's letter to his newly appointed manager, James Williams, suggests that he drowned either at the pond, perhaps while fishing, or when crossing one of the ravines, the ghuts, that run down the mountainside. JPP expressed his sadness at losing him but implied that Codando had been careless: 'I am very sorry for the fate, as well as the loss, of poor Codando. Negroes in general are too venturesome in crossing the pond & gutts when the rains cause them to run with great rapidity - endeavour to impress on their minds the late fatal event.'<sup>220</sup>

**186 Congo Peter** was probably born about 1743/4. In the early 1760s he was not the only person from the Congo region; the others were Congo Sarah (No 114), Congo Will (No 157), and Congo Flora (No 197).

Congo Peter worked in the field and although in the mid-1760s he was described as 'good', by 1783 he was worth a mere N£50. It is likely that his attitude to work, rather than his health, had deteriorated in the intervening period: in the late 1790s he still worked in the field<sup>221</sup> and there is no record of him receiving any medical attention, although, of course, he may have been treated by other plantation folk.

Congo Peter died, probably between January 1802 and May 1803. He was in his late fifties or aged about 60.

**187 Kate, later Old Kate**, was probably born in the late 1720s, possibly as late as about 1740.

More men than women borrowed money from JPP and Kate was one of five women to do so, N7s6d in August 1765.<sup>222</sup> Apart from one, all were field hands and all were of a 'good' disposition.

Although she was 'infirm', in 1765 Kate still worked in the field, in the great gang. She and Phillis were the only 'good but infirm' women to do so; all others in declining health were allocated to the small gang. Phillis had only recently become ill, but Kate had been listed as 'infirm' from 1763 onwards. However, it was not until July 1783 that she was manumitted.

<sup>219</sup> PP, AB 43: 27 July 1794; also AB 40 f146 and AB 45 Charles Maies a/c

For different periods Codando's and Daniel's hire amounted to a total of N£14:0:6. The masons Almond and William Fisher, the cooper Billey Jones and the cook Tom McGill also worked on the *Nevis* during this period.

<sup>220</sup> PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, *Nevis*, 15 December 1794

<sup>221</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary Front cover

<sup>222</sup> PP, AB 17: 24 August 1765

Old Kate died between July 1783 and July 1794. She was at least in her early forties but may have been in her mid-sixties.

**188 Dwarfoe** was 'useless for many years'. She was 'bad, in a declining way' and may have suffered from consumption. She died between July and mid-September 1761.

**189 Yanneky, later Old Yanniky**, was perhaps born in the 1740s. The woman Yanica (No 85) may have been her mother, or grandmother. She died before 1761.

In April 1775 the midwife Agnes Adams delivered Yanneky of a child<sup>223</sup> but it died in infancy – certainly before it was nine years old. It is possible that she had another child and that Little Yanneky, born in February 1779, was her daughter but she may have been her niece. Aged about 4 ½, the girl was worth N£30 and Yanneky, then in her thirties, or possibly early forties, N£80. This represented the average value for a woman. She was another 'good and able' field hand who owned at least one pig: in 1781 she sold JPP N14s worth of pork.<sup>224</sup>

Yanneky died between December 1816 and July 1817. She probably was in her mid to late seventies.

**190 Broom (also Broom's) Sarah's Kitty**. She was born after 14 September 1734 and probably before 1740, and the daughter of Broom's Sarah (No 135). Her sister was Little Brooms Sarah (No 205), who in 1771 may have had a daughter, Amelia, and in 1777 had a son called Little Nero. Their uncle Jack (No 129) died before 1761. One of their cousins may have been Jack (No 218).

Broom Sarah's Kitty was a 'good & able' field worker in the great gang. In May 1766 JPP entered in his private cashbook that he had lent her N4s 6d and 'received of it N3s'.<sup>225</sup> Although in his accounts JPP distinguished between 'giving' and 'lending', this is one of only two records of money ever being recovered, and Broom Sarah's Kitty did not repay more than two thirds of the sum borrowed. If ever repaid, along with other sums lent to various people, it did not go through the books. What JPP did record, however, was the a few months later she sold him 12 ½ pounds of pork, at N9s4 1/2d.<sup>226</sup>

In 1771 she was ill and an unnamed Negro was paid N£1:13:0 'for curing Broom's Sarah's Kitty'.<sup>227</sup> The illness may have foreshadowed her death. She died between July 1774 and July 1783. Broom's Sarah's Kitty was in her mid-thirties to late forties.

Her mother, 'old and a cripple', and also her sister died around the same time.

**191 Agree** may have been born between about 1705 and 1710. Bought some time after 1734, her name suggests a Gold Coast, or Ghanaian, origin.<sup>228</sup> Aggrey (also Aggry) beads are a type of glass bead valued in the Gold Coast region for their clever designs and their supposed magical powers.<sup>229</sup>

<sup>223</sup> PP, AB 20 f175 Plantation a/c

<sup>224</sup> PP, AB 17: 30 June 1781

<sup>225</sup> PP, AB 17: 30 May 1766

<sup>226</sup> PP, AB 17: 11 October 1766

<sup>227</sup> PP, AB 21 Plantation a/c

By 1761 Agree had become 'old and infirm', two years later she was declared 'useless' and in January 1765 she was manumitted.

It is likely that Little Agree (b 1764) was her granddaughter, and that Agree was alive at the time Mingo murdered the girl.

Agree died between January 1769 and July 1783. She was at least in her late fifties but may even have been in her seventies.

**192 Penda (also Pænda)** was probably born around 1710 and bought after 1734, as an adult. She may have come from Senegal where among the Fula her name means 'Beloved'.<sup>230</sup>

'Good but infirm', in 1765 she was a member of the small gang and between 1766 and 1768 worked on the Gingerland estate.

In January 1769 she was still well but within a couple of years she became 'old & useless'. Penda died before July 1783. The girl Penda, born in February 1777, may have been her granddaughter.

**193 Santee's Kitty** was perhaps born about 1740. Her father may have been Santee (No 22). He died before 1761.

Santee's Kitty was delivered of a child and the midwife paid on 16 November 1764.<sup>231</sup> The child born closest to that date was Little Agree, on 11 September 1764. If Coker had delayed paying the midwife, as happened in another instance, Little Agree may have been Santee's Kitty's daughter. Little Agree was murdered by Mingo in March 1769. All three were between 1766 and 1768 placed on the Gingerland estate; Mingo as a boiler and Santee's Kitty as a 'good and able' field worker in the great gang.

Santee's Kitty died between June 1772 and July 1783. She probably was in her early forties to early fifties.

**194 Patty, later Old Patty**, was probably born on the plantation between 1735 and 1740. She had a brother or a sister, whose daughter was Nelly (No 234).

Classed as 'Good and able', in the mid-1760s Patty worked 'in the house'. She received various payments from JPP. He gave her N1s6d in May 1766, bought pork (N8s) and fish (N3s9d) from her in August and September, and in September also lent her N7s6d.<sup>232</sup> Payments continued: N16s6d for 'cloth for Patty' in 1773;<sup>233</sup> N6s in February 1774 and another N8s3d in May;<sup>234</sup> and in July 1774 JPP 'paid Ann Weekes N16s6d for cloth for Patty'.<sup>235</sup> The next transaction was not until May 1782, when she sold him a

<sup>228</sup> Pers. comm., Agyenim Boateng, 25 May 1999

<sup>229</sup> Cardinall, AW 'Aggrey Beads of the Gold Coast' in *Journal of the African Society* pp286-98

<sup>230</sup> <http://www.swagga.com/name.htm>

<sup>231</sup> PP, AB 18 1764 Wm Coker a/c; also AB 15 Wm Coker's a/c

<sup>232</sup> PP, AB 17: 31 May 1766, 28 August 1766, 1 September 1766

<sup>233</sup> PP, AB 20 Expense a/c

<sup>234</sup> PP, AB 17: 25 February 1774 and 5 May 1774

<sup>235</sup> PP, AB 21 Expense a/c; also AB 20 Ann Weekes' a/c

lamb worth N9s.<sup>236</sup> Patty clearly was a woman of some substance. She owned at least one pig and a lamb but, most likely, more. While over thirty people are known to have sold pork and, by implication, owned pigs, few seemed to have reared sheep and goats. Then generally it was the elite people who did so. Patty was the only woman who sold lamb and the only woman who sold fish. As fishing was usually done by men,<sup>237</sup> she may have sold what had been caught by a male member of her family.

The payments for cloth, one of which was to Mrs Pinney's aunt Ann Weekes, suggest that Patty enjoyed the benefits of being a domestic. She may have received presents by way of rewards but Patty may also have earned money from assisting women giving birth. Although the midwife Agnes Adams delivered Mrs Pinney's children,<sup>238</sup> Patty received N6s soon after the Pinneys' second child, Elizabeth, was born and, certainly by 1783, Patty had become a midwife. She probably took on the duties of a midwife in 1779. The year before Agnes Adams had been paid for two deliveries and then was paid for one more in 1781. The origins of this woman are not known but it is likely that Agnes Adams was white and that she, or her forebears, had come from the West Country.<sup>239</sup> Patty also replaced the old nurses, Kendall and Rose (Numbers 101 and 102). Both women died before 1783.

Valued at N£100, Patty was then the only official health worker and, until the Hugginses took over, there were no more dedicated sick nurses on Mountravers. JPP only appointed midwives who also undertook nursing duties. But in addition to the midwives and the white doctors, other individuals on the plantation also provided health care. Wiltshire, for instance, was known to be well versed in medicinal plants, and later Frank Fisher proved himself a 'valuable slave for sick people'. No doubt there were others skilled in various methods of healing.

During the 1770s Agnes Adams delivered several women on the plantation but more children were born without the midwife's assistance and their births, presumably, would have been attended by Patty. According to Dr Robert Thomas, who had practised 'Physick' in Nevis before he moved to Bristol,<sup>240</sup> a 'negro midwife' always officiated in natural cases and a surgeon was 'called for in preternatural cases'.<sup>241</sup> On Mountravers doctors Archbald & Williamson only twice assisted in delivering children.<sup>242</sup> This was in 1796 and may have been during a period when Patty was ill but, more likely, the doctors dealt with complicated cases and undertook specialist procedures similar to those performed by a colleague of theirs: on Symond's Estate Doctor Beard extracted two women's placenta and delivered another's stillborn child.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>236</sup> PP, AB 17

<sup>237</sup> Craton, Michael *Empire Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* p142 and George F Tyson and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* pp10-1

<sup>238</sup> On 18 January 1774 Elizabeth was born, on 6 December 1776 Alicia Pretor, and in May 1781 Pretor. The girls' deliveries cost N£9:18:0 but Pretor's N£15:4:0 (PP, AB 17).

<sup>239</sup> There were early Adamases in Nevis: the 1677/8 census lists Thomas, Samuel and Christopher, the last as 'poor'. None of the men owned anyone (Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p80) They were joined in 1685 by one of the Monmouth rebels, Jacob Adams of Leigh on Mendip, who was transported for Stapleton from Bristol (Wigfield, W Macdonald (comp) *The Monmouth Rebels 1685*). The 1707 census does not show any Adamases and if any of these men's families remained in Nevis, they probably were poor. They, for instance, do not figure in land records or other documents until the nineteenth century and then mostly in St Kitts (Pers. comm., Charles Loeber, 10 July 2002). This may suggest that Agnes Adams might have emigrated herself, perhaps through links with John Frederick Pinney or William Coker: John and Thomas Adams, for instance, were connected to Bettiscombe (PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic), and an Eleanor Adams rented a small tenement at Coker's Woodcutts estate (C3, Farm Account Book Estates in England 1783-1787: 1797). A noticeable number of members of the Adams family also lie buried in the cemetery in nearby Sixpenny Handley.

<sup>240</sup> ECSCRN, CR 1789-1790 f222

<sup>241</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 71 p254 Dr Robert Thomas's evidence

<sup>242</sup> The doctors delivered Pænda on 3 May 1796 and Cuba 2 June 1796 (PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's a/c).

<sup>243</sup> PP, WI Box 1823-1825: Symond's Estate a/c March 1824-March 1825

JPP, a keen exponent of herbal remedies himself, recognised Patty's skills. As soon as his new manager Joseph Gill had taken over, JPP reminded him 'that negro children require to have cow-itch, or worm grass, properly boiled by a skilful negro, given them, now and then, for worms, which they are generally full of, I therefore hope you will not forget to make Patty gather a large quantity of the former ...'<sup>244</sup> JPP knew that preparing the worm-grass concoction required great skill because, hailed as 'a powerful vermifuge', even in expert hands it could cause temporary blindness.<sup>245</sup> Patty was to make syrup from the grass for the children and, so JPP advised, 'after every three doses, they must have a dose of castor-oil each.'<sup>246</sup> He practised what he preached; he asked for wormgrass to be sent to Bristol 'as I want it too (sic) take myself for worms.'<sup>247</sup> He also told Gill about remedies for 'obstinate venereal complaints' and suggested that Wiltshire, who had knowledge of medicinal roots, collected these, and 'after you have divided the quantity, make Patty prepare and boil them according to the directions.' Gill was to make sure the nurse gave 'the patients the drink therein prescribed regularly for a considerable time.'<sup>248</sup>

Her skills were rewarded, and in October 1799 Patty was among ten women who received from 'Mrs P ... some white cotton ½ yd each ... for wrappers'.<sup>249</sup> Based on her Creole upbringing, with these presents of materials for head wraps Mrs P displayed cultural sensitivity towards the women but the gifts only rewarded former domestics and the acquiescent.

Not long after this present arrived, Patty began suffering from yaws - a chronic, highly contagious infection easily transmitted by direct contact with skin lesions. Living in close proximity and wearing few clothes contributed to its spread,<sup>250</sup> as did unsanitary conditions and poor personal hygiene. Patty would have been horrified when she noticed the first signs of yaws: red, raspberry-like, repulsive-looking eruptions that appear on the face and other parts of the body. Usually a fever follows. Yaws primarily affects the skin, bones and joints, and over time the bones and fingers may become painfully inflamed. If untreated, the final stage involves destructive lesions of the skin and bones. These can lead to severe disfigurement and disability. Because the disease was so contagious, yaws sufferers were separated from their friends and families and kept in special yaws houses. They were tended by nurses from the plantation. Depending on the patients' general condition and the care they received, the ailment could last for weeks, or months, or even years. It was an illness associated with isolation - physical as well as personal because the yaws sufferers' disfigurement could lead to ostracism within their community.<sup>251</sup> This was a heavy burden indeed for those who required their comrades' emotional support to withstand their enslavement and the rigours of plantation life.

The physical isolation, away from interference by their employer and the white doctor, gave nurses greater scope for treating patients with medicines of their choice, including spiritual therapies and African ways of healing that might otherwise have been frowned upon or forbidden. But the isolation also gave yaws nurses power over their patients which could tip over into abuse of power – as demonstrated by the allegations against the head nurse on Maddens plantation in Nevis. She was accused of pilfering food

<sup>244</sup> PP, LB 5: JPP to Joseph Gill, 5 January 1784

<sup>245</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* October 1764 p487

<sup>246</sup> PP, LB 5: JPP to Joseph Gill, 5 January 1784

<sup>247</sup> PP, LB 9: JPP to Wm Coker, Nevis, 8 February 1789

<sup>248</sup> PP, LB 5: JPP to Joseph Gill, 30 March 1784

<sup>249</sup> PP, LB 15: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, 29 October 1799

<sup>250</sup> Kiple, Kenneth F and Virginia Himmelsteib King 'Deficiency Diseases in the Caribbean' in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol 11 Issue 2 (Autumn 1980) p206

<sup>251</sup> Sheridan, RB *Doctors and Slaves* p83

and, without seeking the manager's permission, of sending patients back to work even if they were still ill.<sup>252</sup>

It was said that many enslaved people in Jamaica used intentional inoculation, based on an African belief that children who had experienced the disease were protected for life.<sup>253</sup> There is no direct evidence that these inoculations were performed on Mountravers. In the medical accounts yaws was not mentioned as something doctors treated but on neighbouring Woodland it occurred at least twice before JPP took over that plantation.<sup>254</sup> On Mountravers, the first reference to this illness was in 1798 when an unnamed yaws sufferer was listed as being sick. Most likely, Patty caught the complaint from a patient of hers. She fell ill in early 1800. A couple more women became infected afterwards.

Her condition deteriorated and she came to be 'in a very bad state of health'. Old Patty died on 11 July 1801.<sup>255</sup> She probably was in her early to mid-sixties.

While her illness was progressing, the manager James Williams informed JPP of this and, at the same time, put forward the names of several women who might succeed Old Patty. It has been said in a North American context that 'midwifery was an old and venerable institution in most frontier regions, and more importantly it was one cherished by the slaves themselves',<sup>256</sup> but this did not apply to Mountravers. None of the women volunteered for Patty's job and there was 'no proper person to succeed her'. Several times Williams had 'put several females at different times under her', but none chose 'to undertake the business.'<sup>257</sup> As Barbara Bush explained, 'considerable hazards attended the job as midwives were frequently blamed for infant deaths ... Midwives and nurses also had to double up as prison warders and had unpleasant, isolated lives, in constant contact with diseases such as yaws'<sup>258</sup> – the very illness from which Patty suffered before she died.

News of her death had not reached JPP when he replied to his manager: 'I am very much concerned at the acc't you give me of Patty's health. Make a point of getting a proper person to succeed her, surely those you have mentioned will be equal to it - when I was last in Nevis I understood she had selected her niece Nelly who I thought not equal to it but did not object to give her a trial ...' JPP went on to suggest Nanny Nolan<sup>259</sup> but the issue of Old Patty's successor was not settled for several more years.<sup>260</sup>

**195 Phillis** was perhaps born around 1735. Phillis (No 64) may have been her grandmother - she died before 1761 – and Little Phillis, born about 1754/5, her daughter. Between 1766 and 1768 they both remained on Mountravers while others were moved to the Gingerland estate.

In 1765 Phillis was said to have been 'good but infirm' and despite her state of health, she, and another woman, Kate, who was also 'good but infirm', both worked in the great gang. However, five years later Phillis caught the smallpox. She died in March 1770. She probably was in her mid-thirties.

<sup>252</sup> NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton pp293-95

<sup>253</sup> Higman, BW *Slave Population and Economy* p113, citing David Mason 'A Descriptive Account of Framboesia or Yaws' in *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* Vol 35 (1831) p53

<sup>254</sup> PP, AB 26 John Fisher's a/c and Woodland a/c; also LB 19 f1 Roger Pemberton's a/c

<sup>255</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

<sup>256</sup> Kiple, Kenneth F and Virginia Himmelsteib King *Another Dimension* p172

<sup>257</sup> PP, MSS in Red Boxes, Box 34-1: JPP to JF Pinney, 4 September 1801

<sup>258</sup> Bush, Barbara *Slave Women in Caribbean Society* p136

<sup>259</sup> PP, LB 16: JPP to James Williams, 26 August 1801

<sup>260</sup> PP, LB 20: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 5 December 1805



On Mountravers, Phillis was one of at least three people who died from smallpox that year. The others were John, a 16-year-old from the Gold Coast, and Range, an adult man. These deaths occurred during one of the frequent, island-wide smallpox outbreaks. Everyone would have known the symptoms. The illness starts with malaise, a high fever, nausea and vomiting, a headache and an aching back. Then puss-filled rashes appear, initially on faces, forearms and hands. These spread to their trunks and lower limbs. Eight or nine days after the initial onset the pustules dry up, leaving a crust. Smallpox was not necessarily fatal and if the patient survived, these spots became scars. Many people would have been disfigured for life by these pockmarks. On Mountravers twelve people had suffered from smallpox during an outbreak in 1762. Only one young woman had died.

Phillis died in March, when the outbreak in Nevis was probably in its early stages. In April John Scoles, who held the various posts of 'Searcher, Measurer, Notary Publick, Coroner and Justice of the Peace', petitioned the Nevis Legislature for a supply of medicines for the smallpox house. This was rejected.<sup>261</sup> The epidemic continued. Some planters took measures to fight the disease. On John Stanley's estate, for instance, 168 people were in 1772 inoculated against smallpox.<sup>262</sup>

In August 1773 Dr George Dalgleish recommended that 'all negroes and other slaves' within Charlestown 'be removed if infected with smallpox to the pest house'. The Legislature this time acted more resolutely. It imposed a fine of N£25 on slaveholders who concealed anyone, required all vessels to perform quarantine and ordered Dr Dalgleish to attend to the sick and to employ nurses.<sup>263</sup> Despite these measures the disease spread. It appears that inoculations were blamed for this, because the Assembly decided that 'no white person, Mulattoes or Negroes shall be inoculated for smallpox within a half mile radius of Charlestown.' They also decreed that no Negroes '(renters or managers of Negroes also)' were 'to stay near any highway road or near any Negro houses.'<sup>264</sup> It was difficult to semi-quarantine the majority of the population and to maintain and police such measures, and it seems that this particular outbreak continued until at least the spring of 1774,<sup>265</sup> possibly even into the summer of 1776.<sup>266</sup>

**196 Princess, later Old Princess.** Perhaps born around 1710, she was probably an African woman bought after 1734.

It is very likely that Princess had a child or children. The girl Princess (b January 1795) may have been named after her.

