

PART 2

The enslaved people

Chapter 7

Mountravers under the Hugginses (1808-1834)

'... from disobedience they proceeded to riot, and from riot to rebellion.'

Peter Thomas Huggins, 1810

A change in ownership transformed the lives of everyone on Mountravers. Once again, the proprietor was resident on the plantation and people became subject to a harsh regime. They rebelled and were severely punished. Their punishment received publicity in Britain and North America and contributed to the debate about plantation slavery.

The number of freed people in Nevis increased. Because they operated outside the plantation structures, institutions had to be adapted or established: an organised police force came into being, the jail was improved and a hospital and a 'lunatic asylum' built. The legal system, too, had to be changed to take account of this new, significant layer of society. Another institution that underwent change was the church. It began to cater for enslaved people who could get baptised, married and buried with Christian ritual. Mountravers was at the forefront of developments that included the establishment of a chapel and a school. It was also among the estates that introduced new technology in the form of the plough and the steam engine. These innovations changed people's work. Further changes took place when three neighbouring estates were added to Mountravers and workers moved between the different properties.

The decade before the abolition of slavery was marked by droughts, hurricanes and earthquakes, and by increased acts of resistance: thefts, arson, burglaries, and murders. The 1820s were tough indeed.

When slavery was abolished, some of those who then lived on Mountravers will have descended from Africans who had been purchased for the plantation in the seventeenth century. The last children born into slavery had a Creole lineage.



From the beginning of August 1807 onward there followed several months of uncertainty on Mountravers. After Joe Stanley had handed over the keys to James Tobin and Thomas Arthurton, the sale of the plantation was in limbo because, although agreed in principle, the potential purchaser had not signed a contract. Samuel Bennett was managing the estate but as yet there was no new owner – the plantation still belonged to the Pinneys.

One sticking point was the property which John Pretor Pinney (JPP) owned separately from his son's. He still held Woodland plantation, six acres called Coker's land and ten enslaved people whom he had reserved for his own use: Nancy Jones and her son William Fisher, Mulatto Nanny and her two children

George and Christiana, Tom MacGill, Prince, and three little girls, Princess, Nanny and Ritta.¹ These individuals needed to be housed, and JPP wanted them to live somewhere near Mountravers. One option was to reserve part of the land rented to Clarke's Estate and a plot of about eleven acres known as 'the old Negro-house piece'. Both of these lay advantageously on the further side of the large ghut and therefore 'out of the way of annoying Mr Huggins'.² At the same time JPP made it known that he was prepared to accept other deals, such as giving up Coker's land near the house and taking 'the small piece above Oliver's [i.e. Clarke's] and three or four acres the bottom of the old Negro-house piece'.³ JPP was angling for a small plot above Oliver's house but when no agreement could be reached he was prepared to sell the group, if necessary. He did not want their housing situation to hinder the sale of Mountravers.⁴

With these finer points still needing to be settled - in addition to the sale of the main plantation - letters went back and forth between Bristol and Nevis. JPP charged James Tobin with selling Mountravers, but at the same time JPP also conducted his own talks with other people. Negotiations therefore went on simultaneously in Bristol and in Nevis, between JPP and Edward Huggins's attorney, and between James Tobin and John Henry Clarke, and when Clarke visited England, JPP also entered into discussions with him.⁵ Reaching agreement over the sale was made more complicated by the length of time it took to get news across the Atlantic, and the upshot was that both JPP and Tobin concluded separate deals.

Clarke informed JPP that, if Huggins was still interested, then he would not pursue the purchase until Huggins had definitely stated he was withdrawing.⁶ At this point JPP seized the moment and sealed months of negotiations with a contract. On 1 February 1808 Robert Claxton, as Edward Huggins's attorney, signed an agreement in Bristol. Unaware of this development, in Nevis, about five weeks later, Tobin sold the plantation to John Henry Clarke and put him in possession of Mountravers.

The deal with Huggins meant that John Frederick Pinney and JPP sold the estate for £35,650 (worth about S£2.9 million in 2016). Included were Woodland, Coker's land, those 183 people who were alive in December 1806 and ten of JPP's reserved people.⁷ Not included in the sale were five men, four women, six girls and seven boys - men with skills, mothers and their children, and three little girls to whom JPP may have had a particular attachment. Some in the group were black but most were mixed-race. These 22 JPP reserved for himself. They were to be hired to Colhoun's on a long-term basis. JPP wanted them to live on that estate in their own houses which the Mountravers people were to help moving there. Altogether it was an expedient solution. Colhoun's was mortgaged to the House and JPP thought his people would be a valuable acquisition. His son had assured him of the 'excellent character of several of them',⁸ and he believed they would be treated well. He had faith in the manager, James Lawson, whom he considered 'a very deserving man' -⁹ high praise indeed from a man to whom humankind was divided into deserving and undeserving. JPP also made separate provisions for some of his favoured people: Billey Jones, his wife Patty Fisher and Patty's mother Sarah Fisher were to be allowed to work out. Billey Jones's mother, Black Polly, was mentioned but not included in the final count of the 22 reserved people. According to JPP, she was 'considered for many years free'.¹⁰

¹ BULSC, PN Microfilm Vol 1: JPP to James Tobin, 2 July 1807

² PP, LB 21: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 4 September 1807

³ PP, LB 22: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 7 September 1807

⁴ PP, LB 22: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 3 December 1807

⁵ PP, LB 22: JPP to John Henry Clarke, on board *Edward*/Capt Wm Powell, Cove of Cork, 22 December 1807

⁶ PP, Misc Vols 13-16 Case of Clarke and Tobin f9

⁷ PP, Misc Vols 17-19 Case of Clarke and Huggins 1808 f7

⁸ PP, LB 46: JPP & JF Pinney, to James Lawson, Nevis, 25 February 1808

⁹ PP, LB 46: JPP & JF Pinney, to JC Mills, 6 April 1809

¹⁰ PP, Misc Vols 17-19 Case of Clarke and Huggins 1808 f7: JPP to James Tobin, 1 February 1808, also LB 22: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 1 February 1808

News that JPP had sold Mountravers to Edward Huggins had not reached Nevis and John Henry Clarke took possession of the property.¹¹ In an additional agreement, from 7 March 1808 Clarke also rented the 22 reserved people whom JPP had intended to have hired to Colhoun's.

While JPP had second thoughts about the 'hasty decision' to sell the estate - sugar prices being 'much better' now - ¹² Tobin was pleased that Clarke had taken on the whole estate and was certain of JPP's approval. Tobin believed the 'poor negroes', too, were 'very glad' of the developments.¹³ No doubt, news would have reached them that JPP had seemed to have been 'strongly prejudiced in favour of Huggins', and presumably they saw John Henry Clarke as a man who worked his people with a lighter touch. Clarke, in turn, was well disposed towards them. He believed that, 'though accustomed from long indulgence to habits of idleness', the people 'were not difficult to manage by mild measures'. Later he claimed that during his residence of sixteen months on the estate 'he did not believe that the number of one-hundred-and-sixty lashes was inflicted amongst the whole gang, then amounting to one-hundred-and-eighty-three'.¹⁴ This equalled an average of about two and a half lashes per person – man, woman and child - over a period of sixteen months.

The punishment may have been relatively slight and the plantation people may have accepted Clarke's regime but JPP's reserved people did not. They had already taxed Joe Stanley's patience by claiming that JPP had given them permission to work for themselves (that is hire themselves out and keep the money) and, now that the plantation was being sold, they expected to be freed. They felt themselves to be special. Ever since JPP had handed over Mountravers to his son, they had belonged to JPP. They had held a privileged position; they did not consider themselves ordinary plantation workers. Listed separately from the others, their hire income had gone directly to JPP, and for over ten years they had hoped their master would free them. Now, their expectations crushed and, no doubt, feeling betrayed by JPP, they immediately resisted Clarke's new regime. They reacted strongly and made it plain that they had no intention of working for the new master. But their refusal to accept their ongoing enslavement could not last long. Clarke had the upper hand, and after a couple of months James Tobin could report to JPP that his people appeared resigned to the new reality:

I am concerned to be obliged to inform you, that I have had an uncommon deal of trouble from the *refractoriness* of such of your negroes as you chose to keep distinct from the rest. I have reason to think that several in this lot, particularly some of the mulattoes had puffed themselves up with the hopes of receiving their *freedom* as you had professed an intention of keeping them separate from the others they ill brooked therefore their being *leased* to Mr Clarke and became impudent and unruly and several of them told him in plain terms that they had not been used to work and never would. However by mild measures with some of them, and sharp ones with a few others, they seem now to be pretty quiet and reconciled to their situation'.¹⁵

But there was more to come.

John Henry Clarke, meanwhile, set out to repair the Great House which was 'very much in want'. According to him, not a single room was 'tight' and the other buildings were 'in a similar state'.¹⁶ He need not have troubled himself because as soon as JPP learnt that Clarke was in possession of the estate,

¹¹ PP, Misc Vols 13-16 Case of Clarke and Tobin 1809-1810 f1

¹² PP, LB 22: JPP to JF Pinney, London, 12 April 1808

¹³ PP, Misc Vols 17-19 Case of Clarke and Huggins 1808 f42: Copy of a letter James Tobin to JPP, 2 April 1808

¹⁴ UKNA, CO 152/100: JW Tobin to Thomas John Cottle, 30 December 1811

¹⁵ Pares, R A *West India Fortune* p153, quoting James Tobin to JPP, 17 May 1808

¹⁶ PP, Misc Vols 17-19 Case of Clarke and Huggins 1808 f50: Clarke to JPP, 20 April 1808

JPP sought to recover the property and install Edward Huggins instead. Suspecting connivance between his attorney and Clarke, JPP enlisted the help of Captain Shilstone. He had always thought him 'a man fit to be trusted'¹⁷ and now instructed him to 'Contrive to hear from Mr Nicholson whether Mr Clarke and Mr Tobin signed the agreement at his store on the same day and whether it was signed after the contract with Mr Huggins arrived.' Given the mix-up over the sale, it was important to find out the exact date the contract had been finalised. JPP swore Shilstone to secrecy: 'You must keep this to yourself and enquire in a way that he may not suspect you are desired to do it. Get all the intelligence you can.'¹⁸ Just as Captain Maies had been JPP's eyes and ears in Nevis, Shilstone now fulfilled a similar function.

James Tobin's agreement with John Henry Clarke had included a clause that gave Huggins possession if he had entered into a prior contract with JPP,¹⁹ and, following a court case in which Huggins sought possession from Clarke, on 2 August 1809 Clarke retreated from Mountravers. Edward Huggins senior was now the owner. Almost exactly a hundred years after the Helme/Travers plantations had come into the Pinney family through the marriage of an earlier John Pinney, Mountravers went out of the possession of the Pinneys and into the hands of the Hugginses.²⁰ The Clarke scenario was only an interlude; the real owner was Edward Huggins senior. For him prospects looked good. Just then sugar prices were up.²¹

In the first six months of Edward Huggins ownership nine people died without there being an epidemic on the plantation.²² When negotiating the sale with Huggins, JPP was not to know that so many deaths would follow so soon, but he did know of Huggins's reputation for cruelty: that he used spiked iron collars as well as whips and chains, that two of his people had committed suicide by jumping chained into a cistern and that he had shot another, thrown the body into a hut and set it alight.²³ But Huggins had escaped punishment. When he was tried for flogging one person most inhumanely, in a subsequent trial the overseer had refused to give evidence.²⁴ And yet, although JPP knew of Huggins's character,²⁵ he

¹⁷ PP, LB 19: JPP to JF Pinney, Nevis, 15 February 1805

¹⁸ PP, LB 46: JPP to Capt Shilstone, 18 January 1809

¹⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1805-1808 ff527-31

²⁰ PP, Misc Vols 13-16 Case of Clarke and Tobin 1809-1810 f1 and f27

The court case that followed was unpleasant, with both JPP and James Tobin blaming each other for the fiasco, and although JPP hoped James Tobin would return to the firm, he never did. JPP's ratty comment scribbled in a margin - 'a schoolboy of 12 years of age would have acted with more propriety' - is indicative of the prevailing tone (LB 21 f16). Pares suggested that they were both to blame; Tobin for exceeding his powers and JPP for trying to control the process from England after he had given Tobin powers to act on his behalf (Pares, *R A West India Fortune* p173).

JPP had offered to sell Mountravers and Charloes (£28,000) and Woodley's (£2,000) for a total of £30,000 (PP, LB 20: Valuation of the estate sent by JPP to TJ Cottle). Huggins had originally offered £27,000 but bought it for £35,650, payable in instalments from 1808 until 1815 (Pares, *R A West India Fortune* p152, quoting UKNA, C54/8710). The House, however, quoted the lower figure of £27,000 (PP, LB 46: Pinney, & Tobin to John Taylor, Tunbridge Wells, 26 February 1808).

Oddly Pares took the capital value of Mountravers including Woodland in 1783 to be the same amount, £35,650, and explained this by saying that it would not have sold for as much as that in 1783 but that it was a 'convenient figure' (Pares, *R A West India Fortune* p320 and p366 fn1).

²¹ Pares, *R A West India Fortune* p198

²² The nine people who died soon after Huggins took over presumably would have included the man who succumbed to 'pleurisy' after the flogging (UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810; also ECM, 1996/24/1290 Correspondence relating to the case of Edward Huggins senior; also PN Box 1 194 A-L).

²³ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

²⁴ *Fifth Report of the Directors of the African Institution Read at the Annual General Meeting on the 27th of March 1811* Extract of a Letter from Governor Elliot, Antigua, to Earl of Liverpool, 20 November 1810

²⁵ PP, LB 21: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 18 February 1807

According to what today would be described as 'a source close to' Edward Huggins (his son-in-law, Thomas John Cottle), Edward Huggins studied plantership under the supervision of John Richardson Herbert, then president of the island and 'one of the best planters' in the island (Cottle, Thomas John *A Plain Statement*). What Cottle did not mention was that President Herbert apparently dismissed Edward Huggins.

John Richardson Herbert was visiting London in 1788 and during his stay learnt of some unspecified wrongdoing by Huggins. Horatio Nelson, who was with him, picked up on this and gleefully passed on the gossip in a letter to his wife: 'Mrs Mills and myself could not keep from laughing. Poor Mr Huggins is quite in disgrace and is to be turned out very shortly.' (Naish, GPB (ed) *Nelson's*

was prepared to sell his people to him. The firm Pinney & Tobin stood behind him and steadfastly defended his decision: 'Mr Pinney had every reason to believe that, though Mr Huggins was the ostensible man - the estates were purchased for his son Edward who amongst the coloured people bears the character of being a human good master.'²⁶

But while he was prepared to hand over his plantation people, JPP did not hire to Huggins his own, reserved group. Instead, he entered into a separate agreement with John Henry Clarke for him to continue renting them. The annual hire rate was set at S£150 which represented ten per cent of their appraised value.²⁷

JPP considered the possibility that Clarke might not pay the money, in which case his people were to be rented to an estate where they were 'likely to remain permanent and be well treated'.²⁸ Like James Tobin, he thought it best if they were rented to one person. It would suit him and also be in their interest: 'Instead of being obliged to receive the produce of their labour by uncertain dribbles,' he would get a lump sum while his people would not be left 'to the wide world without any established protection.'²⁹

Now that Huggins had taken over the plantation JPP's people needed to move their houses somewhere else, and he instructed Thomas Arthurton to appropriate for them a piece of JPP's land, or to acquire a piece of poor land in or near Charlestown.³⁰ Two hundred acres of pasture called Mountain land which were no longer needed were deemed unsuitable for housing and, instead, this land was rented to William Laurence, the owner of Wansey's.³¹

Resistance and the consequences

Although it had been claimed that Edward Huggins senior had purchased Mountravers for his son Edward, he put his 22-year-old son Peter Thomas in charge. Things got off to a bad start and without the assistance of an overseer the young man was soon out of his depth. People did little work, stole sheep from neighbouring Scarborough's plantation that was then worked by John Dasent Smith (Smith claimed he 'could keep nothing from them') and they upset Smith by 'drumming, quarrelling, fighting and rioting' at night. He sent someone up to tell them to stop³² and Peter Thomas Huggins may well have intervened, too. He and his workers certainly were involved in a series of confrontations. Whether, as it was said, it simply was a matter of people 'trying their new master', or whether there were underlying reasons such as the sudden, sharp increase in the number of relatives and friends who perished, what followed was a deliberate refusal to accept Peter Thomas Huggins's authority and, as a result, a breakdown of order. Whereas under Clarke JPP's reserved people had rebelled against not being freed, the plantation workers now fought against the new regime *per se*. They resisted with whatever means they had at their disposal. According to young Huggins, 'they early commenced a system of opposition; from opposition

letters to his wife p51 and Sheila Hardy *Frances, Lady Nelson* p68). Nelson's tone might suggest that Huggins was a bit of a laughing-stock and not popular but, as he came from a poor background, his social superiors may have amused themselves at his expense.

²⁶ PP, LB 47: Pinney, & Tobin to James Tobin, 18 February 1807

²⁷ PP, LB 47: James Tobin, Nevis, to JPP, Bristol, 8 July 1808, in 'Case Tobin v Pinney'

²⁸ PP, LB 23: JPP to Samuel Laurence, 20 September 1809, and 7 July 1810

²⁹ PP, LB 47: James Tobin, Nevis, to JPP, Bristol, 8 July 1808, in 'Case Tobin v Pinney'

³⁰ PP, LB 23: JPP to Thomas Arthurton, 28 August 1809; also PN186

³¹ Mountain land had been part of Lady Bawden's 360-acre estate bought by Azariah Pinney and Richard Meriweather. On division of Lady Bawden's, 160 acres of this estate was allotted to Azariah Pinney, leaving 200 acres of the Mountain land held in common between them. This had descended to JPP on the Pinney side and to William Laurence on the Meriweather side (PP, LB 23: JPP to JC Mills, 18 January 1810).

³² *Fifth Report of the Directors of the African Institution Read at the Annual General Meeting on the 27th of March 1811* and R Pares *A West India Fortune* p153, quoting CO 152/96: John Dasent Smith's evidence

they proceeded to actual disobedience; from disobedience they proceeded to riot, and from riot to rebellion'. They fought their masters but their masters fought back.

At first people defied Peter Thomas Huggins by going away in small groups. Six or eight left at a time. Huggins sent out hunters but they only questioned the absconders without returning them to the plantation. Huggins threatened to punish the hunters. That resulted in the hunters escaping, too. Refusing to work was another weapon at their disposal, and crowds of twenty or thirty reported sick, and they all refused to collect grass and throw it into the pens at night. Then the situation intensified with an incident at Sharloes. It had started harmlessly enough – Huggins had called for a boatman to give him instructions for the following morning – but the gang thought that the boatman had been summoned to inform on them and people fell on him with sticks. The boatman was rescued by a John Smith and taken to Huggins. Informed that a crowd armed with sticks had gathered at Sharloes, Huggins rode to the lower yard but found only six or seven men. He apprehended two of them; the others managed to hurry away.

The next morning, after a night of heavy rainfall, Peter Thomas Huggins asked the drivers to have the pens cleaned out. It took two or three hours for people to turn up for work. When the gang was assembled, Huggins punished the supposed ringleaders of the events the night before, as well as the drivers. He claimed they should have controlled the altercation. After carrying out the punishments, for some time afterwards people remained 'tolerably quiet' but frequently disobeyed orders.³³ Then followed a confrontation between Huggins and one of the drivers. He had shown the man how to stake the ground for holing but the driver, possibly trained by JPP in a different technique, did it his own way, and when Huggins saw how the work had been carried out and criticised it, the driver insisted this was the correct method. Huggins later stated that he 'alighted from his horse to convince him the more easily of his error' but the driver, fearing punishment, attempted to get away. Huggins caught him, struck him with his horsewhip, and on seeing this, the whole gang immediately threw down their hoes and advanced towards Huggins. He, 'not knowing their intention, declared to them, that the first that got over the wall he would put to death.' Having made their point, they advanced no further. Peter Thomas Huggins then ordered one of the drivers, old Wiltshire, to summons four of the men. Wiltshire called them by their names. He called them once, twice. He called them three times. They refused to step forward. When it looked as if they were advancing towards the driver who had been staking the ground, Huggins knocked down one of the men, seized another and whipped the driver, and also the four men who had refused to heed Wiltshire's command.

From then on the gang only worked as long as Huggins remained in the field. As soon as his back was turned they did nothing. In order to punish them for not having worked during the day, Huggins tried to punish them by getting them to work nights. He ordered them to carry dung from the pens for an hour every night, beginning on Saturday, 13 January. Night work had been outlawed over a decade earlier and, knowing they had the law on their side, they refused and went to their houses. Huggins instructed Wiltshire to call at every house, commanding people to turn up for work on Monday. If they failed to do so, they would be punished by being sent to old Edward Huggins's Gingerland plantation. Everyone would have known what that meant, and on Monday people did turn up for work. Peter Thomas Huggins, realising that further punishment at this stage would not do any good, insisted, however, that they carried dung that night. Then, having already left their work once, all but a few old families did so for a second time, and they went to Stoney Grove on the other side of town. They went there to ask James Tobin to intercede on their behalf.³⁴ Tobin was not only their old master's attorney but Tobin had negotiated with

³³ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

³⁴ According to Pares (*A West India Fortune* p155), the Mountravers people turned to James Tobin's son James Webbe Tobin for help. He, however, never stated this in his subsequent correspondence. As James Tobin acted as JPP's attorney and as he was in the island, it is likely that they would have sought his assistance.

John Henry Clarke about selling Mountravers to him rather than to Huggins, and so they knew that Tobin would be sympathetic to their plight and would support them.

Tobin listened to their complaints and, as was customary in such situations, returned them to the plantation in the hope of negotiating a truce between the two sides. He brought back about sixty people. Some of the women returned to the field, as ordered by Huggins, and some more returned the following morning. Then, on Thursday of that week, Huggins repeated his order to carry dung. For him it had become a matter of principle to make everyone work; for them it had become a matter of principle to do the work on their own terms. All of them went off for a third time. In response to this, Huggins borrowed hunters from his friends and let it be known in the island that the Mountravers people 'should be publicly punished and exchanged for the Gingerland negroes'. Threatened like this, some came back on their own accord; others were brought in by hunters. On Sunday, their usual day of rest, Huggins repeated his command to carry dung. Some did, others refused. A party of them, on their way to their houses, was stopped by Huggins. Reluctantly, for a while they followed his orders to carry dung.

While all this was going on, there were other incidents - violent incidents: one man killed a mule by breaking its thigh with a stone, another mule was killed in the mountain, and one man threatened to kill another man with a bayonet. Although many opposed Huggins, people were not entirely united. There were some who did not want to take part in any rebelliousness. When the party of protesters were leaving the plantation for the third time, they met an old watchman who implored them not to go. He reminded them that Peter Thomas Huggins had not punished them after their second absence but 'they told him to hold his tongue, and that he was crazy.'³⁵

Since taking possession of the plantation almost six months earlier, Peter Thomas Huggins had not managed to establish discipline. Crop had started and holing needed to be done, and unless he managed to re-assert control, no sugar would be made this year or next. Knowing that he was losing ground, Huggins had the previous week sought his father's advice. Since then nothing had improved. At this point old Edward Huggins stepped in. If his son was unable to take charge of the situation, he would. Determined to set an example, Edward Huggins tried rounding up those he considered the worst troublemakers. They refused his order. Huggins senior drafted in fifty men from his other estates, probably Golden Rock and New River on the south side of the island, and 'It was not without resistance nor without considerable trouble ... that he could seize the ringleaders and those who were the most turbulent of the gang.'³⁶ But getting hold of the people was only the first step in old Huggins's plan for revenge.

Accompanied by Peter Thomas and another son, Edward, in the morning of Tuesday, 23 January 1810, Edward Huggins senior marched the Mountravers gang into town. People watched as the three men rode by on horseback, escorting their workers. They were heading for the public market place.³⁷

³⁵ UKNA, CO 152/96: Peter Thomas Huggins's evidence

³⁶ Cottle, Thomas John *A Plain Statement* p12

³⁷ ECM, 1996/24/1290 Correspondence relating to the case of Edward Huggins senior. John Burke junior's evidence.

According to Pares, Burke was the Deputy Secretary of the island but it is more likely that his father had held this office. Horatio Nelson noted in 1786 that he had retained Mr Burke in the business of settling Mrs Nisbet's affairs arising from the death of her husband intestate. Burke identified Naish as John Burke, Crown Lawyer for the Leeward Islands and Solicitor-General of Antigua (Naish, GPB (ed) *Nelson's letters to his wife* p37 Nelson, English Harbour, to Mrs Nisbet, 27 November 1786). In the Pinney Papers John Burke is noted as 'Solicitor General' (Misc Vols 12 Leeward Island Calendar 1793), 'Deputy Secretary General' (AB 54 1795) and as 'merchant, Secretary of the Island of Nevis' (AB 57). John Burke senior died at Nevis on 18 September 1802 (Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 Cayon Diary).

Among those who saw the procession move along was John Burke junior, who stood opposite Revd William Green's house. Burke, like others in Nevis, would have known the allegations of brutality made against old Huggins. With that kind of history, anything could happen and, intrigued, a little while later Burke followed the plantation workers up the street. He arrived in the market place in time to see Wiltshire and another Mountravers driver flog Yellow Quashey. Quashey would have been lying on the ground, the position generally adopted for these types of whippings. His arms and legs would have been extended and held down by others while 'his body laid bare from the shoulders downwards to the feet'. As one source described it, the lash would have been applied vertically on his naked body, drawing blood, stripping off the skin until it was 'cruelly mangled and torn.' The resulting marks retained 'a shocking appearance during the rest of life'.

John Burke sat down in 'Dr Crosse's gallery'. He watched as Yellow Quashey was being whipped for another fifteen minutes. From his vantage point in the alley Burke started counting the number of lashes as they struck Huggins's next victim. The report of the lash, 'louder than the long whale bone whip used by the London cartmen',³⁸ could be heard some distance away and, no doubt, attracted more onlookers. At Dr Crosse's house were Mr Parris, Peter Butler and Dr Crosse himself. Henry Barnes, who lived nearby and closer than Dr Crosse, also came out to have a look. Burke noted down the numbers of lashes and continued counting.³⁹ Among the bystanders he recognised men he knew: Joseph Nicholson, Joseph Laurence and the mason's son William Keepe – they had all been watching the whole ordeal since it started at about nine o'clock.⁴⁰ George Abbott joined later. Abbott, the Deputy Naval Officer, had gone 'down in town' to see what was going on. A black woman, who had passed by his house near the Cedar Trees,⁴¹ had told him that 'he would die' (referring to the man who was being flogged) and Abbott came to see for himself. Also among the onlookers were a doctor and a parson – Dr Henry Richards Cassin and Revd Samuel Lyons - and everyone knew that another clergyman, Revd William Green, was somewhere within hearing. Both Lyons and Green were magistrates and Lyons was also a member of the Council,⁴² but neither they, nor anyone else, intervened. Dr Cassin usually attended to the Mountravers people as the plantation doctor and had been called in by Huggins to attend the flogging in his professional role, but he just watched. He did not even step forward when one of the women cried out 'that she was with child'. Her plea was disregarded. Her punishment continued. Burke kept on counting the lashes, and while listening to the strikes as they fell, Dr Cassin observed that one of the drivers made a lot of noise but had little effect, while the other made less noise with greater effect.⁴³ Although he had not helped the pregnant woman, when Burke said that he had counted that 236 lashes had fallen on the man who was then being whipped, Dr Cassin decided that as a doctor he could not allow the punishment to go on. He went up to Huggins and said that it 'was enough'. Huggins told him that 'he did not want his advice'⁴⁴ and the prone man was struck another six times.⁴⁵ Dr Cassin retreated and did no more.

³⁸ 'The West Indian Barbarity' in *The Reformists' Register* No 1 September 1811 p15

³⁹ UKNA, CO 152/96 Andrew Crosse's evidence

⁴⁰ UKNA, CO 152/96 John Burke junior's and Dr Crosse's evidence; ECM, 1996/24/1290 Correspondence relating to the case of Edward Huggins senior; *Fifth Report of the Directors of the African Institution Read at the Annual General Meeting on the 27th of March 1811* Evidence by John Burke and Henry Barnes

⁴¹ In May 1801 George Abbott had bought a piece of land near the Jewish Burial Ground which was near the Cedar Trees (ECSCRN, CR 1801-1803 f175).