By the mid-1760s, then considered 'good but old', she worked in the small gang. She had a prolapsed uterus and in June 1765 Diana was called in to help her. Diana probably was a free woman who worked as a healer. For 'attempting to cure Princess of a falling of the womb' she was paid N7s6d.<sup>267</sup>

<sup>261</sup> UKNA, CO 186/7: 30 April 1770

<sup>262</sup> PP, AB 44 John Stanley's Estate

<sup>263</sup> UKNA, CO 186/7: 24 August 1773

The fine imposed on owners concealing people was N£5 higher than it had been in 1762, representing a 25 per cent increase. In effect this was a revenue-raising measure to finance public works projects. The year before over N£240 had been approved for repair work to 'watering places and spring near Charles Town' and the forts needed repairing (UKNA, CO 186/6: 27 May 1772 and 21 June 1773).

<sup>264</sup> UKNA, CO 186/7: 19 October 1773

<sup>265</sup> Aberystwyth Bodrhyddan MSS 2: John Robinson to Catherine Stapleton, 23 February 1774

<sup>266</sup> UKNA, CO 186/7: July 1776

<sup>267</sup> PP, AB 17: 13 June 1765

In the 1770s Princess was among the oldest women on the plantation and by July 1782, when John Springett was paid N3s6d 'for curing Princess of a sore leg',<sup>268</sup> she probably had long been past productive work. By 1783 she was manumitted.

Princess kept fowls and when JPP visited Nevis in 1790, she sold him two chickens at the going rate of N3s.<sup>269</sup> This was the last time she saw her master. Old Princess died some time before JPP visited Nevis again in the summer of 1794. She was perhaps in her eighties.

**197 Flora, later Congo Flora.** Born perhaps around 1730, she was bought after 1734. Her name implies she came from the Congo region, but this may have been a broad interpretation. It is possible that she, Congo Will and Congo Peter had come to Nevis on the same ship. Both Flora and Sarah acquired the prefix 'Congo' later on in life; in Flora's case when she was moved to the Gingerland estate between 1766 and 1768.

It is possible that Little Flora (b 1746/7) was her daughter. She died between 1772 and 1774.

Although in the 1760s she was 'good and able' and in the first gang, Congo Flora was manumitted in July 1783. JPP left for England shortly after appraising everyone but, as soon as his ship had disappeared over the horizon, Congo Flora was made to work for Mulatto Polly (No 378). She was the former nurse of one of the Pinneys' children and about thirty years younger than Congo Flora.

Mulatto Polly and the new manager, Joseph Gill, had struck some kind of deal to employ her. Congo Flora may not have been a willing participant. It is not known what line of work Mulatto Polly was following at this time but she was allowed to hire herself out. Later on she traded in various dry goods. It is possible that she was already buying and selling her merchandise, needing Congo Flora's assistance, but Congo Flora may also have been hired to look after Mulatto Polly's three-year-old daughter, Christianna Jacques.

As soon as JPP became aware of the arrangement, he made it clear to Gill that 'Mulatto Polly had no liberty from me to employ Congo-Flora - I leave all my people under your direction.'<sup>270</sup> This incident not only shows that Congo Flora, although 'manumitted', was still able to do useful work of some kind; it also says something about Mulatto Polly's character and, at the same time, hints at a possible tension between the two women. As an African and a field hand, Congo Flora would have been seen as a mere plantation labourer while Mulatto Polly would have considered herself among the elite - she was a Creole with a white father and, as a domestic servant, had been close to the Pinney family. But she was still a slave, and Congo Flora's feelings towards her temporary employer must have been even stronger than those expressed by Mary Prince, an enslaved woman whose autobiography was published in the early 1830s. Mary Prince wrote that when her white owner hired a free mulatto, this woman 'wanted to be mistress over' her. Mary Prince thoroughly resented this: 'I thought it very hard for a coloured woman to have rule over me because I was a slave and she was free. ... she was a saucy woman, very saucy ...'<sup>271</sup> Another contemporary observer noted that 'It is said that mulattoes make bad masters; and this holds good oftentimes with persons of this description who have been in a state of slavery, and become

<sup>268</sup> PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f76

<sup>269</sup> PP, AB 33

<sup>270</sup> PP, LB 5: JPP to Gill, Nevis, 27 August 1783

<sup>271</sup> Ferguson, Moira (ed) *The History of Mary Prince* p69

possessed of slaves of their own ...<sup>272</sup> Congo Flora may well have felt aggrieved, and it is likely that it was her, through a third party, who quickly informed JPP of Mulatto Polly's scheme. The news travelled with the next ship that left Nevis. Less than a fortnight after he had arrived back in England, JPP fired off his response to Gill. At the most, Mulatto Polly employed Congo Flora for a period of about three months.

When JPP returned to Nevis on his first visit in 1790, Congo Flora sold him a chick worth N1s6d and pork for N£1:19:9.<sup>273</sup> At the usual price of nine pence per pound, this works out at 53 pounds of pork, the largest single amount of meat anyone sold to JPP during this visit. She may have sold him a whole piglet.

Congo Flora died before December 1801. She was in her sixties or early seventies.

**198 Hetty.** Born probably between 1734 and about 1743, she may have been the daughter of Hetty (No 103).

In 1765 Hetty worked in the small gang. She was then 'Good but almost a cripple' and it was noted that she had 'done no work since this list was taken'. Her state of health may have fluctuated because it was not until January 1769 that she was officially declared 'useless'.

Hetty survived her retirement for many years and died some time between July 1783 and July 1794. She may have been in her forties or fifties but could have been in her sixties.

**199 Molley and Bander Legged (Legged) Moll or Molley.** She was probably born between 1734 and about 1740. It is possible her mother was Old Molly (No 93) and her daughter Little Molly (b c 1750-5).

Listed by Coker as Molley, JPP added the 'Bander Legged' and the name stuck. She may have acquired the nickname from her legs bowing out, perhaps the effects of rickets. This vitamin D deficiency certainly was common in North American slave communities; descriptions of deformed bones have frequently been found in advertisements for the recovery of runners.<sup>274</sup>

In the 1760s Bander Legged Molley worked in the great gang but in July 1782 she was taken away from Mountravers and moved to another household. She became part of a deal that was not uncommon at the time: in exchange for a mortgage, JPP paid a small annuity to a widow, Mrs Thraske, together 'with the use and labour of the negro woman Bander Legged Moll'.<sup>275</sup> JPP might well have chosen her over other women because he had deemed her 'lazy' and, anyway, in her forties, she was past her most productive years.

Her new mistress, Mrs Elizabeth Thraske, probably was the impoverished widow of the planter Thomas Thraske. It is likely that some time after 1755 she moved from the parish of St James Windward to St Paul's, possibly straight to Black Rock, where she lived in the 1790s.<sup>276</sup> While at Black Rock, Bander Legged Molley remained close to Mountravers and could maintain contact with family and friends.

<sup>272</sup> *The Annual Register* 1817 p408

<sup>273</sup> PP, AB 33

<sup>274</sup> Kiple, Kenneth F and Virginia Himmelsteib King *Another Dimension* p104

<sup>275</sup> PP, AB 26: 7 July 1782

<sup>276</sup> UKNA, CO 186/6: 9 December 1772; PP, Dom Box P: General's Tax Notebook 1755; ECSCRN, CR 1763-1764 ff477-89 and AB 39 Elizabeth Thraske Widow of Black Rock a/c

Somehow Mrs Thraske upset JPP and in 1794 he complained about this woman's 'ungrateful behaviour'. He had been generous and felt snubbed after what he had 'done for her'.<sup>277</sup> However, he did more for her when a year later he finally relinquished ownership of Bander Legged Molley. She was 'Given to Mrs Eliz. Thraske for her life'. Bander Legged Molley did not live much longer; she died, probably some time before July 1801.<sup>278</sup> She would have been in her mid-fifties to mid-sixties.

**200** Grace was born probably between about 1745 and 1750. It is possible she had a child when very young.<sup>279</sup>

Grace was a rebel, and it is likely that the N£1:10:0 paid on 20 October 1763 for 'bringing home runaways' included a reward for her capture.<sup>280</sup> Her disposition - 'very bad, being lazy and a runaway' – was more than JPP could stomach, and she was the first person he sold into exile. Her banishment was meant to set an example to others. When Coker had wanted to sell people some years earlier, JPP had agreed: 'I think it a very prudent step to sell them two run away Negroes and purchase two more in their room, which probably may deter others from treading in their steps.'<sup>281</sup> But Coker's plans had come to nothing and it was time to act. JPP would not tolerate any recalcitrant individuals and he could spare a young woman – particularly if, like Grace, she only worked in the small gang.

Grace left Nevis on 16 December 1765. She sailed on board Capt Joshua Hayes's *Plantation Schooner Economy*, to be sold in Georgia. Aboard ship were also three people from neighbouring Ward's estate. They, too, were up for sale but they died either on the voyage, or very soon after.<sup>282</sup> Had they survived, some of them may have ended up as ship's crew; many of the seamen employed in the traffic with North America were said to have been enslaved.<sup>283</sup>

It likely that Grace was sold onto one of the rice plantations that spread along the coastal regions of Georgia and South Carolina. After sugar, tobacco and wheat, rice was the fourth most valuable product exported from British America, and by the time Grace reached Georgia, production in South Carolina and Georgia had, in the past fifty years, risen more than twelve-fold to 72 million pounds a year.<sup>284</sup> Rice was cultivated successfully in parts of West Africa and captives from those regions had brought with them the skills of growing and processing this plant.<sup>285</sup> They established rice fields in areas of marshy land which they drained and then surrounded with banks and ditches. The system of canals and dykes required constant repairs and the many waterways had to be kept clear of rotting vegetation.

Grace arrived in Georgia when preparations for the next crop were under way. The soil was broken up so that in spring the rice could be sown in straight lines into shallow trenches. It was then briefly watered and once the plants started to sprout, the land had to be weeded and lightly hoed and the birds scared away, to stop them from damaging the growing crops. When the rice sprouts reached a certain height, the floodgates were opened and the land was under water from mid-June until the first week in September. Then the crop was ready for harvesting. The plants were cut with a sickle, cocked up in the field to dry

<sup>277</sup> PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, 15 December 1794

<sup>278</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary Front cover

<sup>279</sup> Grace was listed by Coker as a 'woman' in 1761 and 1763 but by JPP as a 'girl' in 1765. She may have been de-classified because her child had died – something JPP might not have known – or perhaps he just mis-judged her age?

<sup>280</sup> PP, AB 15 William Coker a/c

<sup>281</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Coker, 11 March 1763; also PN 218

<sup>282</sup> PP, AB 18 Schooner Plantation Economy a/c (Capt Joshua Hayes) and John Ward's a/c

<sup>283</sup> Nisbet, Richard *The Capacity of Negroes for Religious and Moral Improvement* pp36-7

<sup>284</sup> Price, Jacon E 'The Imperial Economy' in PJ Marshall (ed) *The Oxford History of the British Empire* p85

<sup>285</sup> Walvin, James *Black Ivory* pp87-8

and collected into bundles or sheaves. These were taken into nearby barns where they were formed into stacks, ready for threshing. After threshing and winnowing, the stems passed through wooden mills until just the white kernel of rice was left - ready to be exported from the port of Savannah to Europe and also the West Indies.<sup>286</sup> The rice consumed on Mountravers may well have come from Georgia.

Grace was either sold through the company of George Baillie & Co, or bought by the owner himself because he, too, owned a rice plantation.<sup>287</sup> Having been 'bred as a merchant', Baillie had left Scotland for America ten years earlier and immediately had set himself up as a merchant with a partner, Andrew Robertson. From their base in Charlestown, South Carolina, they traded with the West Indies, Great Britain and other parts of America. In 1762 Baillie moved to Savannah, Georgia,<sup>288</sup> four years later married a woman from a St Kitts family<sup>289</sup> and soon after, just about the time when Grace was shipped to Georgia, he became a planter but continued trading for a while longer. Baillie also held office as Commissary General for Georgia.<sup>290</sup>

George Baillie owned several pockets of land but his main plantation was Hutchinson's Island, directly opposite Savannah. This he worked with about 40 hands. He mainly grew rice and on the higher ground also some indigo and Indian corn. There were no fixed working hours on his plantation; enslaved people did task work, except during the six-to-eight-week harvesting period when they laboured every day from dawn until dusk. At other times, each person was generally allocated quarter of an acre of plantation land that they worked until they had completed whatever task was required of them. They usually finished in the afternoon. Then they had the rest of the day to themselves, as well as Sundays and the usual Christmas holidays. Their weekly allowance consisted of a peck of Indian corn, or a peck of clean rice (about 14 pounds/6.3 kg), or a bushel of potatoes (about 40 pounds/18 kg). These were all produced on the plantation. Workers also had some land they could farm for themselves.<sup>291</sup> The food allowances were more generous than those Grace would have received on Mountravers and, even allowing for the colder winters, Baillie's clothing allocations seem greater than those given out in the Caribbean. And they included shoes, which were not issued in Nevis. They were generally only worn by white folk and some elite people, and wearing them would have been a new experience for Grace. Although her footwear may have been uncomfortable and of inferior quality, wearing shoes may have given her a sense of pride and increased her self-confidence.

George Baillie was a Loyalist and banished after the American War of Independence, along with his two business partners<sup>292</sup> and over 200 other Georgia Loyalists. Their property confiscated, most fled to the British province of East Florida and from there to England and to British-held islands in the Caribbean.<sup>293</sup> In the late 1780s George Baillie turned up in London. He was among those who gave evidence to the Parliamentary enquiry into the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

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<sup>286</sup> <http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hp/colonial/Nchr/Subjects/clifton.htm> and S Lambert (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 73 p188

<sup>287</sup> There is no suggestion that George Baillie was directly related to the brothers Alexander, James and Evan Baillie. There was at least one other George Baillie, a cousin, who died at Bellville, Liberty County, in April 1791 at the age of 29 (<http://www.petersnn.org/libertyco/marriage.htm>). The notice also appeared in the Georgia Gazette.

<sup>288</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 73 pp183-204

<sup>289</sup> <http://www.georgiahistory.com/Collections/ms0041.htm> and <http://genealogytrails.com/geo/state/colonial-marriages.html>

<sup>290</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 73 p183

<sup>291</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 73 p185

<sup>292</sup> The third partner of George Baillie's firm was John Thoroughgood Jameson (Neil), born circa 1736, the son of Neil and Pembroke (Thoroughgood) Jameson. An attorney and a Loyalist during the Revolutionary War, Jameson was primarily a Georgia merchant, in partnership with Andrew Robertson and George Baillie, engaged in trade principally in South Carolina and Georgia. He was from Savannah and he, too, was banished from Georgia. The three men owned jointly a total of 1700 acres in several tracts (<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Cottage/8016/gen43000.html>).

<sup>293</sup> <http://www.rootsweb.com/~gagenweb/records/loyalist.htm>

Baillie's submission stands out as less strident and more caring and warmer in tone than that of other witnesses. He showed some empathy when he stated, for instance, that the Africans who landed in North America 'received a great injury to their health as might be seen from their squalid countenances', and he pointed out that many arrived with 'ulcerated limbs.' Having travelled to Jamaica, he concluded that work on Caribbean sugar plantation was harder than on North American estates but that punishments were equally severe. He commented positively on enslaved parents' ability to bring up children, having observed them to be 'tender and affectionate', and he believed that freed people were willing to work – something most planters denied. They generally portrayed enslaved people as lazy. Baillie also told the Committee that he had felt confident and secure about arming his people during the Siege of Savannah, in what probably was The Battle of the Rice Boats (also called the Battle of Yamacraw Bluff, on 2 and 3 March 1776). During the fighting they 'behaved with spirit' and he had no regrets about supplying them with weapons. Baillie also knew aspects of his people's private lives. He knew that there were those who 'took every step in their power' to learn to read, and with some admiration he told the Committee that they bought spelling books with their own money and that, with the assistance of literate negroes, they 'came to read tolerably well.'<sup>294</sup> He was a sympathetic observer of slave life but, at the same time, a willing participant in the trade in enslaved people and in plantation slavery.

Judging by his submission, Grace might have ended up living in a more benign environment than the one she was used to in Nevis. However, by the time Baillie gave his evidence, she was no longer alive. Grace had died some time before July 1774. JPP then recorded her as 'sent to Georgia being good for nothing. I have heard since she is dead.'

**201 Quasheba, also Great Quasheba,** was probably born in the late 1730s. The name is derived from the Twi (spoken in the central region of Ghana) for a girl born on a Sunday, Akwasiba.<sup>295</sup>

In July 1755 she may have had a daughter, Little Quasheba (No 229).

Considered 'good and able', in the 1760s Great Quasheba worked in the great gang. She was a strong woman. In her forties her value held up at N£60 and even in her fifties she still laboured in the field. This was despite her having been ill. First she had a tooth extracted, in May 1785,<sup>296</sup> and then, a year later, she suffered from 'the crabobas', or cocobays - a disease akin to leprosy.<sup>297</sup> She was not the only one to suffer from this; another woman and three men had to undergo treatment by 'the French Doctor'. He charged N£1:13:0 per patient.<sup>298</sup> They all recovered.

Many years later Great Quasheba fell ill again and in October 1798 she received 12 pectoral powders. They cost N£1:16:0.<sup>299</sup> These powders were given to people with chest complaints and the last prescription was, no doubt, for treating the illness which was to kill her. On 22 March 1801 Great Quasheba died from consumption. She was at least in her sixties.

<sup>294</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 73 p186, p184, p190 and p193 George Baillie's evidence

<sup>295</sup> Julia Stewart *1001 African Names* p147; also Richard Hart *Slaves who Abolished Slavery* Vol 2 p11 Table 1

<sup>296</sup> PP, AB 31 Archbald & Williamson's a/c

<sup>297</sup> Sheridan, RB *Doctors and Slaves* p82

<sup>298</sup> PP, AB 30 Plantation a/c

<sup>299</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

Little Quasheba died shortly afterwards. This could have been a coincidence but consumption (tuberculosis) is easily transmitted in overcrowded and poor sanitary conditions and she, too, may have become infected.

**202 Jenny, also Jenney and Rose's Jenny.** She was probably born about 1744 and the daughter of the nurse Rose (No 102). 'Good and able', Rose's Jenny worked in the great gang and was between 1766 and 1768 transferred to the Gingerland estate, with her mother and a boy called Foe. Born in December 1763, he almost certainly was her son.

By July 1783 Jenny was considered 'useless'. In the intervening years her mother had died and Foe had been in trouble for stealing a fowl from one of the domestics. Since Foe was born, Jenny also had another child; it was noted that 'Rose's Jenny to take care of her own child and therefore does nothing for the Estate.' The sentence may suggest that she had been minding someone else's offspring and that, from then on, she was to look solely after her own. This child of hers could have met with an accident or illness which meant that it required her undivided attention.

Jenny may have been looking after the workers' children because she had 'lost one hand'. It is likely that this was the result of an accident, perhaps when feeding cane into the crusher. If a hand or arm was caught, the victim could be pulled between the rollers, and it was said that, in order for someone to quickly sever arms or hands, sharpened cutlasses were kept by the side of the machine. When employed as a doctor in St Kitts, James Grainger, no doubt, treated such injuries and in his poem on *The Sugar Cane*, he lamented this 'sad spectacle of woe':

And now thy mills dance eager in the gale;  
Feed well their eagerness;  
But O beware;  
Nor trust, between the steel-cas'd cylinders,  
The hand incautious: off the member snapt...<sup>300</sup>

In a footnote he explained that 'the unfortunate wretch must fall victim to his imprudence or sleepiness if a hatchet do not immediately strike off the entangled member; or the mill be not instantly put out of the wind.' If Jenny's hand was, indeed, hacked off in such an accident, someone near the cane rollers must have reacted with great speed, thereby saving her life.

Despite being deemed 'useless', ten years later Rose's Jenny worked in the field again<sup>301</sup> until she was finally freed from work in July 1794. She had regained sufficient control over her maimed arm that, even with one hand, she was able to perform some tasks, and JPP expected her and two other women to care for themselves and not be a burden on the estate: 'I think stump hand Jenny, Benneba and Abba are capable of providing for themselves; if you find they are, give them no allowance unless they do something for the estate.' Rose's Jenny was expected watch people's houses during the day. While the others were in the field and the slave village was uninhabited, she and the other women were supposed to account to the manager for any thefts.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Grainger, James *The Sugar Cane – a Poem in Four Books* Book III p95

<sup>301</sup> PP, Misc Vols 12 Leeward Islands Calendar

<sup>302</sup> PP, LB 11: JPP, off Tortola, to James Williams, Nevis, 31 July 1794

Rose's Jenny died, probably in her fifties, some time between August 1794 and December 1801.

**203 Tusey or Tusy** was probably born between about 1743 and 1745. In the mid-1760s she was in the great gang and, being 'good and able', she continued working in the field until her fifties.

Tusey gave birth to a child, and it is very likely that Tallihoe, born in February 1765, was her son. The 'midwife delivered Tusey' and for her assistance was paid N15s.<sup>303</sup>

Aged around 40, Tusey was worth N£80, the 18-year-old Tallihoe N£5 more. Apparently he was healthy then, but he died four years later. He was only 22 years old.

Tusey died, probably between May 1803 and December 1806, in her late fifties to early sixties.

**204 Penney or Penny, later Old Penny.** Born probably between 1743 and 1745, she worked in the great gang and was said to have been 'good and able'. In the late 1790s she still worked in the field.