⁴² UKNA, CO 152/96 George Abbott's evidence; *The London Statesman* 21 September 1811, quoted in *Connecticut Journal* 2 January 1812 (Courtesy of VK Hubbard).

According to James Webbe Tobin, a total of five magistrates were 'within sight or hearing' but no one had done anything (UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810).

⁴³ PN 194a, quoting UKNA, CO 152/96 Dr Cassin's evidence

Samuel Bennett, in his evidence at the trial, said that he had been told by some enslaved people that the whips had wire lashes. Although he did not see this, he believed it was true; he wondered why he did not hear the crack of the whips.

⁴⁴ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

⁴⁵ UKNA, CO 152/96 John Burke's evidence

Everyone knew that expert drivers could strike without cutting the flesh and, with twenty years of practice, Wiltshire was an expert at wielding the whip. The other driver almost certainly was the equally experienced Jack Will, and it was the second driver's brother who at some stage was also brought to the market place. A man called Aberdeen, he worked as a watchman on Edward Huggins's Golden Rock Estate and was punished together with the Mountravers people. Accused of breaking canes and feeding them to the pigs on another estate, Aberdeen received 187 lashes - John Burke noted this down, too. By the time it was all over by about midday,⁴⁶ Burke had recorded that the whip had altogether struck 2,386 times. Apart from Aberdeen, eight other men had received 115, 65, 47, 165, 242, 212, 181, and 59 lashes each, and ten women 110, 58, 97, 212, 291, 83, 49, 68, 89, and 56 lashes each.

John Burke thought that the woman who was whipped 291 times 'appeared to be young but most cruelly flogged'.⁴⁷ After 291 lashes the flesh on her back and buttocks would have been raw, shredded and bleeding. None of the witnesses mentioned any noises other than the crack of the whip so there is no way of knowing whether she had just winced at each strike, or whether she had screamed out in pain. Did she beg for mercy, or did she and the others bear their torture silently? The evidence from one of the eyewitnesses suggests that the men and women endured the assault with great strength and fortitude. The planter Joseph Laurence watched one of the men 'scrape the blood from his buttocks and drink it'⁴⁸ - what a powerful gesture of defiance!

It may have been the fact that their spirits were not broken that made one of the Hugginses order an old woman throw saltpetre and gunpowder on the mangled bodies - if he could not thrash their pride out of them, then he would burn it out of them - but bravely the old woman refused to carry out the order.⁴⁹ When the woman disobeyed, perhaps at this point the Hugginses knew that they had lost the fight completely. If an old woman refused their command, they would never be able to subjugate their workers. If they were to get any cooperation, they had to accept that they could not crush people with brute force but that they had to find a way to at least co-exist.

It is not known when exactly this incident with the saltpetre and gunpowder happened but most likely it took place soon after everyone had returned to the plantation that day. Nurses would have tended the injured, cleaning and bandaging the gashes, with friends and family gathered around. They would have spoken words of comfort, while others would have talked of escaping as quickly as they could, and of retribution. Everyone knew that enslaved people had already tried to kill old Huggins; he had 'publicly boasted of five attempts against his life by poison',⁵⁰ and, surely, on that day someone swore they would try a sixth time, and that this time they would make sure they succeeded. Equally, others would have warned of the consequences, restraining some of the hotheads and perhaps advocating more moderate methods of resistance.

Meanwhile, what went on at the Great House? Did Peter Thomas's brother and father celebrate the day with a glass of Madeira wine? And when Edward Huggins senior returned home to his plantation, what

⁴⁶ UKNA, CO 152/96: Peter Thomas Huggins's and William Keepe's evidence, and JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810
Aberdeen survived the beating and died on 24 November 1830 (T 71/368).

⁴⁷ UKNA, CO 152/96 John Burke junior's evidence

⁴⁸ UKNA, CO 152/96 Joseph Laurence's evidence

⁴⁹ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

Saltpetre is an ingredient in the manufacture of fertilizer, glass, food preservatives and of some medicines, as a diuretic. It was once used for making gunpowder. While gunpowder causes blood poisoning, in homeopathic medicine saltpetre has also been used as a prophylactic and as an antidote in the treatment of infected wounds. (<http://www.ewildagain.org/Homeopathy/gunpowder.htm>) Huggins's use of saltpetre and James Webbe Tobin's reaction, however, suggest that Huggins was not using the saltpetre in a healing way but that it was intended to inflict further pain. Gunpowder, rubbed into freshly punctured skin, used to be used for tattooing, and had gunpowder been used, the wounds, once scarred, would have been forever tattooed onto the victim's bodies.

⁵⁰ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

did his wife Frances say to him, and his daughter, the 19-year-old Ann Prentis? And how did the other daughter react, Mrs Frances Cottle, who lived with her husband at the Round Hill estate? And Revd Green's mistress?⁵¹ What was the talk that evening on the plantations, in the harbour and in town, in Revd Green's very own rum shop?⁵² Did anyone take him to task for not intervening? How many people were outraged by what they had witnessed? Although public punishments then were not as shocking as they are now - floggings were part of the legal system and ordered by courts not just in the Caribbean but also in Britain - ⁵³ this was punishment of a different kind. Instead of chastising his people on the plantation, Edward Huggins was making a very public statement. By taking the men and women to the market place, he did not just seek to punish and humiliate those he considered rebellious and idle; Huggins was broadcasting a warning to all enslaved people in the island, and many a nervous planter would have applauded him for doing so. However, even the most zealous hardliner would have felt that Huggins had overdone it and that he had exceeded the level of violence that was acceptable in Nevis. It is telling that even Samuel Bennett, a man with a reputation for cruelty, had to admit that he had never seen 'such correction in all his life'.⁵⁴ And those who looked beyond the island would have realised that Huggins had done their cause no good. They knew that abolitionists were watching events in the colonies. Planters needed good publicity, and Huggins's actions could not be defended. The magistrates, however, who had witnessed the event no doubt defended themselves by arguing that Huggins had been within the law because the latest legislation, the Leeward Islands Melioration Act, did not restrict the number of lashes. But remembering the 1791 revolt in St Domingue, others would have warned that this day could herald the beginning of outright rebellion and bloodshed. From then on planters would have watched and listened more carefully than ever as to what went on in the plantation villages.

The aftermath

On Mountravers, an English groom quit in horror over the events and returned to England,⁵⁵ and the injured people fell ill. According to one surgeon, 'many of them suffered severely from fever', the effect of their punishment. Dr Cassin, however, who attended to them, claimed that only three had fever on 'the seventh or eighth day afterwards'. One man, David, was ill, 'but his indisposition did not arise from his flogging', and a man who died was said to have done so from another cause: pleurisy. This is a very painful inflammation of the membrane that contains the lungs and lines the chest cavity. Usually it would be caused by bacteria or a virus but one is left to wonder whether what had been diagnosed as pleurisy might have been connected with the flogging. Of the people flogged Dr Cassin stated afterwards that he 'detected no dangerous symptoms in any of them', and only three or four people were 'detained from work' for about another seven days. Those flogged were also examined by three magistrates, Messrs

⁵¹ UKNA, CO 152/96: James Webbe Tobin to Zachary Macaulay, 28 July 1811

Zachary Macaulay was an ardent philanthropist and connected with the company that founded Sierra Leone. For many years he edited the abolitionist organ, the *Christian Observer* (Oldfield, JR 'Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838)' in *Oxford DNB*).

Revd William Green's mistress was the free woman Amelia Smith who, after his death, was the sole beneficiary and acted as his executrix (ECSCRN, King's Bench and Common Pleas Cause List 1805-1813). His death left her financially secure; she sold several of his properties worth close to N£2,500 (ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 1 ff24-31, CR 1835-1838 ff254-61, ff509-21; CR 1823-1829 Vol 2 ff481-83, ff492-94; CR 1838-1847 ff657-59).

⁵² PN Box 1 194 A-L, taken from UKNA, CO 152/96: James Webbe Tobin to Zachary Macaulay, 28 July 1811

⁵³ In England public flogging of women was not abolished until around 1820 (Harvey, *AD Sex in Georgian England* p166 and Burns, Sir Alan *History of the British West Indies* p614 fn4).

In the military, offenders not infrequently received hundreds of lashes. In 1807 a sentence of 1,500 lashes led to a General Order being issued which stated that for any breach of military discipline other than capital offences punishment should not exceed 1,000 lashes. Although increasingly imprisonment was being used as an alternative to flogging, on a number of occasions this instruction was ignored. Flogging in the army did not cease until 1881 (Dinwiddy, JR 'The Early Nineteenth-Century Campaign against Flogging in the Army' in *The English Historical Review* Vol 97 No 383 (April 1982) p311 and p308).

⁵⁴ PN Box 1 194 A-L, taken from UKNA, CO 152/96 Samuel Bennett's evidence

⁵⁵ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

Wilkes, Liburd and Pemberton, and they, in effect, confirmed Dr Cassin's assessments.⁵⁶ Dr Cassin later did not recall that Fanny alias Affey was ill at this stage although, over the coming weeks, her health certainly did decline. He clearly underplayed the after-effects, but if one accepts even part of his observations, then the physical long-term consequences people suffered were not as horrendous as they might have been. It is likely, therefore, that the enslaved people themselves treated the lacerated skin and successfully prevented infections. For instance Wiltshire, with his knowledge of medicinal plants, might have been called upon to bring roots and herbs for treating the injured. But as Wiltshire was also the man who had flogged the people, did the Mountravers inhabitants shun him, and the other driver, for what they had been ordered to do to their friends and relatives?

Eight days after the flogging had taken place the Legislature met. Josiah Webbe Maynard moved, and James Tobin seconded, the motion that members should investigate the events.⁵⁷ Tobin, although a keen supporter of slavery, must have felt vindicated: the Pinneys had sold Mountravers to the wrong man. But as someone who had given evidence to the Parliamentary Enquiry into the Abolition of the Slave Trade, James Tobin also had his fingers on the political pulse in Britain, and, having lived in England for over twenty years, he knew only too well that public opinion was turning against planters. He knew that the elected representatives had to distance themselves from Huggins. Tobin had the support of the other men present at the meeting: William Laurence, William Garvey Laurence, Edward Pemberton, William Pemberton, Finlay Nicholson, James Hanley, John Richardson, William Worthington Wilkes, William Bowrin junior, Thomas Liburd, and Richard Lythcot Hicks.⁵⁸ Only Peter Thomas Huggins would have been torn between allegiance to his father and allegiance to the planter fraternity. For him the evidence heard by the Assembly would have made particularly unpleasant listening.

Among the witnesses was John Burke junior, the man who had counted the lashes. Of course the flogging had been the talk of the island, and immediately afterwards rumours had started to circulate about the number of times people had been whipped. Burke stated that he had overheard George Abbott say that the first person, Yellow Quashey, had received 365 lashes - ⁵⁹ one for each day of the year – but because George Abbott had not been present from the very beginning, this piece of evidence was disregarded.

Having heard testimony from various people, at their meeting on 31 January the Assembly and Council passed the following resolution:

Resolved, that it is the opinion of this House that the conduct of Edward Huggins senr. Esq. on Tuesday the 23rd of this month in inflicting punishment on several of his negroes, in the public market-place of this town, was both cruel and illegal; and that particularly in two cases where two hundred and forty-two, and two hundred and ninety-one lashes were given, he was guilty of an act of barbarity altogether unprecedented in this Island; that this House does hold such conduct in the utmost abhorrence and detestation, which sentiments perfectly accord with the feelings of the community in general.

⁵⁶ UKNA, CO 152/96 Dr Cassin's evidence

⁵⁷ UKNA, CO 152/96 and David Small *Notes on James Webbe Tobin*, quoting CO 152/100: James Webbe Tobin to Governor Elliot, 30 December 1811, and 12 January 1812

⁵⁸ In a twist of fate the son of one of the men present at the meeting that condemned the flogging was to marry one of Edward Huggins's granddaughters, Georgina Eliza. Richard Lythcot Hicks junior was born just before the flogging took place. Later in the year his father, Richard Lythcot Hicks, left Nevis for America (ECSCRN, Nevis Wills Book 1805-18 ff218-24), where he died in the following year, in 1811 (PP, LB 50: P & A to Peter Jeffreys, Nevis, 1 January 1812). Georgina, the wife of Richard Lythcot Hicks junior, died aged 21 in August 1835 'after a long and painful illness' and he died five months later, aged 26 (Memorial in St George's Church, Gingerland).

⁵⁹ UKNA, CO 152/96 John Burke's evidence

That this House do pledge themselves to promote the strictest investigation into this cruel proceeding; so disgraceful to humanity, so injurious to the fair character of the inhabitants, and so destructive of the best interests of the West India Colonies.

The President, the Council and the Assembly were united in their desire that 'every legal measure should be taken to bring the party to trial.' Interestingly and possibly without precedent, the Assembly decided that their resolution, as well as the evidence they had taken, should be printed and that 'copies be transmitted to England, and circulated through all the islands.' According to their wishes, on 23 February 1810 the *St Christopher Gazette* carried the piece. Outraged, Edward Huggins senior instigated a case of libel against the proprietor of the paper, Thomas Howe. King's Counsel at St Kitts, Clement Caines, defended Howe but the printer was found guilty, sentenced to a month imprisonment, and bailed to keep the peace for three years.⁶⁰ To compensate Howe, the Nevis Legislature voted to award him N£100.⁶¹

Clement Caines also assisted the prosecutor James Weekes to prepare the trial 'The King v Edward Huggins senior Esq'.⁶² The hearing in the Court of King's Bench and Common Pleas began on 1 May 1810 in the public Court Hall in Charlestown. Huggins was defended by a team of four: John Woodley, George Tyson, Samuel Long and Samuel Pemberton.⁶³ James Weekes decided to select the members of the jury by an oddly frivolous method and one that had never before been used in a criminal case: he asked the Marshall to pick cards from an uncut and unshuffled pack.

The jury was full of pro-Huggins men, and, unsurprisingly, the defence Counsel did not challenge any of them. But the jury was not entirely on Huggins's side. It appears that two men did not support him. Later it was alleged that one of Edward Huggins's Counsel, Samuel Long, responded to a bystander's remark of 'ten for Huggins and two against' by saying: 'They should not have been there if I had known it.'

It is possible to identify some of the men who would have backed Huggins. The foreman of the jury, Job Ede, lived on Jessup's estate next to Mountravers, and presumably he would not have wanted to upset his neighbour, Peter Thomas Huggins. Then there was William Bennett Frost junior, Edward Huggins's own overseer, and John M Hixon who worked on Round Hill, the plantation that belonged to Huggins's son-in-law, Thomas John Cottle.⁶⁴ Another juror, the silversmith John Brooks, was, or had been, leasing the Spring Garden Estate with, among others, two Hugginses, Frederick and John.⁶⁵ George Burke had already publicly shown his support for Huggins in another case in which Huggins 'was deeply concerned': Burke had then refused to sit on the jury. For this he had been fined and when he failed to pay the fine, imprisoned. In a subsequent trial George Burke had been, in fact, declared 'unfit to sit on any jury'. Unfortunately it is not possible to identify the two dissenting voices from among the remaining jurors: the

⁶⁰ UKNA, CO 152/96 and *Fifth Report of the Directors of the African Institution Read at the Annual General Meeting on the 27th of March 1811* Introduction 'Case of the King v Edward Huggins senior Esq' Clement Caines served as a member of the Assembly in St Kitts in 1798 and spoke there in favour of the abolition of the slave trade. He published *Letters on the Cultivation of the Otaheite Cane* (London 1801) and *The History of the General Council and the General Assembly of the Leeward Islands which were convened for the purpose of investigating and ameliorating the Condition of the Slaves throughout those Settlements and of Effecting a Gradual Abolition of the Slave Trade*, Vol I (Basseterre 1804) (Goveia, *EV Slave Society* p346, bibliography).

⁶¹ UKNA, CO 186/9: 11 December 1810

N£ means Nevis currency

⁶² UKNA, CO 152/96

⁶³ George Tyson, the son of Peter Thomas Tyson of St Kitts, was an experienced lawyer; he had been admitted to the Bar in 1786 (<http://www.innertemple.org.uk/archive/>).

John Woodley and Samuel Long had interests in, or owned, plantations (e.g. ECSCRN, CR 1810-1814 ff820-23; PP, G Ledger (Misc) f169). Samuel Pemberton, a solicitor, was also a slaveholder. In 1817 he owned four males and four females (UKNA, T 71/364).

⁶⁴ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

⁶⁵ Ingram, KE *Manuscript Sources for the History of the West Indies*, quoting National Library of Jamaica, MS 1287

friends Thomas Slaider and Matthew Wallace, both planters;⁶⁶ William Henry Rawlins, who became a clergyman and later stood trial for murder himself; Robert Mulhall and Samuel Sturge, who were or became plantation managers; and John Hanley and John Darlowe Creese. John Hanley was the younger brother of Dr Alexander Hanley and a member of the Assembly ⁶⁷ but nothing is known about Mr Creese.

At the trial the indictment was read but it only named six men and three women: Tom Pinney, Quashey, Ned, William Coker, Casteel, Range, Nelly's Juba, Madge's Juba and Catherine. Some of the names of those punished had previously been dropped, thereby weakening the charge. Edward Huggins senior was accused of assaulting and 'cruelly and excessively' whipping, maltreating and beating these people to their 'extreme torture ... and to the great risk of their lives contrary to the form of the [Leeward Islands Melioration] Act'. Also mentioned were thirty other, unnamed people upon whom Huggins 'used whips and cords' and 'caused to be held and used by certain negro drivers'. The jury heard evidence from ten Crown and four defence witnesses, Peter Thomas Huggins among them.⁶⁸

Witnesses generally agreed that the folk on Mountravers 'were all well taken care of',⁶⁹ that Huggins fed and clothed everyone abundantly and did not stint on medical care, either.⁷⁰ As to the Mountravers people, the magistrate William Pemberton judged them as bad as those on Ward's - they were known as a riotous gang - and other witnesses, too, attested to their unruliness. However, far from being a crowd of dangerous mutineers it emerged at the trial that none of the people flogged 'had ever uttered a contumacious expression or lifted a hand against a white man',⁷¹ and they certainly were not the only gang who had 'gone off in bodies'. They had done so 'on many estates': once on Maynard's, Hamilton's, Nisbet's and Tobin's and twice on Ward's.⁷² Peter Thomas Huggins, of course, presented them as dangerous, rebellious, uncontrollable, and he reported with a degree of satisfaction that some of the people who had been flogged had since run away. Did that not prove just what a disobedient lot he had to contend with? As to the punishment, he denied that it was inhuman, claimed that compared to the offences their chastisement was mild.⁷³ Other witnesses also used the same term 'mild' while Henry Rawlins modified this to 'rather mild'. But there were also those who condemned Huggins for 'severely flogging' the people, 'never having heard such a punishment, even for similar offences.' This certainly was not the first public whipping to happen in the market place. According to the evidence of Joseph Nicholson who lived on Ward's estate, after absconders from that estate had been recaptured they had also been publicly punished in the market place. The difference was that then a Magistrate had given the order for this to happen.⁷⁴

The trial began on 1 May and ended on 10 May. That day the jury pronounced their verdict: 'not guilty'. Edward Huggins senior had escaped justice on a technicality: the Leeward Islands Melioration Act did not limit the number of lashes. Although the same Act clearly and unambiguously forbade the 'cruel whipping, maltreating or beating', the jury simply ignored this clause, or agreed with Peter Thomas Huggins's

⁶⁶ Thomas Slaider witnessed Matthew Wallace's will (ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1805-1818 ff327-31)

⁶⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f5, and UKNA, CO 152/96: 31 January 1810

⁶⁸ In the evidence, 32 people were mentioned as having been flogged although the indictment suggests that it was a total of 39. The witnesses for the Crown were John Burke junior, William Keepe, Joseph Nicholson, Joseph Laurence, Henry Barnes, Doctor Andrew Moore Crosse, Doctor Henry R Cassin, William Pemberton, Thomas Arthurton and Samuel Bennett. The defence witnesses were William M Wilkes [more likely William Worthington Wilkes], Henry Rawlins, and John Dasent Smith (UKNA, CO 152/96).

⁶⁹ UKNA, CO 152/96 William Pemberton's evidence

⁷⁰ PN Box 1 194 A-L, taken from UKNA, CO 152/96

⁷¹ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

⁷² Cottle, Thomas John A *Plain Statement* p15

⁷³ UKNA, CO 152/96 PT Huggins's evidence

⁷⁴ *Fifth Report of the Directors of the African Institution Read at the Annual General Meeting on the 27th of March 1811* Evidence by Henry Rawlins, William Pemberton, William Keepe, Andrew Moore Crosse, Samuel Bennett and Joseph Nicholson

evidence that the flogging fitted the offences. Huggins celebrated his victory, and it was said that ‘two of the judges dined with him at a feast which he gave shortly after in honour of his acquittal.’⁷⁵

JPP’s response to the flogging was pathetic. Although he evidently replied to a letter Peter Thomas Huggins had written before the flogging took place and, as yet, he would not have known the outcome of the trial, in the meantime he must have received further details from his contacts in the island. By the time he replied to Huggins, he must have become acquainted with the full horrors of the event. However, instead of condemning the Hugginses he apologised for his people. His main thrust was that they had been testing their new master. JPP slipped in a little criticism but it might easily have got lost; he wrote that his people responded to kind treatment and that, by implication, this had been lacking. JPP replied to Peter Thomas Huggins:

I am truly sorry to hear that the negroes have not behaved as they ought and you wish. During my long residence in the island no people could have behaved better in general than they did – it will give me infinite pleasure to hear that all things go on to your satisfaction and that the negroes are reconciled to their change of masters. We know the disposition of these people that they are apt to try the temper of a new master by not being as correct in their conduct as they ought at first, but I have no doubt with kindness and attention to their little wants, when they deserve it you will find them a well disposed set.⁷⁶

The fallout from the flogging continued. In June Fanny alias Affey died from the effect of the flogging and the woman who had pleaded that she was pregnant presumably had miscarried and had lost her baby. The old woman, who had defied the order to throw saltpetre and gunpowder on the injured, had been relegated to the field gang. She had broken down under the sheer weight of it all, and ‘her intellects’ had become ‘evidently disordered’. Around the beginning of September she went to see James Webbe Tobin on Stoney Grove to plead for help.⁷⁷ James Webbe Tobin, the son of JPP’s business partner James Tobin, was one of the few white people in Nevis who spoke out against Huggins, and by now everyone in the island was aware that in fact he was championing the cause of the Mountravers people. Following the verdict of acquittal, a letter of Tobin’s had been published in the *St Christopher Gazette*. In this he had expressed his surprise and indignation at the outcome. He alleged that the Counsel for the Crown had ‘publicly declared, after the trial was over, that it was a packed jury.’⁷⁸ This was denied.

Having taken such a public stance against Huggins, James Webbe Tobin would hardly have been listened to, had he, on behalf of ‘the wretched old woman’ who came to see him, tried to negotiate with Peter Thomas Huggins. But Tobin related her case to Governor Elliot. In the same letter to Elliot he recounted Edward Huggins’s previous offences and also alleged that some of the names of the people who had been punished had previously been struck out of the indictment, and that Fanny alias Affey, who was then dangerously ill, was among them.⁷⁹ The allegations against the Huggins camp were mounting: a flawed indictment, a rigged jury, and corrupt judges. Governor Elliot read it all and was aghast that the jury had acquitted Huggins on the evidence before them.⁸⁰ Elliot was due to travel to Nevis to present to the Council his Commission as Commander Captain General and Governor in Chief. Members braced themselves for his visit. As was usual when the King’s representatives came to the island, they made careful and lengthy preparations. The Legislature rented a house that would make ‘respectable

⁷⁵ UKNA, CO 152/98 Extracts from ‘Letters from James Webbe Tobin of Nevis, 28 July 1811’

⁷⁶ PP, LB 23: JPP to PT Huggins, 28 April 1810; also R Pares *A West India Fortune* p157

⁷⁷ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

⁷⁸ NLS, Minto Papers MS 13058: 24 August 1810

⁷⁹ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

⁸⁰ UKNA, CO 152/96: Governor Elliot, Antigua, to Earl of Liverpool, 21 November 1810, and CO 241/19

accommodation' and charged the free woman Hester Smith with providing the public entertainment during his stay.⁸¹

At the end of February 1811, a year after the flogging, Hugh Elliot appeared before the Council. His address was to the point: regarding corporal punishment, the Melioration Act required an additional clause - already in force in Jamaica - which would limit the lashes to thirty nine. To prevent the recurrence of such events, the matter had to be dealt with urgently, and he appealed to the men's Christian feelings, their 'self interest as proprietors' and their 'sagacity as Senators'. The Council, in reply, volubly declared their 'humanity' and promised to introduce a law that would restrict punishment. Then they almost immediately backtracked. They asserted that the lot of the enslaved people compared well to that of the poor across the Atlantic; indeed, their conditions were 'very little if any inferior to the subordinate classes of the labouring men in Europe'.⁸² The Council trotted out well-rehearsed arguments about the material well-being of the plantation workers, and their address to Elliot makes it clear that, once again, they had failed to understand.

Elliot, however, soon had to deal with an ever greater atrocity. While in Nevis, news reached him of horrendous deeds committed in the island of Tortola. The sugar planter Arthur Hodge stood accused of so many unimaginable acts of cruelty against so many of his people that Huggins's offences paled by comparison. Fearful of another injustice (Hodge was a member of the island's Council) Hugh Elliot personally took charge of the Tortola case.⁸³

Soon details of both cases reached a wider audience. Governor Elliot requested that the documents relating to the Huggins case be sent to Antigua, in time for the Government schooner to take them to England,⁸⁴ and it is very likely that the job to carry these documents to St John's fell to Daniel Levy, the master of the sloop *Perseverance*. Elliot had already entrusted various documents he sent from Antigua to Nevis to a mariner called Daniel Levy - ⁸⁵ almost certainly the father of Judith Levy, who was the daughter of Mary Richens and the granddaughter of the Mountravers employee John Hay Richens and his mistress Judy. In that way a man connected with descendants of Mountravers people was indirectly involved in the process whereby the official papers relating to the infamous Huggins flogging came to be in England.

The case was laid before the House of Commons and although the Government took no immediate action, it later fed into the debate against the abolition of slavery in the colonies. Briefed by James Tobin's son James Webbe Tobin, details of the flogging also reached the African Institution which was fighting for the abolition of slavery,⁸⁶ and they reached a wide readership: on 17 June 1811 *The Times* published a letter from Tobin to Governor Elliot and five days later an article signed 'JW Tobin' appeared in the

⁸¹ UKNA, CO 186/9: 25 September 1810

In an effort to appease Elliot, the Council overdid their hospitality. In July 1811, the House of Commons in London passed a resolution to stop gifts to governors. This ruling was presented to the Council of Nevis on 24 August 1811 (CO 186/9).

⁸² UKNA, CO 186/9: 28 February 1811

⁸³ Arthur Hodge had committed countless acts of barbarity 'unparalleled in the annals of British Caribbean history.' Among the atrocities he was said to have perpetrated was to murder two women by pouring boiling water down their throats; one child was 'slayed alive by being dipped in a cauldron of scalding water', another was cart-whipped for an hour, flogged again the next day, and then chained with other people. Hodge was said to have taken children by the heels, 'stuck their heads into tubs of water until they all but drowned, had then hung them up by both hands and had ended up by horsewhipping them.' It was estimated that up to a hundred people had suffered violent deaths at his hands or under his orders. He was tried on one count of murder, convicted after a two-day trial and executed in May 1811. Governor Elliot refused to listen to any pleas of mercy (Ragatz, LJ *The Rise and Fall* pp401-02 and GP Moriarty, revised Christopher Fyfe 'Arthur Hodge (d 1811)' in *Oxford DNB*).

⁸⁴ UKNA, CO 186/9: 15 November 1810

⁸⁵ UKNA, CO 186/9: 30 November 1810

⁸⁶ *Fifth Report of the Directors of the African Institution Read at the Annual General Meeting on the 27th of March 1811*

London Chronicle.⁸⁷ Sitting in their drawing room in Great George Street in Bristol, the Pinneys must have read the newspapers shame-faced, particularly the section in the article about the woman who had been close to the family. Tobin recounted her sorry tale: 'A wretched old woman came to me a few days ago, to tell me she was compelled to work in the field. She was a favourite house Negro in her former master's family, and had nursed one of his children.' Fanny's fate, that 'She never worked with a hoe again after the whipping, and died of an atrophy,'⁸⁸ must have haunted the Pinneys.