Penny kept chickens - in April 1765 she sold JPP three, worth N4s6d - and at least one sow: in May 1765 he paid her in two instalments 'for a pig', first N7s6d, then another N3s9d. Weighing in at only 17 pounds, this must have been a piglet rather than a pig.<sup>304</sup>

Apart from selling foodstuffs to JPP, Penny was among those who received cash payments from him. These may have been for services but they could also have been rewards for good behaviour. She had N1s6d in August 1765 and another N1s6d in January 1766, and she and Pompey received a shilling each on 18 June 1766. She also borrowed money from him: N2s3d on 14 September 1765, N1s6d on 13 March 1768 and – after a long break - N8s3d on 17 January 1781.<sup>305</sup> There is no record of the money ever being repaid.

In the late 1770s Penny was sick, and Ward's Billy, a man from a neighbouring plantation, was called in to treat her. He received N8s3d for curing her of an unknown illness.<sup>306</sup> However, the treatment apparently did not restore her health, or she fell ill again, because four years later she was valued at only N£50.

Having been sold with Mountravers to the new owner, Edward Huggins, Penny died before December 1816. She was in her sixties or seventies. Given her advanced age, it is likely that she was one of the nine people who were said to have died within six months of Huggins taking over in August 1809.<sup>307</sup>

**205 Little Broom's Sarah, later Broom's Sarah.** She was born on the plantation, probably around 1745. Her mother was Broom's Sarah (No 135), and her grandmother had also been called Sarah. Her uncle Jack (No 129) died before 1761. His son, her cousin, may have been Jack (No 218) who was a few years younger than Little Broom's Sarah. She had an elder sister, Broom's Sarah's Kitty (No 190). Both

<sup>303</sup> PP, AB 18 Wm Coker's a/c, also AB 15

<sup>304</sup> PP, AB 17: 17 April 1765, 15 May and 25 May 1765

<sup>305</sup> PP, AB 17: 18 August 1765, 13 January 1766 and 18 June 1766

<sup>306</sup> PP, AB 17: 24 August 1779

<sup>307</sup> PN194, quoting Box 1 A-L: JW Tobin to Gov Elliott, 7 September 1810, unpublished letter



young women worked in the great gang, both were 'good and able' and between 1766 and 1768 both remained on Mountravers when others were moved to the Gingerland estate. Their mother, 'old and a cripple', was manumitted in 1765 and died some time before May 1777.

It is possible Little Broom's Sarah had a daughter, Amelia, who was born in June 1771. She gave birth again; the midwife received a payment for assisting the delivery on 6 May 1777.<sup>308</sup> This was the same day Little Nero was born. It is likely that the boy's father was a purchased slave, the cook Nero (No 396), who came to Mountravers in 1774.

Broom's Sarah died some time before July 1783. She probably was in her thirties. Given her age, and the fact that she had no recorded illnesses, she may have died in childbed.

**206 Abba** was probably born in the mid-1740s. Her grandmother may have been Abbah (No 45), who perhaps was alive when she was born but who died before 1761.

Aged around 20, Abba worked in the field and, said to have been 'good', between 1766 and 1768 was on the Gingerland estate.

By the time John Springett treated her for venereal disease, in 1778,<sup>309</sup> her health was declining already. Her rather low value of N£60 five years later reflected this, as well as the fact that, in her forties, she worked in Tom's gang – the weeding gang that did the lightest work. By July 1794 her health had deteriorated so much that she was manumitted but, like Rose's Jenny and Benneba, JPP thought Abba was capable of fending for herself. He proposed that, with the agreement of the manager, she and some other women were to have their allowances withheld unless they did some kind of work for the estate.<sup>310</sup>

Abba died between January 1802 and December 1806. She probably was in her mid-fifties to early sixties.

**207 Susanna or Susannah** was probably born about 1745/6. Her mother or aunt may have been Sue (No 113) who died between 1761 and 1762.

Susanna worked in the field and was described as 'good'. She gave birth to a child in September 1776<sup>311</sup> but this died before July 1783. At that time she was valued at N£80, which was the average for a female. This does not suggest she suffered ill health, although twice that year she did receive medical attention: first from John Springett for 'a venereal complaint'<sup>312</sup> and five months later, in November, doctors Archbald and Williamson gave her 'a phial of specific mixture'.<sup>313</sup>

The treatment did not save her. Susanna died some time before December 1785. She was in her late thirties, aged 40 at the most.

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<sup>308</sup> PP, AB 20 Agnes Adams a/c

<sup>309</sup> PP, AB 26 John Springett's a/c; also AB 17: 4 September 1778

<sup>310</sup> PP, LB 11: JPP, off Tortola, to James Williams, Nevis, 31 July 1794

<sup>311</sup> PP, AB 20 Agnes Adams' a/c

<sup>312</sup> PP, AB 26 John Springett's a/c

<sup>313</sup> PP, AB 30 Archbald & Williamson's a/c

**208 Lena** was probably born around 1749. She was a 'sheep keeper' in 1765 and of a 'good' disposition. Between 1766 and 1768 she worked on the Gingerland estate. She was responsible for the 22 sheep kept there: one ram, 12 ewes, five weathers and four lambs. Mountravers had more than double the number of animals.

Lena's duties would have been similar to those of the male stock keepers. She had to lead the animals to good grazing while making sure that they did not stray and become a nuisance. Sheep and the other livestock were in competition for food, and with sheep grazing 'so close that other stock will starve' their keepers had 'to take particular care not to suffer sheep to feed in the pastures, where the mules and cattle feed.' Being draught animals and burden carriers, mules and cattle were of greater importance to the plantation than sheep. JPP let the sheep forage on 'gut sides, and in the open pasture about Black Rock and other parts of the bay ...'<sup>314</sup> After she was moved back to Mountravers it is very likely that Lena carried on looking after all the sheep there.

Lena died before July 1783. She was in her mid-twenties to mid-thirties. It is possible that Laena (b October 1775) was her daughter, or perhaps her niece.

**209 Morote** was probably born around 1743/4. It is possible that she was related to Moro (No 121), who died before 1761.

Said to have been 'able but runaway', Morote lived up to her reputation. In the autumn of 1765 she was absent again and hiding out somewhere. A member of the great gang, she was a valuable worker and JPP wanted her back. He sent out a hunter 'to catch Morote' and chose Little Robin, a trusted man about the same age as her. He brought her back at the end of October.<sup>315</sup>

Between 1766 and 1768 Morote worked on the Gingerland estate and later may well have had to work under Little Robin, who had become a driver.

In her thirties or early forties, Morote died between July 1774 and July 1783.

**210 Ducks Jenney or Jenny.** A Creole, it is likely that she was Ducks Jemmy's older sister and born around 1745.

Ducks Jenny was one of twelve people who had the smallpox during the outbreak in 1762 but, as Coker wrote, she 'had the confluent kind and expressive thick'. Having suffered a particularly virulent form of the smallpox, Ducks Jenny was not strong enough to withstand the disease and died between June and October 1762.

Coker was not surprised: 'Indeed the Dr. always said he thought she must die'. Described by Coker as a 'young girl', Ducks Jenny was, at the most, in her late teens.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> PP, LB 8: JPP to Wm Coker, 8 August 1788

<sup>315</sup> PP, AB 17: 30 October 1765

<sup>316</sup> PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 21 October 1762

**211 Sabella, later Old Sabella**, a black woman, was born around the mid-1740s,<sup>317</sup> probably on the plantation. Most likely her name was a shortened version of Isabella,<sup>318</sup> but it may also have been the Latin form, Sibella, of the Greek *sibyl*. The name could also have had an African origin: Sabala means onion among the Ewe and Saturday among the Bobangi of today's Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>319</sup>

In December 1778, when she was in her early thirties, Sabella had a child but this died before July 1783.

Having worked 'in the house' in the 1760s, Sabella's value of N£90 suggests that in 1783 she may still have been a domestic. JPP had described her as 'good' but something must have happened - most likely during James Williams's time as manager - <sup>320</sup> that caused her to be demoted to fieldwork. In the late 1790s, when she was in her fifties, Sabella was a field hand.<sup>321</sup>

After Mountravers was sold in 1807, Old Sabella lived on the estate for at least another decade and died some time between 1817 and 1822. She was no less than 70 years old and may well have been in her late 70s.

**212 Little Phibba, later Phibba and Old Phibba (also spelt Fiba)**. She was black and born on the plantation around 1745. Her mother may have been Great Phibba (No 117). Both worked on Mountravers between 1766 and 1768 and both were field hands. Little Phibba, like Great Phibba, was said to have been 'good'. She was in the great, while the older woman was in the small gang. Appraised in 1783 at a relatively high sum, N£100, Little Phibba probably was a strong woman and in good health. In her early fifties, she still worked in the field.<sup>322</sup> The only known medical treatment she underwent was for 'negro worms'.<sup>323</sup>

If JPP's knowledge of his people was correct and his memory did not fail him, Little Phibba had a son, James Arthurton, who was born in April 1775.<sup>324</sup> The boy's father was the overseer and distiller Thomas Arthurton, about eight years Phibba's senior. Arthurton had come to Nevis with William Coker in 1761 and worked for JPP on and off until 1777. James's sister was Betsey Arthurton, born in September 1768, and it is likely that Phibba was also her mother. James was conceived just after JPP had left for a short trip to England, and Betsey while JPP was away in England. The pattern suggests that he might not have approved of liaisons between his white employees and the plantation women. Whether or not Phibba was a willing participant is open to debate. Thomas Arthurton certainly did not purchase her when, in 1783, he bought his eight-year-old son and his 14-year-old daughter.<sup>325</sup> This might suggest that theirs was not a stable or permanent relationship although it is also likely that Arthurton's finances would not have stretched to buying Phibba as well. He spent almost two years' wages on buying the children. The sale of the children was also exceptional because, technically, they were entailed to JPP's son. Phibba, too, was entailed, and selling Phibba as well may have been one favour too many.

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<sup>317</sup> UKNA, T 71/364

<sup>318</sup> On Charlot's, a woman was called Sabella in 1696 and 1697, Isabella in 1701, and Sibela in 1704. On another plantation, Stoney Grove, the name as also spelt Sybella (UKNA, T 71/364).

<sup>319</sup> Muñoz, Sharon R *The Afro-American Griot Speaks* p104

<sup>320</sup> In 1793 Sabella probably still worked in the house; she was not on the gang list compiled by the manager, Thomas Pym Weekes.

<sup>321</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary Front cover

<sup>322</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary Front cover; also listed in 1793

<sup>323</sup> PP, AB 26 John Springett a/c

<sup>324</sup> PP, LB 15: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, 29 October 1799

<sup>325</sup> PP, AB 26 Plantation a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f138 22 September 1783

After Betsey Arthurton left the plantation she had three children: Ann, Robert and John. Still only in her thirties, she died between 1799 and 1803. Around that time the woman who may have been Phibba's mother, also died, and Phibba may have lost both her mother and her daughter within a short space of time. But she also had happy news when she learnt that Thomas Arthurton had freed their son James, as well as Betsey's three children, Phibba's grandchildren.

Having been sold with the plantation to Edward Huggins, confusion over names then caused a misunderstanding as to who owned her and the various other Phibbas. For a couple of years correspondence went back and forth between JPP and Huggins but she would not necessarily have been aware of this mix-up. By 1811 there were two more Phibbas: Peter's Flora's daughter, who belonged to Huggins, and an African girl, who had been exchanged with another girl for two boys whom JPP had reserved for his own use. Mulatto Polly (alias Polly Weekes), then on a visit to England, cleared up the matter for JPP: 'The two Phibbas sold by my son to Mr Huggins Polly Weekes, who returns to Nevis in the *Edward*, informs me they are both living - that is Old Fibba and Phibba the daughter of Flora'.<sup>326</sup> The African girl was rented to Clarke's Estate with JPP's reserved people, while Flora's daughter and Old Phibba remained on Mountravers. There, in 1817 when all enslaved people were recorded in Nevis's first island-wide census, her age was over-estimated by 15 years.<sup>327</sup> Then known as Old Phibba, she was said to have been 'about 85 years' old. Her long working life had taken its toll.

While Old Phibba underwent her first official registration as an enslaved person, her son James Arthurton registered his own, a five-year-old girl. Two of Phibba's grandchildren, Betsey's daughter Ann and her son John, had also become slaveholders. They were among the island's coloured, property-owning elite, and it is likely that this would have been a source of pride for Phibba.

Phibba's son James had three children (Eliza, Amelia and George) but James died some time between 1817 and 1820. The father of Phibba's children, Thomas Arthurton, died in February 1824 at the age of 86. Old Phibba outlived him by some years and died on 1 December 1827. She was in her early eighties. Of the women who had belonged to the first John Frederick Pinney, she had survived the longest.

**213 Little Flora** was probably born about 1746/7. She worked in the great gang and was described as 'good'.

Little Flora died between June 1772 and July 1774. She was aged between about 25 and 28.

**214 Little Essex** was born on Mountravers on Tuesday, 18 December 1753. Aged 11, he worked 'with the mules' and between 1766 and 1768 he was, with his father Great Essex, on the Gingerland estate. Working with the mules may have meant three kinds of activity: driving them as a carter, driving them around the mill, or minding them.

On Saturday, 31 August 1771, Little Essex was 'stolen off the island', together with another man called Charles. He was from Parris's, a neighbouring plantation.<sup>328</sup> Perhaps fetching something from town, they might have been kidnapped under circumstances similar to those experienced by three negro freemen

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<sup>326</sup> PP, LB 23: JPP to John Colhoun Mills, 10 January 1811, and LB 50: P&A to JW Stanley, 3 January 1812

<sup>327</sup> UKNA, T 71/364

<sup>328</sup> PP, AB 20 Voyage to Martinico a/c

from Boston. They 'were decoyed on board' by a ship's captain calling for their help. Having lured them aboard, these men were put in irons and spirited away to St Bartholomew's.<sup>329</sup> Little Essex and Charles, too, were taken to another island; they were held 'on a vessel bound to St Vincent'. This was immediately 'sent after', while JPP and some men made it their business to search every vessel they 'had the least reason to suspect' of carrying the stolen men. Straightaway, JPP also advertised the theft.<sup>330</sup>

St Vincent had become British in 1763 and many of its first settlers came from Nevis.<sup>331</sup> Little Essex and Charles may have heard of men like John Kennedy, who had assisted William Coker with his shop in Charlestown, and of George Lowman, who owed Coker money.<sup>332</sup> These men had become members of the Assembly, as had Evan Baillie, whom they might also have known. At the time Kennedy, Lowman, Baillie and the other Assemblymen concerned themselves with improving the island's infrastructure and services: supplying water to all estates, establishing a court, appointing men to public posts. The Assembly voted to spend money on repairing casks for storing gunpowder, on improving the rickety jail to prevent 'the frequent escapes', and on installing a doctor to 'attend and administer medicines to such poor white and black prisoners'.<sup>333</sup>

St Vincent had an indigenous population of Caribs who had long resisted successive attempts to colonise their island. In 1771 the conflict escalated when they refused to swear the oath of alliance, or to exchange their lands for land in another area. A year later troops entered Carib territories, it came to clashes and both sides suffered heavy casualties.<sup>334</sup> A newspaper reported the action:

On Monday last, as a Party of the thirty second Regiment was marching to join the Troops encamped near Niamboo River, they were attacked by the Carraibs from amongst the Bushes. A great many of the Savages were killed and wounded; of the King's Troops a Corporal and four Men were killed and wounded, and a Negro who attended them was likewise killed. It seems that a Frenchman, who was standing upon a Hill adjacent to the Place where the Engagement began, gave the Carraibs the signal when to fire ...

While waiting for troop reinforcements, Caribs burnt down several plantations, killing some of the enslaved people. Punishment was swift and hard. A Carib, who had surrendered, was hanged and several others taken prisoner.<sup>335</sup> Either around this time, or before the fighting took place, Little Essex and Charles were moved to French-controlled Martinique.

Meanwhile on Mountravers, although absent from the plantation, Little Essex was listed with the other entailed people in JPP's marriage settlement because JPP expected him to come back one day. And, indeed, soon there was evidence that Little Essex and his mate were still alive. Shortly after he had returned from his honeymoon, JPP heard from William Martin, a mulatto from Antigua, that he and an

<sup>329</sup> Anon 'Documents Relating to Negro Masonry in America' in *The Journal of Negro History* Vol 21 Issue 4 (October 1936) p420  
The Nevis mariner's son John D Levy recounted in his autobiography how, as a child in his father's house, he had overheard American captains talk about kidnapping people. This knowledge later stood him in good stead; with great presence of mind he managed to make good his escape from a vessel (Levy, Rachel Frances (ed) *The Life and Adventures of John Levy* pp7-8). I am grateful to Martha Mayo of the Center for Lowell History at the University of Massachusetts Lowell for bringing this publication to my attention.

<sup>330</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Wm Martin 'a Mulatto in Antigua', 29 December 1772

<sup>331</sup> Among the planters who left Nevis for St Vincent was Thomas Ottley. In the mid-1750s he had two plantations in Nevis with altogether over 150 enslaved people (PP, Dom Box P: General's Tax Notebook 1755). He was elected to the St Vincent Assembly (UKNA, CO 155/8: 10 February 1770; also <http://www.stvincent.netfirms.com/landgrants.htm>).

<sup>332</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 26 July 1768

<sup>333</sup> UKNA, CO 155/8: e.g. 10 February 1770, 6 January 1771, and 2 March 1772

<sup>334</sup> Burns, Sir Alan *History of the British West Indies* p503 and 505

<sup>335</sup> <http://www.stvincent.netfirms.com>

unnamed captain had seen the two young men offered for sale. Just before they were due to be sold, both had declared themselves as JPP's property, 'upon wch (sic) the Captn forbad (sic) the sale'. It is interesting to note that Parris's man also claimed to have belonged to JPP; perhaps he thought JPP's name held more sway in the islands than Edward Parris's.

William Martin, the man who had witnessed the scene, probably was somehow connected with Samuel Martin, the author of *An Essay Upon Plantership*.<sup>336</sup> Visited by Lady Schaw and painted by Nicholas Pocock, Martin's Greencastle Plantation in Antigua was well-known in the Caribbean. Samuel Martin's brother was called William Thomas Martin, and this mulatto man may well have carried his name.

The mulatto William Martin offered his assistance in tracking down the two men and asked JPP to employ him. In his reply JPP pointed out that one of the men was Edward Parris's but thought that Parris would go along with whatever JPP planned. JPP was going to reward Martin 'for his trouble' but wanted more information. He enquired of Martin how he could prove that the men were those who had been stolen and what steps he proposed to take in recovering them. JPP asked for a description of the men, the date of the sale, the name of the captain who had also witnessed it, and he added as a PS: 'Inform us whether you took care to confine them when you forbid the sale'.<sup>337</sup>

JPP went to some trouble to recover Little Essex. On the same day he wrote to William Martin, 29 December 1772, he also used his own Caribbean-wide connections and contacted Alexander Wardrobe in Dominica with a request for assistance:

My negro fellow is a Creole of this island, born upon my estate called Little Essex, about 18 or 19 years old, very short and small for his age, a cunning sensible boy. Should it be necessary to prove the property I can send up his father who is still living called Great Essex, with one of my white overseers. - Mr Edward Parris's negro is a young man called Charles above middle stature some country marks about his forehead and crooked in one or both of his knees. ... if you would be so obliging as to write to your correspondent in Martinique immediately ... & desire him to secure the beforementioned negroe ... I will amply reward the person.

In a PS he added: 'Should they not be secured as we expect, pray advertise them in your island and Martinique, describing them as above and offer a large reward for apprehending them.'<sup>338</sup>

In this letter JPP gave the only physical description of any of his people. It reveals that Little Essex was neither branded nor decorated with country marks – otherwise JPP would certainly have referred to these identifying features – and that he was undersized for his age. Modern studies into height and growth patterns of slave and free populations have shown that, generally, enslaved children were shorter than their free counterparts, and for this several explanations have been put forward: that high work intensity among pregnant and lactating women deprived the foetus of nourishment and shortened periods of breast-feeding<sup>339</sup> and that poor nutrition during the early years weakened the immune system and made children more vulnerable to repeated infections, causing stunted growth. Genetic factors may also have played a role.<sup>340</sup> While the relative importance of each of these causes is still being debated, experts

<sup>336</sup> Sheridan, RB *Sugar and Slavery* p202

<sup>337</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Wm Martin a Mulatto in Antigua, 29 December 1772

<sup>338</sup> PP, LB 3: JPP to Alexander Wardrobe, Dominica, 29 December 1772

<sup>339</sup> Bodenhorn, Howard 'Early Achievement of Modern Growth: Height and Health of Free Black Children in Antebellum Virginia', citing Steckel (1987, 1992a)

<sup>340</sup> Frank, John W and J Fraser Mustard 'The Determinants of Health from a Historical Perspective' in *Deadalus* Vol 123 No 4 (Autumn 1994)

agree that 'the height of a typical slave child would trigger alarm in a modern paediatrician's office'.<sup>341</sup> According to JPP, Little Essex was undersized and therefore even smaller than many of his fellow slaves while Parris's Charles was 'above middle stature'. However, being 'crooked in one or both of his knees' meant that in early childhood his health, too, had been affected. He may have suffered from rickets, a bone deformity caused by vitamin deficiency.