But if they hoped this was the end of the affair, it was not. James Webbe Tobin's letter was followed three months later by a piece in the *London Statesman*, which outlined the events, detailed the number of lashes and named four of the magistrates who had failed to intervene. Readers would have been relieved to read that these men, at least, were held accountable; the Prince Regent 'ordered all the magistrates who might have ... prevented such an outrage, to be deprived of their commissions in the most public and disgraceful manner possible.'⁸⁹ This ruling, however, no longer affected two of the men, Dr Cassin and Revd Green. Dr Cassin had already resigned as a magistrate. Ashamed that, 'ignorant of his duty', he had failed to intervene, he felt he could no longer hold office. Condemning Cassin's resignation as an act of betrayal, Huggins had sacked him from his job of attending to the people on Mountravers.⁹⁰ The other magistrate, Revd William Green, had died a year after the beating, in April 1811. His early death - he had died at the age of 38 -⁹¹ had spared him a lifetime's shame and remorse. He had failed as a man, as a magistrate and as a member of the clergy. James Webbe Tobin had posed the question: 'Why did not Revd Mr Green try to stop Huggins as a Magistrate?' and had answered it himself: 'Because his salary is paid in sugar levied on the planters and he would never again have received an ounce of good sugar from Edward Huggins.'⁹² As rector of St Paul's and St George's Revd Green had held the two best livings in the island and standing up to the Hugginses required strength of character and independent means. Edward Huggins was not only a bully on a personal level but also had economic clout and was not afraid to exercise it. He may even have delighted in the notoriety he had gained. Indeed, his name became familiar not just to readers in Britain but also in America: on 2 January 1812, under the headline 'Horrid Barbarity', the article from the *London Statesman* was reprinted across the Atlantic. The *Connecticut Journal*, published in New Haven, in its final paragraph drew attention to letters received by the *London Statesman*: its readers had called for 'the liberation of all surviving tortured slaves'.⁹³ The very public airing of the Mountravers case stoked the debate about the abolition of slavery. Edward Huggins and Arthur Hodge had shown that the British withdrawal from the trade in Africans had not changed plantation slavery. Their excesses played into the hands of their opponents, and so, for the first time after the ending of the slave trade, the Quakers, for instance, at their annual meeting in May 1812 reminded their members of the 'oppressed victims' of slavery in the British colonies.⁹⁴ In Britain the scene was set for the abolition debate to continue – the abolition of plantation slavery.

⁸⁷ UKNA, CO 241/19: 16 September 1811

⁸⁸ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

⁸⁹ On 29 August 1811 Elliot informed the President and the Speaker that 'HM Government was particularly angry with the magistrates who had stood by without intervening. The Earl of Liverpool sought to strike their names off the Commission of the Peace.' (PN Box 1 194 A-L, taken from UKNA, CO 152/96).

⁹⁰ Dr Cassin's contrition was recounted in an Assembly meeting in Basseterre. It was reported that he 'expressed his abhorrence' at the flogging and that he 'endeavoured to excuse himself as a magistrate at not having prevented it because he had been ignorant of his duty. He had believed that had no power to intervene' (UKNA, CO 241/19: 16 September 1811 and Copy of Dr Cassin's letter to Governor Elliot in *Fifth Report of the Directors of the African Institution Read at the Annual General Meeting on the 27th of March 1811*).

⁹¹ NHCS Archives, RG 9.1 Gravestone Inscriptions, St Thomas Lowland Cemetery

⁹² UKNA, CO 152/96: James Webbe Tobin to Zachary Macaulay, 28 July 1811

⁹³ The *London Statesman* 21 September 1811, quoted in *Connecticut Journal* 2 January 1812

⁹⁴ Wesley, Charles H 'The Neglected Period of Emancipation in Great Britain, 1807-1823' in *The Journal of Negro History* Vol 17 No 2 (April 1932) p166, quoting *The Epistle of the Yearly Meeting held in London, 20th Fifth Month to 30, 1812* London 1813

Although widely attacked in Nevis, James Webbe Tobin carried on his campaign against Edward Huggins.⁹⁵ His principal opponent proved to be Huggins's son-in-law Thomas John Cottle. The two men publicly exchanged allegations and insults.⁹⁶ Cottle's main outlet was a pamphlet which he published in defence of his relative. In this he put forward the notion that 'Edward Huggins ought to be thanked for his action, since it checked an incipient tendency to organised resistance'. Clearly based on the whites' fears of an uprising, he asserted that 'the spirit of Liberty and Rebellion has made such immense strides amongst the Negro population of the West Indies' that it had to be curbed. And Cottle defended the severity of the flogging. He claimed to know that black people suffered less pain: 'it is an ascertained fact that negroes, both from nature and from habit, are not so sensibly affected as the whites.' He backed up his racist assertion by stating that one of those involved, Tom Penny, had attended a dance eleven days after being flogged.⁹⁷ Dances, of course, provided enslaved people with a legitimate reason to assemble in one place without causing suspicion, but it will never be known whether this dance might have been used as a cover to plot revenge.

In February 1811, just before Governor Elliot's visit, the first stone was about to be laid for the new Court House.⁹⁸ It seemed like a good omen. Perhaps now justice would be done. The signs, however, were deceiving. Instead of immediately drafting legislation that would restrict the number of lashes slaveholders could administer - as requested by Elliot - the Legislature found other matters with which to occupy itself. The first time it returned to the fallout from the Huggins case was by way of introducing a Bill 'for Settling and Regulating the Trial of Criminal Slaves by Jury'.⁹⁹ This was on 20 October 1812, and shortly afterwards another Huggins episode occurred. This time it involved Edward, Peter Thomas's brother. Between two and three o'clock in the morning he shot dead an enslaved boy in the street in Charlestown. Edward Huggins junior claimed that the boy, Peter, who belonged to the free mixed-race man Jenkin Powell, had entered his yard with several others, intending to steal, and had escaped over the gate from Huggins's yard when he shot him. Governor Elliot came to Nevis to bring Huggins to trial personally, Arthur Hodge of Montserrat having been hanged in the meantime. At Huggins's trial Chief Justice Weekes directed the jury to reject a bill of murder, which they did, and instead Edward Huggins junior was found guilty of manslaughter and fined N£250. Governor Elliot later commented that the man when he was shot was not in Huggins's yard but twenty yards the other side of the wall. Elliot thought that the punishment was more lenient than the crime deserved, but, overall, he deemed this verdict impartial.¹⁰⁰

A new decade

The war with France and the Netherlands continued but Nevis was at least spared an invasion. Other Caribbean islands, however, were fought over and ownership passed from one European power to another. The British forces captured Martinique in February 1809, took Guadeloupe twelve months later and accepted the surrender of St Martin, St Eustatius and Saba.¹⁰¹ People in Nevis were so familiar with the sound of war that when in 1812 a volcano erupted, the Soufrière in Guadeloupe, they believed these

⁹⁵ James Webbe Tobin brought another case to Elliot's attention; that of a man called Sammy. For years, Huggins had held him in chains and then sent him to Trinidad (UKNA, CO 152/98 Extracts from Letters from James Webbe Tobin of Nevis, 28 July 1811).

⁹⁶ For instance, Cottle claimed that Tobin was a dangerous man who had previously left Nevis after the islanders had shunned him. Tobin replied that he only stayed away for four months in 1794 because he had gone to America for 'relief in his eyes'. He noted that he lost his sight 'whilst travelling through America' (*St Christopher's Gazette* 17 January 1812 and 30 December 1811 in UKNA, CO 152/100). Tobin, in turn, accused Cottle of whipping up planters' by 'sounding the Trumpet of Alarm, and calling up the phantom of FEAR, to terrify the weak and ignorant' – despite the 'peaceable demeanour' of the slaves (UKNA, CO 152/100: JW Tobin to Thomas John Cottle, 12 January 1812).

⁹⁷ Cottle, Thomas John *A Plain Statement*

⁹⁸ UKNA, CO 186/9

⁹⁹ UKNA, CO 186/10: 20 October 1812

¹⁰⁰ PN Box 1 194 A-L, taken from UKNA, CO 152/100: Governor Elliot to Lord Bathurst, 20 November 1812

¹⁰¹ Buckley, RN *The British Army* pp265-66, and CC Goslinga *A Short History of the Netherland Antilles* p86

were the bangs and the booms of a naval engagement.¹⁰² The beginning of the end of war finally came with Napoleon's abdication and his banishment to Elba in 1814. Britain agreed to restore to France the islands that had been captured, Martinique and Guadeloupe, as well as other conquered territories, but held on to Tobago and St Lucia¹⁰³ and returned the six Dutch islands, including St Martin, St Eustatius and Saba.¹⁰⁴ When Napoleon reassumed power in March 1815 his last-ditch attempt at French expansion was restricted to battling it out in Europe and ended after only a hundred days with his second banishment to St Helena.

Although sugar prices had been consistently high throughout the Napoleonic Wars, they had dipped at various times when new sugar-producing islands came under British control. Since 1813 the decline of French power had meant that British sugars could reach customers in continental Europe and by the end of the war sugar prices were higher than ever before.¹⁰⁵ A few months before the Battle of Waterloo a hundredweight fetched an extraordinary 110 to 130 shillings.¹⁰⁶

Nevis had not been a theatre of war but it had suffered famine. Unless the Hugginses had heeded JPP's last-minute instructions to attend to the people's plantation provisions and to 'give every possible encouragement to plant their own grounds',¹⁰⁷ in the years 1811 and 1812 more than the usual number would have perished from want of food. Partly to blame was the high cost of imported provisions occasioned by the war but throughout the decade the unpredictable weather also contributed to a shortfall in locally grown food crops. A hurricane in July 1811 brought about the loss at Nevis of the *Sussex* and of the *Rachel*, an under-insured Pinney-owned vessel,¹⁰⁸ but the gale was said to have caused very little damage on shore. Shortly afterwards, however, James Webbe Tobin declared that in Nevis there had been 'No allowances for slaves for months past.'¹⁰⁹ In the following year the 'alarming scarcity of provisions' compelled the Legislature into purchasing food and distributing it in equal measure to enslaved and to poor free people.¹¹⁰ In England, meanwhile, similar steps were being taken to feed the hungry. Riots over the high price of potatoes prompted a vicar in Taunton to buy a large quantity of rice but this was not given away; it was only resold without profit.¹¹¹ For the pro-slavery lobby, this would have been another example of how well off enslaved people were compared to the mass of poor British people: they received their allowances while in Britain the poor had to pay for everything. In Nevis, however, the provisions distributed by the Legislature proved insufficient; on Brazier's estate, for instance, part of which was the old Pinney plantation, Mountain or Governors, the people went hungry.¹¹² As the decade progressed there were more storms although not all damaged the provision grounds. A hurricane in St Kitts in July 1813 caused vessels to be driven ashore¹¹³ but seems to have spared Nevis. Two years later, however, ships ran aground in Nevis in August and September when the island experienced another 'gale of wind'. 'Gale or wind and rain' the following January may well have caused damage to

¹⁰² NHCS, MG 2.2 Chronology of Nevis, based on a search of the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda database

¹⁰³ Buckley, RN *The British Army* p268

¹⁰⁴ Goslinga, CC *A Short History of the Netherland Antilles and Surinam* p86

¹⁰⁵ Ward, JR *British West Indian Slavery* p43

¹⁰⁶ Pares, Richard A *West India Fortune* p196

¹⁰⁷ PP, LB 22: JPP to JW Stanley, 15 August 1807

¹⁰⁸ Farr, Grahame E (ed) *Record of Bristol Ships* p251 and p247, and PP, LB 22: JPP to Daniel Sharry, St Kitts, 18 October 1811, and LB 50: P & A to Edward Hodges, Lloyds Coffee House, London, 23 August 1811

¹⁰⁹ UKNA, CO 152/98 Extracts from Letters from James Webbe Tobin of Nevis, 1 August 1811

¹¹⁰ UKNA, CO 186/10: 24 September 1812

¹¹¹ Bush, Robin A *Taunton Diary* p22

¹¹² PP, WI Box O: Edward Huggins junior to JF Pinney, 5 September 1813

There may have been a period of unrest during 1813. Incomplete entries in Walter Lewis Bucke's diary look similar to those he made when people were tried after a Grand Jury had investigated their cases. On several dates in Sep 1813 (7, 11, 14, and 21) he entered 'Nevis, Mingo and Constant'; and on 22, 23, and 27 'Cuffy'; on 27 September and 1 October 'Tom Pringle and Will Barrack'; and on 2 October 'Cuffy exicuted' (sic). Governor Elliott's presence in the island may not have been a coincidence; on 30 October 'Governor Elliott sailed' (RHL, MSS W. Ind. S. 24 (b)).

¹¹³ <http://www.candoo.com/genresources/hurricane>

food crops; a storm in September that year certainly did. It also left the matrosses at Fort Charles without shelter, damaged the magazine and gave the garrison 'the appearance of a ruin'. This was followed by 'The Flood' in October 1818¹¹⁴ and a major hurricane in September 1819. Throughout Nevis, it destroyed buildings, provision grounds and the ripening sugar canes. The island found itself in 'a state of distress'.¹¹⁵ The hurricane occurred on 19 September; three days later all able-bodied men were called for 'barrack guard'. Usually the alarm was raised when unrest occurred, and raising the men suggests that in the aftermath of the storm the plantations' stability may have been threatened. The state of alarm lasted for almost a fortnight,¹¹⁶ but the effect of this hurricane was felt for some years to come.

In late 1816 an event took place that was to prove a turning point in the history of slavery in Nevis. For the first time Revd Daniel Gateward Davis published banns in St Paul's church for the wedding of an enslaved person. The son of a St Kitts Anglican clergyman, Davis had been influenced by anti-slavery opinion while studying in England and, by marrying an enslaved person in church, he sought to put enslaved people on a more equal footing. Davis had the permission of the slaveholder, Dr Cassin, but before the wedding could take place, President Maynard intervened and ordered Revd Davis not to proceed. Maynard believed that the marriage would be 'highly improper'. Fearing that 'bad consequences might ensue', he claimed that it was essential to get permission from the church authorities and legal opinion from the government. Persevering in his quest, Davis wrote to the Bishop of London who laid his query before the government. He also contacted William Wilberforce.¹¹⁷ The reply from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Bathurst, was straightforward: 'Ecclesiastical law has always held without distinction as to the consent of the owner, that slaves were not to be excluded from marriage either with free persons or with slaves and that their owners' claims to their services would not be affected thereby.' Bathurst ordered the Legislature to 'take measures for removing the error' and added that their misinterpretation was dangerous as it led 'to perpetuate that promiscuous intercourse among slaves which [was] fatal to all attempts at moral and religious improvement.'¹¹⁸ For the planters, the world order they knew was coming to an end. Not only were enslaved people allowed to be married in church, it was to be encouraged. This measure was followed by another novel idea that had originated in Britain: slaveholders were to be required to publicly register all the people they legally possessed.

Ameliorationists had hoped that the British withdrawal from the Transatlantic Slave Trade would improve enslaved people's condition but this had not happened, and in 1815 they opened a new Parliamentary campaign against slavery. They used a two-pronged approach: colonial legislatures were to ameliorate their laws and all colonies were to introduce compulsory registration of all enslaved people. At the same time, at the Congress of Vienna that settled the end of the war with France, the British government tried to get agreements from other European nations to abandon the trade in African captives. After the British withdrew from the transatlantic slave trade in 1807 and subsequently put a stop to the inter-island trafficking, some people were still being imported illegally and to identify those, slave registration had

¹¹⁴ UKNA, CO 186/11: (15) September 1816 and RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

¹¹⁵ UKNA, CO 186/12: 24 September 1819

Before the hurricane the island had already suffered a shortage of horses, and in October 1819 the Governor-in-Chief issued a proclamation that allowed vessels of all nations to import food stuffs, building materials, horses, cattle and other animals for a period of six months. In March 1821 lumber was still in such short supply that the ban on importing boards and staves was suspended again (UKNA, CUST 34/511 Items 3, 54 and 67).

¹¹⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 4 October 1819

¹¹⁷ *The Gentleman's Magazine* Vol III New Series (July to December 1857) pp675-76

Some years later, when debating whether to set up a Select Committee to deal with another outrage committed by Edward Huggins, this incident was mentioned in the House of Commons. Apparently an 'angry discussion' took place in the House of Assembly before Revd Davis was ordered not to proceed. A British Member of Parliament commented on what he clearly believed was outmoded, unchristian and immoral thinking: 'Here, then, it appeared, that these legislators thought it proper to discourage marriage amongst the slaves, and thereby to favour a system of concubinage' (Hansard, TC (ed) *The Parliamentary Debates* Vol XXXVIII p852).

¹¹⁸ UKNA, CO 186/11: 20 December 1817

already been introduced in Trinidad and other Crown Colonies.¹¹⁹ Wilberforce proposed a Bill that the remaining colonies should follow suit. Apart from identifying people who had been imported illegally, it was also thought that slave registration would underpin ameliorationist measures. Originally the anti-slavery lobby had assumed that once the flow of Africans stopped, planters would see the need to improve the living and working conditions so that births increased and deaths decreased, but this had not happened. In the previous century a 'culture of quantification' had developed, where all manner of things were counted, tabulated and turned into statistics,¹²⁰ and ameliorationists and abolitionists sought to utilise this trend. They aimed to institute a complete census of all enslaved people held legally. This initial survey would be updated at regular intervals with information about anyone who in the intervening years had been lost through death or manumission, or gained through birth or purchase. Accurate statistics would reveal trends in fertility and mortality and once the facts had been established, so the argument went, publicity about the conditions would provoke further reforms.¹²¹

The West Indian assemblies reacted vehemently to the proposed legislation. They argued that these were entirely local matters. In mid-1816 Wilberforce was forced to withdraw the Registration Bill on the understanding that the colonies were sincere in voluntarily improving their slave laws and that they would seek to implement the compulsory registration of enslaved people. Accordingly, the Secretary of State issued a Circular to all colonial governors, instructing them to move the colonial legislatures to adopt the necessary Acts.

In Barbados the debate about the Registry Bill triggered an insurrection. Misunderstanding the intention of Wilberforce's Bill, the enslaved people believed that their immediate emancipation was desired by the British Parliament but withheld by the planters.¹²² This led to open rebellion. At the beginning of June 1816 news from Barbados reached Bristol and Charles Pinney relayed to his sisters what he had heard: that people had destroyed several estates, three parishes were in flames, martial law had been declared and the military called out. '300 negroes were killed and more wounded and 400 taken prisoner'. They had lately been 'very anxious about the arrival of the packets expecting their freedom to come from England', and Pinney blamed the planters' old adversary, William Wilberforce: he 'has been the occasion of more mischief than can be told.' Optimistically Pinney hoped for 'one good effect': that instead of the British Government adopting measures hostile to colonial interests, henceforth more consideration might

¹¹⁹ Williams, Eric (comp and ed) *Documents on British West Indian History* p59, quoting UKNA, CO 295/28 Order in Council 26 March 1812

The first attempt by the British government to pass a bill to introduce slave registries as a means of monitoring the illicit transportation of people faced much opposition and had to be withdrawn. So as to avoid the possibility of the pro-slavery lobby defeating a subsequent motion, the government then passed an Order in Council (an instrument whereby legislation did not have to pass a vote in Parliament) for the crown colony of Trinidad to establish its registry of enslaved people. In 1813 slaveholders in Trinidad registered their people and a year later a second Order was passed for St Lucia and Mauritius to establish their registries (UKNA, PC 2/192 and PC 2/196). Following pressure from the anti-slavery lobby the government directed the colonies to pass their own registry legislation.

James Stephen senior, a barrister who had worked in St Kitts for eleven years and became an abolitionist and associate of Wilberforce, played an important part in the introduction of slave registration. See Russell Smandych "To Soften the Extreme Rigor of their Bondage": James Stephen's Attempt to Reform the Slave Laws of the West Indies, 1813-1833' in *Law and History Review* Vol 23, No 3 (Fall 2005) pp537-588; also 'A Review of the Reasons given for establishing a Registry of Slaves in the British Colonies, in a Report of a Committee of the African Institution, entitled "Reasons" &c, &c.', 1815

¹²⁰ Porter, Roy *Enlightenment* p207

¹²¹ Craton, Michael *Sinews of Empire* pp239-84; Charles H Wesley 'The Neglected Period of Emancipation' pp167-69; and BW Higman *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* pp6-7

Planters certainly were aware of the negative impact slave registration could generate. When John Colhoun Mills predicted a great loss of people owing to the appalling conditions in the island, he wrote that this would show 'at the next return' (PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 January 1823).

¹²² Burns, Sir Alan *History of the British West Indies* pp611-13

A similar mis-understanding had probably led to an insurrection in Tortola as early as 1790. The people on Isaac Pickering's estate believed that the government in England had passed an Act abolishing slavery but that the planters had withheld the news (Goveia, EV *Slave Society* p95).

be shown towards the colonies - they, after all, contributed so much to the Metropolitan revenue.¹²³ Then further news filtered through and Pinney relayed what he had been told:

The insurrection at Barbados must have been tremendous – everything was prepared to crown the rebel chief and the insurgents had decided upon the murder of all the whites and to take their wives – the flags they hoisted on the occasion show their spirit – one represented a negro man and a white woman with crowns suspended over them – the second – a white woman begging for mercy – and the third “Wilberfree for ever” – this motto is a pun upon his name Wilberforce – One of the negroes of Gen'l Braithwait declared on going to execution it was his intention to have murdered his master – married his master's wife, who is the mother of twelve children and to have made her sit at table while he drank punch out of her husband's skull – On the neighbouring [illegible] estate belonging to Lord Harewood there is not a single negro man remaining alive, all either shot by the soldiers or since executed.

For Charles Pinney, Mr Wilberforce seemed 'from all accounts to be enthusiastically mad'. He neither agreed with Wilberforce's politics nor did he rate him as a person. He not only lacked a light touch - 'if he is more cheerful than normal he thinks it is registered in heaven against him' – but also was too heavy-handed: 'to his tenants and servants he is extremely overbearing.'¹²⁴ Little did he know that he mocked the man who, a decade later, almost became his father-in-law!

Pinney held Wilberforce responsible for the loss of life in Barbados.¹²⁵ In suppressing the rebellion, 'a little short of 1000' rebels were killed and afterwards another 214 executed and 123 transported. The island lacked mountains in which to hide.

Although it failed, this formidable insurrection was a wake-up call. Enslaved people would not wait for their freedom indefinitely. The successful revolution in St Domingue and the British withdrawal from the transatlantic slave trade gave hope to millions that slavery in the British colonies would come to an end.

To prevent further uprisings, islands in the Eastern Caribbean were placed under martial law.¹²⁶ In Nevis the authorities were so anxious to prevent a repeat of the events in Barbados that, when Revd Daniel Gateward Davis returned from a trip abroad, they requested him not to land. It was thought that the enslaved people were expecting him to bring the announcement of their freedom, and 'it was feared that the presence of their kind and zealous pastor and friend might be the signal for a rising among the negroes.'¹²⁷

The Legislature had promised Governor Elliot in 1810 that they would introduce a law limiting to 39 the number of lashes individuals could administer. It took three years for Revd Samuel Lyons to propose a Bill for the 'further protection of the slaves ... from cruel and excessive punishment'. Revd Lyons had been one of the magistrates who had stood by, watching Huggins's public floggings without intervening, and he had been criticised for it. As if to make amends for their combined failings, Lyons's motion to alter the provisions of the 1798 Melioration Act was seconded by James Weekes, the prosecutor in the Huggins trial.¹²⁸ After that initial discussion the matter was dropped in favour of other issues that were deemed more pressing. No more was heard of Revd Lyons or his motion until, in 1816, he and James

¹²³ PP, Dom Box C1-2: Charles Pinney, to Mrs Baillie, 5 June 1816

¹²⁴ PP, Dom Box C1-2: Charles Pinney, Bristol, to Mrs Ames, 19 June 1816

¹²⁵ PP, Dom Box C1-2: Charles Pinney, Bristol, to Mrs Ames, 19 June 1816

¹²⁶ Anon *Annual Register or a View of the History, Politics and Literature for the Year 1816* p162

¹²⁷ *The Gentleman's Magazine* Vol III New Series (July-December 1857) pp675-76

¹²⁸ UKNA, CO 186/10: 13 March 1813

Weekes performed another double act in proposing and seconding an altogether different and much jollier scheme: to raise money for Governor Thomas Probyn's visit to Nevis. This was accepted, as was the second motion to do so by the usual method of taxing proprietors on the number of individuals they owned.¹²⁹ Nevis was good at entertaining its official guests and during his two visits in September and in November Governor Probyn would have had a comfortable stay in the island.¹³⁰ The British Parliament had requested colonial legislatures to curb their practice of making expensive gifts to governors,¹³¹ but members of the Nevis Council and Assembly appear to have had an almost childlike belief that if they showered their guests with entertainment they could win them over and no one would ask awkward questions.

The Legislature had not taken any action over limiting the number of lashes when another brutal flogging happened where the culprit escaped punishment. Again, Edward Huggins senior was the instigator. This time the beatings took place at the works on the Round Hill estate in the parish of St James Windward. The plantation belonged to Thomas John Cottle, Huggins's son-in-law. Huggins was then in charge; he 'had been left manager' (more likely attorney). On Friday, 28 March 1817, Huggins ordered Cottle's driver Mattey to whip three young men said to have committed crimes: William Nolan stood accused of stealing from a black woman in town and the two other men, Richard and David, of handling stolen stockings and not revealing quickly enough where they had stashed their loot. Richard and David proclaimed their innocence. They said they did not know the stockings had been stolen but Huggins claimed they should have known because William Nolan had a reputation as 'a bad character'. Richard fared the worst. He received a hundred lashes, David eighty and William Nolan 25 to 30. While they were being thrashed, two women who were related to the men started crying. One of them tried to hide her tears behind a handkerchief and begged Mr Huggins "to forgive Richard". Huggins ordered that the women, too, should be lashed. Apparently Huggins was supposed to have said to one of his attendants, "now bring out the ladies", and while the women were 'extended on the ground, and receiving their punishment, he was heard frequently to say to them "now cry," as if taunting them with the possession of the feeling of humanity'. Richard's sister Thisbe, who was also a half-sister to David, endured 22 or 23 strokes on her naked body, and David's cousin Cressy about twenty. Cressy, a mulatto woman, and Thisbe lived together.¹³² The driver Mattey, who was ordered to carry out the punishment with a carter's whip, was also related to the others. George McDougal, a free man who lived and worked on Cottle's estate, noted that there was 'a great noise and disturbance' at the works, suggesting that such a commotion could easily have turned into a general uprising.

A strained atmosphere continued for several weeks. The manager, Francis Newton, who had been present during the floggings at the works, quit his job and his successor, Richard Roberts, did not remain for long. A man with seven years' experience of working in Nevis and in St Kitts, Roberts left quickly

¹²⁹ UKNA, CO 186/11: 26 August 1816

¹³⁰ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

¹³¹ UKNA, CO 186/9: 23 August 1811

¹³² When the case reached the British Parliament, members present alleged that either the Nevis Legislature had failed to send all the relevant papers, or that the agent for the island had produced the 'documents of a garbled nature'. Despite the passionate defence of Huggins by Mr Marryat, an agent, members decided to appoint a Select Committee to look into the handling of the trial of Edward Huggins (Hansard, TC (ed) *The Parliamentary Debates* Vol XXXVIII).

From the 1817 slave register it is possible to identify all the people involved, except for Richard. The only Richard who was on Round Hill on 10 July 1817, the day the register was taken, was a 12-year-old boy who was in possession of Mr Cottle but actually belonged to the merchant house Messrs T & J Daniel of Bristol. He may have been the 'man' who was beaten but this cannot be verified. The other people involved were mostly very young people: William Nolan was aged 20, David 18 and Cressy 21 (according to Thomas Cottle, Cressy also went by the name of Christiana; she was listed as Crissy.) Thisbe, Richard's sister and David's half-sister, at 31 years of age was the oldest and one can imagine that, as the older sister, she felt protective towards her brothers and tried to intervene. Matty, the driver, was aged 45 and, like the others involved, a black Creole (UKNA, T 71/364).

because the people on the estate displayed 'insolence' and 'a great disposition to riot and disorder'.¹³³ Edward Huggins had stirred up everyone on Round Hill.