After William Martin had spotted them in Martinique, it took another two and a half years for Little Essex and Charles to return to Nevis. For the past decade Martinique had been in French hands and although it is not known what the young men did during their time in the island, it is likely they were put to work on one of the plantations; the large number of enslaved people imported during the British occupation in the early 1760s had developed a thriving sugar industry. However, just when JPP sent his father-in-law to Martinique to collect the two men, a plague of ants had almost totally destroyed the island's crop, and they may have become surplus to requirement. Such was the devastation that a reward of £50,000 currency was offered for the eradication of the blight.<sup>342</sup>

JPP had to buy back Little Essex and Charles, for N£83 and N£52:16:0 respectively. Robert Robertson Jones, Revd William Jones's brother, took the cash on JPP's behalf to St Kitts and handed it over to 'Messrs Semerall & Sons at Sandy Point'. This company had either bought the two men, or were collecting the money on behalf of a third party. While Edward Parris reimbursed JPP the cost of purchasing Charles,<sup>343</sup> it appears that otherwise he did not contribute to William Burt Weekes's 'Martinico Voyage' expenses. These totalled a staggering N£320. Little Essex's recovery alone came to just over N£140, the rest was for hiring Peter Smitten's vessel, for provisions and for William Burt Weekes's expenses at Guadeloupe and Martinique.<sup>344</sup> JPP may just have been single-mindedly determined to regain rightful possession of one of his people but it may say something about his humanity that he went to such lengths and spent a considerable amount of money to recover a single individual. Purchasing a replacement would have been much cheaper. It is surprising, though, that it took so long to retrieve the two young men, but it is just possible that Little Essex and Charles were reluctant to leave Martinique. The three men stolen from Boston and taken to St Bartholomew's returned to America within six months. However, theirs might have been an easier task: the Boston men were free, literate and one of them, 'a sensible fellow', was also a Freemason, and it can be no coincidence that the merchant to whom they were offered for sale was also a Freemason.<sup>345</sup>

Little Essex returned to Nevis in the summer of 1775 but by July 1783 he was not on the plantation any more. Neither was his father; he died between September 1780 and July 1783. It is possible that both men died, perhaps during the time of near starvation following the island's surrender to the French in January 1782.<sup>346</sup> Little Essex was, at the most, 29 years old.

Soon after his return, Edward Parris's Charles may possibly have had a son, or a boy was named after him: in 1817 a 40-year-old man called Charles lived on Parris's Black Rock Plantation.

<sup>341</sup> Bodenhorn, Howard 'Early Achievement of Modern Growth', citing Steckel (1992 p498)

<sup>342</sup> Burns, Sir Alan *History of the British West Indies* p515, citing *Gentleman's Magazine* 1775 p501

<sup>343</sup> PP, AB 17: 17 June 1775

<sup>344</sup> PP, AB 17; also AB 21 Plantation a/c and AB 20 f168

<sup>345</sup> Anon 'Documents Relating to Negro Masonry in America' p420

<sup>346</sup> Hubbard, Vincent K 'Slave Resistance in Nevis' Part II in *NHCS Newsletter* (February 1996) p9

**215 Little London, later London.** According to the slave lists, Little London and Little Essex were both born on Tuesday, 18 December 1753, and, aged 11, both were still classed as 'child boys'. This suggests that Little London, like Little Essex, was small for his age.

It is likely that the distiller London (No 27) was his father, or grandfather. He died between October 1765 and May 1767. At that time Little London was employed to 'cut grass for sheep'.

By then called just London, he may have had two children with Barbai (No 344). Her first son, also called Little London, was born in June 1785. Barbai was then 16 and London 31 years old. She had three more daughters and another son (Flora, Kate, Betsey and Adam), but there is no evidence to link these children with him - except for the second girl, Kate, who was later known as Kate London. Described as 'yellow cast', she may possibly have been his child, too.

In July 1780 George Frost, a man who was temporarily hired to watch the boiling house,<sup>347</sup> paid London N10s 'on his account'.<sup>348</sup> He then probably worked a sugar boiler already, having perhaps replaced Old Kersey. Three years on, by July 1783, and London certainly had become a sugar boiler. He was valued at N£130. The N16s6d JPP paid him was perhaps a bonus for producing a good batch<sup>349</sup> but this would have been an exception. Over the years JPP constantly complained about bad sugars.

During one of JPP's visits to Nevis, London was the only man to sell him chickens. His and Harriett's were either bigger or better, or these two got a preferential price: at N2s each, their fowls were more expensive than those sold by Bridget and Sarah.<sup>350</sup>

Aged 23, London had been suffering from an unspecified illness, which Old Ned (No 52) treated and, a year later, cured.<sup>351</sup> In his mid-forties London fell ill again, and in March 1798 doctors Archbald & Williamson prescribed 'Materials for a quart lotion',<sup>352</sup> followed six months later by '4 diaph.[oretic] boluses'.<sup>353</sup> These pills were meant to induce sweating.

He lost his health and his strength. While he still worked as the 'first boiler', he also became a watch and guarded the Old Potato piece. Occasionally he helped out with other light work, such as attending the masons. Once he did this together with Scandal, whose health was also declining, and with Lucy who was in her sixties. It appears that by May 1803 he was not employed as a boiler any more.

Barbai and her children Flora and Adam died between 1807 and 1816; London died between December 1816 and July 1817. He was 63 years old.

**216 Little Kersey, later Kersey,** was probably born around 1753. The boiler Old Kersey (No 24) may have been his father, or grandfather. He died between 1774 and 1783.

Like Little Essex and Little London, Kersey was a 'child boy' until 1765 when his duty was to 'cut grass for the sheep'. Between 1766 and 1768 he was transferred to the Gingerland estate.

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<sup>347</sup> PP, AB 26 f110

<sup>348</sup> PP, AB 17: 10 July 1780

<sup>349</sup> PP, AB 17: 3 August 1782

<sup>350</sup> PP, AB 33

<sup>351</sup> PP, AB 21 Plantation a/c; also AB 17: 26 April 1777 and AB 17 Nevis a/c

<sup>352</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>353</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c



By the time he was about thirty years old, Kersey had become the driver of the second gang. At N£130 his value was N£20 less than that of the driver of the great gang, Robin (No 156). Both men and some other skilled people received a shirt, made 'from the piece of check', which JPP sent not long after he returned to England. This was intended 'as an encouragement'.<sup>354</sup>

Kersey was ill - and would have been so for a considerable length of time - but the records do not reveal whether he received any medical treatment. Probably in his mid-thirties, Kersey died on 24 July 1788. The cause of death was given as consumption.

**217 Tom Punch** was probably born between 1753 and 1755. His father, or grandfather, may have been Tom Punch (No 30), a man who died before 1761.

Since infancy, Tom Punch was 'ruined by lameness'. As a child he was not expected to do any work. It is possible that he had a hunched back, like the puppet character Mr Punch in the then very popular Punch and Judy shows.

Recorded as 'useless' in 1769, Tom Punch - along with other people who were past productive work - was not included among the individuals listed in JPP's marriage settlement. By 1783, however, he had a job which he was capable of holding down: he had become a 'taylor', and although appraised at only N£50, the money he made by being hired out compensated for his low value. JPP expected Tom Punch to bring in N3s9d a week and another tailor, Tom Thraske (No 371), N10s a week. This was 'clear without allowance for loss days' and applied to both men.<sup>355</sup> Tom Thraske, whom JPP had acquired in 1771, was expected to bring in more money because he was fit and healthy and possessed superior skills.

It was noted that Tom Punch was 'not employed on the Estate'. In fact he was working for the other plantation tailor, Tom Thraske. In an unusual but not unique arrangement, Tom Punch was hired by Tom Thraske. This man, who was some years older than him, paid N5s a week to employ him, from 30 June 1783 until 18 January 1786 and again from 24 January until 6 May 1786.<sup>356</sup> It suited everyone that these two men were in charge of their own employment rather than the manager having to find jobs for them, and it allowed both tailors to enjoy a degree of independence and to shape their lives as they saw fit. Any money they made on top of the agreed rates was theirs to keep.

After he had worked for Tom Thraske, Tom Punch hired himself out for several periods and in the following four years brought in about N£17. His weekly rate was N5s. Although higher than the N3s9d JPP had originally expected him to hand over, this was relatively low; men who were temporarily employed on ships brought in N4s 1/2d a day. His last hire income was accounted for on 26 September 1790.<sup>357</sup> It is possible that JPP, who had visited Nevis that summer, put an end to his working out and that from then on his activities were officially confined to the plantation. However, he may also have suffered from declining health. Tom Punch died between January 1798 and December 1801. He was in his forties.

Despite his lifelong disability, over many years he had managed to sustain useful and gainful employment. It was clean work, away from the fields, and his skills had enabled him to earn money and to earn the respect of others.

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<sup>354</sup> PP, LB 5: JPP to Joseph Gill, 5 January 1784

<sup>355</sup> PP, Misc Vols 7 1783-1794 List of Deeds and Papers at Nevis

<sup>356</sup> PP, AB 31 Thomas Thraske alias Tom Tross a/c, AB 35 Loose page Tom Tross' a/c

<sup>357</sup> PP, AB 30 Negro Hire a/c, AB 39, AB 43 f23 and f32 and AB 35 f9

**218 Little Jack, later Jack.** Born on Monday, 28 July 1755, he probably was the son of Jack (No 129), a nephew of Broom's Sarah (No 135), and a cousin of Broom's Sarah's Kitty (No 190) and Little Broom's Sarah (No 205). The older Jack died some time before 1761.

As a young child, Little Jack supplied 'Grass for sheep' but when he was 15 years old, he and another boy, Primus (No 273), were to train as carpenters. JPP paid half their apprentice fee of N£15:0:0 to their master, John Cornelius. A free negro, this man had in the 1760s rented a property in Bristol but then lived in Charlestown, where he had built a house opposite the Cedar Trees.<sup>358</sup> Recently he had hired Range (No 165) and some other men, but Range had died during a smallpox outbreak. Cornelius then also died, before the boys had even started their training.<sup>359</sup> It is likely that another skilled slave, perhaps Codando (No 185), instructed Jack instead: by 1783 he was worth N£100 and may then have worked as a carpenter's assistant already. The other boy, Primus, had been apprenticed to Job Powell and was worth N£15 more. His higher value may have been due to him having been trained by a white carpenter.

From the beginning of March 1789 Jack was hired with Glasgow Wells to Morgan Hearne, a carpenter and millwright. Over a period of ten months the two men lost twelve days owing to sickness,<sup>360</sup> and their employment probably ended when Morgan Hearne died.<sup>361</sup>

Glasgow Wells was almost immediately hired out again and Jack joined him a month later. Until 10 July 1790 they worked for another carpenter, Patrick Ryan,<sup>362</sup> and again both men lost days through sickness.<sup>363</sup> The man who employed them lived in Charlestown and many years earlier had done work on Sharloes.<sup>364</sup> Ryan may well have been Irish and appears to have belonged to the poor whites in the island. When he died a couple of years later, he was broke.<sup>365</sup>

While they were hired to Patrick Ryan, JPP visited Nevis and Jack sold him 7 1/2 pounds of mutton.<sup>366</sup> At N12d per pound, this was a third more expensive than pork. It appears that the Mountravers people kept fewer sheep; pigs could be held more easily in confined spaces whereas sheep needed a wider range. Earlier only Range and Billy Keefe had sold mutton but none of the women sold mutton and only Patty, the midwife, sold a lamb.

When he was next hired out, Jack worked with Primus. During the period from 25 November 1795 until 4 July 1796 each man lost 15 days due to sickness. They were employed by Job Powell, who had trained Primus, and probably repaired the mill at Woodland and the windmill at Sharloes.<sup>367</sup> One of their jobs, for instance, involved 'assisting Job Powell to wedge the spindle gudgeon'.<sup>368</sup> Job Powell was very familiar with Mountravers and its people; he had first hired the woman Bess Powell from JPP and then bought and freed her.

<sup>358</sup> ECSCRN, Kings Bench & Common Pleas 1764-1766; PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker to JPP, 26 March 1764, and Dom Box S1: William Burt Weekes to ?Miss Weekes, 16 November 1794

<sup>359</sup> PP, AB 20

<sup>360</sup> PP, AB 30 Morgan Hearne's a/c; AB 43 f32 Negro Hire a/c; also AB 39 and DM 1173 Nevis Ledger (Mt Sion) 1789-1794 f43 Negro Hire a/c

<sup>361</sup> PP, AB 39 Morgan Hearne dec'd a/c

<sup>362</sup> PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger (Mt Sion) 1789-1794 f43 Negro Hire a/c; also AB 39 Patrick Ryan's a/c

<sup>363</sup> PP, AB 30 Patrick Ryan's a/c; also AB 43 Patrick Ryan's a/c

<sup>364</sup> PP, WI Box D: Receipt dated 27 February 1765

<sup>365</sup> PP, AB 39 Webbe Hobson's a/c

<sup>366</sup> PP, AB 33

<sup>367</sup> PP, AB 47 Job Powell's a/c

<sup>368</sup> PP, AB 47 Plantation a/c

In the autumn of 1799 James Williams, the manager, decided that a new horsemill should be built at Sharloes. He employed a man called John Henley (also Hanley) and hired to him Jack and Frank Sanders (No 482).<sup>369</sup> They began work on 28 November and three months later 'Mr Henley finished the horse mill'.<sup>370</sup> John Henley was a free coloured house carpenter, who later gave evidence when Edward Huggins stood, once more, accused of cruelty. Henley lived in St George Gingerland<sup>371</sup> and seems to have worked with the mulatto John Hendrickson,<sup>372</sup> a man freed in the early 1790s.<sup>373</sup> The free and the white carpenters' families were related: John Hendrickson's wife Elizabeth was a daughter of the free negro woman Polly Powell and Joseph Powell and almost certainly the niece of the carpenter Job Powell.<sup>374</sup> When John Hendrickson's brother-in-law, the free mulatto James Powell, left for England in 1800, he bequeathed to John Hendrickson N£500 he had inherited from his father and his share of a property in Charlestown.<sup>375</sup> Carpenter Hendrickson and his wife prospered; by 1817 Elizabeth owned eleven people.<sup>376</sup>

In between working on the horsemill at Sharloes, Jack and Frank had to attend to the windmill as well; in February 1800 they were employed 'from yesterday morning til ten o'clock this forenoon putting in cogs in the windmill'.<sup>377</sup> It was crop time, and keeping the mill going was vital for crushing the freshly cut canes - otherwise the juice spoilt. During the period they were hired out, Jack and Primus earned N4s 1 1/2d each for working on a Sunday.<sup>378</sup> This would normally have been their day off but carpenters were called in more than once to 'expedite the windmill'<sup>379</sup> and to carry out urgent repairs.<sup>380</sup>

The last reference to Jack being hired out was from 1802 when he was employed for four months<sup>381</sup> by one of the men who had witnessed Job Powell's will,<sup>382</sup> the carpenter and cabinetmaker John Hancock.<sup>383</sup> This time Jack worked with Primus and Frank Sanders on repairing some of JPP's houses in Charlestown.

Jack had medical treatment in 1797 and 1798 - the first possibly for an accident, the second apparently for a chest complaint:

14 August 1797..... Dressing Jack's finger, a visit N£1:6:0

4 September 1798 ... 12 pectoral powders, and a large phial for nervous mixture N12s.<sup>384</sup>

Aged 46 or 47, Jack died, probably before May 1803.

<sup>369</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

<sup>370</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary: 19 February 1800

<sup>371</sup> BUL, mf XVII.33 Parliamentary Papers, Nevis: Slavery

<sup>372</sup> PP, AB 47 John Hendrickson's a/c

<sup>373</sup> ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 f704

<sup>374</sup> ECSCRN, CR 1776-1777 Unnumbered folio

<sup>375</sup> ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 f357

<sup>376</sup> UKNA, T 71/364

<sup>377</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

<sup>378</sup> PP, AB 47 f27 Cash a/c

<sup>379</sup> PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger (Mt Sion) 1789-1794 f99

<sup>380</sup> PP, AB 47 Plantation a/c

<sup>381</sup> PP, AB 57 f37 Negro Hire a/c and Pinney's a/c

<sup>382</sup> ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff313-14

<sup>383</sup> PP, AB 50 and AB 39

<sup>384</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

**219 Little Wiltshire, later Wiltshire and Old Wiltshire.** He was black and probably born on the plantation around 1760. He may have been the son or, more likely, the grandson of 'old Wiltshire' (No 131), a man whose death was considered 'a real loss to the estate'.

Wiltshire's relatively high value of N£130 was probably due to several factors: he came from a well-regarded family and his state of health and his disposition were good. In addition, JPP may have valued Wiltshire for the contribution he made to the plantation with his knowledge of medicinal plants. Wiltshire may have been a straightforward provider of roots - perhaps even a doctor or a healer in the conventional sense - but it is also likely that he was an Obeah man. Obeah has its origin in West Africa and is a belief system that enslaved people brought with them from their homelands and which survived in the Americas. Obeah men, and sometimes women, were said to possess powers that allowed them to provide a link between the real and the spiritual worlds. They could heal ailments with medicines and with magic charms, see into the future and discover secrets. Part of their medical vocabulary was blood-letting, or cupping, which they performed with a small calabash, after making incisions. JPP would have heartily approved of this practice but would not have approved of the bad, harmful potions that some Obeah men made, in order to cast spells intent on hurting or even killing an enemy. In Africa those who could communicate with the spirits went under different names – Obea, Oboe, ndi obea, Dibbeah or Onye Dibia – but they all had in common that they were said to possess special powers and that these made them important members of their communities. Their status was such that they were called upon to act as mediators and judges. The Jamaican planter-historian Edward Long claimed that enslaved people 'consulted Obeah men upon all occasions in order to revenge injuries and insults, discover and punish thieves and adulterers; to predict the future, and for the conciliation of favour.' Obeah men were respected and esteemed but they were also feared to the point where in coastal Nigeria they held 'the populace in the most absolute awe and subjection'.<sup>385</sup> The status of an Obeah man and the deference his role engendered would have been a useful foundation for the post of driver.

Wiltshire's value in 1783 was the same as that of Kersey, a driver. Kersey's health declined and he died of consumption in 1788, and probably at that point Wiltshire took over as driver of the second gang while Robin remained the driver of the great gang until his health declined and he was demoted to watch duties in the early 1790s. Certainly by about May 1793 Wiltshire was the driver of the great and Jack Will of the second gang.<sup>386</sup> Wiltshire was then in his early thirties.

Wiltshire was one of the youngest men to sell produce to JPP, and it is possible he had inherited his domestic animal (or animals) from his family: aged 19 he sold his employer a pig for N11s3d.<sup>387</sup> He may also have earned money from his knowledge of medicinal plants. In March 1784 JPP wrote to his manager about cures for venereal diseases and advised that 'Wiltshire knows all the roots etc and you can send him for them'. Patty the midwife was to 'prepare and boil them according to the directions',<sup>388</sup> and it is likely that Wiltshire also sold potions and remedies and practised as a healer, or 'root doctor'. The N6s1 1/2d the overseer John Cheyney paid to 'Wiltshire on his account' may well have covered the cost of supplying and treating him with locally-sourced medicines.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> The quote by Edward Long appeared in Douglas B Chambers's chapter 'My own nation: Igbo Exiles in the Diaspora', which gives an excellent historical overview of Obeah among the Igbo (Eltis, David and David Richardson (eds) *Routes to Slavery*).

<sup>386</sup> PP, Misc Vols 12 Leeward Islands Calendar

<sup>387</sup> PP, AB 17: 23 May 1779

<sup>388</sup> PP, LB 5: JPP to Joseph Gill, 30 March 1784

<sup>389</sup> PP, AB 47 John Cheyney's a/c

Cheyney would not have been the only white person treated by Wiltshire; many whites recognised black people's healing skills. For instance, James Rymer, a surgeon who in the 1770s spent several months in Nevis, wrote that 'different preparations of roots and herbs [were] procured from the mountain, etc, [and] used by the negroes and poor people often with great advantage.' Impressed by their success, Rymer advised white physicians 'to try every thing (sic), which has been known to do good'.<sup>390</sup> Wiltshire's learning might have been handed down to him by his mother or his father; Dr Forbes, who in the early twentieth century researched native methods of medicine and surgery in Ghana, found that one of his informants had studied 'for many years under his father' while another derived his knowledge 'from his mother, a fetish priestess'.<sup>391</sup>

By 1790 Wiltshire was in a position to improve his house, and between September and November he bought 1,250 shingles and 250 ft boards.<sup>392</sup> He was among the first to progress from a wattle and daub to a boarded and shingled house. The others, Cudjoe Stanley and Black Polly, were also among the elite, and no doubt, these three were trendsetters and had dwellings to which the less well-off aspired.

It is likely that somehow his position as a driver got him into trouble; in 1791 William Scarborough, the son of the neighbouring planter, took out a warrant and summons against Wiltshire and another driver, Jack Will. Subsequently Jack's name, however, seems to have been deleted from the summons.<sup>393</sup> What lay at the root of this case is not known, nor what came of it, but it may have been Wiltshire's forthrightness that had upset Scarborough. Wiltshire was an honest, outspoken man. When JPP's son John Frederick visited Nevis, he informed him that the previous manager, James Williams, had stolen sugar from the plantation and illegally exported it on his own account. According to Wiltshire, Williams's scam was to cut out the Pinney branding marks and stamp his own on the hogsheads, which were then shipped to America. When Wiltshire, told John Frederick Pinney of the theft, he did not have to fear any retribution from James Williams – he had died - but his brother Henry was not only present during that conversation,<sup>394</sup> he had also become the manager. He could have made Wiltshire's life very difficult. As it turned out, Henry Williams died soon after, while young Mr Pinney was still in Nevis, and Wiltshire was thereby spared any possible long-term repercussions.