After the incident, Justices of the Peace examined the three men who had been beaten and questioned witnesses. Among them was Elizabeth Powell of St James Windward. She was reported as saying 'that she was at a masquerade dance at Mr Jeffery's negro houses, on a Saturday evening', which was the day after the punishment, and that the men were there, dancing and in good spirits. Accepting that the men had not suffered great physical harm, the Justices of the Peace acquitted Huggins on the charge of cruelty but bound him over to appear in court for exceeding the customary 39 stripes. The President of the Council and Chairman of the Assembly put into many words why they had resolved to send Huggins for trial: it was felt 'highly important to evince a sincere disposition to conciliate the good opinion of our bretheren (sic) in England and to shield His Majesty's Ministers as much as possible from those clamorous attacks, which a non-compliance with the popular feeling would otherwise expose them to.' In short, they were afraid of bad publicity should the abolitionists get wind of the incident. Once again, the case hinged on whether 39 lashes were permissible and the Legislature put forward the specious argument that the Melioration Act of 1798 had rejected a limitation on the number of lashes precisely because it was thought that 'cruelty should be punished even if the master did not exceed the Mosaic Law.'¹³⁴ The argument went that just a few violently administered lashes could constitute cruel treatment which should be punishable and by restricting the number to 39 it would not be possible to convict a wrong-doer who had whipped little but brutally. This ignored two facts: the 1798 Melioration Act had already forbidden excessively cruel treatment and magistrates, by law, were limited to administering up to forty lashes. As James Webbe Tobin had pointed out some years earlier, this resulted in the absurd situation where an individual could exercise greater power than a magistrate.¹³⁵

Edward Huggins was tried on 20 May 1817. Once again, his defence relied heavily on the argument that 39 lashes were only the custom, not the law, and that the flogging did not constitute cruelty: those flogged had clearly not suffered too much since they were dancing shortly afterwards and, as a number of white witnesses testified, they had seen no marks of cruelty – the floggings were, therefore, deemed to have been within the law. Huggins was acquitted on the same day.

Before the month was out, the Assembly and Council of Nevis, once again, passed a resolution to emulate Jamaica and to limit the number of lashes.

After the trial, the Huggins/Cottle public relations machinery got going again. Both men had the money and the wherewithal to make their voices heard but as to the voices of the enslaved people, there was no one in Nevis who took up their cause. The narrative was one-sided. Huggins published his defence anonymously in a pamphlet entitled *Case in Nevis, 1817*,¹³⁶ while Cottle attacked Thisbe and his old but now dead adversary, James Webbe Tobin. Thisbe he condemned for her 'haughty violent temper', for being 'insolent and overbearing', and he alleged that she was violent to her own child who had to be sent away some distance to learn needlework. Wanting 'to place Mr Huggins's general conduct ... in its true light', Cottle laid into the late James Webbe Tobin who had 'most grossly misrepresented' Edward

¹³³ UKNA, CO 239/4

¹³⁴ HoCPP 1818 Vol xvii pp1-91 'Papers Relating to the Treatment of Slaves in the Colonies' Chadwyck-Healey mf 19.86 When the case 'King v Huggins' was discussed in the British Parliament, Sir Romilly said, wrongly, that 'the law limits the number to 39'. Only magistrates were limited to 39 lashes; individuals could thrash more – as long as the lashes were not administered with cruelty. The decision to set up a Select Committee 'relative to the treatment of slaves in the island of Nevis', however, hinged not on the number of lashes but on the question whether the British Parliament had the right to interfere in the colony's legal processes ('The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 ... Vol XXXVIII').

¹³⁵ UKNA, CO 152/100: JW Tobin to TJ Cottle, 30 December 1811

¹³⁶ Anon *Case in Nevis* Whitmore and Fenn, London 1818 (British Library Shelfmark 1250.f.58(19), 1 fiche; number 1.1.329)

Huggins ('this scandalously traduced gentleman') and praised his father-in-law as a 'good master and judicious planter ... [who] had the oldest negroes, horses and mules, of any proprietor' in Nevis. Once again, Mountravers played a part in the whole affair, albeit a marginal one: Cottle put down Tobin's 'virulent persecution to something that Huggins had written in a note enclosing the last instalment of payment for Huggins's first purchase of an estate from Mr Tobin and Mr Pinney'.¹³⁷

History was repeating itself. Just as Edward Huggins's flogging of the Mountravers people in 1810 had been eclipsed by Arthur Hodge's atrocities in Montserrat, his involvement in the Round Hill floggings was later that year surpassed by a murder in St Kitts. Revd William Henry Rawlins, who managed his brother's estate, Hutchinson's', had ordered the driver to flog a man called Congo Jack. Badly beaten, Congo Jack died on the same day, 5 September 1817. Contrary to legal requirements, his body was buried on the plantation without being examined by a doctor. Later it was exhumed. Revd Rawlins, who, incidentally, had been a juror in Edward Huggins's trial in 1810,¹³⁸ was put on trial for murdering Congo Jack. Convicted for the lesser offence of manslaughter, he was sentenced to three months imprisonment in the jail in Basseterre and fined £200 currency - ¹³⁹ the cost of a skilled man. Revd Rawlins's case came only four years after the prosecution for murder of another clergyman in St Kitts: Revd William Davis (the father of Daniel Gateward Davis, the vicar at St Paul's), together with three other sons of his and a man called William Sharry, had been tried for the murder of an enslaved person but a jury had acquitted them.¹⁴⁰

Although the enslaved people had no direct channels for airing their version of events, Parliament in Britain took notice. It made enquiries into, and later printed accounts of, the flogging on Round Hill and the death of Congo Jack in St Kitts. The widely-read *Gentleman's Magazine* picked up the parliamentary reports and re-told the stories of Edward Huggins's outrages.¹⁴¹ The British public could engage at an emotional level with these detailed narratives and they undoubtedly boosted the anti-slavery cause. The reporting contained an element of voyeurism, and various publications obliged their readers by circulating Edward Huggins's misdeeds even after his death and after slavery had been abolished.¹⁴²

Some thought that the cases of 'Huggins of Nevis, Hodge of Tortola, and Rawlins of St Kitts' were more typical of small island communities 'where individuals are less influenced by public opinion than in larger societies' but of course atrocities also happened in the bigger colonies.¹⁴³ In small island communities people know each other's business more easily and news travels faster, but as long as slaveholders had common cause and stuck together, they were more likely to get away with anything - including murder. And in Nevis they did stick together. Their ideas and language did not change; members of the Legislature still talked of proprietors who 'might be exposed to ruin by the malice' of their people, and they eagerly re-visited the Bill for committing criminal slaves to trial.¹⁴⁴ But because they had still failed to set a

¹³⁷ HoCPP 1818 Vol xvii pp1-91 'Papers Relating to the Treatment of Slaves in the Colonies' Chadwyck-Healey mf 19.86

¹³⁸ UKNA, CO 152/96: JW Tobin to Governor Elliot, 7 September 1810

¹³⁹ HoCPP 1818 Vol xvii pp1-91 'Papers Relating to the Treatment of Slaves in the Colonies' Chadwyck-Healey mf 19.86; see also RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

Revd William Henry Rawlins moved to St John Figtree in Nevis where in 1836 he claimed for and was paid compensation for three people (UKNA, T 71/1038 and HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xviii: Chadwyck-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08). He died at the age of 53 in January 1839. He last lived in the Parsonage in Charlestown (NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1837-1841 No 151).

¹⁴⁰ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 pp211-12

Revd William Davis, who was the agent for Lord Romney, was prosecuted together with his sons William, Henry and Edward Davis. William was also a clergyman (ECSCRN, CR 1814-1817 f384-89). They were the father (Foster, Joseph (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses*) and brothers of Revd Daniel Gateward Davis, the rector in Charlestown who set into motion the issue of enslaved people being able to marry in church.

¹⁴¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* Vol LXXXVII (July-December 1818) p165

¹⁴² Cross, Maurice (ed) 'Selections from the Edinburgh Review' in *Collection of Ancient and Modern British Authors* Vol CIV p372

¹⁴³ Hansard, TC (ed) *The Parliamentary Debates* Vol XXXVIII pp843-44 and p851, also William Wilberforce *Slavery in the West Indies Part I* p35

¹⁴⁴ UKNA, CO 186/12: 24 December 1819 and 4 January 1820

legal limit to the number of lashes an individual could administer, in January 1822 another case of abuse happened that violated 'every principle of humanity' and transgressed 'the local law'. This time the perpetrator was Joseph Hanley, a free mixed-race man. The victims were two unnamed individuals who jointly belonged to him and his brothers. Hanley was said to have inflicted punishment that by 'very far [exceeded] the authority of the master'.¹⁴⁵ Yet there were signs that times were changing; the Legislature also began to discuss a Bill 'to more effectively provide for the protection of slaves to promote and encourage their increase and generally to ameliorate their conditions'.¹⁴⁶ Amelioration was back on the agenda.

As to Revd Davis's plan to marry enslaved people in church, Bathurst's letter quickly led the Legislature to put their minds to 'the Promotion of Christian Religion in the Slaves for their better Government'. Whites now realised that it would be in their interest for the church to instil in their workers such Christian principles as duty, obedience and abstinence. Planters could approve of Bathurst's argument that Christian marriage among enslaved people would end the 'promiscuity' which by many was accepted as the cause of reduced fertility and low birth rates. But for their unions to be blessed in church the brides and grooms had to be baptised first, and planters certainly did not want anyone to get the notion that as Christians they would be equal to whites. While in the Danish colonies the Moravians had for many decades accepted enslaved people into their congregations and in the French colonies the baptising of enslaved people was encouraged by an article in the Code Noir, in the British colonies all manner of arguments had been put forward against this: at one stage planters in Barbados had feared that if converted, their labourers would have to be allowed more time off work to observe the Christian 'holy days'.¹⁴⁷ Others thought enslaved people simply unworthy of receiving baptism: they 'ought not to be allowed to enter where the word of God was preached'.¹⁴⁸ One of Revd Davis's predecessors, Revd Smith, had even predicted that it would all end in bloodshed. He feared that men and women, once christened, would question the accepted hierarchy of slave – master – God. A 'baptised slave conceits that he ought to be upon a level with his master' and, believing himself to be equal, would not accept his master's authority and refuse his corrections. Indeed, he would feel 'at full liberty' to poison him - 'the effect would then be a general rebellion, and massacre, of us whites.' For emphasis Revd Smith added: 'This is Truth.'¹⁴⁹ Revd Smith spoke as a self-proclaimed expert and played to a British audience but by advancing such an argument he avoided to address the real objection: that one Christian should not own another Christian. Although there is no clear condemnation of slavery in the Bible, it was an unpalatable idea for one Child of God to own Another. Once that was accepted it would have to lead to the logical conclusion that the system of slavery was un-Christian, morally wrong and therefore indefensible.

Attitudes had softened since Revd Smith published his *Natural History of Nevis* but there remained another major stumbling block to accepting the Christianising of enslaved people: the issue of literacy. Christians hold up the Bible as the written word of God but many thought it was dangerous for enslaved people to learn to read and write. In Nevis and elsewhere in the British West Indies legislatures did not go so far as to pass anti-literacy laws - as was done later in North America -¹⁵⁰ or to forbid schools – as the

¹⁴⁵ UKNA, CO 186/12: 27 July 1822 and 30 September 1822. See also the case of an Anguillan enslaved man, Joe Fleming, who was alleged to have assaulted the free shoemaker William Azular. The evidence did not agree with Herbert's and Azular's allegations and Herbert was bound over (CO 186/12: 11 June 1819 and 16 June 1819).

¹⁴⁶ UKNA, CO 186/12: undated, pre-April 1821

¹⁴⁷ Burns, Sir Alan *History of the British West Indies* p287, quoting CSP 1693-1696 No 1738

¹⁴⁸ Halliday, Sir Andrew *The West Indies: The Natural and Physical History* p57

¹⁴⁹ Smith, Revd William *A Natural History of Nevis* pp229-30

¹⁵⁰ Blouet, Olwyn M 'Earning and Learning in the British West Indies: an Image of Freedom in the Pre-emancipation Decade, 1823-1833' in *The Historical Journal* Vol 34 No 2 (1991) p397

French had done in Martinique - ¹⁵¹ but British slaveholders certainly viewed educating enslaved people as wholly undesirable. They feared that, once literate, enslaved people would think of themselves as equal to whites and become dissatisfied with their lot, and, on a practical level, they did not want to set aside the time for schooling. But that was not all. One planter in the early eighteenth century had declared his principle that 'A slave may learn anything that he wishes except to write' and explained this by saying that a slave, who was able to communicate in writing, could instigate an international conspiracy. He might correspond with someone 'in foreign lands, which he might travel to or become acquainted with and which in time might bring damage, ruin or destruction to the island.' Whites always feared enslaved people making common cause with enemy forces, and they feared enslaved people conspiring among themselves. There certainly were leaders of uprisings who were literate. For an enslaved person to learn to read and write, he or she had to be highly motivated, energetic and resilient – qualities that distinguished the leaders from the led. One of these was Sam Hector, who led a rebellion in St Croix in 1759,¹⁵² and - Charles Pinney knew this for 'a fact' - the ring leaders in the 1816 Barbados rebellion were literate. Although on an island the conspirators could just as easily communicate by other means – drumming, for instance, or by blowing conches - planters explained their unwillingness to let enslaved people learn to read and write by claiming that literacy would lead to bloodshed. But for many of the humanitarians who sought to convert enslaved people, conversion and literacy went hand in hand, and the notion that people might be taught to read had to be squared with the danger arising from missionaries planting seditious ideas. Charles Pinney, himself an Evangelical Christian, admitted this when he wrote that missionaries 'may have prepared the minds of the slaves in a great measure to receive Mr Wilberforce's Bill.' Because, as he said, the ringleaders in the Barbados rebellion were literate, he feared that his brother John Frederick would use this to stifle missionary activity and become 'so vehement' in his opposition to missionaries as to become 'intolerable'.¹⁵³ Reflecting the views held by the wider population, within the ranks of the Pinney offspring there clearly was a difference of opinion as to whether literacy was desirable.

Despite earlier opposition, the Methodists, in particular, had established themselves in Nevis and made many converts. The Methodists preached that God loved all His creatures equally – dangerous, as far as the planters went - but they also sought to curb ungodly practices such as gambling and drinking – and this, of course, the planters approved. In 1803 Dr Coke had proudly measured his missionaries' success by proclaiming that 'The negroes, who used to spend that Sacred Day in dancing, drinking, etc. which generally ended in fighting, now attend the house of God and learn to sing His praise!' ¹⁵⁴ Indeed, many attended the established church services and afterwards 'frequently go to the Methodist chapels'.¹⁵⁵ That the church could also have a restraining influence in other spheres can be seen from the way the Moravian Brethren in the Danish colonies treated members of their congregation who had run away from their plantations. If the absconders did not return within a specified period, they were dismissed from the

¹⁵¹ After the British left Martinique, in 1803 the French government decided to close all schools that admitted 'Negro or coloured children'. They feared that by attending school they might be imbued with revolutionary ideas (McCloy, Shelby T *The Negro in the French West Indies* p121).

¹⁵² Tyson, GF and AR Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p4 and p55

¹⁵³ PP, Dom Box C1-2: Charles Pinney, Bristol, to Mrs Ames, 19 June 1816

¹⁵⁴ Coke, Thomas Dr *A History of the West Indies* p29

Mrs Dace, the wife of a Methodist missionary whose 'native place' was Nevis, was quoted as saying that she could 'well remember, that if the managers did not deal out the Christmas allowance to please the slaves; they, out of resentment would do any mischief to the estates, which lay in their way.' Sometimes, they would go and set fire to a whole piece, or track, of sugar canes; so that the greater part would be destroyed before the flames could be quenched. Sometimes, the poor cattle would suffer, either by being maimed or killed.' Mrs Dace's father took part in protecting property by joining other white men 'into an armed body'. At night, they would meet at the church and then patrol the estates 'to prevent mischief, overawe the Negroes, and preserve their own lives and property'. It was argued that with the advent of the Methodists all this changed and that it was no longer necessary to keep guard during the Christmas season. 'The ungodly spend this season, it is true, in a loose and thoughtless manner; but even they do not run to the same excess of riot'. Others now observed Christmas with 'order and sobriety' and 'in the most religious manner' (Watson, R *A Defence of the Wesleyan Methodist Missions in the West Indies, etc;* courtesy of Brian Littlewood).

¹⁵⁵ Parliamentary Papers Vol 17 Revd JH Pemberton, 9 July 1817 and Revd JH Walways, 7 July 1817

congregation, and if they took themselves off a second time, this resulted in complete exclusion. It was said, though, that this hardly ever occurred as exclusion was the punishment they 'most' feared.¹⁵⁶

Although there had been early attempts at ousting the Methodists from Nevis, a change in perception had taken place – word may well have reached planters that on one of the British islands Methodists had even played a major role in preventing enslaved people from rising during the turbulent 1790s - ¹⁵⁷ and enslaved people were no longer restricted in their religious worship.¹⁵⁸ This was confirmed by one of the Methodist ministers, Revd Thomas Morgan, who came to the island in February 1812. He stayed for just over two years and during that time encountered no opposition to his preaching, and on his subsequent tour of duty in St Kitts some prominent slaveholders even encouraged him by making available rooms for services.¹⁵⁹ However, so far the Methodists had been at the forefront and, until Revd Davis publicly displayed the banns in the church in Charlestown, the Anglican Church had not played a role – except for the occasional baptism, marriage or burial of an enslaved person.¹⁶⁰ For some planters the teaching of the established Church of England was preferable to the free churches, and when the Legislature considered Bathurst's request to rectify their mistaken views on marriages, they turned to the (Anglican) Church Missionary Society. Thomas John Cottle, in his capacity as President of Nevis, wrote to the agent who represented Nevis in England and asked him to enquire about the Church Missionary Society sending a missionary.¹⁶¹ To accept conversion required a complete change in the planters' mindset and when Cottle wrote that letter on 22 January 1818, he and others had accepted that times were changing. Two years on, and Cottle was even planning to erect a chapel on his estate: a place in which enslaved people could worship. However, these concessions were designed to reinforce, rather than change, the system of slavery.

In the meantime the first census of enslaved people had taken place, as envisaged by the ameliorationists and abolitionists in Britain. In June 1816 the Secretary of State had issued a Circular to the Governors to initiate slave registration in their colonies. This had been tabled in Nevis in October 1816, and James Parris, accordingly, introduced an 'Act for Establishing a Census of the Slaves in the Island of Nevis'. It could have been debated and passed there and then, but instead members decided that a joint Committee of the Assembly and the Council should consider the issue¹⁶² and it was not until January 1818 that the Act was finally passed in Nevis.¹⁶³ The Legislature had delayed this unpopular task for as long as it could, and even when it eventually did pass the law, it could not stop itself from attaching certain conditions to the registration process. While registration was 'to make every provision for the slaves' benefit', this was to 'be done without interfering with the rights of private individuals or the future tranquillity of the island.'¹⁶⁴ The added phrase shows that the events in Barbados still weighed on their minds and at the same time demonstrates that the men in power just had to have the final word. People in the colonies did not easily accept diktats from London.

¹⁵⁶ Tyson, GF and AR Highfield (eds) *The Kamina Folk* p117

¹⁵⁷ Linebaugh, Peter and Marcus Rediker *The Many-Headed Hydra* p297, quoting MUJRL, Methodist Archives Centre, Thomas Coke Papers, PLP/28/4/10

¹⁵⁸ UKNA, CO 186/9 Report of the Joint Committee to prepare returns specified by the House of Commons resolution of 2 July 1811, presented 23 January 1812

¹⁵⁹ HoCPP 1831-1832 Vol xx 'Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Slavery' Chadwyck-Healey mf 35.166 Revd Thomas Morgan's evidence

¹⁶⁰ In 1817 the Nevis clergy stated that in total they had baptised 349 enslaved people in their five parishes and, in the past three years alone, Revd Davies had buried thirty in his St Paul's church (Parliamentary Papers Vol 17 pp208-10).

¹⁶¹ UKNA, CO 239/4: TJ Cottle to [James] Colquhoun, 22 January 1818, and Colquhoun to TJ Cottle, 30 January 1818

¹⁶² UKNA, CO 186/11: 16 October 1816

¹⁶³ Huggins, HC (ed) *Laws of Nevis 1680-1773* p511, and UKNA, CO 186/11: 8 October 1818

¹⁶⁴ UKNA, CO 186/11: 22 August 1818

The census had already been carried out, parish by parish, in the summer of 1817, with the first Registrar of Slaves in Nevis, John Robert Small, presiding over the process.¹⁶⁵ Although plantations had always maintained lists of their people for internal use, this was a very different exercise. On pre-printed forms 'every resident possessor of slaves' completed columns headed 'number, names, sex, country, colour, reputed age' of all his or her people, and those who could, did sign; others made their marks. For non-resident proprietors attorneys completed the forms which were taken to the parish vestries and collected from there by a clerk.¹⁶⁶ On some forms the Registrar changed details: for instance, he altered the ages of more than a dozen people on the Hard Times plantation and the colours of some on the Maynards' Gingerland estates.

Unlike some other colonies, the Nevis registers did not require information about people's stature or their occupations, but despite these shortcomings the census revealed many interesting facts about the slaveholders and their people. While some plantations in St Kitts and St Vincent, for instance, had more than five hundred inhabitants, in Nevis the largest had only three hundred.¹⁶⁷ In terms of numbers, with its 9,662 enslaved people Nevis ranked fourteenth out of twenty colonies; St Kitts had more than double the number than Nevis. Of Nevis's total enslaved population just over half (4,955, or 51.3 per cent) were female,¹⁶⁸ which was very much in line with the gender distribution found in the majority of colonies and equal to that in St Kitts. The ratio of females to males was mirrored on Mountravers, where just over half (52.2 per cent) were females.

Nevis and St Kitts also had an equal percentage of Africans. On both islands one person in seven was identified as African (777 men and 627 women),¹⁶⁹ and of these 1,404 Africans, the most lived in the parish of St George's Gingerland (291) and the fewest in St Paul's (52).¹⁷⁰ Individual slaveholders in Nevis registered a higher proportion of Africans than owners of plantations; almost a quarter of those belonging to owners with up to ten individuals were Africans.¹⁷¹ While this may have been a reflection of the reality, it is also possible that those owners with fewer individuals were more diligent in recording the origin of their people. As the example of Mountravers shows, eight individuals were correctly identified as African, one was mis-identified as Creole (Monimia) and one's 'country' was left blank (Hannah). This high error rate may not have been typical but there certainly would have been more people whose African origin was not properly noted down. On Mountravers the proportion of Africans – one in 16 as opposed to one in seven - was well below the island's average and reflected the fact that the plantation population had increased naturally through births and that those few who had latterly been purchased tended to be Creoles.¹⁷² Of the last three Africans bought in the early 1800s two were still alive and seven of those 61

¹⁶⁵ UKNA, T 71/364

¹⁶⁶ Higman, *BW Slave population and economy in Jamaica 1807-1834* p46

¹⁶⁷ Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p458 Table S3.6 Percentage of Slaves African-born by Slave-holding Size-Group: Ten Colonies, 1813 [1817 in the case of Nevis].

¹⁶⁸ Table S1.1 Registered and Mean Slave Populations by Colony and Sex, 1813-34 gives different figures from those in other tables and have been ignored (Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p413). The figures were those given in Table S4.4 (p477).

¹⁶⁹ Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p463 Table S4.1 Age Structure of Slaves by Sex, Birthplace and Colony, 1813 to 1834 [1817 in the case of Nevis 1817]

¹⁷⁰ While 291 Africans were registered in St George's Gingerland, the number of unattached Africans ('parish unknown') amounted to about the same, 286. Second was the parish of St Thomas Lowland where 276 Africans were registered, then St James Windward with 236, St John Figtree with 263 and St Paul's with 52 Africans (Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* pp477-79 Table S4.4 Age Structure of Slaves by Sex, Birthplace and Parish: Nevis, 1817).

¹⁷¹ In Nevis the number of Africans owned dropped in proportion to the size of the slaveholders. Owners with one to ten slaves had 22.7 per cent Africans; owners with 11 to 50 people had 19.1 per cent Africans; owners with 51 to 100 had 17 per cent Africans; owners with 101 to two hundred people had 12.3 Africans. Only the largest plantations, those with 201 to three hundred enslaved people, had more Africans: 13.2 per cent (Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p458 Table S3.6 Percentage of Slaves African-born by Slave-holding Size-Group: Ten Colonies, 1813 [1817 in the case of Nevis]).

¹⁷² In 1817, the African population on Round Hill - 22 out of 151 - was representative for the whole island, whereas, for instance, on Edward Huggins's Golden Rock the number of Africans was considerably higher than the island's average. Among his 255 people were 58 Africans, which meant that about one in four people were Africans. On George Clarke Forbes's Bush Hill plantation at one

Africans whom JPP had bought in the 1760s (two men and five women). Of these, six lived on Mountravers and one other (Black Polly) in Charlestown.

Survival of unseasoned African captives acquired for Mountravers in the 1760s

| Date purchased | Number of Africans | Description | Survived until January 1769 | Survived until July 1783 | Survived until August 1807 | Survived until July 1817 |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 11 January 1765 | 9 | Ebboes | 8 | 5 + 1 stolen | 2 | 1 |
| 2 November 1765 | 3 | Ebboes | 3 | 3 | 2 + 1 escaped? | 1 |
| 23 January 1766 | 8 | Ebboes | 3 + 1 sold? | 2 + 1 sold | 0 | 0 |
| 29 January 1766 | 10 | Ebboes | 10 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| 3 June 1766 | 20 | Gold Coast | 19 | 13 + 1 escaped + 1 sold | 6 + 1 sold | 1 |
| 20 and 21 February 1767 | 9 | Ebboes | 8 | 7 + 1 sold | 5 | 1 |
| 16 July 1768 | 2 | Windward | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |

Two other African women lived on Mountravers in 1817: one had been bought by Huggins; the other was Sacharissa whom JPP had purchased from another planter in Nevis. Of the entailed people, those he had inherited along with the plantation, nine survived until 1817 and beyond: two men and seven women.¹⁷³

In 1817 about one enslaved person in six in Nevis was identified as 'coloured' but the descriptions varied. Compared to other islands, this was relatively high.¹⁷⁴ Mixed-race people had become part of the fabric of slave society, and this may have been the reason why the colour distinctions were not as rigidly applied

in three the ratio was even higher; there were 37 Africans out of a total plantation population of 96 (UKNA, T 71/364). On Mountravers ten out of 159 inhabitants were Africans. The old people who had survived from the 1760s were Othello, York, Caroline, Hannah, Monimiah, Silvia while Pompey and Caesar had been acquired when the Williams brothers were managers and Patience when Huggins owned the plantation. One other woman, Sacharissa, had been purchased in 1775 from John Henry Clarke and Black Polly lived in Charlestown.

¹⁷³ The nine entailed people who survived until 1817 were Charge, Wiltshire, Bridget, Lucy, Molly, Nelly, Phibba, Phillis and Sabella.

¹⁷⁴ The mixed-race enslaved population of Nevis in 1817 accounted for 15.8 per cent, compared to Barbados where it was 14 per cent in 1832, St Lucia (12.6 per cent in 1812), St Kitts (10.3 per cent in 1817), the Virgin Islands (6.6 per cent in 1818), and Berbice (3.1 per cent in 1819) (Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p152 Table 5.14 'Percentage of Slaves Coloured (sic) by Slave-holding Size-group: Select Colonies, 1815-32', and p150).

It is difficult to establish the exact percentage of mixed-race people on Mountravers because included was an African woman, Silvia, who was said to have been 'yellow cast'. If all those who were not described as black are counted, this adds up to 45 out of 159 people (28.3 per cent). Those classified as Mistee (one) and Mulatto (seven) accounted for only 5 per cent.

as in Jamaica, for instance. Jamaica had a much higher proportion of Africans than Nevis and most of the owners carefully recorded the colour of their people according to the many gradations that were in use. In Nevis owners restricted themselves to less than a dozen categories that either described people's parentage (negro, mulatto, sambo, and mustee) or their perceived colour (black, yellow, yellow cast, and black of a yellow cast). Only one person registered a 'quadroon', five had 'mongrels' (a term much used in St Vincent), two whom they described as 'red' and one as 'Indian'.¹⁷⁵ If a person's description hinged on paternity and if this could not be established or was in dispute, this could result in different descriptions being used in different situations: for instance, when a woman called Betsey was registered by Mary Williams Smith, she was described as a mulatto but when Betsey was freed, in the manumission document she was recorded as a mestee.¹⁷⁶ On Mountravers only one person was described as a 'mistee' and seven as 'mulatto'. Huggins generally labelled people by colour rather than parentage, and used the terms 'black', 'black of a yellow cast' (11), '(of a) yellow cast' (24) and 'yellow' (2). Thus the African woman Silvia was described as 'yellow cast' and the twins Charles and James Peden (sic) as 'yellow' and 'yellow cast'. They were sons of a mulatto and probably a black parent and would otherwise have been classed as sambos.