Not long after John Frederick Pinney visited Nevis, Mountravers was sold. Confusion over the sale meant that first the planter John Henry Clarke was put in possession until Edward Huggins senior established his claim and in August 1809 took over the running of the plantation. He put one of his sons in charge but the workers objected to his management and rebelled. To set an example, in January 1810 Edward Huggins marched the Mountravers people to the market place, to be publicly punished for disobeying orders.

Drivers held positions which could put them in conflict with their community, and the grim situations which these trusted men faced are graphically illustrated when Edward Huggins senior forced Wiltshire and another driver to flog their fellow workers. Had they refused, they would have been severely punished, too. Short of outright rebellion, there was nothing they could do but to obey. With a cart whip, Wiltshire had to strike people on their naked bodies and not, as was more usual, over their clothes. Skilled at wielding the whip, he at least could lessen the impact by making it swing down with a loud clap that

<sup>390</sup> Rymer, James *A Description of the Island of Nevis* p24

<sup>391</sup> Forbes, J Graham MD 'Native Methods of Treatment in West Africa: With Notes on the Tropical Diseases Most Prevalent among the Inhabitants of the Gold Coast Colony' in *Journal of the Royal African Society* Vol 3 No 12 (July 1904) p378

<sup>392</sup> PP, AB 43 1790-1791 Cash a/c

<sup>393</sup> PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger (Mt Sion) 1789-1794 f93

<sup>394</sup> PP, LB 22: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 12 April 1808; also R Pares *A West India Fortune* p146

sounded more dramatic than the injury it caused – thereby satisfying Huggins's demand for revenge while trying to protect his fellow workers as much as he could. Nevertheless, no matter how softly he tried to apply his whip, each time he struck he would have seen how he cut the flesh of people he had to live and work with for the rest of his life.

His long years as a driver took their toll. He looked older than he was and in 1817 was judged to have been 'about 70'. 'Old Wiltshire' was around that age when he died 13 years later, on 15 July 1830. The boy Wiltshire, born in 1820, may have been his grandson.

**220 Little Santee, later Santee**, was probably born about 1755 to 1757 and may have been the son or grandson of Santee (No 22). His elder sister may have been Santee's Kitty (No 193).

As a child, his job was to 'cut grass for sheep', and in the late 1790s he worked in the field but his relatively high value of N£110 in 1783 suggests that he may have been a skilled man for part of his working life. This is further supported by the fact that in the same year he was hired with five other men, all coopers and carpenters, to a ship, the *Gustaf Adolph*.<sup>395</sup> It may have been his illness that brought about a transfer to fieldwork: on 27 November 1797 he had a visit from a doctor and was prescribed 'pectoral powders'. The treatment was expensive at N£2:4:0.<sup>396</sup>

Santee owned at least one goat: he sold a kid to JPP during his visit in 1790. Selling the earned him N19s;<sup>397</sup> for this he could have bought six pairs of shoes, or two bushels of corn at nine shillings each, with a shilling to spare.

He may have had a son, or nephew, also called Santee, who was born in September 1801.

Santee died between August 1807 and December 1816. He was at least 50, at the most about 61 years old.

**221 Cubbena (Cubbenna)** was probably born about 1758 to 1760. His father or grandfather may, possibly, have been one of the men of the same name who were on the plantation during Mary Pinney's time.

By the time he was in his early to mid-twenties, Cubbena was working as a domestic and valued at a relatively high N£120. He also doubled up as a watchman. He was one of three 'standing watches' and, together with Abraham and the cook Nero, guarded the yard. This was a special responsibility that, according to JPP, they were 'very apt to neglect'.<sup>398</sup> Apart from protecting the area around the Great House, Cubbena, like Nero, had other duties. They prepared some of the produce that was sent to England. Once JPP asked his manager for 'a dozen bottles of pickled pepper' and another time instructed to 'let Cubbena squeeze about 20 or 30 gallons of sowering, to be preserved and sent me.'<sup>399</sup>

<sup>395</sup> PP, AB 26 Capt Johan Trangberg and the Owners of the on the snow *Gustaf Adolph*, Sterling a/c; also f208 Negro Hire a/c and DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f117

<sup>396</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>397</sup> PP, AB 33

<sup>398</sup> PP, AB 27: JPP to Joseph Gill, undated but 1783

<sup>399</sup> PP, LB 5: JPP to Joseph Gill, December 1783

With the African seamstress Black Polly Cubbena may have had at least one child, Little Cubbenna (b March 1784), but her daughters Hetty (b January 1781) and Little Molly (b May 1787) may also have been his.

Although valued at up to N£40 more than the other watches, it is likely that in 1783 he was suffering from consumption already. This was given as the cause of death when Cubbena died, either on 6 August 1787, or on 1 March 1788. He was, at the most, thirty years old.

**222 Little Phillis, later Phillis**, was black, and probably born around the mid-1750s. She may have been related to Phillis (No 64) who died between 1734 and 1761.

As a young girl, Little Phillis's duties were to 'cut grass for sheep', Her value in 1783 of N£100 suggests she was a strong woman but two years later she was ill and given two 'Anodyne Bolus'.<sup>400</sup> In June 1798 she had more treatment: 'an emet.' [pill] costing N6s and a 'box stom. pills' costing N£1:10:0.<sup>401</sup> Despite having had at least two bouts of sickness, in her late forties she still worked in the field.

Hard work and illnesses made her deteriorate and appear very old: in 1817 her age was over-estimated by 30 to 40 years (she was said to have been 'about 90 or 100').

The year 1822 was a difficult one for people in Nevis: provisions were in short supply and the shortages only alleviated when trade with America opened up again in September. After prolonged drought the autumn was 'most sickly throughout the island',<sup>402</sup> and of the eight people who died on Mountravers in 1822, five lost their lives between October and December. Phillis was the last to die that year, on 25 December 1822. She was probably in her late sixties.

**223 Little Shabba, later Shabba**, was probably born around the mid-1750s. Shabah (No 67) may have been her mother or grandmother; she died before 1761.

As a girl, Little Shabba worked in the small gang and was considered 'good'. In her late thirties, her value of N£100 was above average for a field hand. She was strong. In her late forties she still worked in the field.

She sold 17 pounds of pork at the usual price of N9d a pound to JPP during his 1790 visit. From this transaction she earned N12s9d.<sup>403</sup> This was enough to buy four pairs of shoes, a lamb, or a set of oars for a boat.

Shabba had no known medical treatment but she died between January 1791 and July 1794. Probably still only in her thirties, she may have died in childbed.

**224 Tuttabau, also Tuttabaw**. Her grandmother may have been Tittibah (No 91). She died before 1761.

<sup>400</sup> PP, AB 31 Archbald & Williamson's a/c

<sup>401</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>402</sup> PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 January 1823

<sup>403</sup> PP, AB 33

Tuttabaw was probably born around 1754/5 and as a young child her duty was to 'attend on negroes'. She would have carried water and food to the field workers.

Tuttabaw died in December 1766. She was only around 11 or 12 years old.

**225 Little Bridget (Bridgette), later Bridget and Old Bridget.** She was black and born in July 1755.

As a ten-year-old, she 'cut grass for sheep' and between 1766 and 1768 was on the Gingerland estate. She worked as a domestic and may have been promoted to that job because of her liaison with JPP's white servant, Tom Peaden. A year or two older than Bridget, Tom Peaden came to Nevis with JPP in December 1764 and was the father of Bridget's two mulatto children, James Peaden (b October 1773) and Sally Peaden (b June 1776).<sup>404</sup> It appears that Bridget and Tom Peaden had a steady relationship; when her daughter was about two years old, Bridget received a present from Tom. JPP laid out three Guineas on his servant's behalf so that he could buy a 'locket for Bridget'.<sup>405</sup> Around that time Tom was buying sugar from the plantation, presumably to sell at a profit in order to earn extra money to pay for the present and to support his family.

In the summer of 1779 Tom Peaden was due to leave for England. In an accident he had burst a blood vessel and to improve his health, the doctors had recommended he should leave the island. Perhaps Bridget had ordered some warm clothing for Tom's passage; a month before his departure she paid the seamstress Nancy Jones N15s.<sup>406</sup>

Tom never made it to England. He died on his way home, in June 1779. His remaining money was to go to his friends or relatives in Axminster. But Bridget was already relatively well off; she had some cash and owned some animals. Just before Christmas 1782 she sold JPP a 'sow pig' worth N8s<sup>407</sup> and during his visit in 1790 three chickens.<sup>408</sup> On his return to Bristol he took with him 'cut money' (paper money cut in half, with each part kept separately to prevent theft) which Bridget had given him, and also Black Polly. He exchanged this for them in England. Bridget's was worth 'six dollars and two black dogs'.<sup>409</sup> JPP conducted this transaction as he would have done with any other person.

JPP had brought his servant Pero Jones with him to Nevis and after their visit Pero sent Bridget a parcel from England. This might suggest that Tom and Pero had been on friendly terms and that Bridget was perhaps selling goods she had imported.

Bridget, as well as her 18-year-old daughter Sally, briefly hired themselves out. They made various cash payments<sup>410</sup> but JPP accused the manager, Thomas Pym Weekes, of having omitted to credit part of their hire income and that of some other women.<sup>411</sup> Handing over the hire money was always open to abuse; managers could just pocket the cash.

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<sup>404</sup> PP, AB 20 Agnes Adams' a/c

<sup>405</sup> PP, AB 20 Gill & Nisbet's a/c

<sup>406</sup> PP, AB 17: 10 May 1779

<sup>407</sup> PP, AB 17: 22 December 1782

<sup>408</sup> PP, AB 33

<sup>409</sup> PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 9 November 1790

<sup>410</sup> PP, AB 50 Negro Hire a/c

<sup>411</sup> PP, AB 39



Bridget's value in 1783 of N£100 was that of a healthy woman but in late 1795 she was ill. Doctors visited her on 30 November and again four days later. They prescribed six 'feb. boluses' [febrifugal, or fever reducing pills], costing N3:10:0 in total.<sup>412</sup> Her health improved but that year her granddaughter Mary (No 570) died and in the following year her grandson, also called Tom Peaden (No 549). After Mary died, Bridget's daughter appears to have suffered a mental breakdown. Sally had more children but not all survived. Bridget's son James, who had become a carpenter, also had children and in 1800 she became a grandmother again when his sons were born, the twins Charles and James. Their mother may have been Johntong (No 226), a woman a bit older than Bridget.

When her grandsons Charles and James were still very young, Bridget's son James absconded off the island. She then also lost her daughter and probably two more grandchildren, Mary Scarborough (No 625) and Alfred (No 640). They all died some time after the plantation was sold but before her grandsons also escaped off the island. The twins Charles and James (Numbers 601 and 602) left Nevis between 1817 and 1822, and then only George Scarborough (No 558) and Betsey Sanders (No 590), both probably her grandchildren, remained living on Mountravers. Another grandson who was alive was William Peaden (No 659). Throughout her life Bridget would have grieved the loss of many family members.

Bridget had received a present of white cotton that Mrs P had sent,<sup>413</sup> and it seems that her former mistress continued to keep in touch with her and support her with occasional gifts of money. In October 1820 Mrs P wrote to her son Charles Pinney, then in Nevis, that he should 'give to a black woman on Mr Peter Huggins estate named Bridget 2 guineas as a present from me'.<sup>414</sup> Shortly afterwards she repeated her request for him to make another payment – this time of six dollars - but cautioned that Bridget 'must not expect any other present this year from me'.<sup>415</sup> Mrs P also asked her son to give the same amount to a woman called Sally Webbe.<sup>416</sup>

Illnesses, losing her children and grandchildren left their mark. In 1817 Old Bridget was said to have been 'about 70', eight years older than she was. She died on 25 May 1825 at the age of 69. She had outlived her former mistress by three years.

**226 Little Johntong (also John Tong)** was born in December 1753. As a 12-year-old she worked in the house but later became a field hand. By 1783, when she was appraised at N£80, she probably worked in the field already. In her mid-forties, she was still employed in the field but only in the small gang.

<sup>412</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>413</sup> PP, LB 15: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, 29 October 1799

<sup>414</sup> PP, Dom Box C1-6: Mrs Jane Pinney, Swanage, to Charles Pinney, Nevis, 25 October 1820

<sup>415</sup> PP, Dom Box C1-7: Mrs Jane Pinney, Bath, to Charles Pinney, Nevis, 2 February 1821

<sup>416</sup> There were at least two women called Sally or Sarah Webbe in Nevis at that time. One was white, or freed before 1797, when she sold a person (ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 f710), the other had been freed in the early 1800s by George Webbe (CR 1801-1803 f367-77 and f504). One had suffered hurricane damage in 1819 which had entitled her to poor relief (UKNA, CO 186/12: 12 April 1819 and 27 February 1820) but may have been the same woman who in 1817 had owned a female and then purchased two more in 1825 at a Marshal's sale (T 71/367 f108).

One of the women died, aged 88, in September 1822; the other, who had owned enslaved people, died in September 1827 (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)).

Johntong had an accident that may have been very debilitating. On 9 June 1797 the doctor came and stitched a wound in her knee. Eight days later he dressed it. She had two further visits from the doctor, on 23 and 28 June.<sup>417</sup>

Given that her first known child was born when she was in her late thirties and that she was 'with child' four times in the space of nine years, it is most likely that she had other children before August 1791 when Hetty was known to have been born. Johntong was pregnant less than two years later, in May 1793,<sup>418</sup> and either miscarried or the baby died young. Five years later she was 'with child' again - she then worked in Pompey's gang - and probably gave birth on 7 August 1798,<sup>419</sup> but this child, too, did not survive. She was expecting once more towards the end of January 1800, and it is very likely that in June 1800 she gave birth to the twins James and Charles Peaden. Their father, James Peaden (No 388), a mulatto twenty years younger than Johntong, was ill-treated by the then manager, James Williams, and he escaped off the island when the boys were just a few months old. Johntong was then 47 years old, and it is likely that the twins were the last children to whom she gave birth.

Johntong died between August 1807 and December 1816. She was aged at least 54 and at the most 63 years old.

In 1819 a black girl called John Tongue was born on Mountravers. The name was very unusual; elsewhere it only occurred on nearby Ward's Trust Estate.

**227 Little Molly, later Molly and sometimes Madge.** She was black and probably born between about 1750 and 1755. It is possible her mother was Bander Leged Moll (No 199), her grandmother Old Molly (No 93). All three worked in the field and were on Mountravers between 1766 and 1768. Little Molly's conduct was described as 'good', which may have been reflected in her relatively high value in 1783 of N£100.

It is likely that in her teens Little Molly had a child that died soon after birth. Earlier listed among other girls born before the mid-1750s, in 1767 Little Molly was already recorded as a 'woman' while the others were not. Pregnancy may have conferred on her the status as a 'woman' and either of the two children born in 1767 could have been hers: Catharine (b January 1767) and Acree (b October 1767). Catharine died young, between May 1767 and July 1768. Molly later had two girls and two boys: Friday (b March 1775), Quashee (b August 1776);<sup>420</sup> Jibba (b August 1780) and John-Peter (b August 1794). It is noticeable that three of her children were born in August – conceived, perhaps, during the Christmas revelries.

At the age of five weeks her son John-Peter died from dropsy, but two years after his death, Little Molly's first grandchild was born, Friday's daughter Diana. This is one example of the generations being very close together; women who had children when they were young began having grandchildren while they still continued to bear children. Molly had another grandchild when Friday was delivered again in 1802. All her family were described as black, except for Quashee, who was said to have been 'yellow cast'.

<sup>417</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>418</sup> In May 1793 these women were 'supposed to be with child': Flora, Myrilla, Sarah Fisher, Phillee, Leah, Preen, Barbai, Patty, John Tong' (PP, Misc Vols 12 Leeward Islands Calendar).

<sup>419</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

<sup>420</sup> PP, AB 20 Plantation a/c

Acree's name suggests a Ghanaian origin, as do the names of three of Molly's four children. She may even have chosen them herself. Both Friday and Quashee (the name for a boy born on a Sunday) were actually born on a Friday and Sunday. However, Jibba, the name for a girl born on a Monday, was recorded as born on a Wednesday. It is, however, possible that her birth was registered two days late (as in the case of Mary Path's son). Jibba was later spelt 'Juba', a name 'used mainly, if not exclusively' by a group of people of Akan origin who settled around Accra.<sup>421</sup>

Two of her children, Jibba and Quashee, were among those publicly 'severely flogged' when, in January 1810, Edward Huggins marched the Mountravers people to the market place to be publicly punished for disobeying orders. Quashee's beating, which lasted 15 minutes, was particularly bad. It is likely that he ran away some time before 1817.

Reputed to have been 'about 50' in 1817, Molly's age was clearly under-estimated by 12, if not 17 years. In contrast, her 41-year-old daughter was called 'Old Friday'! Molly obviously was a strong, healthy woman, having only had recorded medical attention once. That was in April 1798 when a doctor visited her and prescribed eight stomach powders. The treatment cost N£2:4:0.<sup>422</sup> At that time she was in her forties and still worked in the field.

Molly was alive when her three great-grandchildren were born, Diana's children Priscilla, Angelica and Rasburn (Numbers 681, 699 and 722). But she did not live long enough to see them being baptised. Molly died on 22 February 1827. She was in her seventies.

**228 Margo (also Margot)** was born in July 1755. Her duties were to 'cut grass for sheep'.

Margo died on 3 September 1765. She was ten years old.

**229 Little Quasheba** was born in July 1755. It is likely that her mother was Great Quasheba (No 201).

When she was about nine and a half years old - the same age as Margo - Little Quasheba was not required to perform any particular tasks. She probably was sickly all her life. Aged 28, her value was only N£55. She may then already have been allocated to the weeding gang; certainly by the early 1790s her health was such that she was engaged in the lightest work on the plantation.

Great Quasheba died from consumption in March 1801 and Little Quasheba died not long after, probably between May 1803 and December 1806. She was aged between 47 and 51 years.

**230 Benneba** was probably born between about 1758 and 1760. Her grandmother may have been Banibah (No 68); she died before 1761.

When JPP appraised Benneba just before he went to England, her value of N£90 did not suggest any illness but by the time he returned for his first visit in 1790 she had been sick for a while. He noticed this

<sup>421</sup> Hart, Richard 'Slaves who Abolished Slavery' Vol 2 p13

<sup>422</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

and some months after leaving Nevis wrote to his new manager, Dr Thomas Pym Weekes: 'I hope Benneba's sore leg was well, or in a fair way of getting well, and that she was not suffered to lurk about the negro houses as she did in Coker's time.'<sup>423</sup> She did not recover and from then on did not work in the field any more. During JPP's second visit in 1794 he freed her from work. Then only in her thirties, she was among those listed as 'useless maimed and diseased'.

Benneba was on JPP's mind again after he left the island and, lying off Tortola, wrote to James Williams - who had replaced Thomas Pym Weekes as manager - that he thought Benneba and two other women 'capable of providing for themselves'. He instructed Williams not to give them allowances 'unless they do something for the estate.' This would have been tasks such as carrying water for the field workers, or looking after small children and cooking their food during the day. He also wanted her and the others who remained at home to act as watches while everyone had gone to work and the village was empty.<sup>424</sup>

Benneba died between August 1794 and December 1801. She was in her early thirties to early forties.

**231 Peter's Flora** was black and probably born between 1759 and 1761. It is likely that her mother had died while she was still young and that she was, therefore, always associated with her father's name. This was possibly the watchman Peter (No 50). In his mid-fifties to late sixties, he died between 1774 and 1783 but may still have been alive when Peter's Flora's first child was born. Almost certainly this was Quakey (b September 1777),<sup>425</sup> followed by two more boys, Peter (b August 1784) and John Frederick (b January 1787). In May 1793 it was noted that she was pregnant<sup>426</sup> and in November she gave birth to Phibba.<sup>427</sup> In February 1798 - she was then in her late thirties - the manager noted that Peter's Flora was 'with child' again. Most likely she had another boy, Azariah (b May 1798). He was black, like Quakey, John Frederick and Phibba, while her son Peter was 'black of a yellow cast'.

In 1783 her value of N£100 had been at the top end for a female field hand and she would have worked in the great gang. However, while pregnant with Phibba, she was in Jack's gang and, while pregnant with Azariah, in Pompey's gang.<sup>428</sup> Her 11-year-old son John Frederick worked with her in the same team, which was made up of older children and the frail. Her health was failing, or Azariah's birth had been difficult, because on 16 November 1798, a few months after he was born, a doctor visited Peter's Flora and gave her six 'dia.[phoretic] ano.[dyne] boluses'. These pills - possibly made from elecampane, a herb used since ancient times to induce sweating - cost N£2:10:0.<sup>429</sup> She recovered and less than three years after the birth of her last child, in March 1801 she had another boy, Charles. She would have been one of the recipients of the ten 'suits of baby linen with handkerchiefs' that Mrs P had sent out on the ship *Rachel*. These were intended as rewards for mothers.<sup>430</sup>

Charles was the third boy with a name of one of JPP's sons, and it is likely that William Coker had started the trend and that James Williams, ever the flatterer, continued in the same mode while leaving out the Pinneys' third son, Pretor, who was mentally ill. Peter's Flora's other two children, Quakey and Phibba, had Akan names for boys born on a Wednesday and girls on a Friday but, according to the records,

<sup>423</sup> PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 24 January 1791

<sup>424</sup> PP, LB 11: JPP, off Tortola to James Williams, 31 July 1794

<sup>425</sup> PP, AB 26 Agnes Adam's a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 p67 Plantation a/c

<sup>426</sup> PP, Misc Vols 12, Leeward Islands Calendar

<sup>427</sup> PP, LB 23: JPP to John Colhoun Mills, 10 January 1811

<sup>428</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary Front cover

<sup>429</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>430</sup> PP, LB 16: JPP to James Williams, 25 November 1800

Quakey's birth date fell on a Monday and Phibba's on a Thursday. In other instances the birth may have been recorded a day or two late but, given the large discrepancy in dates, here it is more likely that Phibba's children were named not according to the Akan custom but perhaps after respected elders or extended kin.

Some time between January 1802 and December 1806 Peter's Flora last child, Charles, died. Her son may have died before her; Peter's Flora died on 16 April 1803. Most likely, she was in her early to mid-forties.

Her death was the first after Henry Williams officially took over as manager from his brother James.

**232 Little Bess** was probably born between 1758 and 1760. Her mother may have been Bess (No 120), a lame and blind woman who died, in her late thirties to early forties, before Bess had reached her teens.

It is possible that, being orphaned, Little Bess did not have the family support to see her through the famine years of the 1770s. She died between July 1774 and July 1783, in her mid-teens to mid-twenties.

**233 Sarah, also Little Sarah**, was probably born around 1760.

She kept some animals, and when JPP visited Nevis for the first time, she sold him 10 ½ pounds of pork worth N7s10 1/2d and a chick for N1s6d.<sup>431</sup>

In her early twenties, Sarah's value of N£90 was that of a healthy woman but by the time she was in her late thirties, she was ill and worked in the second gang. In August and September 1797 she received several doses of medication: '12 pectoral powders' and '4 diapho.[retic pills] boluses', another 12 pectoral powders', this time with '6 dia. boluses', and then the same again.<sup>432</sup> The pectoral powders were for a chest complaint, the diaphoretic pills for promoting perspiration. She may have suffered from pneumonia.

The treatment did not save her. Sarah died a year later, on 22 October 1798. She was in her late thirties. She was buried in a coffin made by the carpenters on the estate.<sup>433</sup>

The carpenters' work was noted in the plantation diary and during the period it covers, just over two and a half years, this was the only record of a coffin having been made by, and for, an enslaved person. No documents have been found describing slave burials on this or on any other plantation in Nevis, and as yet no graves containing enslaved people have been archaeologically excavated and examined. Many questions remain unanswered, and to get some idea of Sarah's funeral one has to look at how the dead were laid to rest in other islands, particularly in the Eastern Caribbean. There were differences over time but some of the customs that were observed in the mid-eighteenth century were still in use around the time slavery was abolished.

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<sup>431</sup> PP, AB 33: 20 May 1790 and 18 June 1790

<sup>432</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>433</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

The first question that needs answering is whether enslaved people were generally buried in any form of casket and covering. John Luffman, writing from Antigua in the late 1780s, reported that the bodies of people were placed in a 'wooden shell', or in a coffin.<sup>434</sup> Some years earlier, it was said that in St Croix some domestics and trades people were 'buried in a board coffin' while the poor, unbaptised enslaved people were simply 'placed in a hole in the field without a casket, without ceremony or any other observance.' They may have been 'wrapped only in a kavanna' whereas the better-off were 'clad in a white burial garment' and placed in a coffin which sometimes was lined with linen.<sup>435</sup> By the 1820s people in Nevis were said to be generally buried in coffins.<sup>436</sup> That the dead were buried with some ceremony is evident from the 1830s. Eneas on the Stapleton plantation was, when dead, shaven and one woman made him a 'shroud'.<sup>437</sup> This shows how the plantation folk wanted to inter their comrades with care and dignity.

In Jamaica William Beckford observed that "'all the trinkets of the defunct are exposed in the coffin".<sup>438</sup> What he considered 'trinkets' would have been people's cherished possessions which may well have had spiritual value; grave goods are important in West African burials. During archaeological excavations of graves in Montserrat fragments of objects have been found and while some items may have been attached to people's clothing, others would have been placed in graves because of their religious or cultural significance. The objects found in Montserrat were made from a range of materials: glass (wine glass and bottles, white buttons), copper alloy (clothing fasteners), ceramic (bowls and jars) and clay (pipes). Clay pipes were found in both men's and women's graves.<sup>439</sup> These objects may have been the deceased's possessions, intended to accompany him or her into the world beyond but it also possible that they were laid in the grave as gifts for the ancestors. Graves held great significance for Africans. It was said that the most binding oath a person could make was to drink a mixture of water and earth taken from another person's grave.<sup>440</sup>

Sarah may have been a member of the 400-strong Methodist congregation in Nevis<sup>441</sup> but most of the rituals at her burial would have been of African origin. From Luffman we know that in Antigua mourners brought fruit to the house of the deceased and that funerals were attended by large numbers of people.<sup>442</sup> To go to a funeral, workers had to ask for time off, either for an afternoon or a day. (This was yet another instance designed to reinforce their psychological dependence.)<sup>443</sup>

Before the actual burial took place, mourners may have participated in communal food preparations and communal eating; in the 1760s in St Croix a feast was accompanied by much dancing, often throughout the night. According to a missionary, in Antigua the singing and dancing continued as a 'great many

<sup>434</sup> Luffman, John *A Brief Account* Letter LXXV 8 December 1787 in VL Oliver *The History of the Island of Antigua* Vol 1

<sup>435</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p46 and p96

<sup>436</sup> Appendix to Third Report of Commissioners in *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry Into the Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice in the West Indies* p143

<sup>437</sup> NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p300

<sup>438</sup> Brathwaite, Edward Kamau *Folk Culture of the Slaves in Jamaica* p9, quoting William Beckford *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica* London 1790 Vol 2 pp323-24

<sup>439</sup> Pulsipher, Lydia M and Conrad 'Mac' Goodwin 'Getting the Essence of it: Galways Plantation, Montserrat, West Indian' in Paul Farnsworth (ed) *Island Lives* p167

<sup>440</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p56

<sup>441</sup> Easton, Revd Wilfred and Revd Dominic A Parker *Kindling of the Flame* p50

<sup>442</sup> In Antigua Luffman observed as many as a thousand to 1200 mourners attend a funeral (Luffman, John *A Brief Account* Letter LXXV 8 December 1787 in VL Oliver *The History of the Island of Antigua* Vol 1). In Barbados, as many as two or three thousand 'free negroes and mulattoes' attended the funerals of negroes who had been 'wantonly shot by some angry white man, in the neighbourhood of Bridge Town'. Dressed in 'decent mourning', they walked in a 'solemn procession' and made the funeral a powerful, ceremonious occasion. A similar procession attended another funeral at which about 3,000 people were present (Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 67 p319).

<sup>443</sup> Nisbet, Richard *The Capacity of Negroes for Religious and Moral Improvement* pp36-7

negroes' followed the coffin to the burial place. Accompanied by the sound of drums and calabashes, women danced and made what the missionary described as 'horrible movements with their bodies'. During the procession to the gravesite 'the pallbearers moved as if the deceased had no desire to be buried there' and, speeding up, they went elsewhere until eventually they returned to the gravesite. The coffin was then 'quickly covered with earth so that the reluctant departed would not have time to throw it back out again.'<sup>444</sup> African rites and ceremonies were so firmly grounded in people's conscience that they survived well into the nineteenth century. In the 1830s one observer suggested that, to prevent them from being enacted at funerals, the plantation manager should attend slave burials and 'read a portion of the English Church service.'<sup>445</sup>

If Sarah was, indeed, a practicing Methodist, her faith alone may not have guaranteed a burial in consecrated ground. Although in the 1820s it was said that for enslaved people, if baptised, funeral services were being held,<sup>446</sup> this does not necessarily mean they were buried in church cemeteries. In the 1780s Luffman was scandalised that in Antigua not even free people were buried in the churchyard: 'the distinction and the superiority which the European race claim over the African, are extended as far as they can possibly go: to the grave!'<sup>447</sup> In the mid-1820s Henry Nelson Coleridge confirmed that in Antigua free and enslaved people were excluded from the ordinary burying grounds and instead had to make do with 'unconsecrated earth in some out-of-the-way place.'<sup>448</sup> Again there were differences between the islands because in St Kitts Coleridge observed that 'the odious custom', this 'unchristian practice' of burying the dead 'in a detached piece of ground', was not common. He stated that 'where it did exist a little while ago, I believe it has been since abolished at the earnest instances of the worthy Bishop.' As to the situation in Nevis, he stated that he did not know whether churches did 'admit their people and coloured freemen to Christian burial in *their* churchyards or not'. He went on to say that 'certainly very few parishes in any of the islands have done so.'<sup>449</sup> The church records suggest that in Nevis free people were afforded a place in the cemeteries: the first documented burial of a free person in Nevis - that of the mulatto Blanche Browne in 1775 - was listed like any other in the St John Figtree parish register. It did not state that she was buried in a different place, nor was there an indication in the other parish registers that, in the 1820s and 1830s, Christian people and freed people were laid to rest in unconsecrated ground.<sup>450</sup>

If Sarah was not a member of a Christian congregation she would certainly have been buried on the plantation. A man would have been allocated the task of digging her grave.<sup>451</sup> The only documented evidence of a plantation burial in Nevis comes from the observation of a sailor who visited Ward's estate in St Thomas Lowland. He was told that a man was interred 'not more than 3 yards from the front door' of the house in which his widow still lived. He was informed that it was a 'common mode' of burials in the West Indies.<sup>452</sup> This notion of house or yard burials is supported by archaeological evidence from Mountravers where the remains of a grave have been found in the vicinity of the slave village. Investigated but not excavated, this is a confirmed burial, while a possible second burial site has not yet

<sup>444</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* pp96-7

<sup>445</sup> Waddell, HM *Twenty-nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa* p164

<sup>446</sup> Appendix to Third Report of Commissioners in *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry Into the Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice in the West Indies* p143

<sup>447</sup> Luffman, John A *Brief Account* Letter LXXV 8 December 1787 in VL Oliver *The History of the Island of Antigua* Vol 1

<sup>448</sup> Burns, Sir Alan *History of the British West Indies* p647, citing HN Coleridge *Six Months in the West Indies* p237

Coleridge referred to 'slaves and coloured people', no doubt meaning enslaved and free people.

<sup>449</sup> Coleridge, HN *Six Months in the West Indies* p204 and p181; see also William A Green *British Slave Emancipation* p17

<sup>450</sup> In Antigua in 1801 it was not 'The duty of [the] Rector to bury slaves' and that 'free people of colour' were buried in 'the burial ground at the Point' (Oliver, VL *History of Antigua, 1635-1894* Vol 3 p360).

<sup>451</sup> MLD, Mills Papers, 2006.178/10, Vol 4 (22 November 1776)

<sup>452</sup> Aaron Thomas's *Journal* p12

been archaeologically tested. Although these graves may date from the post-Emancipation period, they do suggest that at least some people were buried near their living friends and relatives. Others may have been laid to rest in a designated area elsewhere on the plantation.<sup>453</sup>

**234 Nelly, later Old Nelly,** was black and born on the plantation around 1760.<sup>454</sup> Her aunt was the midwife Patty (No 194). Both worked on Mountravers between 1766 and 1768.<sup>455</sup> Nelly appears to have been a domestic.<sup>456</sup> Her value in 1783 stood at N£100.

In her twenties, within a space of only four and a half years she had three children: Jibba (b April 1783), Little Lewey (b September 1785) and Tom Bossu (b November 1787). It is likely that the cooper and cane watch Lewy (No 166) was Lewey's father, as well as that of her other children. He died, having been infirm almost half his life, in the early 1790s. During that time she also lost her son Little Lewey. He was eight years old at the most.<sup>457</sup> Her grandson Toby, her daughter Jibba's son, died when he was about 11 years old.

By the time her son Lewey had died, her aunt Patty had chosen Nelly to succeed her as the plantation midwife. Patty died in 1801 but would have passed on to her niece her knowledge not just of midwifery but also of medicinal plants and their applications. However, JPP was not convinced that Nelly was up to the job and, although willing to 'give her a trial', he went on to suggest another woman.<sup>458</sup> The manager probably never tried out Nelly; soon after Patty died a midwife from outside the plantation was employed.

Old Nelly died between 1817 and 1822. She was in her late fifties to early sixties.

**235 Pheenia, (?Phænia).** Probably born in 1760 or in the first half of 1761, she was the youngest child on Mountravers when Coker arrived.

The only known medical attention she had was in August 1782, when John Springett treated her for a sore leg.<sup>459</sup>

Pheenia died between 1 January 1791 and July 1794, during Dr Thomas Pym Weekes's managership. She was between 30 to 34 years old. Given that she was of child-bearing age and her value in 1783 - a stable N£90 - indicated that she was not sickly, it is possible that she died in childbirth.



<sup>453</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p97

<sup>454</sup> Listed in 1761 as a girl, Nelly's reputed age in 1817 of 'about 90' probably was a mistake and should have read 'about 60'.

<sup>455</sup> Given that her daughter was called Jibba, it is possible that Nelly's mother was Little Gibbah (No 122)

<sup>456</sup> Nelly was not on the 1793 or 1794 gang list

<sup>457</sup> Mary Fog (b 1794) may possibly have been another child, or a niece, of Nelly's; she had a daughter called Nelly.

<sup>458</sup> PP, LB 16: JPP to James Williams, 26 August 1801

<sup>459</sup> PP, AB 26 John Springett a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f81



Fanny and Little Harry were the first children born on Mountravers after Coker arrived in the island in May 1761.

**236 Fanny, also Fanny alias Affey.** She was born on Tuesday, 2 February 1762. As a young child, she, presumably with her mother, was between 1766 and 1768 transferred to the Gingerland estate.

At the age of 21, Fanny was appraised at N£80. In the 1790s she worked in the field but in the early 1800s did lighter work. She was then sold, along with the plantation, and the new owner, Edward Huggins, decided she should work in the field again. The Huggins regime was demanding and harsh, and soon a conflict arose when the workers refused to carry dung at night. Fanny was one of those who stood up for their rights. People knew that night work had been outlawed. But Edward Huggins intervened and, wanting to set an example, he had a number of Mountravers people publicly punished in the market place in Charlestown. Huggins ordered his drivers to whip many men and women – among them Fanny.<sup>460</sup>

Over the coming months her health declined, and on 22 June 1810, almost five months to the day after the whipping, Fanny died. She was 48 years old.<sup>461</sup>

After her death, an inquest was held. This complied with the 1798 Leeward Island Melioration Act: the sudden death of anyone aged six years or over, who died without having been visited by a doctor 48 hours prior to their death, had to be investigated. Four men examined the circumstances surrounding Fanny's death: the Coroner William Burke, John Darlowe Creese, George Burke, and Andrew Joliffe. Two of the men were less than impartial: John Creese had been a juror in the trial that had acquitted Edward Huggins after the very beating which had triggered Fanny's death, and George Burke had withdrawn from the jury in another case in which Mr Huggins was 'deeply concerned'. He, and also Huggins's son-in-law, Mr Cottle, had been fined for refusing to serve as a juror and when they did not pay the fine, imprisoned.<sup>462</sup>

The four men charged with investigating Fanny's death found that she had no marks of violence on her body and that she had 'died by visitation of God in a natural way and not otherwise'.<sup>463</sup> They declined to find Huggins responsible. He felt vindicated and penned a letter to the local newspaper in which he proclaimed his innocence.

James Webbe Tobin, the anti-slavery campaigner and son of JPP's business partner and pro-slavery campaigner James Tobin, took up the case. In his letter to Governor Elliot, he blamed Fanny's death on Edward Huggins. He pointed out that she had wasted away after the flogging. Tobin's letter was later published in *The Times* and Fanny's case became known all over Britain: 'The negro Fanny, who died, had not been accustomed to hard work for many years before Mr Huggins got possession of the estate; but he put her into the field, and she was one of those ordered to carry out dung by night. She never worked with a hoe again after the whipping, and died of an atrophy...'<sup>464</sup>

<sup>460</sup> UKNA, CO 152/96 Copy of the letter of JW Tobin to Governor Elliott, 7 September 1810

<sup>461</sup> ECM, 1996/24/1290 Correspondence relating to the case of Edward Huggins senior

<sup>462</sup> UKNA, CO 152/96 Copy of the letter of JW Tobin to Governor Elliott, 7 September 1810, and ECM, 1996/24/1290 Correspondence relating to the case of Edward Huggins senior

<sup>463</sup> UKNA, CO 152/96; also PN 194 A-L: Edward Huggins to *St Kitts Advertiser* published 4 September 1810

'Visitation of God' was among the loose terms which physicians tended to use if the cause of death was unclear (Higman, BW *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica 1807-1834* p109).

<sup>464</sup> James Webbe Tobin to Governor Elliott, 9 September 1810, printed in *The Times* 17 June 1811

**237 Little Harry** was born on Saturday, 27 February 1762. Aged just over three years, he died on 29 June 1765. It is possible he was the grandson of Old Harry (No 11).



### ***Coker bought ten African children***

On Monday, 8 March 1762,<sup>465</sup> William Coker travelled to St Kitts to buy new workers. Few Guinea ships landed at Nevis any more and African captives could seldom be bought in the island.<sup>466</sup> From John Frederick Pinney he had directions what to do. Coker was to 'get them at St Kitts or any other of the islands where they be had best and cheapest'. Having arrived in the West Indies only the year before, he may have been accompanied by an experienced planter who would advise him in the 'true knowledge in the purchasing of new negroes'. He may have heeded his employer's advice to 'get Mr Oliver or any other gentleman whose judgement and veracity you can abide in, to instruct, aid and assist you.'<sup>467</sup>

Buying preferences differed in the colonies; French planters favoured adults, the British wanted them young.<sup>468</sup> All Africans purchased for Mountravers were children and teenagers. Indeed, it was John Frederick Pinney's 'express command to buy people young (which is certainly and universally allowed to be the best method of purchasing them).' Regarding their ages and the gender ratio, he gave Coker very precise instructions:

I would rather have them of that age as are called men-boys or women-girls, never let your females be more than as four in ten, and be sure never let them be younger than ten years, or more than twenty, and be sure never let them be as old as thirty, if you can help it.<sup>469</sup>

Accordingly, Coker bought seven young men and three girls. They cost £308.<sup>470</sup> He purchased this group from the company of Wharton & Douglas.<sup>471</sup>

The partners in this firm were William Wharton and Alexander Douglas. Both young men were aged around thirty and influential members of the St Kitts community, with Wharton holding the posts of Treasurer and Casual Receiver in the island.<sup>472</sup> Later he lived in England, where he died in 1784. An important man, William Wharton lay in state for a week and his nephew erected a memorial tablet for him in Bath Cathedral.<sup>473</sup> By then the Scottish-born Alexander Douglas<sup>474</sup> had also retreated to England. He

<sup>465</sup> The purchase date entered in the 1762 list was 8 March 1760 but it has been established that this was a mistake by Coker

<sup>466</sup> MLD, Mills Papers, 2006.178/7, Vol 1, Letterbooks 1752-1771: Thomas Mills to Robert Pemberton, John Richardson Herbert and James Brodbelt, 25 June 1761

<sup>467</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 5 October 1761; also WI Box D: JF Pinney to Coker, 19 November 1761

<sup>468</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 69 pp356-62 Evidence by the Nevis Legislature Thomas Mills's view, for instance, was typical: 'I am much of your opinion that new negroe men full grown will never answer on an estate and therefore I always bought when I was in the West Indies, Boys of ab't 16 or 17 years old...' (MLD, Mills Papers, 2006.178/7, Letterbooks 1752-1771: Thomas Mills to Robert Pemberton and John Richardson Herbert, 9 May 1763).

<sup>469</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 5 October 1761; also WI Box D: JF Pinney to Coker, 19 November 1761

<sup>470</sup> PP, LB 3: JF Pinney, London, to Wm Coker, 5 June 1762

<sup>471</sup> Eltis, David *et al* (eds) *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade CD-ROM Voyage No 17516*

<sup>472</sup> William Wharton had earlier traded in the company of Wells, Wharton and Doran (Evans, JAH 'Nathaniel Wells of Piercefield' p93). In 1769 he was one of seven men embroiled in a political controversy as to whether or not members of the Council could vote for members of the Assembly. The group alleged they had been illegally ousted from the Assembly, arrested and jailed (SCHS: Wade Family File; UKNA, PC 1/3181 and EV Goveia *Slave Society* p86

<sup>473</sup> Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 1 p78 and Vol 3 (Cayon Diary); also Bath Cathedral, memorial on the south side of the south wall JPP attended William Wharton's funeral in Bath (PP, LB 6: JPP to John Patterson, Nevis, 25 September 1784).

<sup>474</sup> SCHS, Wade Family File

had spent over twenty years in St Kitts, owned a considerable number of enslaved people and had been much in demand as an attorney. He was among the absentees who gave evidence to the parliamentary enquiry into the Transatlantic Slave Trade. His replies were short, ill-tempered and uncompromisingly pro-planter.<sup>475</sup> Said to have been worth a staggering £200,000 (over £24 million in 2016), Alexander Douglas died in England in 1797.<sup>476</sup>

The African captives would have arrived several days before Wharton & Douglas offered them for sale. It is not known on which ship they came but when it approached the island, the captain would have signalled his arrival to alert the agents to come aboard. He may have hoisted a flag and fired his guns,<sup>477</sup> thereby creating some of the excitement that usually accompanied the arrival of ships.