One woman, Lucy, who had been born on Mountravers in 1734, was still alive in 1817. She was 83 years old and among the 126 Creole women in the island who were aged seventy or over. Creole men fared less well - only 52 had survived to reach three score ten - and Africans even worse: only 28 male and 44 female Africans who lived in Nevis in 1817 were in their seventies.¹⁷⁷ Among the 44 female survivors was Sacharissa whom JPP had purchased from another planter.

The age distribution on Mountravers roughly matched that in the rest of the island. Most age bands were within a + - 1.5 per cent difference, except for four: on Mountravers there were noticeably fewer children aged five to nine years and fewer adults aged 45 to 49, and noticeably more adults in the age bands 20 to 24 years and 60 to 64 years. The relatively small number of children aged 5 to 9 may be explained by the food shortages and the very poor conditions in the island in 1811 and 1812, possibly coupled with the Hugginses' bad management during the first few years. The low number of ten to 14-year-olds appears to have been the result of Henry Williams's poor stewardship. During his time few children were born, or few survived until the next inventory was completed.

The comparatively smaller number of people who were in their mid-thirties to late fifties (those born between 1758 and 1782) is a reflection of the demographic make-up of Mountravers at the time they were born: the entailed people had been ageing and had not produced many children, and the African-born children JPP had bought had not yet produced offspring of their own. Once the dreadful 1770s were over and the purchased women had children, these youngsters grew up during a period of stability and prosperity on the plantation. Born between 1783 and 1802, they represented the relatively large number of people who in 1817 were in their mid-teens to mid-thirties.

¹⁷⁵ Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p49 and p155 Table 5.15 'Color of Slaves: Eight Colonies, 1813-27'

¹⁷⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 ff395-96

¹⁷⁷ Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* pp477-80 Table 4.4 'Age Structure of Slaves by Sex, Birthplace and Parish: Nevis, 1817'

Age distribution in Nevis and on Mountravers, 1817

| Age group | Nevis-wide total in numbers | Nevis-wide total In % | Mountravers in % | Increase on Mountravers compared to Nevis, in % | Decrease on Mountravers compared to Nevis, in % |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---|---|
| 0-4 | 1075 | 11.13 | 12.58 | + 1.45 | |
| 5-9 | 1042 | 10.78 | 7.55 | | - 3.23 |
| 10-14 | 1063 | 11 | 9.43 | | - 1.57 |
| 15-19 | 741 | 7.67 | 8.8 | + 1.13 | |
| 20-24 | 782 | 8.09 | 11.95 | + 3.86 | |
| 25-29 | 825 | 8.54 | 9.43 | + 0.89 | |
| 30-34 | 819 | 8.48 | 8.8 | + 0.32 | |
| 35-39 | 777 | 8.04 | 7.55 | | - 0.49 |
| 40-44 | 686 | 7.1 | 5.6 | | - 1.5 |
| 45-49 | 490 | 5.07 | 1.26 | | -3.81 |
| 50-54 | 446 | 4.62 | 3.77 | | - 0.85 |
| 55-59 | 230 | 2.38 | 1.87 | | - 0.51 |
| 60-64 | 286 | 2.96 | 7.55 | + 4.59 | |
| 65-69 | 138 | 1.43 | 0.62 | | - 0.81 |
| 70+ | 250 | 2.59 | 3.14 | + 0.55 | |
| Unknown | 12 | 0.12 | 0 | | |

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The slave registrations also revealed who had absconded (those who were believed to return soon were not included). Had the registration taken place at a different time of the year, the numbers may generally have been higher - according to one historian absences became more frequent during the summer months.¹⁷⁹ There were discernible differences in the number of absconders between those who were owned by individuals and those who were attached to plantations: of 19 people who had absconded and

¹⁷⁸ Higman, BW *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p463 Table S4.1 'Age by Colony: Nevis, 1817'

¹⁷⁹ Ward, JR *British West Indian Slavery* p27

who belonged to a random sample of individual owners, the average age was 31.75 years, while out of 24 particular incidents involving plantation-owned people the average age at 37 was slightly higher, and, although overall the proportion of Africans in the island had declined to one in seven, one in three of those who had left their individual owners on their own accord were known to have been Africans. This suggests that these late arrivals were more intent on freeing themselves, either because they were subjected to greater pressures or because they were less accepting of their enslavement than their Creole colleagues. Among the individual-owned people was one woman absconder but all the plantation-owned absconders were men, which is a fact supported by Barbara Bush's research: young males without family ties constituted the largest group of runners but even men with families ran away more than women. Barbara Bush also found that Africans tended to leave in groups whereas Creoles fled as individuals,¹⁸⁰ and this appears to have been the case of those five Africans who belonged to the blacksmith Frederick Huggins and whom he registered as 'absent'. Two other individual owners stand out as having lost relatively large numbers: six out of seven who belonged to Frances Pemberton and three of Dr Cassin's nine had absconded. Among the plantation people similar numbers were on the run. From Edward Huggins junior's Spring Hill Estate one African and three Creoles were missing, four had gone from Edward Brazier's estate, three from Clay Hill, two from Ward's and so on. It is not known whether these were individuals who sought to gain freedom on their own, or whether they went away in groups, although the ten people who were said to have fled from Morning Star may well have gone off together.¹⁸¹ In 1817 no one was recorded as absent from Mountravers. On Clarke's, one 30-year-old woman was logged as having 'absconded' and, probably not expected to return, she was not included in the total count.

Slaveholders objected to two measures contained in this new registration process: having to pay certification fees which were used to cover the salaries and pensions of those employed to administer the scheme, and being required to submit the island's register to the newly established Office for the Registry of Colonial Slaves in London. Nevis failed to comply with the second condition, and in the summer of 1821 received a stern letter from Downing Street reminding the Legislature of its obligation. The Virgin Islands had been similarly unforthcoming.¹⁸² Although the original Act in Nevis had promised triennial returns, the next register was only taken in February 1822 but from then on happened regularly on a three-yearly basis until slavery was abolished in most of the British colonies. Jamaica had dutifully completed another return in 1820 and was to do so every three years until 1832.

The story of JPP's reserved people so far

Among the 234 enslaved people on Clarke's Estate were 30 who belonged to Charles Pinney. They were the people originally reserved by JPP plus their offspring.

Since March 1808 they had been hired to John Henry Clarke. At first they rebelled against not having been freed but, as Clarke put it, with 'mild' and 'sharp' measures they became reconciled to their situation.¹⁸³ Clarke believed 'that though some of them were idle, they were far from being refractory'¹⁸⁴ and in March 1811 Clarke and JPP were happy to renew their agreement. JPP wanted them all kept

¹⁸⁰ Bush, Barbara *Slave Women in Caribbean Society* p65 and p64, quoting Gad Heumann (ed) *Out of Bondage: Runaways, Resistance and Maroonage in Africa and the New World* London 1986

¹⁸¹ Ten out of 118 people from Morning Star absconded when the future of the estate was uncertain; they left when the documents for its sale were drawn up. The owner, James Weekes, was the controversial prosecutor in the case against Edward Huggins. He had gone to live in England (ECSCRN, CR 1819-1823 ff359-70).

¹⁸² UKNA, CO 186/12: 17 July 1821

¹⁸³ Pares, R A *West India Fortune* p153, quoting James Tobin to JPP, 17 May 1808

¹⁸⁴ UKNA, CO 152/98 Extracts from Letters from James Webbe Tobin of Nevis, 6 September 1811

together although one woman and her daughter he considered selling to the child's father. The man, however, did not come up with the money¹⁸⁵ and consequently mother and daughter were also hired to Clarke's Estate.¹⁸⁶ Most people rented to Clarke's were either skilled or 'good field negroes', except for a woman called Old Sue. She was a twin. Her sister was among the people sold to Huggins.¹⁸⁷ Despite JPP's wishes to keep them all together, at least three mothers were separated from their children: one of Sarah Fisher's sons and Frankey Vaughan's and Quasheba's daughters were sold to Huggins.

The agreement with John Henry Clarke was that he rented 24 people at S£168 a year. The money was payable half-yearly in England – an example of how directly the colonial income financed JPP and others like him. The conditions of hire stipulated that at the end of the lease Clarke had to return any individuals 'who may then be alive' without them being re-appraised. This meant that if Clarke so chose he could work people until they became exhausted and ill (and therefore were worth less) but if they died, he was accountable for their deaths and had to compensate JPP at their original, appraised value. Any children born whilst their parents were hired to Clarke were to be appraised 'to set off against the deaths and those who cannot be returned'. Later, when births outweighed deaths, this resulted in some of the children born to reserved individuals being owned by the Pinneys while the Clarkes owned their siblings.¹⁸⁸ If ownership was split like this, the potential for families to be broken up was even greater than if the whole family was owned by one person.

The handover from JPP to Huggins had caused some confusion. On the original list of people to be sold with the plantation several boys called James got muddled up¹⁸⁹ and for years JPP argued with the Hugginses over who owned one of the boys called James, as well as a girl called Phibba. When the Hugginses held on to these two, this angered Clarke who warned he would end the hire arrangement without giving the required six months' notice. He kept the rented group a while longer but then returned all of them to JPP's attorney John Colhoun Mills.¹⁹⁰ JPP was disappointed. He was keen to keep this group together on Clarke's Estate. They and the Mountravers people 'were well acquainted with each other and [had] family connections',¹⁹¹ and with Clarke his people had seemed 'more contented and at home ... than with any other person living near their former habitation.'¹⁹² Seeking to resolve the issue over James's and Phibba's ownership he threatened Peter Thomas Huggins with legal action.¹⁹³ The majority of reserved people, meanwhile, worked for several months on Mills's estate, Prospect, in the parish of St John Figtree, and some were rented to Samuel Laurence,¹⁹⁴ but Mills did not wish to retain them and everyone's future was uncertain once more.¹⁹⁵ There certainly was no shortage of planters wanting to hire them. Mr Hanley, who lived in the Gingerland parish, offered to rent the group at double the money Clarke had paid, and George Clarke Forbes from Bush Hill also expressed an interest. Even Edward Huggins senior put in a bid. Incredibly, despite the market place flogging JPP still had 'no objection' to rent his people to old Huggins. Admittedly, Huggins might have placed them on Mountravers and for JPP hiring them to Huggins was only an option if others declined them,¹⁹⁶ but to even consider this man as a potential renter was in such contrast because, at the same time, JPP was inclined to listen

¹⁸⁵ PP, LB 23: JPP to Samuel Laurence, 7 June 1810; also PN 188

¹⁸⁶ PP, LB 23: JPP to JC Mills, 18 February 1811

¹⁸⁷ PP, Dom Box T3-6: Notes added to 'A list of Negroes and other Slaves the Property of JPP Esq under rent to John Henry Clarke Esq commencing the 7th March 1808 and who were appraised by Wm Laurence and JD Smith Esq the 25th April 1808'; also LB 23: JPP to JC Mills, 18 February 1811

¹⁸⁸ PP, Dom Box T3-6: Copy of slaves rented to JH Clarke, 7 March 1808

¹⁸⁹ PP, LB 23: JPP to Thomas John Cottle, 26 September 1809

¹⁹⁰ PP, LB 23: JPP to JC Mills, 8 March 1813

¹⁹¹ PN 191, quoting B23 1809-13 f611: JPP to JH Clarke, 7 July 1813

¹⁹² PP, LB 24: JPP to JH Clarke, 18 April 1814

¹⁹³ PP, LB 23: JPP to PT Huggins, 10 March 1813

¹⁹⁴ PP, LB 24: JPP to JC Mills, 13 October 1814

¹⁹⁵ PP, LB 24: JPP to JC Mills, 8 March 1814

¹⁹⁶ PP, LB 24: JPP to PT Huggins, 3 June 1814

to his group. They made it known that they objected 'to live so far from their former habitation' and informed one of the interested planters, Mr Hanley. Knowing that without their cooperation he faced years of strife, Hanley withdrew his offer. JPP presumed that they would have 'the same objection to live with Mr Forbes'¹⁹⁷ and accepted their desire to live close to Mountravers. He was strongly in favour of Mr Clarke renting them again. Clarke did, indeed, take them back.

Everyone packed up once more. On 7 September 1813 they had moved to St John Figtree and nine months later, on 20 June 1814, they all returned to St Thomas Lowland.¹⁹⁸ They were re-appraised and a new, seven-year-agreement was drawn up for Clarke to hire 29 people.¹⁹⁹ Included were the children born in the meantime and the two oldest children of the mulatto cooper William Jones. Although JPP had told his attorney in April that he had 'no idea of selling them', in July he did hint at the possibility that he might do so. He was speculating that his group might increase in value - now that the 'African trade' had ended completely and, 'from the temper of the time,' there was no prospect of it ever starting up again. JPP estimated that individuals were valued at S£75 a head on average,²⁰⁰ compared to S£70 in 1807²⁰¹ and S£40 in the late 1760s.²⁰² By his own estimate, their average value had almost doubled but rather than sell his people, in August 1815 JPP assigned them all to Charles, his youngest son.²⁰³ Likewise, the Mountravers people passed from father to son when in 1816 Edward Huggins senior gave up the estate and passed it to his son Peter Thomas.²⁰⁴

Some of the people rented to Clarke's Estate would have been employed in repairing the barracks at Fort Charles. During the war, in 1812, the quarters at Fort Charles were already uninhabitable and needed immediate repair.²⁰⁵ Nothing was done for four years until the new Master Gunner at Fort Charles, Francis John Galpine, repeated the demands for urgent repairs.²⁰⁶ The Legislature decided to build accommodation for a hundred troops, with slaveholders providing a percentage of their people to do the work.²⁰⁷ The Council appointed John Henry Clarke to oversee the scheme and gave him N£5,000 for its completion.²⁰⁸ Then a 'gale' in September 1816 caused further damage at Fort Charles²⁰⁹ but shortly afterwards a resolute Mrs Clarke withdrew her husband from his role as supervisor of the barracks building project.²¹⁰ Clarke presumably had to deal with the aftermath of the hurricane on his plantation.

In the autumn of 1817 Mr and Mrs Clarke offered their estate for sale. They were deeply in debt. Probably tempted by a long period of higher wartime sugar prices, in 1812 they had bought a neighbouring estate,

¹⁹⁷ PP, LB 24: JPP to JC Mills, 4 April 1814

In 1817 William, James, Judith and Sarah Hanley registered several people (UKNA, T 71/364) and applied for compensation.

¹⁹⁸ PP, G Ledger f119; also LB 24: JPP to JH Clarke, 18 December 1813, and LB 24: JPP to Ed Huggins, 21 October 1813

¹⁹⁹ PP, P Ledger f98, transferred to new ledger f72; also LB 24: JPP to JH Clarke, 13 February 1815, and LB 51: P & A to JH Clarke, 13 February 1815

²⁰⁰ PP, LB 24: JPP to JC Mills, 18 July 1814; LB 24: JPP to JC Mills, 8 March 1814, and JPP to JC Mills, 4 April 1814

²⁰¹ PP, LB 20: JPP to James Tobin, 5 February 1807

²⁰² PP, AB16 f17 Gingerland Plantation a/c

²⁰³ PP, Dom Box P: Instructions from John Pinney, to James Parsons regarding the disposal of his property August 1815; also DM 792/12 and DM 792/13 Release and Assignment John Frederick Pinney, to Charles Pinney, 22 August 1823

²⁰⁴ In an indenture dated 4 December 1816 Peter Thomas Huggins mortgaged to his father Mountravers with Charloes for S£20,000 and rented to him Woodland and six acres called Coker's at a peppercorn rent, together with seven of the ten people who had originally belonged to JPP and whom JPP had sold to Edward Huggins together with Woodland: Prince, Nancy Jones and her son William Fisher, Mulatto Nanny and her son George, and the daughters of Richens Quasheba and Frankey Vaughan, Nanny and Ritta (ECSCRN, CR 1814-1817 ff761-74). Since Huggins began hiring the group of ten who came with Woodland, three had died. In 1817 and subsequent years the surviving seven were registered by Peter Thomas Huggins with the other Mountravers people (UKNA, T 71/364-369). JPP praised old Huggins for his 'liberality' in passing on the estate to his son (PP, LB 24: JPP to PT Huggins, 6 December 1816).

²⁰⁵ UKNA, CO 186/10: 14 January 1813

²⁰⁶ UKNA, CO 186/10: 18 August 1814

²⁰⁷ UKNA, CO 186/11: 4 July 1816

²⁰⁸ UKNA, CO 186/12: 13 March 1819 and CO 186/11: 8 August 1816

²⁰⁹ UKNA, CO 186/11: 17 September 1816

²¹⁰ UKNA, CO 186/11: 19 September 1816

Wansey's. This was one of the properties which bordered Clarke's and Mountravers and consisted of all or part of Lady Bawden's old estate. They purchased it from William Laurence for £18,000. With the land came eighty people. Although this did not cover what they owed elsewhere, three years later, in June 1815, the Clarkes took out a mortgage of £8,000 from the House. Since Mr Clarke enquired about a 'portable' steam engine, some of the money they borrowed clearly was intended for developing their property.²¹¹ However, following the end of the war in 1815 the price of sugar dropped and by the beginning of the following year turned 'unsteady' and payments became 'precarious'.²¹² A general depression was in progress.²¹³ Mr and Mrs Clarke found that they had overstretched themselves and dropped the idea of buying a steam engine.

John Henry Clarke died on 5 December 1817.²¹⁴ He may have been a relatively just and benevolent master (he claimed that he never inflicted more than 39 lashes on his estate),²¹⁵ but there is no way of knowing. As far as his worldly possessions went, he 'had nothing to leave, poor man.'²¹⁶ It was said that he died intestate, but a year or so later his widow claimed that she found his will in a drawer. She swore an affidavit to the effect that it truly was her husband's but her joint executor, her neighbour William Laurence the Elder, renounced the burden of executing the will.²¹⁷ Either he was not convinced, or he knew what lay ahead: within days it was revealed that of the N£5,000 Clarke had been given for the barrack works £1,500 had gone missing. He had spent N£3,500 on lumber and the rest remained unaccounted. Although he had been paid more than half of the money, Clarke had completed less than half of the work. William Slater, a merchant, volunteered to superintend the remaining work and Mrs Clarke was asked to return the unused money. She was unable to comply. She did, however, deliver boards, planks, joists, shingles and lime from the estate. Two other people gave up boards and shingles that they, presumably, had purchased from Clarke. These materials were valued and put towards the barracks project but the Legislature had to set aside another N£1,000 so that the work could be completed. All this happened at a time when the barracks were urgently needed - British troops were to be stationed there -²¹⁸ but as late as April 1821, when William Slater departed for England due to ill health, the barracks still had not been finished.²¹⁹ Years later a third man, Frank Browne, was put in charge of this project.²²⁰

On 6 October 1817 JPP's business partner James Tobin died in Bristol²²¹ and, reminded of his own mortality, at the end of the month JPP wrote his will.²²² He had suffered bad health for some years: His 'old disorder the rheumatism', was ongoing, and he had shingles, an inflamed eye that rendered him incapable of writing, and very debilitating asthma. Having been in an 'ill state of health',²²³ he declined further until he died on Friday, 23 January 1818.²²⁴

²¹¹ PP, LB 51: PA & Co to JH Clarke, 1 August 1815

²¹² PP, LB 53: P & A to John Hanley, 21 January 1816

²¹³ Pares, R A *West India Fortune* pp199-200

²¹⁴ John Henry Clarke died on 5 December 1817 and was buried the following day (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b) and NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825).

²¹⁵ HoCPP 1818 Vol xvii pp1-91 'Papers Relating to the Treatment of Slaves in the Colonies' Chadwyck-Healey mf 19.86

²¹⁶ PP, LB 58: Wm Laurence PA & Co, 28 March 1825

²¹⁷ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1805-1818 ff389-96

²¹⁸ UKNA, CO 186/12: 13 March 1819 and 1 April 1819, and CO 185/9

²¹⁹ UKNA, CO 186/12: April 1821

²²⁰ UKNA, CO 186/13: 1827/8

²²¹ James Tobin was buried in the Lower Churchyard of St Andrew's in Clifton where his grave is still visible today (Small, David 'James Tobin (1736/7-1817)' in *Oxford DNB*).

²²² PP, WI Box G: 29 October 1817; also ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1805-1818 ff384-85; also UKNA, PROB 11/1605, sig. 287

²²³ PP, LB 3: JPP to Edward Jessup, 10 March 1764; LB 23: JPP to Mrs Roberts, 22 June 1812; LB 24: JPP to JC Mills?, 3 March 1814; Dom Box C1-1: JPP to Charles Pinney, 15 November 1815, and LB 24: JPP to James French, St Vincent, 1 February 1817

²²⁴ Oliver, VL *Caribbean* Vol 2 p376; also PP, LB 54: P & A to George Webbe, Flushing, 26 January 1818

Clarke's and JPP's deaths prompted a scramble for the reserved people. Peter Jefferys wanted them,²²⁵ as did Peter Thomas Huggins²²⁶ and his brother Edward. Such was the competition that when a direct approach did not result in an immediate response, Edward Huggins used his brother-in-law Thomas John Cottle as an intermediary²²⁷ and Peter Thomas Huggins enlisted the help of Butler Claxton in Bristol. The Huggins brothers put forward arguments that would have been unimaginable half a century earlier. Rather than state their own needs, they put their case in terms of the enslaved people's welfare. Edward Huggins anxiously conveyed his eagerness to accommodate the wishes of the group:

The great inducement I have for this proposal, is the readiness and anxiety they express of belonging to me, in preference to any one else; with these sentiments I have no doubt they would be more comfortable and happier with me than any other person. ²²⁸

Given the reputation of the Huggins family this was an unlikely claim but one that fitted Edward Huggins's personality. Charles Pinney judged him 'a character fond of boasting and not very particular' and disapproved of him and his wife. They were known to be 'of the most expensive turn'. Given their reputation, Charles Pinney thought it prudent to warn his brother not to sell one of his properties to Edward Huggins junior unless he received payment or additional security. Pinney knew that even Edward's brother Peter Thomas was 'cautious in any money transactions with him'.²²⁹ However, the fact that Edward Huggins used as an argument the enslaved people's supposed desire to belong to him shows that the group held some power in determining their future. His brother, in turn, put forward similar reasons and appealed to the Pinneys' sense of compassion and fair play:

I wish I could get back the gang Mr Pinney reserved from this estate when he sold it to my father. It amounted to about 30 or 32 negroes – they are rented to Clarkes Estate. I think if they are sold I ought to have the preference of them, for many of them unto this day live in our negro houses, and I have some of the children, and the mothers are rented to Clarkes and so it is that part of some of the oldest families belonging to this estate are divided. It would be an act of humanity on the part of Mr Pinney to suffer them to return to their native abodes, and it would be but justice to me. I wrote several times to the late Mr Pinney respecting them, and I believe if he had lived until the expiration of the lease with Mr Clarke I should have had them – he promised me as much.²³⁰

Charles Pinney's preference was for the group to remain on Clarke's Estate but if they were to be sold, Mr Jefferys was to get first refusal. As far as Peter Thomas Huggins went, if he wanted more people Charles suggested he should buy Brazier's Estate. From his father Charles had inherited Brazier's mortgage ²³¹ and he was keen to divest himself of that property as soon as possible.²³² Badly managed, covered in weeds, and cultivated by an exhausted workforce, in 1813 Edward Huggins junior had declined to buy it even for as little as £8,000 or £9,000.²³³ The Pinneys offered it to his brother, Peter Thomas Huggins, not for the land but for its workers: a snip at £15,000 at six per cent interest, plus an allowance for Brazier's daughters for as long as they were alive.²³⁴ Peter Thomas, too, declined to buy Brazier's.

²²⁵ PP, LB 54: PA & Co to Peter Jefferys, Windsor, Berkshire, 19 February 1818 and 6 August 1818

²²⁶ PP, LB 54: PA & Co to PT Huggins, Nevis, 28 February 1818

²²⁷ PP, Dom Box C1-4: TJ Cottle, Cheltenham, to PA & Co, 4 August 1818

²²⁸ PP, Dom Box 1: Edward Huggins jnr, Spring Hill, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 29 April 1818

²²⁹ PP, Dom Box L2-28: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 26 September 1828

²³⁰ PP, Dom Box C1-4: PT Huggins to Charles Pinney, enclosed in letter BT Claxton to Charles Pinney, 6 August 1818

²³¹ PP, LB 27: Charles Pinney, to JC Mills, 18 June 1818

²³² PP, LB 27: JF Pinney, London, to Edward Huggins junior, 19 June 1818

²³³ PP, WI Box O: Edward Huggins junior to JF Pinney, 5 September 1813

²³⁴ PP, LB 27: JF Pinney, London, to Edward Huggins junior, 19 June 1818

Brazier's Estate had to be sold, Clarke's was to be re-possessed²³⁵ and other business needed sorting out. There was only one thing to do: for Charles Pinney to go to Nevis. Born in Bristol, this was his second visit; some years earlier he had briefly called at Nevis on his way to St Croix.²³⁶ Armed with his brother's power of attorney,²³⁷ in October 1819 he sailed to the West Indies.²³⁸

The dreadful 1820s: 'misery all round'²³⁹

The 1820s were marked by periods of famine and sickness, occasioned by hurricanes and drought, and in the early years, worsened by a trade embargo with North America. A flood and earthquakes added to the wretched conditions. The 1820s saw an increase in acts of resistance, by both enslaved and freed people. A law passed in January 1820 set the tone for the new decade: the Act was 'for the further prevention of malicious shooting and attempting to discharge loaded firearms, stabbing cutting wounding, poisoning and the malicious using of means to procure the miscarriage of women and also the malicious setting fire to buildings or other property, including negro house, wowra heap, dried cane stack, magoss heap.'²⁴⁰

The hurricane of September 1819 destroyed buildings, the sugar crop and gardens and allotments with ground provisions. Food and lumber became scarce.²⁴¹ Growing food was a priority. Having laid claim to some public land adjacent to the Court House, even the Registrar of Slaves turned his hand to raising vegetables.²⁴² Whereas in the previous decade inhabitants had occasionally sought poor relief to alleviate their 'extreme distress and poverty', on one day alone in February 1820 the Legislature approved rate relief owing to the 'lowest state of pauperism' to over two dozen people: 12 men, 16 women and one family.²⁴³ Of all these, at least eleven individuals were known to have been freed people. Nine of them owned enslaved people whom they had to support - 58 in total – so that the overall number of individuals suffering the hardships of poverty would have been much greater than the number of applicants would suggest.

The hurricane reminded everyone how very fragile the island's supplies were. To secure food for people and Guinea grass for animals, the Legislature issued a reminder 'for all persons owning or having the direction of plantations ... to keep in cultivation a certain quantity of land in negro provisions and fodder'.²⁴⁴ As if to reinforce the message, in August 1820 another 'gale of wind' passed through Nevis,²⁴⁵ but it appears that not everyone took notice immediately: a full three years later Peter Thomas Huggins talked about lowering his running costs by planting provisions, which might suggest that on Mountravers he had let fall into disuse the practice of growing food for allowances.²⁴⁶ JPP's old mantra, first issued in the 1770s and repeated in the 1790s, to plant food crops for the plantation people, appears to have gone unheeded.

²³⁵ PP, LB 27: Charles Pinney, to JC Mills, 7 July 1819

²³⁶ PP, LB 24: JPP's letters of introduction, various dates, and JPP to Samuel Laurence, 13 October 1814

²³⁷ PP, LB 48: JF Pinney, to Charles Pinney, 14 October 1819

²³⁸ PP, LB 25: JF Pinney, to Ed Huggins, Nevis, 6 July 1819

²³⁹ PP, Dom Box C2-8: JC Mills to Charles Pinney, 21 July 1822

²⁴⁰ UKNA, CO 185/9: 6 January 1820

Act No 46 was passed at St Kitts because from 1816 onwards the Leeward Islands had been subdivided and St Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands administered as one colony, and Antigua, Montserrat and Barbuda as another. This arrangement was to last until 1871 when the Leeward Island Federation was established (*South America, Central America and the Caribbean 1988*).