A former slave remembered how he was subjected to his first inspection. He and his shipmates were put into separate lots and examined. They were told to jump. Their flesh appraised, everyone was fearful that they would be eaten 'by these ugly men, as they appeared to us ...'<sup>478</sup> Once the agents had struck their deal, they advertised the sale. The accounts for one sale in St Vincent give a good picture of the preparations they made and the considerable set-up costs they incurred in disposing of the African captives from one ship, the *Essex*:

Advertising sale and handbills and drum and fife attending the sale .....	£1:8:4
Hire of 2 vessels to Grenada, Tobago and other islands with information of the sale .....	£22:12:7
Hire of a yard and shade for the negroes during the sale .....	£6
A dinner, punch etc at the sale .....	£27:6:9 currency <sup>479</sup>

Sales were promoted in various ways: hoisting a flag from a window, sounding the trumpet,<sup>480</sup> distributing handbills, or by drumbeat.<sup>481</sup> Agents hired messengers 'to give notice round the island'.<sup>482</sup> This created a buzz, and buyers and anyone intending to just have a good day out readied themselves for the occasion.

While the advertising was underway, the Africans were prepared. For this, one captain allowed two days<sup>483</sup> but it could take three or even four.<sup>484</sup> The ship was cleaned and fresh water distributed so that people could wash themselves. They were given nourishing food,<sup>485</sup> and to relax them, might be

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Alexander Douglas was the second son of Revd Alexander Douglas and Isabel Houston and the nephew of Col Water Douglas, a corrupt and controversial Governor of the Leeward Islands (Penson, Lillian M *The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies* p162 and Sir Alan Burns *History of the British West Indies* pp424-25, citing Acts of Privy Council Vol ii No 1215 and No 652).

<sup>475</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 71p293-9

<sup>476</sup> Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 (Cayon Diary)

<sup>477</sup> Donnan, E *Documents* Vol 2 p369 Instructions of Humphrey Morice to Captain Anthony Overstall, 8 July 1728

<sup>478</sup> Equiano, Olaudah *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* p60

<sup>479</sup> NMGM, D/Dav/13/3/6: Baillie & Hamilton, St Vincent, to William Davenport & Co, Liverpool, 14 July 1784

<sup>480</sup> Luffman, John A *Brief Account* Letter XIX 6 July 1787 in VL Oliver *The History of the Island of Antigua* Vol 1

<sup>481</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p17

In Nevis the sale of goods, including possibly the sale of enslaved people, was sometimes advertised in the *St Christopher Gazette* (there being no paper in Nevis), and by notices affixed to the court house and parish church doors and by beat of drum on the day (UKNA, CO 318/63 Appendix to 'The Second Report of the Commissioners to enquire into the Administration of Civil and Criminal in the West Indies: Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, St Kitts and the Virgin Islands' 1826 p153).

<sup>482</sup> Donnan, E *Documents* Vol 2 p383

<sup>483</sup> 'Voyage of the *James*, 1675-1676' in E Donnan *Documents* Vol 2 pp199-209

<sup>484</sup> Galenson, David W *Traders, Planters, and Slaves* p35 fn14, citing Colin Palmer *Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America 1700-1739* p45

<sup>485</sup> BULSC, DM 1061: Capt D Duncombe, Bristol, to Capt Joseph White, March 1767

presented with pipes and tobacco. In order to make them look 'sleek and handsome',<sup>486</sup> they were rubbed with palm-oil, which not only emphasised their physique but also hid small blemishes. Caustic was applied on sores from yaws so that new skin would grow more quickly.<sup>487</sup> Men were shaved<sup>488</sup> and women encouraged to braid their hair. Revd Smith marvelled at the women, who, 'with a small comb, curl one another's hair into inimitable knots, like roses, etc.' He not only admired their skill but found their beauty much enhanced by these intricate hairstyles.<sup>489</sup> These Africans were traded like any other ware. Not only did they have to look fit for purpose – strong, healthy, and able to work hard – but in order to fetch a decent price they also had to look presentable.

It has been said that in St Kitts the African captives were sold in the 'old slave market' in Basseterre in what is now Independence Square. There, one writer claimed, the planters appraised the new arrivals, 'most of them drawn, the islanders maintain, from the warrior tribes of Ashanti and Dahomey.'<sup>490</sup> In the 1820s an auction house did exist in that square and at least one sale of people did take place there, but it is more likely that what is known as 'the old slave market' was where enslaved people sold their produce.<sup>491</sup> Evidence suggests that in St Kitts and in Nevis enslaved people were sold in a variety of places and by a variety of methods. Richard Nisbet from Nevis mentioned a sale in a 'slave yard',<sup>492</sup> similarly a St Kitts planter felt sorry for the 'wretched Africans exposed to sale by hundreds, in our Guinea-yards'.<sup>493</sup> Also in St Kitts, at 'Baillie's Tavern Sale', humans were on offer, as well as plantations.<sup>494</sup> Equally, sales could take place on board ship.

Africans were sold by different methods: by 'scramble', by drawing a ticket or by bidding at auction. The sale by scramble started with a signal, such as the beat of a drum,<sup>495</sup> or by a gun being fired.<sup>496</sup> This heightened the tension and excitement. As soon as buyers heard the signal, they were allowed into the yard, or aboard ship, and the purchasers rushed in 'with all the ferocity of brutes. Some instantly seized such of the negroes as they could conveniently lay hold of with their hands.' Other buyers tied several handkerchiefs together, or they used ropes and with these encircled as many as they could.<sup>497</sup> 'The noise and clamour with which this [was] attended, and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers ... [increased] the apprehensions of the terrified Africans ...'<sup>498</sup> Having picked the best; only the refuse people remained,<sup>499</sup> mostly 'the feeble or the aged negroes'. Their fate might be decided the following day.<sup>500</sup>

'Enjoyed as a spectacle by provincial bores',<sup>501</sup> scrambles caused fear among the Africans. It was said that some terrified captives tried to escape by scaling the walls of the yard,<sup>502</sup> and friends and relatives

<sup>486</sup> 'Voyage of the *James*, 1675-1676' in E Donnan *Documents* Vol 2 pp199-209 and Revd William Smith *A Natural History of Nevis* p225

<sup>487</sup> Cochrane, Thomas MD 'Answers to the Fifth Table of Queries' pp141-76

<sup>488</sup> Luffman, John *A Brief Account* Letter XIX 6 July 1787 in VL Oliver *The History of the Island of Antigua* Vol 1

<sup>489</sup> Smith, Revd William *A Natural History of Nevis* p225

<sup>490</sup> Fermor, Patrick Leigh *The Traveller's Tree* p212

<sup>491</sup> Referring to the *West India Sketchbook*, the Director of the National Archives of St Kitts has confirmed that the 'old slave market' in Independence Square was the place in which enslaved people sold their own produce. She suggested that, in addition to enslaved people being traded in merchants' premises, they may also have been sold in the customs houses (pers. comm., Victoria Borg-O'Flaherty, October 2009). See also <https://www.historickitts.kn/places/independence-square>

<sup>492</sup> Nisbet, R *The Capacity of Negroes for the Religious and Moral Improvement*

<sup>493</sup> Caines, Clement *Letters on the Cultivation of the Otaheite Cane* p256

<sup>494</sup> Yorke, Philip Chesney (ed) *The Diary of John Baker* p185

<sup>495</sup> Equiano, Olaudah *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* p60

<sup>496</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 73

<sup>497</sup> Falconbridge, Alexander *An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* p34

<sup>498</sup> Equiano, Olaudah *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* p61

<sup>499</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 73 p184

<sup>500</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p108

<sup>501</sup> Craton, M *Sinews of Empire* p101

were invariably separated.<sup>503</sup> To the Africans this caused terrible distress, but buyers, too, found the random snatching unsatisfactory. Scrambles became less frequent in the latter part of the eighteenth century.<sup>504</sup>

Sale by ticket was more orderly. 'On their arrival, the people are generally divided in three sets; the healthy, well-assorted, or prime people; the puny and ill-assorted; and the emaciated, sickly, or refuse people.'<sup>505</sup> The Africans were grouped in lots of perhaps ten and the lots numbered. The agent fixed the price. Buyers drew tickets from a hat, pulling out 'as many lots each as they engaged to take'. This could also result in a 'dreadful scramble'<sup>506</sup> and generally was not popular with buyers. Planters complained that merchants held the upper hand; they alone determined the price and, when sorting the captives into lots, might mix in weaker individuals. For the Africans there was a chance, though, that they might end up in the same batch as their friends and relatives.

At auction the state of the market dictated the price, and buyers had the advantage of looking over their potential purchases an hour or so before the auction began. Planters who intended to buy many Africans may have taken along a barber-surgeon to examine the captives and to determine that they were healthy. The Africans were naked so that buyers could see injuries and flaws, and buyers closely inspected their wares. They looked into people's mouths to see if they had all their teeth and whether the tongue was red and healthy. They prodded arms, legs and thighs, looking for injuries and swellings and, in order to see whether the Africans were fit and agile, they made them 'run, leap or jump from the ground'. Buyers marked their choices by tying a 'small piece of thread' on their fingers or feet. During the auction, each person was called, one by one, to stand on the floor and was offered at a minimum price set by the auctioneer. The men were sold first, then the women, then the boys and the girls. Inevitably, friends and relatives became separated.<sup>507</sup>

At auction the Africans might, for the first time, see Creoles who were up for re-sale.<sup>508</sup> A contemporary writer pointed out that the experience of being sold made Africans fundamentally different from these island-born people because Creoles 'know none of that anxious and painful suspense ... when they are exposed to sale in a slave yard.'<sup>509</sup> While some Creoles were sold publicly, the numbers were relatively small and they came prepared; they knew what to expect from an auction. And they were clothed. One reason why Creoles thought of themselves better than newly arrived Africans was that 'those bosals are brought naked from Guinea and at their sale are seen by all.'<sup>510</sup>

Whether attracted by the spectacle of naked Africans or by the general hubbub, for whites these sales were a popular entertainment. They were social occasions, a day out. This was underlined by the large amounts of food and drink which the agents made available for 'treating customers during the sale'.<sup>511</sup> Not

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<sup>502</sup> Falconbridge, Alexander *An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* p34

<sup>503</sup> Equiano, Olaudah *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* p60

<sup>504</sup> Cochrane, Thomas MD 'Answers to the Fifth Table of Queries' pp141-76

<sup>505</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 69 pp141-42

<sup>506</sup> BCRL, Braikenridge Collection, 9961: Baillie, George *Interesting Letters Addressed to James Baillie* Joyce Gold, Shoe Lane 1809

A similar method was used to sell mules. The animals would be grouped into lots, and 'under the inspection' of the attorneys, a dice would be thrown 'for the first and the second choice of such lots' (PP, LB 38: T & P to JR Herbert, Nevis, 29 October 1792).

<sup>507</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p17 and p44

<sup>508</sup> Craton, M *Sinews of Empire* p101

<sup>509</sup> Nisbet, Richard *The Capacity of Negroes for Religious and Moral Improvement* pp19-21

<sup>510</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p117

<sup>511</sup> Donnan, E *Documents* Vol 2 p383

only those intent on buying attended: 'All the citizens of the island are present at such a sale and it is a pleasant thing to watch, as all those people sit, stand or lie down roundabout the auction site.'<sup>512</sup>

Attending the sale left Coker exhausted and bewildered: 'It is as much as man's life is worth to go to a negro sale: there is such pulling and hauling and thronging that it requires the strength of an Hercules to go thro' it.'<sup>513</sup> It appears he bought the ten Africans at a scramble and, worn out, he hired a vessel to take his new people back to Nevis.<sup>514</sup>

Abolitionists claimed that when Africans arrived on the plantation they were commonly branded with the owners' initials 'like sheep or cattle'.<sup>515</sup> Evidence from Mountravers suggest that by JPP's time this was not done any longer, but it is possible that Coker subjected the new arrivals to that procedure. They would have suffered being marked for a second time since traders in Africa would have branded them already, usually on the chest, with branding irons made of gold or silver.<sup>516</sup> Traders thereby identified those they claimed as theirs and prevented them from being substituted with, for instance, sickly individuals.<sup>517</sup> At the same time, the branding mark became the symbol of people's enslaved status. As one planter saw it, 'A slave's passage through life – beginning with his birth into the world, his upbringing and his work as a slave until his death - can be seen in these marks.'<sup>518</sup> Added to the scars from the branding irons were those caused by beatings and accidents, and perhaps the marks from smallpox.

On the plantations branding appears to have served two functions: as a means of identification and a method of punishment. According to one source, enslaved people were branded on the larger islands,<sup>519</sup> but clearly not everyone was branded as, for instance, advertisements for runaways testify.<sup>520</sup> One contemporary observer expressed it very simply: 'Every citizen knows his own people'.<sup>521</sup> As long as people remained on the plantations, there was no need to mark them, but those who sought to escape fared differently. A slavery apologist, Alexander Barclay, put his own slant on the reasons for branding: he claimed that in Jamaica it was to save illiterate, 'wandering' Africans from getting lost in unfamiliar surroundings; if 'lost', they could be recovered and returned to their rightful owners. The same writer confirmed that Creoles were not marked, except for 'vagabonds' and those prone to 'wandering off'.<sup>522</sup>

The observations from the black abolitionist Olaudah Equiano provide a strong indication that at least in some colonies branding was also used as a form of punishment. He wrote:

It was very common in several of the islands, particularly in St Kitts, for the people to be branded with the initial letters of their master's name, and a load of heavy iron hooks hung about their necks. Indeed, on the most trifling occasions they were loaded with chains, and often other instruments of torture were added ...<sup>523</sup>

<sup>512</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p45

<sup>513</sup> Pares, R A *West India Fortune* p353 fn21

<sup>514</sup> PP, WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney 1762

<sup>515</sup> Wilberforce, William *Negro Slavery* Pt II p73

<sup>516</sup> Palmer, Colin *Human Cargoes* p69 fn28, citing British Museum (BM), 25575, p15

It is possible that captives were branded again when they were aboard ship. Peter Blake, the commander of the slaver *James*, recorded in 1675 that 'by ord'r of Agent Mellish came aboard and counted and marked all our Slaves' ('Voyage of the *James*, 1675-1676' in E Donnan *Documents* Vol 2 pp199-209).

<sup>517</sup> See, for instance, "Voyage of the *James*, 1675-1676' in E Donnan *Documents* Vol 2 pp199-209

<sup>518</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* pp45-6

<sup>519</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p71

<sup>520</sup> Wilberforce, William *Negro Slavery* Pt II p73

<sup>521</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p45

<sup>522</sup> Barclay, Alexander *A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery* p218

<sup>523</sup> Equiano, Olaudah *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* p107

The way Equiano connected branding with punishment is supported by an entry in Gregory Lewis's journal: a man tried for cruel treatment had branded a woman five times.<sup>524</sup> Indeed, in St Croix people were punished by being 'whipped and branded under the gallows', or, as it was put, 'pinched with red-hot tongs'.<sup>525</sup> In England, public whippings and brandings were often attached to prison sentences,<sup>526</sup> and branding, a form of punishment that went back to medieval times,<sup>527</sup> was only outlawed in Britain in 1824 and in the British army in 1871.<sup>528</sup> Deserters from the army, if caught, were marked with the letter 'D'.<sup>529</sup> Enslaved people usually were stamped with two or three letters of their owners' name -<sup>530</sup> except for those unfortunate Africans bought for the Codrington estate in Barbados. It was operated by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and until 1732 their new arrivals had to endure being marked with seven letters: SOCIETY.<sup>531</sup>

Although the evidence is not conclusive, it is likely that it was Coker who named most, if not all, of the children. For the boys he favoured place names. There may have been an element of flattery in this: not only did his employer appear to have used the same method when he bought people on his last visit to Nevis, but two of the towns had direct connections with John Frederick Pinney: he had studied at Cambridge and in Parliament had represented the Bridport constituency. The boys called Chester and Oxford may have inherited their names from men who had died recently, and it is just possible that the plantation people chose the names to remember and honour the dead. However, it almost certainly was Coker who called one of the girls Betty, after his mother and his sister.

It was generally recognised that, after arriving in the West Indies, Africans needed particular care, as well as a settling-in period, and when the new people came to Mountravers, Coker may have followed the advice given to planters:

All negroes are subject to worms, and other disorders, arising from change of climate and food; they should, therefore, when first purchased, be blooded, and purged with *vervain* and *semprevive*; they should be allowed plenty of food easily digested, and treated with kindness, they will then take to labour by degrees, and perform their task with cheerfulness.<sup>532</sup>

This in effect summed up what constituted 'seasoning': cleansing the Africans physically and mentally of their previous existence, getting them used to plantation food and plantation life while gradually introducing them to a new work regime.

The ten new Africans came to Nevis just when there was a smallpox outbreak in the island. Quarantine measures had been announced only recently. The illness was widespread, but on Mountravers none of the newcomers died from the smallpox straight away. One died from an unknown cause in the first three years and another in November 1765, which, according to some, would have been eight months past his three-year-seasoning period. According to others, seasoning lasted for five years, and it is therefore unclear whether these two deaths represented a ten, or a twenty, per cent loss of people in this group. However, not only is the sample too small, it is also difficult to assess whether these losses were

<sup>524</sup> Lewis, Matthew Gregory *Journal of a Residence* pp142-43

<sup>525</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p41

<sup>526</sup> Rule, John *Albion's People* p242

<sup>527</sup> Linebaugh, Peter and Marcus Rediker *The Many-Headed Hydra* p18

<sup>528</sup> Buckley, RN *The British Army* p235 and p236

<sup>529</sup> Buckley, RN *The British Army* p236

<sup>530</sup> Tyson, George F and Arnold R Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p45

<sup>531</sup> Fryer, Peter *Staying Power* p496 fn35, citing JH Bennett Jr *Bondsmen and Bishops* 1958 p27

<sup>532</sup> 'History of the Sugar-Cane' in *Gentleman's Magazine* October 1764 p487

comparable with those on other plantations in Nevis; no accurate figures exist as to how many people could be expected to die during the seasoning period. And in any case, there would have been variations not just between plantations but also over time and between islands. According to Michael Craton, generally during the first three years nearly half of all freshly landed Africans died;<sup>533</sup> according to Walwin the figure was a third.<sup>534</sup> In the 1720s Revd Robert Robertson estimated the losses in Nevis at forty in a hundred,<sup>535</sup> a decade later a Jamaican historian claimed they ran at almost fifty in a hundred, and shortly afterwards, the deaths on one plantation in Barbados did, indeed, amount to forty in a hundred. As time went by, conditions improved and the usual rates of depletion in the 1760s in St Kitts and in 1780 in Jamaica were said to have ranged from between ten to twenty people in every hundred, while during the 1780s on the Parham plantation in Antigua fewer than ten in every hundred died.<sup>536</sup> In the late 1790s one St Kitts planter, however, stated that 'within a very short time after their arrival among us, - during the period of their seasoning' twenty-five in every hundred Africans perished.<sup>537</sup> For the whole of the British West Indies, for the second half of the eighteenth century Ward put the average rate of deaths during the seasoning period at between fifteen and twenty in a hundred.<sup>538</sup>

Several factors would have contributed to high or low death rates, both pre-purchase and post-purchase. If a slaver was tightly packed, had a lengthy or difficult passage during which the crew doled out poor provisions, people would have arrived in much worse shape than those who had experienced shorter crossings with relatively better care. The length of time slavers anchored in harbour and the quality of the pre-sale preparations would also have contributed as to how well or how badly Africans fared immediately after being purchased.

While it is argued here that losses during the seasoning period depended on which ships people were transported, no evidence can be offered for this. The depletion rates cannot be quantified because usually the Africans' after-sales destinations are not known. Equally unsupported is the argument that an additional factor would have been the time of year the ship arrived although research has shown that slavers which sailed during the rainy season incurred higher losses during the Middle Passage owing to diseases.<sup>539</sup> It follows that, if Africans arrived during the rainy season, or, indeed, during very lean periods, they were exposed to greater risks. Buying people at the right time was a factor known to John Frederick Pinney; he encouraged Coker to purchase 'new negroes' before Christmas.<sup>540</sup> This was a good time because the weather was drier and soon crop would start. People could then enhance their food rations by sucking sugar cane.

The number of deaths during the seasoning period would also have depended on how quickly anyone was put to work and during which part of the annual cycle: whether newcomers started off holing, harvesting or carrying out light maintenance work on the plantation although, according to Klein and Engerman, diseases played a greater role than the plantation regime. They attributed high rates of death among unseasoned Africans as 'most probably related to encounters with new disease rather than to

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<sup>533</sup> Craton, Michael *Empire Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* p152

<sup>534</sup> Walwin, James *Black Ivory* p75; also p136

<sup>535</sup> Gaspar, David Barry 'Slave Importation, Runaways, and Compensation in Antigua 1720-1729' p312, citing Robert Robertson A *Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London*

<sup>536</sup> Ward, JR *British West Indian Slavery* pp126-27

<sup>537</sup> Caines, Clement *Letters on the Cultivation of the Otaheite Cane* p263

<sup>538</sup> Ward, JR *British West Indian Slavery* pp126-27

<sup>539</sup> Kiple, Kenneth K and Brian T Higgins' Mortality caused by Dehydration during the Middle Passage' in Joseph E Inikori and Stanley L Engerman *The Atlantic Slave Trade* p325

<sup>540</sup> PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 24 July 1762



deliberate overworking or poor care'.<sup>541</sup> Particular local conditions would have played a role, too, such as the outbreak of smallpox that was underway when Coker brought his purchases to Nevis.

But new arrivals did not just have to adjust to diseases and the physical environment – the climate, housing, food, and work – they also had to overcome the stress and the emotional hurt caused by their forced removal from their homeland. Away from kith and kin, they were confronted with white, alien ways that were brash and unceremonial. Everything was strange. If they were to survive, they had to learn much and they had to learn fast. First of all, though, they had to overcome what today is called culture shock.