²⁴¹ UKNA, CO 186/12: 24 September 1819

²⁴² UKNA, CO 186/12: 2 December 1819

²⁴³ UKNA, CO 186/12: 20 February 1820

²⁴⁴ UKNA, CO 186/12: 6 April 1820 and 14 October 1822

²⁴⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 28 August 1820

²⁴⁶ PP, LB 56: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 July 1823

Charles Pinney was present at an important meeting at the Court House in Charlestown. On 3 August 1820 he, with the island's Anglican clergymen and the Wesleyan missionary Thomas Hyde, met with many residents to establish the 'Auxiliary Missionary Society for the Island of Nevis'. It sought to aid the British Church and Wesleyan Missionary Societies in 'spreading the light of Christianity to the ends of the earth'. Under this new umbrella organisation the Anglicans and the Wesleyans were to work together, with the island's President, John Colhoun Mills, acting as Patron and President.²⁴⁷

This meeting marked a milestone in Nevis's history. Such unity of purpose between the different churches and the island's government had previously been unthinkable. The mob's torching of the Methodist chapel in 1796, their attack on the mixed-race members in the congregation, their harassment of the missionary Mr Brownell while none of the bystanders intervened – all this had been forgotten. Forgotten was also the previous president's warning, issued only four years earlier, that marrying an enslaved person in church would be 'highly improper', leading to 'bad consequences'. Now the residents, the Legislature, the established and the missionary churches committed themselves to join forces in bringing Christian teachings to the enslaved people. In the new spirit of cooperation and generosity the 'considerable number of ladies and gentlemen, and other inhabitants' present at that meeting in August 1820 meeting raised over £200.²⁴⁸

During his visit to Nevis Charles Pinney had to attend to much business, including sorting out the future of certain individuals on the mortgaged properties²⁴⁹ and some of the reserved people. Nancy Williams he sold to an old free woman, and Black Polly and her family to the free mixed-race Smith sisters.²⁵⁰ By selling them he enabled them to be freed. While on the one hand this was a charitable act in line with his Christian beliefs, on the other hand it was mean-spirited. Rather than free them himself he was circumventing new legislation governing manumissions. Since 1814 measures had been in place to stop irresponsible slaveholders from freeing people without making provisions for their livelihoods. The new law regulating manumissions was conceived at a time of food shortages which had caused a 'general distress of the poorer classes of the inhabitants'. Forced to dole out food at public expense, the Legislature had passed an Act that placed restrictions on slaveholders wishing to manumit people: they had to present the person due to be freed to three magistrates who would certify their ability to maintain themselves. Anyone who wanted to free old or incapacitated individuals had to secure their future livelihood. No doubt the fact that an increasing number of freed people were freeing others was an added reason for this new legislation – with this spiral of manumissions slaveholders must have feared that one day there would be no enslaved people left.

If the new legislation was partly aimed at freed people, an additional clause targeted absentee owners. Slaveholders who had been absent from Nevis for at least two years had to seek permission from the Legislature before their people could even be presented to the magistrates for certification.²⁵¹ Absentees were singled out because so many men were leaving the island that public posts could not be filled and meetings could not be held because they were inquorate.²⁵² Those left behind felt deserted, and they resented the fact that others abandoned the island at such a difficult time. The law that required any

²⁴⁷ *The Missionary Register for MDCCCXX*, London p453

²⁴⁸ See also Thomas K Hyde's 'Journal', 4 August 1820, cited in David U Farquhar *Caribbean Adventures. Extracts from Missionary Journals* (Boston, MS: Mt Prospect Press, 1999) pp 32-33

²⁴⁹ Correspondence regarding a woman called Ritta and her child from Symond's, hired to a Miss Wilkes, can be found in PP, LB 57: PA & Co to Mills & Galpine, Nevis, 27 April 1822, and 4 June 1822, LB 56: Mills & Galpine to PA & Co, 14 June 1822, 13 February 1823 and 18 March 1823

²⁵⁰ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to Mills & Galpine, Nevis, 27 April 1822

²⁵¹ Howard, JH *The Laws of the British Colonies* p511 Act No 54 Geo III 24 May 1814

Although Clause 12 of the 1798 Leeward Islands Melioration Act had required that any slaveholders freeing ill or disabled slaves should lodge N£300 with the Treasury for their upkeep, this law appears to have fallen into disuse as soon as it had been passed.

²⁵² UKNA, CO 186/9: 3 and 17 November 1812; also CO 186/10: 27 March 1813

manumission to pass through the Legislature was drawn up just when several planters had gone abroad; it was meant to remind those absentees of their obligations. The Legislature, therefore, as well as the magistrates, gained an element of control over manumissions. Whereas in the past manumissions had been an individual's decision alone, now the government and legal representatives could restrict the number of manumissions. Under the new measures magistrates could refuse to issue certificates and thereby limit the number of people who were freed. In reality the new legislation did not affect the rate at which people were freed. Indeed, manumissions increased.

Rate of manumissions in Nevis, 1808 to 1834

| Time span | Number of males and females freed [alternative numbers in square brackets] | Average interval between manumissions |
|-----------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1808-1810 | 4 | 9 months |
| 1811-1813 | 7 | 5.14 months |
| 1814-1816 | 37 | 0.97 months |
| 1817 | 9 | 1.33 months |
| 1817-1822 | 42 [38] | 1.28 months |
| 1822-1825 | 38 [46] | 0.94 months |
| 1825-1828 | 61 | 0.59 months |
| 1828-1831 | 66 | 0.54 months |
| 1831-1834 | 56 | 0.64 months |

²⁵³

Charles Pinney got rid of a 'variety of lands which for years have produced nothing'²⁵⁴ and sold all plots in Charlestown to Francis John Galpine.²⁵⁵ This included the old Weekes property, Cedar Trees, which JPP

²⁵³ Figures were based on Table S10.1 Manumissions of Slaves by Sex and Colony, 1808-34 in *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* p689. These figures given by Barry Higman differ slightly but confirm the trend. Higman pointed out that the different sources did not always agree on the numbers. According to Higman, 135 males and 185 females were freed during the period 1808 to 1834.

Drawing on the information from another source, during the years 1814 to 1817 – the period which immediately followed the introduction of the new law regarding absentees - on average less than once a month someone was manumitted (ECSCRN, CR 1814-1817). During the five-year period from 1821 this rose to an average of about one person a month. Among the 57 people who were manumitted between 1821 and 1825 (UKNA, CO 111/60 Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter No 19 (31 December 1826) p281) was a Mountravers-born woman, Nancy Williams. During the years 1821 to 1825 more people were freed in Nevis than in St Kitts which had a much bigger population: 57 compared to 62. But, as was pointed out, not all the manumissions were entered in the Office of the Registrar of Deeds and it was estimated that 'near double the number of slaves have been actually manumitted that are not considered so in the eye of the law' (CO 239/13: Submissions filed under 10 February 1826).

²⁵⁴ PP, WI Box O Misc: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to JF Pinney, Bristol, 17 January 1820

²⁵⁵ PP, LB 27: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to J Ames, 17 January 1820

had acquired from William Burt Weekes junior.²⁵⁶ Charles Pinney also managed to sell the old Pinney estate in St John Figtree, Mountain or Governor's. Now called Brazier's or Willett's, the millwright and planter Edward Brazier had bought it by way of a mortgage from JPP, but old Brazier had died in 1819, just months after his oldest son.²⁵⁷ Reluctantly the youngest son, Joseph, had stayed on to manage it.²⁵⁸ Charles Pinney judged the plantation in a 'most deplorable state' and was glad that Samuel Long, a St Kitts attorney, was willing to offer £10,000.²⁵⁹ He hoped his brother would agree to the deal and also to selling Clarke's Estate to Peter Thomas Huggins. Mrs Clarke was in England then and while Charles Pinney was negotiating about her plantation with her attorney in Nevis, Mrs Clarke carried on talks with John Frederick Pinney in England. Aware of her conducting a double negotiation, John Frederick Pinney concluded that he did not have 'the least confidence in Mrs Clarke, she will do and undo exactly as suits her.'²⁶⁰ He wanted to foreclose. Mrs Clarke had paid nothing for four years,²⁶¹ but the future of Clarke's Estate, which was said to have been worth about £18,000-20,000, remained unsolved. For the time being, the reserved people were to remain on the estate.²⁶²

Charles Pinney also put his mind to improve working conditions. From Britain he wanted to import a ploughman 'to teach negroes, and be generally useful'. This man was to be 'articled for three years certain'.²⁶³ Cane land was dug in regular trenches four or five feet wide, and according to the depth of soil, the bottoms of these trenches had to be ploughed up. It was estimated that on one particular Jamaican estate one person could dig a third more cane holes in land loosened by the plough: 120 instead of 90 in a day.²⁶⁴ In the 1780s five different estates in Nevis had tried the plough but the experiment had been discontinued because the soil was so 'stiff and stoney'. The Legislature had then claimed that only about 400 out of 8,000 acres could be ploughed.²⁶⁵ While Charles Pinney was making enquiries about a ploughman – apparently, during his last visit to England Mr Mills could have secured one for £25 a year - the House ordered from a Glasgow company four ploughs '(Playfair and Jasen)' for estates in Nevis.²⁶⁶ By about 1822 Mountravers also had a plough for which Peter Thomas Huggins bought two small cart horses, to match the grey that was already there.²⁶⁷ Having a plough meant not only that people were spared some of the back-breaking work of tilling the soil but also that they acquired new skills in handling animals and equipment.

Greater changes would have taken place when the steam engine was introduced on Mountravers. Then people had to learn how to operate the machine and how to maintain it. They had to adapt to very different working methods and a faster pace of production. Peter Thomas Huggins must have considered his workforce capable of managing such changes and, with a view to purchasing additional neighbouring

²⁵⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1810-1814 ff587-88

²⁵⁷ Edward Brazier senior was in his eighties when he died in September 1819. His son, Revd Edward Brazier, had died in April that year (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)).

²⁵⁸ PP, Dom Box C1-4: Edward Brazier, Governor's estate, Nevis, to PA & Co, 12 August 1818

²⁵⁹ PP, WI Box O-4: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 17 January 1820

²⁶⁰ PP, Dom Box C1-7: JF Pinney, to Charles Pinney, Nevis, 30 January 1821

²⁶¹ PP, LB 55: PA & Co to Peter Jefferys, Nevis, 10 January 1821

²⁶² PP, LB 27: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 7 October 1820

²⁶³ PP, LB 27: Charles Pinney, to JF Pinney, 14 November 1820

²⁶⁴ Green, WA *British Slave Emancipation* p53 fn52, quoting Select Committee on the Extinction of Slavery, PP 1831-2 XX (721), QQ 61-83

²⁶⁵ Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 69 1789 Evidence by the Legislature of Nevis and R Pares *A West India Fortune* p111

²⁶⁶ PP, LB 55: PA & Co to Dennistoun and Co, Glasgow, 18 December 1820

The ploughs which Charles Pinney, requested for James Daniel's, John Hanley's and Hendrickson's estates were to be the same as those the House had sent to Antigua. There the planter Samuel Martin, who had died in 1776, may have been the first planter who tried to replace the hand-hoe with the plough (Sheridan, RB 'The Rise of a Colonial Gentry: A Case Study of Antigua, 1730-1775' in *The Economic History Review* New Series Vol 13 No 3 (1961) p353).

²⁶⁷ PP, LB 56: PT Huggins, London, to PA & Co, 27 February 1823

After Mary Ames's husband's death in 1822, Charles Pinney, and Richard Edward Case were the only surviving members of the company Pinney, Ames & Co (LB 57: PA & Co to GC Forbes, 3 December 1822).

estates, he saw that installing a steam engine would prove a profitable investment. At a cost of £1,750 he ordered a 10 horsepower non-condensing engine from a Liverpool company, Fawcett & Preston.²⁶⁸ He did this through Charles Pinney who willingly supported such enterprise; he considered Huggins creditworthy and was impressed by 'his habits of industry and attention'.²⁶⁹ In the first half of 1821 the steam engine arrived on the *Mary Jane* and a specialist, an engineer called Joseph Gardner, came to erect it on Mountravers.²⁷⁰ Huggins was well satisfied with its performance²⁷¹ but soon found that the water on the estate was very corrosive²⁷² and the coals the House had sent him from Bristol were of poor quality.²⁷³ The equipment regularly required repairs and some years later a replacement part gave rise to a further complaint. A steam pipe made in Bristol did not measure exactly the same as the old one and had caused leaking joints. Huggins fumed that this lost him a quantity of coal and 50 hogsheads of sugar and concluded: 'I will never send to Bristol for anything of the sort again.'²⁷⁴

Charles Pinney meant to return to England at the beginning of 1821²⁷⁵ but his departure was delayed until April. Although the war was over, sea travel was still hazardous, and not just on account of severe weather. To calm passengers afraid of pirates, the house considered putting old guns from one ship onto another,²⁷⁶ and in the 1820s two Pinney ships were lost - the *Hope* in the Black Sea and the *Agincourt* off Antigua.²⁷⁷ Indeed, on Charles Pinney's return journey via Tortola the rudder sustained an injury at sea so that his voyage home turned into a 'most unaccountably long' passage. It took two months to reach Bristol. When he got home, he found his mother in a 'very declining state'. Suffering a 'lingering illness',²⁷⁸ Mrs P lived for another year and died on 21 March 1822. At the age of 71 she 'expired ... without a groan. She was quite sensible to the last and appeared to suffer little pain except from shortness of breath.'²⁷⁹

Soon after his mother's death Charles Pinney shipped an organ to Nevis for St John Figtree church. When the 'Fig Tree Organ opened' and was heard for the first time,²⁸⁰ parishioners marked the occasion. Everyone needed some cheer; the island was suffering a particularly bad year. After Charles Pinney had left Nevis, no rain fell for weeks and some of the newly planted cane had died.²⁸¹ The dry spell continued, and by the following spring Nevis had endured the driest conditions for two decades. In search of water, higher up the mountain Peter Thomas Huggins discovered a 'fine spring of water' which he wanted to channel downwards although it meant encroaching a little on Pinney-held land. Ground provisions such as yams and potatoes produce better crops in mountain areas,²⁸² and even without the additional water he was 'gardening there to a great extent very successfully'²⁸³ but he needed the water further down. The sugar crop was dire. On Mountravers, workers had to cut 48 acres to produce 17 hogsheads of sugar,²⁸⁴ and in total they made only 40 hogsheads and little rum. Elsewhere the crops failed 'totally'. The parish of St John Figtree was particularly affected,²⁸⁵ and many estates did not even turn out ten hogsheads.²⁸⁶ In

²⁶⁸ NMGM, B/FP/5/1/1 Engine Book No 1

²⁶⁹ PP, LB 27: Charles Pinney, to JF Pinney, 7 October 1820

²⁷⁰ NMGM, B/FP/5/1/1 Engine Book No 1

²⁷¹ PP, LB 25: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, 1 August 1821

²⁷² PP, LB 58: JC Mills to PA & Co, 10 March 1825

²⁷³ PP, LB 56: PT Huggins to PA & Co, 19 July 1822

²⁷⁴ PP, Dom Box C3-19: PT Huggins to Charles Pinney, 24 August 1834

²⁷⁵ PP, LB 55: PA & Co to PT Huggins, 15 December 1820, and 31 January 1821

²⁷⁶ PP, Dom Box C2- 13: RE Case to Charles Pinney, 21 January 1829

²⁷⁷ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 29 January 1829

²⁷⁸ PP, LB 27: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, 22 June 1821

²⁷⁹ PP, Dom Box D1

²⁸⁰ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 11 August 1822

²⁸¹ PP, Dom Box C1-7: JC Mills to Charles Pinney, 18 June 1821

²⁸² Hanley, Lornette 'I remember when ... Interview with Robert Griffin' in *NHCS Newsletter* No 39 (November 1995) p10

²⁸³ PP, Dom Box C2-8: J C Mills to Charles Pinney, 23 April 1822

²⁸⁴ PP, Dom Box C2-8: PT Huggins to Charles Pinney, 12 April 1822

²⁸⁵ PP, Dom Box C2-8: Wm Laurence, Nevis, to Charles Pinney/RE Case, 18 March 1822, enclosed in a letter from RE Case to Charles Pinney

²⁸⁶ PP, Dom Box C2-8: PT Huggins to Charles Pinney, 12 April 1822

all, that year planters were expecting to export no more than 1,800 hogsheads,²⁸⁷ possibly even as little as a thousand.²⁸⁸ Although by the end of March rain began to fall,²⁸⁹ everyone's crop had been 'very poor' indeed and the outlook was grim. The Pinneys' attorneys worried how the plantation people were going to be fed in the autumn ('God only knows') and prophesied that 'starvation and discontent will be the result.'²⁹⁰ Perhaps the discontent was already manifesting itself: the launch of the *King David* overturned at Bowrin's Landing and ten hogsheads of sugar were lost.²⁹¹ Was it an accident, or an act of sabotage?

Peter Thomas Huggins knew he had to draw bills and get credit if he was to feed his people²⁹² but since he was bringing little sugar onto the market meant it was difficult to get credit. At the beginning of the year people on Mountravers at least had the herrings which arrived on the *Usk*²⁹³ and later on local seafood sustained them. Although turtles were scarce that year,²⁹⁴ in the summer Huggins reported that 'If it was not for the fish that is daily caught round the island half the population would die of starvation.'²⁹⁵ Everyone suffered but it was worse for people who lived in town, or on estates which grew very little food. Some planters purchased expensive cornmeal²⁹⁶ while others gave their workers cash allowances instead of provisions.²⁹⁷ According to the Leeward Islands Act of 1798, this was only to be done at times 'of absolute and unequivocal necessity',²⁹⁸ but these were, after all, exactly such times. Planters unable to get credit to feed their people gave up their property. Among those who considered withdrawing from planting was one of Huggins's neighbours, Job Ede. His family had cultivated the lands for over eighty years but they saw no future in Nevis. Ede blamed the 'depreciation' of West India property.²⁹⁹

Huggins's other neighbour, the widowed Mrs Clarke, was having problems, too. Her people were starving and everyone had become 'very clamorous' and would not work. She had no credit and could not get provisions and, as her plantation was mortgaged to the Pinneys, she applied to their attorneys to furnish her estate with food. As an emergency measure Mills & Galpine allowed her to draw a bill on the House so she could purchase ten puncheons of cornmeal. To the House this humanitarian act was presented as good business: 'Mr Pinney's security must have deteriorated had the negroes been allowed to go without food.'³⁰⁰ The Pinneys, in turn, sought to interest Peter Thomas Huggins in purchasing Clarke's Estate.³⁰¹

Although everyone believed that the terrible conditions exceeded 'all former times',³⁰² the situation got even worse so that in the autumn of 1822 'the distress for want of provisions was greater than was ever known before.'³⁰³ Weakened from lack of food, people fell ill and the last months of the year were 'most sickly throughout the island'.³⁰⁴ On Mountravers 'several negroes' died and Huggins lost his manager, and, being in poor health himself, he left for a holiday in England.³⁰⁵

²⁸⁷ PP, LB 56: JC Mills to PA & Co, 22 March 1822

²⁸⁸ PP, Dom Box C2-8: PT Huggins to Charles Pinney, 12 April 1822

²⁸⁹ PP, Dom Box C2-8: Joseph Syder, St Kitts, to RE Case, 22 March 1822

²⁹⁰ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine to PA & Co, 23 April 1822

²⁹¹ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine to PA & Co, 14 June 1822

²⁹² PP, LB 56: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 14 June 1822

²⁹³ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to PT Huggins, Nevis, 24 January 1822

²⁹⁴ PP, Dom Box C2-8: JC Mills to Charles Pinney, 31 July 1822

²⁹⁵ PP, LB 56: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 19 July 1822

²⁹⁶ PP, LB 28: Charles Pinney, to Samuel Laurence, 25 June 1822

²⁹⁷ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 January 1823

²⁹⁸ Lambert, S (ed) *House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol 122 Further correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Home Department and Governors, or other civil authorities, in the West Indies, in consequence of the Address of House of Commons of 6 April 1797, 'respecting Negroes in the West Indies'

²⁹⁹ PP, Dom Box C2-8: Grace Cox, Newberry House, Gillingham, to Charles Pinney, 30 November 1822

³⁰⁰ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 13 October 1822

³⁰¹ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to GC Forbes, undated but probably November 1822, also 18 December 1822

³⁰² PP, Dom Box C2-8: JC Mills to Charles Pinney, 21 July 1822

³⁰³ PP, Dom Box C3-17: PT Huggins, London, to Charles Pinney, 11 February 1823

³⁰⁴ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 January 1823

³⁰⁵ PP, Dom Box C3-17: PT Huggins, London, to Charles Pinney, 11 February 1823

To alleviate the situation, legislation was put in place that required provisions to be the first call on an estate.³⁰⁶ Again, this came rather too late; one planter commented ‘that many estates must be in a starving state before this act could come into operation.’³⁰⁷ And as John Colhoun Mills had foreseen, with starvation came discontent. Mrs Clarke’s workers were not the only ones who rebelled. Mills spoke of innumerable robberies and reported that several hundred hogsheads had been ‘lost to cane breakers’.³⁰⁸ Canes were the essence of planters’ wealth and breaking cane or laying fire to fields were recurring acts of resistance, with its own symbolism: the resisters destroyed the very roots of the industry. Those who were charged with protecting that wealth were implicated; Toney, Magnus Morton’s watchman, was murdered.³⁰⁹ Mills, too, had planted too little food on his estate and, as there was ‘no way of doing it but paying for it’,³¹⁰ he bought a hundred bushels of Indian corn at an exorbitant rate. He did this partly to avert violence. Knowing that starvation and unrest went hand in hand, Mills attacked others for not feeding their people. If the workers had nothing to eat then everybody had to bear the consequences, and at this stage the cane breakers were more destructive than he could ‘ever remember.’³¹¹ Most likely in response to these disturbances and to forestall outright rebellion, towards the end of the year measures were taken to import food. Trade with North America had re-opened and from there the Legislature ordered a thousand barrels of flour, 49 tierces of rice and four casks of peas,³¹² and several planters got together and chartered a vessel to pick up stores in Barbados.³¹³

It looked as if the situation was improving. Food was coming into the island once again, the weather was good and planters expected fine crops.³¹⁴ But this optimism proved wrong. Another long drought followed. No rain fell from January to May 1823³¹⁵ and there was no wind. The windmills were useless, and some planters had problems working their animal mills because they were short of cattle. At least Mountravers had the advantage of a steam engine.³¹⁶

The Standing Committee of West India Planters and Merchants in London had suggested that colonies should apply for relief and accordingly Barbados prepared an address to the ‘Imperial Parliament setting forth the distress of the West Indies.’³¹⁷ By April 1822 conditions had already become so bad that some in Nevis believed that ‘Parliamentary aid will be their only relief’³¹⁸ but it had taken another year for the Legislature to move this suggestion forward. The same men who had resented any interference from London and who had insisted that Nevis was a self-governing entity capable of solving its own problems,

³⁰⁶ NHCS, RG 1.23 Nevis Council Minutes 1823-1827: 26 April 1823

³⁰⁷ PP, LB 56: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 14 December 1822

The Legislature passed an ‘An Act for the relief of the negro population of the island of Nevis’ on 10 December 1822 (*Third Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice in the West Indies* 5 October 1826 p45).

In his role as legal adviser to the Colonial Office James Stephen junior commented that the sentiment behind this legislation was laudable but argued that the rights of existing mortgagees and creditors had been sacrificed. These creditors would not just be white but also free people. An abolitionist, like his father James Stephen senior, he was critical of the colonial legislatures and their efforts to circumvent the slave registration system and introduce their own ‘ameliorative’ protection laws (Russell Smandych ‘To Soften the Extreme Rigor of their Bondage’: James Stephen’s Attempt to Reform the Slave Laws of the West Indies, 1813-1833’ in *Law and History Review* Vol 23, No 3 (Fall 2005) p553).

³⁰⁸ PP, LB 56: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 13 December 1822

³⁰⁹ UKNA, CO 186/12: 30 October 1822

³¹⁰ PP, LB 56: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 2 July 1822

³¹¹ PP, LB 56: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 13 December 1822

³¹² UKNA, CO 186/12: November/December 1822

³¹³ PP, LB 56: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 14 December 1822

³¹⁴ PP, LB 56: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 14 December 1822

³¹⁵ PP, LB 56: PT Huggins to PA & Co, 5 May 1823

³¹⁶ The absence of wind and the shortage of cattle put estates with steam engines at an advantage. John Colhoun Mills compared his crop of three hogsheads a week to that of Walter Maynard’s New River estate which had a steam engine and was producing 12 to 14 hogsheads a week (PP, LB 56: JC Mills to PA & Co, 11 April 1823, and 5 May 1823).

³¹⁷ UKNA, CO 186/12: 9 December 1822

³¹⁸ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine to PA & Co, 23 April 1822

the same men now had to grovel to London and apply for a loan.³¹⁹ It can be no coincidence that within weeks they passed a Bill 'To promote observance of Christian religion and its duties among the slaves and to allow them by law being Christians to marry without any controul' (sic). Clearly this was a sop to London – after all, nearly six years had passed since Bathurst had instructed them to stop hindering the marriages of enslaved people in church. Typically for the Nevis Legislature the measure taken was not entirely 'without any control': any enslaved bride and groom still had to seek their owners' permission to marry. And Methodist chapels were not licensed to carry out marriages. For a union to have legal status, it had to be blessed in an Anglican church. But the Legislature did pledge to promote 'by every means in its power the attendance of the slaves on the services at their respective parish churches'.³²⁰

Although supplies had been ordered from North America and purchased in Barbados, at the end of January 1823 John Colhoun Mills estimated that a third of the estates had not given their people any food for a fortnight. He feared that many would starve to death.³²¹ In May 1823 Peter Thomas Huggins, having returned from his holiday in Europe, reported that provisions were in very short supply 'and nothing to be had but for money'.³²² By August this turned into an abundant supply of provisions but credit was scarce and no one would purchase anything.³²³ Meanwhile the minds of the enslaved people were so 'inflamed under the idea that they [were] immediately to be made free' that President of the Council requested that Governor Maxwell sent 'a few more troops' and munitions. Maxwell was perplexed: in St Kitts the enslaved population had 'never been more free from internal commotion' and offered to go to Nevis to talk to the people.³²⁴

A long, dry spell was followed by incessant rain. This continued until July. At Mountravers, with the land 'constantly under water', the crop could not be taken off and what could be harvested was of poor quality. The juice was 'all water'. To produce one hogshead of sugar required 2,600 instead of 1,400 gallons of liquor.³²⁵ The land was soggy, people got drenched when working in the fields, and the rain and cold winds caused many to fall ill with fevers. The autumn of 1823 turned sickly. 'For the benefit of purer air' the Cottle family moved from their Round Hill estate to Golden Rock but the plantation workers and their families had no such choice.³²⁶

Gales around the end of October and the beginning of November caused the deaths of several mules and horses from bruising while being shipped to Nevis,³²⁷ and until these were replaced some plantations had to do without fresh transport- and draught animals. This meant people had to work harder to make up for the shortcomings. Then, in December, the *John* went ashore at New Castle and a month later the sloop *Thomas* was lost, also at New Castle. It belonged to one of the Hugginses.³²⁸ This left only one small craft, the Bristol-built *Prospect*, which could bring the goods ashore and get the sugars abroad the big vessels anchored out at sea ³²⁹ until in April 1824 the *Prospect*, too, went under. She was lost at Indian Castle,³³⁰ apparently in fine weather.³³¹ Two days later the pasture at Indian Castle was ablaze,³³² and it

³¹⁹ UKNA, CO 186/12: 12 and 26 April 1823; 22 May 1823

³²⁰ UKNA, CO 186/12: 19 and 26 June 1823

According to an abolitionist source, the Bill did not make it onto the statute book: by 1826 there was still no law in Nevis 'authorizing or sanctioning marriage' (UKNA, CO 111/60 Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter No 19 (31 December 1826) p269).