Since the 1950s anthropologists and psychoanalysts have studied the reactions of people entering new cultures and have tried to measure the stresses these voyagers experienced. The anthropologist Kalervo Oberg was the first to acknowledge that people went through different transitional stages until they were comfortable with their new surroundings. He defined these stages from entry through to acceptance and termed these experiences 'culture shock'. Oberg saw arrival in an alien culture as 'troublesome and uncomfortable', causing physical and mental pressures: lack of appetite, fatigue, sleeplessness, anxiety, even depression. According to him, people went through several more phases until they finally came to accept their new environment. The Austrian analyst Gertrude Ticho applied parameters. She argued that manifestation of culture shock depends on the duration of exposure, the cause and motivation for the change and the nature of dissimilarity to the new, foreign culture. As the study of culture shock progressed, Waud Kracke added a further ingredient: the personality of the individual who underwent entry into another culture.<sup>542</sup>

Culture shock has been studied on adults who voluntarily changed their way of life for another – diplomats, overseas students and other sojourners – but these Africans were forced to leave their familiar environments. They had to overcome the additional trauma of their brutal removal, the horrors of the Middle Passage and the uncertainties and indignities experienced during the sales. And most were

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<sup>541</sup> Klein, Herbert S and Stanley L Engerman 'Fertility Differentials Between Slaves in the United States and the British West Indies: A Note on Lactation Practices' in *William and Mary Quarterly* Vol 35 No 2 (April 1978) p362

<sup>542</sup> Since Kalervo Oberg originated the concept of culture shock, the reactions to entering a new culture have been refined by further research and different models have been proposed. Oberg described four stages (honeymoon, crisis, recovery and adjustment), Adler five (contact, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and independence), while others have attributed up to nine phases to the adjustment process. Symptoms include anxiety, sleeplessness, irritability, and loss of appetite. More recent studies have focussed on the positive, enriching aspects of entering other cultures. Culture shock is then seen as a profound learning experience that adds to personal growth.

It is recognised that these are modern studies and mostly of people who enter an unfamiliar environment voluntarily (businessmen, students, travellers, etc), but in the context of plantation slavery the basic idea that removal from one culture to another caused a variety of psychological stresses is, nevertheless, relevant. During the seasoning period new arrivals may well have experienced frustration at not being able to make themselves understood, grappled with a sense of helplessness, mourned the loss of their own way of life – all these are indications of what today is known as culture shock. Those trusted, experienced people who guided the new arrivals through the seasoning period are, in fact, similar to the 'culture friend' mentioned by Furnham and Bochner. For further reading see PS Adler 'Culture shock and the cross-cultural learning experience' in LF Luce and Ed Smith (eds) *Toward internationalism* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1987; Furnham, Adrian and Stephen Bochner 'Social difficulty in a foreign country: an empirical analysis of culture shock' in Bochner, S (ed) *Cultures in contact – studies in cross-cultural interaction* Pergamon, Oxford 1982; Furnham, Adrian and Stephen Bochner *Culture Shock: Psychological Reactions to Unfamiliar Environments* Methuen, New York 1987; Kracke, Waud 'Encounter with other Cultures: Psychological and Epistemological Aspects' in *Ethos* Vol 15 No 1, Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Anthropology (March 1987) pp58-81; Oberg, Kalervo 'Culture shock: adjustment to new cultural environment's in *Practical Anthropologist* Vol 7 (1960) pp177-82; Spradley, James P and Mark Phillips 'Culture and Stress: A Quantitative Analysis' in *American Anthropologist* New Series Vol 74 No 3 (June 1972), pp518-29; Ward, C and A Kennedy 'Crossing cultures: the relationship between psychological and socio-cultural dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment' in J Pandey, D Sinha, and DPS Bhawuk (eds) *Asian contributions to cross-cultural psychology* Sage Publications, New Delhi 1996

children who had to undergo these awful experiences on their own, without the support from their families.

On arrival, the Africans Coker had bought in St Kitts became members of an artificial village and of an artificial community. Within this community, they had to find their place, establish themselves. For every man and woman who gave the children a home, for every Old Mary who taught them obedience and subservience, for every person who comforted them, there would have been someone trying to have their fun with the newcomers, play tricks on them, mock their foreign ways. Sexual predators, both white and black, were ready to exploit their bewilderment. Along their paths into adulthood they had to overcome many obstacles. But as a white carpenter, who once served on slaving ships, had observed, these Africans came well equipped. The captives he had encountered were all 'capable of learning any thing much quicker' than whites.<sup>543</sup>

Not all the children Coker bought in March 1762 made it into adulthood. Of ten he purchased, three died before the end of the decade, still in their teens, and another three between 1774 and 1783. Only two were to live into their fifties.

**238 Dorsett** was probably born between about 1742 and 1744. An 'able' man, in the mid-1760s he worked in the great gang.

Dorsett died between July 1774 and July 1783. He was in his thirties to early forties.

**239 Bridport** may have been born as early as about 1743 but was probably born later.

One year and eight months after he arrived on Mountravers, he was the first of his group who perished. Bridport died on 26 November 1763. He was still in his teens.

**240 Glasgow, later Cooper Glasgow and Old Glasgow.** He was probably born between about 1746 and 1748.

It is likely that he was earmarked to replace the cooper Tom Bossue, who had died a year earlier. While Glasgow and Little Fido (No 182) were being trained in the trade, the plantation was so short of coopers that Coker had to hire one for six months. The man came at a price: N£3 a month, plus an additional six shillings 'for finding him in victuals'. Coker hired Thomas Wenham's man who probably came from the estate which Wenham was then renting, Budgeon's in St John Figtree.<sup>544</sup> The following year Coker still had to hire a cooper for two months.<sup>545</sup>

Little Fido, a Creole a few years Glasgow's senior, was apprenticed to a white cooper, while Glasgow was trained by a black man, probably Lewy (No 166). Coker may have chosen different instructors because one young man was a Creole and the other an African, but it is also possible that he based his choice on their strength and health, or their motivation: while Little Fido was classed as 'good and able', Glasgow

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<sup>543</sup> Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 82 p15

<sup>544</sup> PP, WI Box D: Accounts referring to the Estate of JF Pinney 1762

<sup>545</sup> PP, Misc Vols 3 AB 3: 16 May 1764

was only 'good'. In 1783 their qualities were reflected in their appraised values: Little Fido's was N£150 and Glasgow's only N£120.

Cooper Glasgow was the first of Dr Thomas Pym Weekes's patients. In March 1788 Dr Weekes visited the plantation and gave him flux powders, followed in October by more visits and more flux powders. The total cost came to almost N£5.<sup>546</sup> Glasgow recovered but over the decade his health declined. Only occasionally did he work as a cooper, at other times he acted as a watchman. He was one of eleven watches and stationed with Foe 'at the Mountain'.<sup>547</sup>

It is not clear when Cooper Glasgow died. He may have become 'useless', or he may, indeed, have died, in his fifties, between January 1802 and May 1803. It is possible, though, that he was still alive when the plantation was sold. In 1807 JPP mentioned him in a 'PS' to John Henry Clarke, with whom he was negotiating about the sale of Mountravers: 'The negro called Old Glasgow is not in the return tho' we believe he is alive'. JPP thought he should be included in the total number of people to be sold with the plantation.<sup>548</sup> Glasgow certainly had died by December 1816.

**241 Cambridge.** Born probably between about 1747 and 1752, he became one of three cattle keepers. He may have looked after the calves and young steers rather than the adult animals. These animals probably were the responsibility of an old man, Johnno.

Cambridge was just the sort of person a Jamaican planter advised should not be employed to work with animals: 'The cattle and mule boys should never be chosen from the Africans or youths between twelve and twenty years of age: "Take then the tractable, docile youth, of Creole birth, for most of them know how both to lead and yoke cattle, and ride and tackle mules."<sup>549</sup>

Cambridge was considered 'indifferent' and did not live long enough to disprove this opinion. He had only been on the plantation for three years and eight months when he died on 12 November 1765. He was still in his teens.

**242 Chester** was born probably between about 1748 and 1753. Described as 'indifferent', he worked in the small gang - the group that did the lighter tasks.

Chester died, in his teens, on 11 March 1767 - almost exactly five years to the day after he had arrived on Mountravers.

**243 Cudjoe** was the only member of this group with an African name. He may have been able to keep his birth name - after all, it was easy to pronounce and spell - but Coker may also have re-used the name of a former Mountravers inhabitant. There had been several men called 'Cugga'; they had all died before 1761.

<sup>546</sup> PP, AB 35 TP Weekes' a/c and AB 30 TP Weekes a/c

<sup>547</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary Front cover

<sup>548</sup> PP, LB 22: JPP to John Henry Clarke on board *Edward* Capt Wm Powell, Cove of Cork, 22 December 1807

<sup>549</sup> Higman, BW *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica* p188, quoting Thomas Roughley *The Jamaican Planter's Guide; or, a System for Planting and Managing a Sugar Estate, or other Plantations* London 1823 pp97-119

Born probably between about 1745 and 1747, he became a field hand. He worked in the small gang. He was judged 'indifferent'.

In his early twenties he died in an accident. Cudjoe drowned on 26 August 1769. It was recorded that he lost his life 'in the worm cistern'. He may have been doing a similar job to the one recorded in the Plantation Diary: 'two employed in the work, making a gap in the cistern to get over the worm'.<sup>550</sup>

He had lived on Mountravers for almost seven and a half years.

**244 Oxford** was probably born between 1750 and 1753.

He worked in the small gang, was thought of as 'good' and between 1766 and 1768 was transferred, with Sally, to the Gingerland estate. They were the only two of this group sent to work there.

Oxford died between July 1774 and July 1783. He was at least about 19, at the most around 33 years old.

**245 Sally** was probably born around 1746/7. She worked in the small gang, described as 'good' and was in 1766 transferred to the Gingerland estate. There she died, probably aged around twenty, some time before 10 July 1768.

It is possible that Little Agree, born in September 1764, was her daughter.

**246 Nancy (also Nantzi)**. Born probably between about 1750 and 1753, she became a 'good' field hand and in 1765 worked in the small gang.

Nancy died some time between July 1774 and July 1783. She was at least about 19, at the most around 33 years old.

**247 Betty** was probably born about 1751/2. Described as 'good', in 1765 she worked in the small gang. In March 1767, or before, Betty ran away, possibly with the man Charge (No 176), but they were both caught. Someone was paid a reward of N6s for returning them.<sup>551</sup> Charge ran way at least once more, in 1781, but there was no record of Betty absenting herself again.

It is possible that, aged 30, she had a daughter, called Little Betty (b March 1781).

When she was in her early forties, she still worked in the field but may have been moved to other tasks before she reached her late forties.<sup>552</sup> Her value in 1783 of N£60 suggests she may not have been very strong, or in declining health.

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<sup>550</sup> PP, DM 1173 Plantation Diary 25 September 1798

<sup>551</sup> PP, AB 17: 12 March 1767

<sup>552</sup> Betty was on the 1793 gang list but was not listed in the 1798 field list. However, some sections of the Plantation Diary were damaged and it is possible that in the late 1790s she may have been listed as a member of the second gang where there was a hole in the paper. The document has since been restored.

Having been sold with the plantation, Betty died between December 1816 and July 1817. She probably was in her mid-sixties. She had become the longest-surviving member of this group of ten Africans. Once again, it was a woman (one of only three) who had outlived all the others.



### ***After John Frederick Pinney died***

John Frederick Pinney died on 11 November 1762, and anyone born from then on was born under JPP's ownership and records of their birthdates were kept.

**248** **Lucy Cuba, later Cuba (also Cubba)**, was born on Friday, 29 July 1763. She was 'of a yellow cast'. Her mother was black and an entailed woman, Lucy (No 123). Cuba had three younger sisters: the twins Sue and Omah (b 1765) and Little Bridget (b 1778). Ten years after Little Bridget was born, her sister Omah gave birth to Goliah.

Cuba, her mother and her sisters were all field workers. Cuba was strong. Aged twenty, she was appraised at N£100 and in her mid-thirties was allocated to Wiltshire's great gang.

By then, Cuba had been delivered of a child. It was a difficult birth and instead of a plantation woman assisting, the doctors were called in. Their charges were high (N£16:10:0) but the baby was either born dead, or it died very young – certainly before it was 18 months old. After giving birth, Cuba was ill. On 5 June 1795, three days after confinement, she had six fever-reducing boluses.<sup>553</sup> Her total medical expenses came to almost N£18 but this sum included the cost of having a troublesome tooth extracted when she was in her early twenties.<sup>554</sup>

Not long after she had given birth, Cuba became pregnant again. Her daughter Peggy was born in August 1797 but she, too, did not live long. Peggy died before she was four years old. Cuba then gave birth to another two children who did survive: Felix (b April 1801) and, named after her mother, Lucy (b August 1806). Although Cuba was 'of a yellow cast', both her children were black. When her daughter Lucy was born, Cuba was 43 years old, which was about the same age her mother was when she had given birth to her last child.

Cuba, Little Bridget, Omah and their mother were sold with the plantation to Huggins and remained on Mountravers, but their sister Sue was among the people JPP reserved for himself. His group of people were hired to Clarke's Estate.

Cuba lived long enough to see her daughter Lucy being baptised in 1828 and she was alive to enjoy the birth of her first grandchild: Lucy's daughter Bridget was born in 1832. Her twin sisters and their mother had died between 1817 and 1822, but Cuba, her daughter Lucy, her granddaughter Bridget, her son Felix, and also her younger sister Bridget were all alive on 1 August 1834.

If her name was intended to follow the Akan custom of naming children according to the day of the week they were born, Cuba was the name for a girl born on a Wednesday. Her recorded birth date, however,

<sup>553</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>554</sup> PP, AB 31 Archbald & Williamson's 1785 a/c

was a Friday although it is, of course, possible that her birth date was registered late. If Coker named her, he may have unwittingly commemorated the resistance fighter Queen Cubah. In 1760 she planned a major slave uprising in Jamaica but the plot was uncovered, she was captured and sent off the island. She returned, was recaptured and hanged.<sup>555</sup> News of the action in Jamaica would have reached Nevis by 1763.

**249 Foe** was born on Friday, 2 December 1763. Almost certainly his mother was Jenny (No 202) and his grandmother the nurse Old Rose (No 102). Between 1766 and 1768 all of them were moved to the Gingerland estate. His grandmother died between 1774 and 1783, by which time his mother had suffered the loss of a hand and appears to have given birth to another child.

Plantation people developed their own values and moral codes which arose from their enslavement and their resistance to it. Theft from their masters they justified by saying that, as they were his property, they were just transferring one item of property to another and, in effect, no one had lost anything. But stealing from another enslaved person was a different matter. This they considered "heinous".<sup>556</sup> The 15-year-old Foe committed just such an act. It cannot be known what motivated him to steal a fowl from the African woman Harriett, one of the domestics. Was it hunger? A private vendetta? Youthful high spirits, a dare, or an act of rebellion? His was the first recorded theft by one enslaved person from another, and JPP did what he always did in such cases: he reimbursed the victim and, no doubt, administered what he considered just punishment. Harriett did well out of the affair; JPP paid her double the amount he had recently paid for someone else's a fowl.<sup>557</sup>

The theft did not affect Foe's job prospects or his value. Aged 19, he was worth N£100. Although sugar boilers generally tended to be older men, he then may already have worked as a second boiler under the head boilers London, Paul and Warrington. But as the second boiler Foe was of lower status and importance and therefore not entitled to the check material that JPP sent 'to be distributed in shirts amongst the head boilers, distillers and tradesmen'.<sup>558</sup>

Foe's mother died between 1794 and 1801, and by the late 1790s Foe was ill. On 20 January 1798 he was given a 'blister' and twelve pectoral powders, and on 1 February another lot of pectoral powders. The total treatment came to N£4.<sup>559</sup> The medication he was given suggests that he had a chest complaint, possibly consumption. While he still worked as the 'second boiler', his declining health meant that at times he was employed as a watchman. He was the youngest of eleven. Foe and Cooper Glasgow were stationed 'at the Mountain'.<sup>560</sup>

On 12 December 1799 Foe caught Cato from the neighbouring Parris's estate 'break nine canes in the windmill piece'.<sup>561</sup> It is worth noting that the manager, James Williams, recorded the exact number damaged; punishment presumably corresponded to the extent of the breakage. Throughout the Caribbean destroying cane was a recurring act of resistance that, literally, went to the roots of the sugar

<sup>555</sup> Terborg-Penn, Rosalyn 'Black Women in Resistance: A Cross-Cultural Perspective' in Gary Y Okiho (ed) *In Resistance* p194

<sup>556</sup> Bush, Barbara *Slave Women in Caribbean Society* p31, quoting John Stewart *A View of Jamaica (with Remarks on the Moral and Physical Conditions of Slaves and the Abolition of Slavery in the Colonies)* Edinburgh 1832 p246; see also Michael Craton *Empire Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* p151

<sup>557</sup> PP, AB 17 Nevis a/c

<sup>558</sup> PP, LB 12: JPP to James Williams, 15 November 1796

<sup>559</sup> PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

<sup>560</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

<sup>561</sup> PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

In 1817 Cato was not listed on Parris's (UKNA, T 71/364)

industry, and perpetrators were punished most severely. The abolitionist Revd Ramsay, who had worked as a surgeon on St Kitts plantations,<sup>562</sup> stated that watchmen were ordered to kill anyone they found breaking canes and to bury the offenders. His opponents rejected his claim but Ramsay insisted that he knew of 'several instances of negroes found dead in cane pieces' and that he had himself treated 'many mangled with wounds, received in breaking canes'.<sup>563</sup> One manager in Nevis, Mr Ward, recorded how men from his plantation were dealt with when they were caught in the neighbour's fields:

Harry catch'd in Vandaypools cane chopt on the top of the shoulder the bone lay bare and in the arm brook his hand and wipt him from his hed to his backsides while he was raw then brought him home.

A few weeks later Mrs Vanderpool's watches caught another man breaking canes; 'they gave him 100 then sent him home by the watchman the next morning.' Mr Ward added another twenty lashes. The estate on which Ward worked also suffered damage and he whipped his own watchman, Ebo Dick, 'for letting his cane be brook where he watched'.<sup>564</sup> Those charged with guarding the plantation could not let perpetrators slip away because, as Revd Ramsay spelt out: 'If a field of canes be found much damaged, the watchman is severely punished; this obliges him to shew no mercy'.<sup>565</sup>

Foe was among those sold with the plantation. Presumably he succumbed to his illness and died between August 1807 and December 1816. He was aged at least 44, at the most 53 years old.

**250 Toa alias Peggy** was born on Tuesday, 20 December 1763. Almost certainly Peggy (No 125) was her mother.<sup>566</sup> She was born on Mountravers and worked as a field hand in the great gang.

When Toa was five years old, her mother gave birth to a girl, Miah (No 345), but died in childbed shortly afterwards. From then on Toa's alias started being used.

Having lost their mother, the girls would have been brought up by their relatives, or fostered by other people. They grew up during a very difficult time, in difficult circumstances. Perhaps they had to compete for food with their foster siblings, leaving them weakened. Her sister Miah was in 1783 appraised at a very low value. But by then Toa was dead already. She died some time after July 1774 and before July 1783. She was at least 10, at the most 19 years old.

**251 Frederick** was born on Monday, 23 January 1764. He may well have been named by William Coker in memory of John Frederick Pinney. Coker later also had a son whom he called John Frederick.

Aged just over five years, Frederick died on 11 March 1769 from a common complaint, worms.

**252 Little Agree** was born on Tuesday, 11 September 1764.

<sup>562</sup> Revd Ramsay worked as a surgeon in Christchurch Nicholastown and St John Capisterre from 1762, left in 1777 and returned the following year. But, faced with hostility from St Kitts planters, he finally returned to England in 1781 (Shyllon, F<sub>o</sub>larin *James Ramsay* p125, p35, p46, p56 and p126).

<sup>563</sup> Ramsay, J *A Reply to Personal Invectives* p65

<sup>564</sup> MLD, Mills Papers, 2006.178/10, Vol 4 (3 November 1776, 15 December 1776 and 3 October 1776)

<sup>565</sup> Ramsay, J *A Reply to Personal Invectives* p65

<sup>566</sup> PP, AB 14 f30

She was moved to the Gingerland estate between 1766 and 1768. By then her mother may have died (possibly Mimba, in 1765), but it is equally likely that one of the women who worked on Gingerland was her mother: Arrabella, Santee's Kitty, Congo Flora, Abba, Morote, or an African girl called Sally.<sup>567</sup> Sally died while on Gingerland, and her death, or Arrabella's in 1769, may possibly have been linked to Little Agree's and Mingo's. He was a cane watch and boiler and had also been working on the Gingerland estate. Back on Mountravers, Mingo killed Little Agree by making her drink a gallon of rum. She died on Wednesday, 8 March 1769. The girl was four and a half years old. Mingo hanged himself on the same day.

To read other chapters, please copy this link and paste it into your search engine:  
<https://seis.bristol.ac.uk/~emceee/mountraversplantationcommunity.html>

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<sup>567</sup> Girls who had children while young would have been classed as 'women'. Other women on Gingerland at that time were too old to have been Little Agree's mother (Old Rose Paenda and Little Sheba); Dorinda was purchased after Little Agree's birth, in 1765; and Jenny had given birth to Foe in December 1763.