³²¹ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 January 1823

³²² PP, LB 56: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 17 May 1823

³²³ PP, LB 56: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 1 October 1823 (second letter)

³²⁴ NHCS, RG 1.23 Nevis Council Minutes 1823-1827: 10 July 1823

³²⁵ PP, LB 56: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 July 1823

³²⁶ NHCS, MG 1.16(2): TJ Cottle to Master Cottle, The Revd J Beesly, Westbury, Wiltshire, 10 December 1823

³²⁷ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 19 November 1823

³²⁸ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 11 December 1823 and 15 January 1824

³²⁹ UKNA, BT 107/484 and PP, LB 58: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 16 January 1824

³³⁰ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 19 April 1824

³³¹ PP, LB 58: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 March 1825

is very likely that these were deliberate, subversive acts. Although temporarily disrupted, the transportation of sugar did, however, soon continue. A member of the Huggins family acquired a new drougher, the *Esther Maria*, and took advantage of the monopoly by charging a hefty three dollars per hogshead.³³³

In August 1823, a general strike among enslaved people in Demerara (Guyana) turned into a rebellion. An estimated 11,000 to 13,000 took part; 250 lost their lives.³³⁴ This rattled the planters in Nevis. The Legislature discussed getting the island's stock of armaments in order, buying gunpowder, applying to the Governor for more troops, ordering managers and overseers to search the negro houses for fire arms and confiscate them.³³⁵ John Colhoun Mills blamed the abolitionists: 'The Saints I do not expect will be satisfied till all our throats are cut.'³³⁶ The British public, however, reacted differently. They were outraged at the sentencing to death of an alleged ringleader, Revd John Smith of the London Missionary Society.³³⁷ The debate about the future of colonial slavery was entering a new phase, and news of both the rebellion in Demerara and the debates in the British Parliament may well have spurred further resistance in Nevis.

The new developments in Britain began with the founding of what became known as the Anti-Slavery Society, although its proper title, which neatly encompassed its aims, was the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery.³³⁸ Members of the Society, however, represented a wide spectrum of anti-slavery views. Some advocated the gradual ending while others, such as Joseph Sturge, campaigned for an immediate end.

One of the Society's founding members was Thomas Fowell Buxton, an active member of the African Institution that had publicised Edward Huggins's floggings. Following Wilberforce's retirement, Buxton had taken over the role of anti-slavery leader. He began a Parliamentary campaign by putting the following motion to the House of Commons: 'That the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British colonies'. Buxton proposed that after a certain date all children born enslaved should be free. Those who were enslaved already should be able to purchase their freedom. If that plan was adopted, he claimed, slavery 'will subside; it will decline; it will expire; it will, as it were, burn itself down into its socket and go

The fact that several droughers were taken out of action around the same time does strongly suggest sabotage although, in the case of the *Prospect*, it is also possible that the loss was caused by an inexperienced master. He had taken over only recently; the previous master had drowned at the end of 1823 (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 31 December 1823 and 23 January 1824). That man, too, had not been in service long (since October 1820) and he, too, had replaced a captain who had died (NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825).

Another vessel was lost in 1824, in addition to the *Thomas* and the *Prospect*: the longboat, or launch, from Captain Fox's *Margaret*. This certainly was not sabotage; the *Margaret* went down in a gale. Four young men died (LB 58: Moses Fox, Nevis, to PA & Co, 9 March 1824). Probably in September William Keepe, the Deputy Provost Marshal, also lost his vessel, the sloop *Matilda* (UKNA, BT 107/484).

Even before these vessels were lost, the House was puzzled by the number of craft that perished and attributed some of the losses to failure by the captains and their crews: 'We cannot but think from the frequency of these accidents that in many instances it is the effect of intoxication and neglect.' (LB 57: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 6 April 1824)

³³² RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 21 April 1824

³³³ PP, LB 58: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 March 1825

Edward Huggins's *Esther Maria* was built in Bermuda and Charles Smith her captain. The vessel was registered in Nevis on 24 August 1824 (UKNA, BT 107/484).

³³⁴ <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/reantisavery.htm>

³³⁵ NHCS, RG 1.23 Nevis Council Minutes 1823-1827: 15 and 24 Sept 1823

³³⁶ PP, LB 56: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 1 October 1823

³³⁷ Revd John Smith was charged with inciting the rebellion, put on trial, convicted and sentenced to death by hanging. The sentence was referred to the British Government for ratification and while awaiting the decision, in February 1824 Revd Smith died in jail from an illness. An excellent book by Emilia Viotti da Costa tells the full story: *Crowns of Glory, Fears of Blood, The Demerara Rebellion of 1823* Oxford University Press, USA 1997.

³³⁸ Blouet, Olwyn M 'Earning and Learning' p392

out.³³⁹ Under Buxton's scheme it would have perhaps taken half a century for slavery to burn itself out, and Buxton withdrew his proposal when the government introduced an even more gradual proposal designed to protect the planters' interest. George Canning, the Foreign Secretary, summed up the position: 'The question to be decided is, how civil rights, moral improvements and general happiness are to be communicated to the overwhelming multitude of slaves, with safety to the lives and security to the interests of the white population, our fellow-subjects and fellow citizens.' Trying to balance the planters' interests with those of the enslaved people, the aims were to improve conditions and to prepare people for freedom. Canning drew up three general resolutions to that effect. Firstly, moral and religious instruction were to be the basis for emancipation; secondly, laws or customs perceived as preventing enslaved people from becoming more civilised were to be abolished; thirdly, they should be able to buy their freedom and to finance this from wages earned from extra time worked. Through these measures, it was hoped, slavery would eventually disappear. Without having to pass any new laws, the full programme could be put in motion in one of the Crown colonies, Trinidad, but other colonies had to pass their own legislation.³⁴⁰ West Indian legislatures were urged to initiate reforms and, for instance, encourage religious instruction, allow marriage, admit enslaved people's evidence in courts and allow them to hold property.³⁴¹

The response in Nevis was mixed. Planters like Magnus Morton were alarmed by what was going on in the British Parliament, fearing that talk of 'rights and privileges' would stoke unrest. It might spark another rebellion 'lest the minds of the negroes should become inflamed from the nature of the late debate'. Morton feared the worst - people would be 'goaded on ... by the artful misrepresentation of the Abolitionists'. While discrediting those opposed to slavery, he claimed that the Legislature 'pledged itself to go as far, nay even further than the resolution submitted to Parliament.'³⁴² Peter Thomas Huggins was 'astonished' at Buxton's motion to take away estates without compensation, but regarding the other points, his response was more sanguine than Morton's. Huggins agreed with the underlying principle of preparing people for freedom. He, too, saw 'religious and moral education ... as foundation of emancipation, upon which the rights and responsibilities of freedom could be grafted', and he agreed that baptisms and marriages were to be encouraged but hoped that the Anglican Church, rather than Nonconformists, would spearhead the Christianisation and 'civilization mission'.³⁴³ His brother-in-law was then in the process of erecting a chapel on his Round Hill estate, and the idea of building his own chapel was taking root. If enslaved people were to receive religious instruction, then he wanted to control who instructed them and what they were being taught. While accepting that people needed to prepare for freedom, Peter Thomas Huggins was 'alarmed' by the 'proceedings in regard to the abolition of slavery'. Fearing that slavery may come to an end he decided against buying the neighbouring estate, Parris's (alias Black Rock). After James Parris's mortgage had become overdue,³⁴⁴ the House had started to cast around for a buyer of his estate. Huggins declined. In his view Parris wanted too much for his estate,³⁴⁵ and in any case, his neighbour was unreliable³⁴⁶ and the 'most unpleasant man to be connected with'.³⁴⁷

³³⁹ <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/reantislavery.htm>

³⁴⁰ Blouet, Olwyn M 'Earning and Learning' pp392-94, quoting Parliamentary Papers XX, 1-655

³⁴¹ UKNA, CO 111/60 Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter No 11 (30 April 1826) pp129-30

In Nevis the Legislature passed the Act which encompassed the required conditions at the end of April 1826 and in October 1828 added a series of bills for the 'protection and government of slaves'. These provided guardians of slaves, admitted enslaved people's evidence with certain restrictions, legalised their marriages, regulated Sunday markets and prohibited employing them on Sundays 'in any kind of labour, excepting domestic affairs'. It allowed them to 'acquire, possess and alienate property'. Acts VI and VII stipulated that they were not to be separated from close family members and, in cases of manumissions, made the slaveholders responsible for their upkeep. Many of these provisions just enshrined in law what, by then, had already been custom and practice (*An Abstract of the British West Indian Statutes for the Protection and Government of Slaves* London 1830).

³⁴² PP, LB 56: Magnus Morton, Nevis, to PA & Co, 10 July 1823

³⁴³ PP, LB 56: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 11 July 1823

³⁴⁴ PP, Dom Box C1-6: James Parris, Nevis, to Charles Pinney, Nevis, 14 April 1820

³⁴⁵ PP, LB 56: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 July 1823

³⁴⁶ PP, Dom Box C1-6: RE Case, Bristol, to Charles Pinney, 15 September 1820

Instead, and despite his fears about slavery ending, in no time Huggins acquired another estate. He bought neighbouring Scarborough's. Absentee-owned for many years and suffering from long-term under-funding, it had been mortgaged to a London merchant house.³⁴⁸

Dry weather between January and May 1823 resulted in another short crop,³⁴⁹ and then the dry spell was followed by constant rain. The wet weather brought sickness to the island. Contrary to expectations, the Christmas holidays of 1823 'passed very quietly' and with some surprise the Pinney attorney reported that 'the negroes behave astonishingly well'.³⁵⁰ But in the island unrest was in the air. Escapes and thefts increased. On nearby Ward's estate, six, or even as many as nine people went absent at one time, came back, then nine went away for another two or three days. Things came to a head when one woman, Bitchey, disobeyed the drivers' orders. The manager, Thomas Hodson, took his anger out on her and, claiming he 'needed to set an example',³⁵¹ Hodson confined Bitchey to the stocks for a whole weekend. She was handcuffed and left without food. On Stoney Grove – mismanaged, under-funded for years and heavily mortgaged to the House - too few food crops were grown³⁵² and people suffered badly. One young man in his early twenties, Pompey, stole three goats and a sheep and then gave up on life and cut his own throat.³⁵³ Freed people suffered their share of thefts; the fishmongers John Johnson, John Stanley and Primus Alvarez found their fish pots and turtle nets 'constantly robbed'.³⁵⁴

To feed the people on Mountravers Huggins had to buy meal, and to avoid drawing bills he paid for it in sugar. This, he wrote, was something he had never done before in all his life. Meanwhile the profit margins were shrinking. Rum and molasses sold at no more than 20 dollars a puncheon when it used to fetch as much as £20 to £30.³⁵⁵ The late canes were 'very bad', too,³⁵⁶ and there followed another long 'very dry' spell. A fire at St Thomas Lowland in February 1825³⁵⁷ may have been caused by the drought but it may well have been a deliberate act of sabotage. In May Peter Thomas Huggins reported that, again, there was little to harvest at Mountravers.³⁵⁸ Just then the Lord Bishop of Barbados and the

³⁴⁷ PP, Dom Box I i-5: Charles Pinney, St Croix, to JF Pinney, 6 June 1820

³⁴⁸ Soon after his father had acquired Mountravers, Peter Thomas Huggins tried to buy Scarborough's. John Latoysonosere Scarborough's only son and heir, William, died in 1809 and the estate passed to his widow and their under-age son. Huggins knew that the estate was heavily mortgaged and hoped to get it at a reasonably low price. His offer was rejected by Mrs Scarborough's attorney, Walter Maynard. Referring to a letter of December 1810, Thomas Latham, to whom Scarborough's was mortgaged, wrote that Maynard's decision was wrong and, because of the mounting debt, Latham threatened to stop supplying the estate further. Although Maynard had decided not to sell, Latham continued negotiations with Peter Thomas Huggins until Huggins's father, old Edward Huggins, who was Latham's attorney, was 'unwarrantably attacked by Mr Walter Maynard'. Peter Thomas Huggins, 'in consequence of the affront to his father', withdrew from the negotiations (DALSS, 337 add 3/1/8/1 2 of 2 (Box 25): Thomas Latham, London, to Mrs Scarborough, Colyton, 4 June 1813, and Thomas Latham, London, to Mrs Scarborough, 5 April 1817). In 1820 Walter Maynard was said to have bought the estate (PP, LB 27: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 7 October 1820), but that deal fell through and after renting Scarborough's for a year, a partnership of William and Samuel Laurence and Magnus Morton bought the plantation (337 add 3/1/8/2 (Box 25)). The Lathams still held a mortgage on Scarborough's and they, the partnership and others, sold the estate to Peter Thomas Huggins. This sale is confirmed by a document lodged in the Nevis Court House (ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829, ff557-80) which states that the agreement was made on 4 February 1823 and entered on 16 June 1825. However, the plantation appears to have been run by Peter Thomas Huggins from as early as 1822 when in that year's slave register the people were recorded as 'late belonging to and in the lawful possession of the heirs of William Scarborough but now of Peter Thomas Huggins'. Elsewhere the document stated that the people were 'actually belonging to or now in the possession of PT Huggins'. By 1825 only Huggins was mentioned (UKNA, T 71/365 and T 71/366).

³⁴⁹ PP, LB 56: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 5 May 1823

³⁵⁰ PP, LB 58: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 15 January 1824

³⁵¹ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton pp316-17

³⁵² Locally-grown food was not only available when needed but, when sugar prices were low, it was also cheaper than imported provisions. Realising this, Mary Ames later asked for a plan for planting crops on Stoney Grove to support feeding the people there at no expense (PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mary Ames to Charles Pinney, 20 August 1828).

³⁵³ PP, WI Box 1823-1825: Accounts Stoney Grove Estate 1824 J Webbe Daniell's a/c

³⁵⁴ UKNA, CO 186/12: 27 January 1825

³⁵⁵ PP, LB 58: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 8 March 1824

³⁵⁶ PP, LB 58: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 7 August 1824

³⁵⁷ There may well have been other incidents of arson. Walter Lewis Bucke recorded on 31 March 1819 'B Claxton's horses burnt', on 30 June 1821 'Nancy's kitchen burnt' and on 5 and 6 December 1821 'Clarke's cane heap burnt' (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)).

³⁵⁸ PP, LB 58: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 28 May 1825

Leeward Islands, William Hart Coleridge, and his nephew Henry Nelson Coleridge arrived in Nevis for a brief visit.³⁵⁹ The Bishop came to consecrate the Cottle chapel at Round Hill. Their stay provided everyone with a diversion during a difficult time. As was customary on such occasions, public entertainment was laid on, this time organised by a Mrs Bligh and Mary Gardner.³⁶⁰ The Coleridges enjoyed Mr Cottle's hospitality, learning to eat guava jelly the West Indian way (with Madeira wine) and feasting on the 'most ambrosial' pines and oranges.³⁶¹

The visitors left on 28 May, just missing by days a flood 'from the mountains'. This deluge was followed by a 'severe gale' a month later. While some ships rode out the storm at sea,³⁶² others were driven ashore, and powerful winds injured many windmills and old canes.³⁶³ As a result of 'incessant rains' that started in September³⁶⁴ the 'Great Flood' at the beginning of November caused further damage on land.³⁶⁵ The rain lasted until January the following year³⁶⁶ and brought with it another 'very sickly' season. Many people died from fevers,³⁶⁷ and even when the weather turned 'favourable', the fevers prevailed among the enslaved people. For John Colhoun Mills, a man in his eighties, this was another first: 'I never knew so many sick since I have lived in Nevis.'³⁶⁸ He wrote this in February 1826; by April a 'violent influenza' had gripped the island. On some estates it laid down so many people that work stopped altogether;³⁶⁹ on others the flu only affected a sizeable proportion. On George Clarke Forbes's Bush Hill, for instance, as many as a fifth of the people had to stay in the sick house. And then chicken pox replaced the flu,³⁷⁰ and if that was not enough, on 24 April 1826, in the middle of the night an earthquake jolted everyone awake.³⁷¹ The earthquake was followed by ten months of drought,³⁷² and sickness was followed by more unrest. In April 1826 the Council wanted a 'detachment of troops to be sent to this island',³⁷³ and in mid-July William Keepe, the Director of Police, pleaded with the Legislature to employ more police officers. In a letter outlining 'the insubordinate disposition of the slaves and the lower classes of the free people of colour of Charlestown' he told of their attacks on him. United, enslaved and free people had rioted during the previous two or three weeks, and when Keepe tried to disperse a crowd armed with sticks and stones, they had turned on him. He had been struck with stones. The violence was particularly fierce one Wednesday night when people set alight a cane piece on Ward's Estate. The field lay just above Charlestown and the wind carried the fire towards town, threatening to destroy everything in its path.³⁷⁴ Around that time parties of thirty to forty people took to raiding vessels anchoring off-shore, and in Charlestown robbers waylaid their victims in Chapel Alley.³⁷⁵ On Stoney Grove the thefts continued and several people ended up in chains and clogs. The blacksmith was kept busy adding link chains, and

³⁵⁹ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 26-28 May 1825; also PP, LB 58: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 26 May 1825

³⁶⁰ When a bill for NE45 for the Coleridges' entertainment was presented to the Assembly, it turned out that Mrs Bligh and Mary Gardner did not have prior approval to spend this money but the sum was allowed in full (UKNA, CO 186/12: 21 July 1825).

³⁶¹ Coleridge, Henry Nelson *Six Months in the West Indies* p185

³⁶² RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 2 June 1825 and 26 July 1825

³⁶³ PP, LB 58: Samuel Laurence, Nevis, to PA & Co, 30 July 1825

³⁶⁴ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 January 1826

³⁶⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 7 November 1825

³⁶⁶ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 January 1826

³⁶⁷ PP, LB 60: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 January 1826

³⁶⁸ PP, LB 60: JC Mills to PA & Co, 10 February 1826

³⁶⁹ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 17 April 1826

John Colhoun Mills died in December 1827 on his way from Nevis to England (PP, Dom Box C2-13: RE Case to Charles Pinney: 23 August 1828; also memorial tablet in St John Figtree church). After his death, Charles Pinney, during his visit to Nevis, discovered that as their attorney Mills had fleeced the House for many years. Pinney, was shocked: 'what plunder ... such a burthen of roguery' (Dom Box C2-13: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to P & C 19 September 1828).

³⁷⁰ PP, LB 60: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 22 April 1826

³⁷¹ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

³⁷² PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 5 March 1827

³⁷³ UKNA, CO 186/13: 6 April 1826

³⁷⁴ UKNA, CO 186/13: 15 July 1826

³⁷⁵ UKNA, CO 186/13: 20 July 1826

putting on and taking off convict clogs.³⁷⁶ People also sabotaged the cattle they worked with and two animals, Priviledge and Tippoo, died from an 'abcess which broke internally occasioned by blows'.³⁷⁷ Another hurricane occurred in September 1826 - ships arrived back in Bristol damaged –³⁷⁸ and in the same month two enslaved people were said to have burgled shop premises in Charlestown which belonged to a free woman, the recently widowed Elizabeth Jones.³⁷⁹ Also in September the 13-year-old domestic Harriet Knight, having rebuffed her master's unwanted sexual advances, set 'an example of insubordination to the slaves' by refusing to work.³⁸⁰

Towards the end of 1826 a rare phenomenon, a waterspout, buried the St Thomas Lowland side of the central mountain in water. The parched earth could not absorb the deluge and Peter Thomas Huggins told his correspondents in Bristol: 'The wash from the waterspout has nearly ruined me.'³⁸¹ At least the enslaved people's provision grounds were on higher ground but, following the drought and the waterspout, the crop was 'wretched',³⁸² with Mountravers and Scarborough's making hardly more than 70 hogsheads.³⁸³ For the past two years the sugars had sold to a depressed market³⁸⁴ and little was expected from the 1827 crop. One planter said that it was the worst since the beginning of the century,³⁸⁵ and Peter Thomas Huggins went so far as to say that it was the 'worst crops' he could 'ever remember'.³⁸⁶ All over the island crops failed.³⁸⁷ To make up for the shortfall, in the previous year Peter Thomas Huggins had sent 1,848 coconuts to Bristol. They sold for £16,³⁸⁸ but when he sent another 2,437 in the following year, many of them were bad. The ten hogsheads of sugar were no better: 'out of condition and not well cured'.³⁸⁹

Although a small cane harvest meant less work for the enslaved people, it also meant that planters would get less credit to buy provisions, and if the crop failure was caused by severe weather, then that also affected the crops in the gardens and provision grounds. In times of economic distress the enslaved people owned by the poor always had hanging over them the threat of being seized for debts and being taken to auction, and during the five years leading up to 1825 47 individuals were sold at public auction. In the mid-1820s one in eight white inhabitants in Nevis were said to have been paupers (115 out of about 800), but only 14 free black or mixed-race people out of a population of about 1,800 were classed as poor.³⁹⁰ They had either slipped through the net, or they had better mechanisms in place for coping with poverty: family support, or a drive to be self-sufficient, coupled with ingenuity to scrape a living and a willingness to make do with little.

Everyone suffered when in 1827 Nevis was once again 'visited with a most malignant fever'. It 'swept off persons of all ages and colour'.³⁹¹ The fear of ill health added urgency to people's attempts to escape off the island. Some succeeded, others did not. Four individuals who used to belong to the free sambo woman Martha Fox made it: a woman called Maria absconded with her two children, Lockett and Charles,

³⁷⁶ PP, WI Box 1823-1825: Accounts Stoney Grove Estate 1825 Estate of John Mills dec'd a/c

³⁷⁷ PP, WI Box 1826-1828

³⁷⁸ PP, LB 28: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, 3 November 1826

³⁷⁹ UKNA, CO 186/13: 19 October 1826

³⁸⁰ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p313, p319 and p322, and UKNA, T 71/364

³⁸¹ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 5 March 1827

³⁸² PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 5 March 1827

³⁸³ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 1 June 1827

³⁸⁴ PP, LB 59: PA & Co to PT Huggins, 7 November 1825, and LB 59: PA & Co to GC Forbes, Nevis, 2 August 1826

³⁸⁵ PP, LB 60: Walter Bucke, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 June 1827

³⁸⁶ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 4 September 1827

³⁸⁷ PP, LB 60: JC Mills to PA & Co, 15 March 1827

³⁸⁸ PP, LB 59: PA & Co to PT Huggins, 14 December 1826

³⁸⁹ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to PT Huggins, 18 July 1827

³⁹⁰ UKNA, CO 111/60 Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter No 19 (31 December 1826) p281 and p278

³⁹¹ PP, LB 61: Robert Russell, Falmouth to PA & Co, 7 February 1827

and Henry 'was driven out to sea in a small vessel, picked up by an American vessel and carried to America where he has since remained.' Another, the 15-year-old Reuben, was not so lucky. He drowned.³⁹² Throughout the year incidents took place in several parishes, and just about every month someone or something came to grief. A man called Frank Moore from Hamilton's Estate was hanged in May,³⁹³ Harry Juba from Cane Garden was hanged for burglary a month later,³⁹⁴ and in August another hurricane hit Nevis. For Peter Thomas Huggins this one was among 'the severest gales of wind' he had seen³⁹⁵ and it caused considerable damage throughout the island.³⁹⁶ While everyone was clearing up and trying to get back to normal, a gang ran away from Bowrin's estate.³⁹⁷ In September the works at Clarke's burnt, and in the same month the police took up several people from Stoney Grove. Charles Pinney was in Nevis then and had doled out extra food for good behaviour but the Stoney Grove crowd was not bought off that easily.³⁹⁸ Towards the end of November, when the island was settling down again, another earthquake terrified everyone.³⁹⁹

In the following year disorder in the streets and alleys in Charlestown caused alarm,⁴⁰⁰ and several other events occurred that hint at violent times: Dr Robert Caines beat to death an enslaved man, George Browne,⁴⁰¹ another enslaved man called Constant Hancock faced trial on a 'felony charge'⁴⁰² and over three days 28 pirates were executed in St Kitts.⁴⁰³ (Although said to have been pirates, these people could have been abscondee who had taken to the seas.) At the end of the year several arsonists set alight the boiling house at Richmond Lodge. It burnt down.⁴⁰⁴ The men responsible went underground and remained in hiding until at least the summer of 1829. Three others unconnected with this particular event were also on the run; two of them were under sentence of death and the other was sought for attempting to poison a family.⁴⁰⁵ And then another fire occurred - this time at Peter Thomas Huggins's Scarborough's Estate.⁴⁰⁶ It may or may not have been arson; the fire happened during another 'long continued spell of dry weather' when the land was terribly parched. The lack of rain threatened to shorten the current crop and injure the next one.⁴⁰⁷

Added to the drought was 'a cruel blight' that destroyed all orange and lime trees.⁴⁰⁸ These would have included the lemons that JPP had wanted planted around the negro houses and the oranges that a visitor to Mountravers at the turn of the century had so admired. Henry Nelson Coleridge, too, had been impressed by the fruit in Nevis. To him, the finest oranges in all the islands were 'without doubt' those he

³⁹² UKNA, T 71/367 f53

³⁹³ Frank Moore was convicted and sentenced on 14 and 17 May and hanged on the 28th (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)). On 19 June 1827 Robert Claxton was allowed N£100 compensation for Frank Moore (UKNA, CO 186/13).

³⁹⁴ UKNA, T 71/367 f36

On 26 and 29 May 1827 Harry Juba was tried and convicted; he was hanged on 22 June 1827 (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)).

³⁹⁵ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 4 September 1827

³⁹⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke: 17 August 1827

³⁹⁷ UKNA, CO 186/13: 25 August 1827

³⁹⁸ PP, WI Box 1826-1828: Accounts Stoney Grove Estate 1828 Charles Pinney's a/c

On St Kitts Charles Pinney, had to deal with problems on West Farm. When the people there heard he was going to sell the plantation, they took to the Mountain 'in a body' (PP, WI Box O: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 11 June 1828).

³⁹⁹ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 30 November 1827

⁴⁰⁰ UKNA, CO 186/13: 29 April 1828

⁴⁰¹ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p313 and UKNA, CO 186/13: 29 April and 27 September 1828

⁴⁰² PP, WI Box O-3/2: Charles Pinney, to President Daniel, 5 September 1828

⁴⁰³ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 27, 29 and 30 September 1828

⁴⁰⁴ UKNA, CO 186/13: 26 December 1828

⁴⁰⁵ UKNA, CO 186/13: 26 June 1829

⁴⁰⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 25 March 1829

⁴⁰⁷ PP, Dom Box L2-28: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 16 April 1829

⁴⁰⁸ PP, Dom Box I i-11 Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs P, undated but 1829/30

had found in St Kitts, Nevis and Montserrat.⁴⁰⁹ Now a disease had killed all the trees. Charles Pinney was shocked; many times he must have heard his family talk of the abundance of fruit in Nevis.⁴¹⁰

He was also alarmed by the continuing thefts of fish pots, and at one of the meetings of the Legislature he called for improved policing. In an effort to stop people robbing the fish pots he moved a motion for the 'better regulation' of canoes, porters, and boatmen.⁴¹¹ In the past almost all property in the island had belonged to white people but a rising class of property-owning free people was emerging, and white people were concerning themselves with protecting their property, too. These property owners had common cause against the enslaved people as well as those freed people whom William Keepe called 'the lower classes of the free people of colour'. Just as the Legislature would financially compensate whites for their losses, so did it pay compensation to a burgled free mixed-race shopkeeper, the widow Mrs Jones, and also put up a reward for catching the arsonists who had burnt down the boiling house at Richmond Lodge. This was in possession of a mixed-race man but when it came to protecting property colour did not matter. The sums were substantial and no less than those granted to a white person: \$200 and N£100 respectively.⁴¹² While supporting these property-owning free mixed-race people, the Legislature did refuse a request from a white fellow planter. He had asked for the public to pay for free men and hunters to catch the gang that had run away from Bowrin's Estate but the Legislature concluded that this was a straightforward plantation matter and not a criminal case. Public funds, therefore, were not made available.⁴¹³

The year 1829 was an *annus horribilis* for the Huggins family. It began in March with the fire on Scarborough's plantation which Peter Thomas Huggins had purchased not long before and continued with the death of his 74-year-old father. 'Old Mr Huggins' was killed by a fall from his chaise on 3 June 1829. He was buried in St George's Gingerland. A memorial inscription which can still be seen states that he was 'beloved and deeply lamented by all his family and friends',⁴¹⁴ but most likely, not by his people. Huggins, blind for years, had already survived several attempts on his life and this raises the question: did he fall, or was he pushed?

Not long after Edward Huggins senior died, Thomas Hurman, the 31-year-old manager on the Indian Castle estate, was murdered. The owner, Edward Huggins junior, it was noted, personally assisted the magistrates with 'promptness and energy' in bringing 'the principal perpetrators' to justice,⁴¹⁵ and just over two weeks after Hurman's murder four men were tried and condemned to death. They were hanged on 29 August: Will, Bob, Joe and Stirling.⁴¹⁶ Hangings were intended not only as punishment but also as a deterrent by connecting the death of the criminal with the notion of disgrace.⁴¹⁷ These executions were designed as a public spectacle and they drew large crowds. And whenever large crowds gathered there was potential that this could spark a riot and, this being a sensitive time, a militia company stood on guard when the men were executed in Webbe's pasture.⁴¹⁸

⁴⁰⁹ Coleridge, Henry Nelson *Six Months in the West Indies* p184

⁴¹⁰ PP, Dom Box I i-11: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs P, undated but 1829/30

⁴¹¹ UKNA, CO 186/13: 26 June 1829 and 27 August 1829

⁴¹² UKNA, CO 186/13: 19 October 1826 and 26 December 1828

⁴¹³ UKNA, CO 186/13: 27 August 1827

⁴¹⁴ Small, David 'Edward Huggins (?1755-1829)' in *Oxford DNB*; RHL, Box MSS. W. Ind. S. 24 (a) Diary of Walter Lewis Bucke and memorial in St George's Church, Gingerland

⁴¹⁵ UKNA, CO 186/13: 27 August 1829

⁴¹⁶ Thomas Hurman was buried on 12 August 1829 (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957). The men were executed on 29 August 1829 (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)). Will, Bob and Joe were from Indian Castle but one of the men, Stirling, lived on Huggins's Eden estate in the parish of St James Windward. That others may have been implicated is suggested by the fact that four men absconded from Indian Castle: Cuffy, Jack Jones, John Williams and James (UKNA, T 71/368).

⁴¹⁷ Rule, John *Albion's People: English Society 1714-1815* p240

⁴¹⁸ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke

Edward Huggins junior had so fervently exerted himself trying to find Hurman's killers that some people sought revenge for his zeal, and three months after the executions he was assaulted. He was waylaid and attacked on his road from the Indian Castle Estate near the very spot where his manager had been found murdered. A negro man called Jack Jones was suspected 'with others in a plot to destroy' Huggins. Jack Jones fled and Charles Pinney tabled a motion in the Legislature to offer a reward of \$20 for his capture.⁴¹⁹ As to the men tried and executed for Hurman's murder, Edward Huggins junior received compensation of their appraised value. This amounted to N£480, and the Treasury also reimbursed him the fees he had advanced for the men's defence counsellor.⁴²⁰

Times were such that every white person was alert to anything suspicious. When very early one morning, at about 4 o'clock, several black people went through the market place carrying 'perhaps two boards each', they attracted the attention of the planter Edward Thomas Wolfe. He had just landed at Charlestown and when he saw the people at the corner of the Old Custom House, he made a point of watching them from Mrs Smith's house. He observed how they made off with the timber and, worried that he had witnessed a theft, Wolfe reported the incident to the authorities.⁴²¹ It was a job for the newly-formed police force.

Law and order, justice and injustice

Since the beginning of plantation slavery, the punishing of enslaved people had been almost entirely in the hands of planters, their managers and their attorneys. These men, and sometimes women, were judge and jury rolled into one. Devoid of cultural sensitivity, they decided what punishment to impose. They had at their disposal a range of equipment and measures: clogs, neck locks, feet stocks and hand stocks (preferred by Peter Thomas Huggins for persistent offenders), chains and shackles. They could deny food and privileges, whip, imprison and banish people. Plantations were very much self-contained units, with few external checks and balances. Enslaved people could not give evidence against whites and so any brutal punishment they received could and, mostly, did go unpunished. They had no access to independent counsel, and their only hope for defence lay in approaching a sympathetic planter who would intervene and plead on their behalf. If a master or mistress was lenient or pardoned the offender, this only reinforced the enslaved person's dependent relationship and the underlying paternalist nature of slavery. On the plantations this system of justice continued right up to Emancipation although two major changes did occur: abused individuals could approach a magistrate, and they could give evidence in Court - first to testify against free black and mixed-race people and then in certain cases also against white people.⁴²² In the island at large other developments were taking place. The period before slavery ended saw a growing concern for prison conditions and the emergence of a professional police force that included free mixed-race people. While most British colonies developed their professional police forces in the post-emancipation period,⁴²³ Nevis began to establish one in the 1820s.

Not long after Edward Huggins's acquittal in 1810, the first steps had been set in motion that heralded the beginnings of a changing island-wide judicial system: the Legislature appointed a new law officer,

⁴¹⁹ UKNA, CO 186/13: 26 November 1829

⁴²⁰ UKNA, CO 186/14: 5 May 1831 and 16 June 1831

⁴²¹ UKNA, CO 186/13: 18 September 1829

⁴²² In British military courts in the West Indies testimony given by enslaved people became admissible in 1809 in cases where active servicemen stood accused of offences such as rape, treason or murder. As the historian Buckley wrote: 'The colonists must have thought the sky was falling in on them when they heard that slaves, who they understood to be less than human, were permitted to testify at a white man's court' (Buckley, RN *The British Army* pp197-99, citing RN Buckley *The Admission of Slave Testimony at British Military Courts in the West Indies 1800-1809* pp93-112).

⁴²³ Higman, BW *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p229

engaged a mason to build a new jail and sanctioned the building of a new Court House.⁴²⁴ At that time people in Britain were agitating for more humane treatment of prisoners and raised questions about the brutal punishment in the army,⁴²⁵ but it appears that in Nevis the underlying reason for seeking improvements to the legal system came from the whites' sense of feeling beleaguered. In the previous decade the colonies had to accept Metropolitan demands for change; they had been forced to adopt melioration measures and they had lost the argument over the rights and wrongs of the trade in enslaved Africans. They were turning inwards, trying to exert control wherever they could. With Britain watching, they had to walk a tightrope - on the one hand attempting to mollify Metropolitan abolitionists, while on the other trying to take measures that would calm their own deep-seated fears of rebellion and, at the same time, keeping the enslaved population subjugated.

For over a century whites in Nevis had been outnumbered by enslaved people, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century they were also outnumbered by freed people. There are no statistics of Nevis's free population in the eighteenth century, but one contemporary estimate stated that in 1787 there were 140 'free coloureds' and that by 1805 this had risen by ten individuals. These figures, however, appear unreliable because they do not tally with the official head count taken seven years later. In 1812 there were 600 freed people - four times as many.⁴²⁶ It is evident, though, from the manumission documents in the Common Records that gradually, throughout the eighteenth century, a free population had developed and that right at the end of the century the Melioration Act of 1798 had spurred an unprecedented number of owners into freeing their people. The demographic make-up of the island had shifted.

Population of Nevis, 23 January 1812

| Parish | Enslaved | Free mixed-race and black | Whites |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|------------|
| St Paul's | 1,100 | 285 | 164 |
| St Thomas | 1,810 | 76 | 83 |
| St James | 1,847 | 53 | 67 |
| St George | 2,302 | 124 | 102 |
| St John's | 2,267 | 65 | 85 |
| Total | 9,326 | 603 | 501 |

⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ It appears that an earlier proposal to purchase 'a proper house' in Charlestown 'for a court house and other public offices' either did not progress beyond the appointment of a Committee, or that such a building was found but did not meet the requirements (NHCS, RG 1.12 Council/Assembly Minutes 24 January 1801). Building the new jail was an example of how individuals and the public worked together: members of the Legislature were to provide lime and 'Negro labour' while the mason, Mr Mills, was engaged to carry out the mason's work 'at the customary charge per perch' (UKNA, CO 186/9: 2 October 1810 and 9 February 1811).

⁴²⁵ Dinwiddy, JR 'The Early Nineteenth-Century Campaign against Flogging in the Army' in *The English Historical Review* Vol 97 No 383 (April 1982) p311 and p308

⁴²⁶ Bayley, FWN *Four Years' Residence in the West Indies* London 1830 p683 and p684

According to Bayley, in 1787 the inhabitants of Nevis numbered 1,514 whites, 140 free and 8,420 enslaved people. By 1805 the whites had decreased to 1,300, the free mixed-race community had risen to 150 and the enslaved people had dropped to 8,000. The official figures of January 1812 showed a much smaller white population (501) than that estimated by Bayley, and a much larger number of free inhabitants (603).

⁴²⁷ UKNA, CO 186/9 Legislature's response presented 23 January 1812 in reply to House of Commons request 2 July 1811

The majority of the island's inhabitants, the enslaved people, were still disciplined within the plantation system. To save having to pay jail fees, whenever possible they were locked up in the estate's sick houses, with nurses doubling as jailors. However, if freed people committed crimes this was not an option and they had to be detained somewhere. The public jail was proving insufficient. Repaired in the 1770s after prolonged pressure from the Deputy Provost Marshal,⁴²⁸ by the late 1790s it had again become so neglected and ramshackle that several men managed to escape by cutting holes in walls and floors. The Legislature acknowledged that the prisoners' health was in danger from the 'very filthy' and 'stinking conditions', sacked the Deputy Provost Marshal and agreed to repairs.⁴²⁹ Some years later it had again fallen into disrepair.

The first record of a jail in Nevis dates to the late 1600s when the Legislature appointed a joint Committee to choose a suitable room in Charles Fort. Within a month of finding such a room, a black person died in the jail which, when it held a white prisoner, was declared an unfit place 'for imprisoning a Christian'.⁴³⁰ Since then there had always been a public jail (also called the 'common jail'), and at various times some of the Mountravers people had been imprisoned in it. The jail was intended to hold anyone who had committed capital offences, such as murder, and any white, free black and mixed-race criminals, as well as captured escapees, and debtors. Magistrates had no clerks and kept no records, and as yet no pre-nineteenth century statistics about crimes committed and 'convictions, fines or forfeitures' have come to light.⁴³¹

The Legislature sought to exploit the desire for freedom when, for the first time, they actively tried to enlist the help of enslaved people to catch a man on the run. A reward of 50 Joes was being offered for the seizure of the mulatto Frederick Stead but if an enslaved person handed in the fugitive, the Legislature was to purchase the captor's manumission.⁴³² More than any other measure, this pitted the enslaved against the free. Captivity and possibly death for one meant freedom for the other.

On the day the Legislature announced the search for Frederick Stead, it engaged Horner Jennings as 'Turnkey and Cage Keeper combined'. In addition to his salary, he was provided with accommodation - two rooms.⁴³³ One of Jennings's duties was to enforce the Ticket Act whereby anyone wanting to sell goods had to have written permission from their owners. Another job was as keeper of the key for admitting offenders to the cage. Intended as a warning to others, this public shaming of wrong-doers behind an open-barred enclosure was an important element in the penal system - in Britain as well as in the colonies. To release a person, in Nevis the owner had to pay N6s.⁴³⁴ The Marshal used this money to provide the prisoners' food. Later Horner Jennings was given additional responsibility for searching and seizing smuggled people and goods, and for his off-shore duties he was furnished with a boat and deck hands.⁴³⁵ These measures proved unsuccessful. By 1818, Richard Joseph Brodbelt, who had succeeded his father as Comptroller of Customs,⁴³⁶ alleged that smuggling 'had risen to such a pitch, that the smuggled articles were vending in the public shops.' Even the Chief Judge and members of the Council profited; they bought cornmeal and other illegal imports with 'no officer of customs daring to interfere'. At

⁴²⁸ UKNA, CO 186/4: 3 March 1762 and CO 186/6: 8 July 1774

⁴²⁹ NHCS, RG 1.12 Meeting of Nevis Council, Council and Assembly Minutes 19 September 1799, 28 November 1799, 5 February 1800 and 5 April 1800

⁴³⁰ Extractions from the Calendar of State Papers; Colonial Series 15; America & the West Indies No 1003; May 1696 to October 1697: Minutes of Assembly of Nevis, 8 May 1696, 16 June 1696 and 4 February 1697

⁴³¹ UKNA, CO 186/9 Legislature's response presented 23 January 1812 in reply to House of Commons request 2 July 1811

⁴³² UKNA, CO 186/9: 22 December 1810

⁴³³ UKNA, CO 186/9: 22 December 1810 and 30 April 1811

⁴³⁴ PP, WI Box 1823-1825: Accounts Stoney Grove Estate 1825 JC Mills's a/c

In St Kitts, an enslaved man called Francisco was released on payment of 'cage fees' of 9s currency (Berkshire RO, D/EX292 E1: Ledger of The Hill Estate of John Estridge dec'd 24 June to 31 December 1815: Provost Marshal's a/c).

⁴³⁵ UKNA, CO 186/10: 24 Sep 1812

⁴³⁶ UKNA, CO 186/9: 21 September 1810

night sugar, rum and molasses was being smuggled out of the bays and, so Brodbelt declared, he 'never dared to stir out in the evening for fear of assassination by the smugglers and other persons.' Smuggling had become 'unbound'.⁴³⁷

When the new jail was completed John Dasent Smith was appointed as 'proper Jail Keeper and Marshal's Man', or Deputy Provost Marshal (DPM).⁴³⁸ In addition to being responsible for prisoners, the DPM dealt with defaulting debtors and took over their property (including people) which he sold at public auction.

As if unsure how to divide up the tasks, in the first stages of the new penal system the job titles as well as the duties were somewhat fluid. The Legislature had given Horner Jennings powers to enlarge his position to General Constable or Police Officer ⁴³⁹ but he had not taken this up and a man called William Solis had been engaged as Police Officer. Solis, however, did not do his job properly and was found guilty of 'very great neglect' and, although Horner Jennings had previously been warned 'to exert himself more fully' in his job,⁴⁴⁰ he was appointed in Solis's stead. Solis appears to have been the first police officer who was sacked,⁴⁴¹ and over the next two decades there was little continuity in the force. As soon as a man had established his credentials, he either lost his job or died.

In addition to Horner Jennings a Mr Fox was appointed but he died ⁴⁴² and in December 1821 was replaced by Mr McLean. As Lance Corporal of the 35th Regiment, he had a military background and it looked as if the police force was in experienced hands ⁴⁴³ but McLean died after being in post for only three months.⁴⁴⁴ He was replaced by Thomas Scott who was allowed two Assistant Police Officers. This

⁴³⁷ Richard Joseph Brodbelt had been arrested on an unknown charge and was on 11 May 1816 put in the guard house. On 28 March 1818 Walter Lewis Bucke noted in his diary: 'Richard J Brodholt (sic) Privy Council, 7 April Grand Jury, 5 May Convictions' (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)). It was noted that Brodbelt was convicted at the last Court Kings Bench of 'infamous and disgraceful comings by a Jury of his countrymen' which had made him 'an unfit person to hold a government position' (UKNA, CO 186/11). On 10 June Mr Brodbelt was suspended as 'Comptroller of Customs Nevis' (CO 239/4), and he left for England. From there he wrote to the Earl of Bathurst, telling him that smuggling was rife in Nevis and that the people at the top of the legal system were a hopeless bunch who made 'a mockery of the law'. He probably referred to Chief Judge James Weekes when he wrote that 'The Chief Judge of Kings Bench and Common Pleas is an illiterate man who knows no law', but the other judges - illiterate shopkeepers and planters - were no better. At the bottom of Brodbelt's allegations may have been a falling out with the Collector of Customs, Lockhart Gordon. He said that Gordon, who also happened to be an Assistant Justice of the King's Bench and Common Pleas, was opposed to him (CO 239/4: Richard Brodbelt, London, to Earl of Bathurst, 6 December 1818).

Lockhart Gordon was said to have been implicated in the illegal import of 40 to 50 black people to Nevis in 1814. The Chief Justice had bought them (Ragatz, Lowell Joseph *The Fall of the Planterclass* p388). It is likely that this very operation lay at the bottom of Brodbelt's complaints to Bathurst. After all, he also alleged that laws introduced after the abolition of the slave trade had been abused. This is confirmed by another source which implicates Lockhart Gordon in the illegal importation of Africans and blames the inept Legislature, largely consisting of Edward Huggins and his supporters, for not enforcing the law ('A Review of the Reasons given for establishing a Registry of Slaves in the British Colonies, in a Report of a Committee of the African Institution, entitled "Reasons" &c, &c.', 1815 pp9-10).

While Brodbelt was abroad, Robert Claxton was appointed Acting Comptroller of Customs (CO 186/11: 8 October 1818), but Brodbelt returned to Nevis the following year. He got involved in an altercation with John Huggins, so that a reward of N£100 was offered for apprehending him 'for the daring and wicked outrage committed by him on the person of John Huggins Esq'. He was also to make good damages (CO 186/12: 18 November 1819). By 1821 Robert Claxton had become Comptroller of Custom and Receiver of His Majesty's Casual Revenue (CO 187/3 Blue Book Nevis 1821). Richard Brodbolt (sic) died some time before the end of 1824 (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)). For correspondence about the allegations, see also UKNA, CUST 34/509 (a).

⁴³⁸ UKNA, CO 186/9: 30 April 1811

⁴³⁹ UKNA, CO 186/9: 22 December 1810

⁴⁴⁰ UKNA, CO 186/10: 24 September 1812

⁴⁴¹ UKNA, CO 186/10: 2 February 1815

William Solis survived his dismissal for three years and died in July 1818 (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)).

⁴⁴² The police officer's widow, Mrs Margaret Fox, was seeking to return to England with her infant children and was granted an allowance of a dollar a week and also a small tenement until she could leave the island. Probably unable to raise the fare, Mrs Fox remained in Nevis; she was later in receipt of a paupers' allowance of N5s3d a week (UKNA, CO 186/12: 29 December 1821 and CO 186/14: 2 July 1832). She died in Nevis on 20 September 1832, aged 43 (NHCS, St Paul's Burials, 1825-1837).

⁴⁴³ UKNA, CO 186/12: 12 December 1821

⁴⁴⁴ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 3 March 1822

was a new development. Scott's appointment happened at the end of March 1822⁴⁴⁵ but on 1 June one of the junior officers, James Brander, was dismissed. Declared unfit for duty, he was accused of having committed an unspecified 'outrage' against the Registrar of Slaves, William George Ramus.⁴⁴⁶ Thomas Scott himself lost his job in October owing to 'neglect of duties' and the Assistant Police Officer Mathias Arneman assumed sole charge on double the salary.⁴⁴⁷ In October 1824 Horner Jennings was the fourth policeman to get pushed out of his job. 'Notoriously addicted to strong liquor', he had turned out to be an 'improper person' for the position. It was said that he got 'so offensive in a state of intoxication' that he could not remain in post.⁴⁴⁸ His alcoholism was hardly surprising; sometimes the Treasury paid its public employees – policemen included – part of their salary in rum.⁴⁴⁹

With Jennings gone it was decided that the Deputy Provost Marshal should 'employ any free person of colour he [thought] fit'.⁴⁵⁰ This was the first public statement about including free mixed-race men in an official capacity and a reflection of the changes that had taken place. It appears, however, that no mixed-race men were recruited into the police service because two years on, in 1826, the Director of Police argued that, for a white police force, it was impossible to deal with the current problems and again advocated employing 'established coloured persons' as police officers. He had been attacked trying to disperse a rioting crowd armed with sticks and stones and thought that people would have reacted differently to a mixed-race policeman.⁴⁵¹ The Director of Police was William Keepe, a mason's son, who had been appointed to the post when he was in his late fifties.⁴⁵² Previously employed as the Deputy Provost Marshall, he had owed his appointment to the death of the previous incumbent, George Hobson.⁴⁵³ Hobson had died, aged 45, after serving for just three years,⁴⁵⁴ and he, in turn, had replaced John Dasent Smith who had also only served for three years.⁴⁵⁵

Apart from pressing for the appointment of mixed-race police officers, another change was that the police - a public body - were now also getting involved in plantation matters. Stoney Grove paid several police officers for 'taking up' slaves.⁴⁵⁶ Previously discipline had been an internal matter but now managers, if they so chose, could distance themselves from the process of disciplining people by calling in an outside force.

Two years into the job, the Director of Police William Keepe died, aged sixty.⁴⁵⁷ A new DPM was appointed, a very young man, the planter's son Laurence Nicholson.⁴⁵⁸ He doubled up as Registrar of Slaves⁴⁵⁹ but, for the time being, the post of Director of Police appears to have remained unfilled. Later Josiah Webbe Maynard became Commander of Police.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁴⁵ The Assistant Police Officers were paid N£50 a year each (UKNA, CO 186/12: 28 March 1822). Around the same time George Hobson, the son of the late Deputy Provost Marshal of the same name, was employed at an annual salary of S£40 as Sergeant at Arms (CO 187/3 Blue Book Nevis 1821), and William Keepe, the Director of Police, earned N£225 a year (CO 186/12: 25 April 1825). In 1811 the DPM's salary had been set at N£60 (CO 186/9: 30 April 1811).

⁴⁴⁶ UKNA, CO 186/12: 1 June 1822

⁴⁴⁷ UKNA, CO 186/12: 14 October 1822 and 18 January 1823

⁴⁴⁸ UKNA, CO 186/12: 12 October 1824

⁴⁴⁹ UKNA, CO 186/13 Accounts 1828

⁴⁵⁰ UKNA, CO 186/12: 24 October 1824

⁴⁵¹ UKNA, CO 186/13: 13 September 1826

⁴⁵² UKNA, CO 186/12: 25 April 1825

⁴⁵³ ECSCRN, CR 1814-1817 ff264-65

⁴⁵⁴ NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825 f42

⁴⁵⁵ John Dasent Smith died in January 1814 (NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825 f40)

⁴⁵⁶ PP, WI Box 1826-1828: Accounts Stoney Grove Estate JC Mills's a/c December 1826-14 April 1828, also Charles Pinney's a/c 1828, and WI Box 1829-1836: Accounts Stoney Grove Estate Charles Pinney's a/c

⁴⁵⁷ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 24 June 1827; also NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 187

⁴⁵⁸ UKNA, CO 186/13: 31 December 1827

⁴⁵⁹ UKNA, CO 186/13 Accounts 1828

⁴⁶⁰ UKNA, CO 186/15: 17 March 1836

The first mixed-race man known to have been employed in the penal system was the Goal Serjeant Robert Prescott Browne. A mature man then in his early forties, in 1824 he incurred the DPM's displeasure for not doing his job properly.⁴⁶¹ During Prescott's time the jail had no separate cells but consisted of a room that could contain as many as thirty prisoners.⁴⁶² In Britain, in the 1770s a movement led by the Quaker John Howard had begun to reform the penal system and towards the end of the eighteenth century the open, mixed prisons had been replaced with cells that held individual prisoners.⁴⁶³ Nevis was taking its lead from these improvements, and when the opportunity arose to transform the layout of the prison, separate cells were built. By the 1830s the jail had eleven cells for male and female prisoners.⁴⁶⁴ The opportunity for remodelling had been taken when the jail needed to be repaired. An earthquake and two decades of inclement weather had affected the fabric of the building. Henry Nelson Coleridge had described the old jail as 'another hole', just as the one he had seen in Montserrat – not fit enough to imprison 'a transgressing donkey'.⁴⁶⁵

The other legal institution, the Court House, also required work,⁴⁶⁶ but this issue was raised just when the island was running out of money. The Legislature considered various measures to save money, such as cancelling a subscription to a publication, not engaging an agent in London and reducing poor relief to several people⁴⁶⁷ but despite the shortage of money was forced to invite tenders for the building work.

While the Legislature was considering repairs and improvements to the jail it received two communications from Britain: a questionnaire concerning public health matters, such as inoculations, drawn up by the Royal College of Physicians in London,⁴⁶⁸ and a Circular from Sir George Murray, the Secretary of State for the Colonies.⁴⁶⁹ Entitled 'General Code of Gaol Regulations for the Colonies', it itemised 43 separate points and directed the colonies to observe regulations designed to stamp out sexual abuse, the harassment of inmates and the ill-treatment of enslaved people. For instance, Murray demanded that a jail keeper had to be married and, when visiting female inmates, his wife had to accompany him. Prisons still accommodated escapees and to stop people languishing without their owners knowing of their whereabouts, their names had to be written up in a legible hand and hung outside the gaol. In Britain there was also a growing concern for child welfare, and Murray's Circular stipulated that no individual under the age of six years was to be imprisoned on charges of being a runaway.⁴⁷⁰ To improve the prisoners' moral welfare Revd Humble Leacock had begun visiting inmates but a one-off payment of N£100 for his 'exertions in the jail' came with a warning that in future public expenditure would have to be curtailed.⁴⁷¹

Another sign that things were changing was the treatment of enslaved people under sentence of death. Executions for capital crimes were not automatic anymore and other means of punishment were explored. In the past, rebels or criminals could be sold to other islands, which meant, of course, that families were divided, and to prevent this, legislation had been put in place that banned the sale to other islands. Exiling people was therefore no longer an option. But for Charles Pinney banishment was the preferred method of punishment, and just after the law came into force, he had advised his attorney to

⁴⁶¹ UKNA, CO 186/12: 21 October 1824

⁴⁶² UKNA, CO 187/4 Duplicate Blue Book Nevis 1826

⁴⁶³ Rule, John *Albion's People: English Society 1714-1815* p242

⁴⁶⁴ UKNA, CO 186/15: 17 March 1836

⁴⁶⁵ Coleridge, HT *Six Months in the West Indies* 2nd ed 1826 p190 and p176

⁴⁶⁶ UKNA, CO 186/13: 11 July 1829 and 16 July 1829

⁴⁶⁷ UKNA, CO 186/13: 26 and 29 November 1829

⁴⁶⁸ UKNA, CO 186/13: 28 August 1829

⁴⁶⁹ Williams, Eric (comp and ed) *Documents on British West Indian History* p394 Glossary of Proper Names, and NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p312

⁴⁷⁰ UKNA, CO 186/13: 12 December 1829, Points 4, 13, 34, and 37

⁴⁷¹ UKNA, CO 186/13: 11 April 1829

sell abroad anyone from Stoney Grove who was considered 'incorrigible' and where banishment afforded 'a proper example' to others. Pinney believed that his attorney could easily obtain special dispensation,⁴⁷² but in 1829 he was still trying to find ways of legally banishing enslaved people found 'guilty of crimes that deserved punishment'.⁴⁷³ He introduced a motion to that effect just when several men faced being executed. Ironically, banishment would at least have saved the men's lives. In another case, that of Red William, the Legislature also sought to commute the death sentence to banishment or to hard labour for life,⁴⁷⁴ and in the case of the 'unfortunate criminal' Richard Phibbs the death sentence was to be commuted to a relatively benign six months confinement with 'hard labour in the treadmill of this island'.

The problem was that there was no treadmill in the island. The Assembly wanted one built. The treadmill had been introduced in Britain a decade earlier as a means of employing prisoners usefully although, in reality, stepping around the treadmill for six hours a day was a brutalising, mindless activity that had no reforming value. The contraption, like an over-sized hamster wheel, consisted of a large wooden, hollow cylinder fixed to an iron frame which had a series of steps around the circumference and hand rails for prisoners to steady themselves. Treading caused the mill to revolve and compelled a person to take each step in turn while weights counterbalanced the action and a break regulated the speed. Several prisoners at a time spent 15 minutes on the wheel and then rested for five minutes. In the middle ages blind people had been employed on treadmills which powered cranes for cathedral building, and in British prisons their power was utilised, for instance, for grinding corn. It is quite possible that in Nevis these machines might have been intended as a novel method for grinding cane. As was often the case, the debate in the Legislature dragged on and no decision about building a treadmill was reached but, in any case, Richard Phibbs resolved the issue himself: he broke out of jail and absconded to St Kitts. There, however, he was apprehended and imprisoned again.⁴⁷⁵ After his escape the idea of building a treadmill appears to have been dropped. Later hard labour was often attached to prison sentences.

When Horner Jennings was sacked from his job as police officer, he lost a salary of N£100 a year⁴⁷⁶ and some years later was so hard up that he claimed poor relief. He was allowed N14s a week – about a third of what he used to earn. To keep him occupied and to get something in return for their charity he was 'directed to be vigilant in suppressing in the day time the disorderly practices of the boys and persons in the street and alleys and the bay of the town ...'⁴⁷⁷ The following year his allowance was reduced and the Legislature suggested that he went to board with one of the Miss Frosts.⁴⁷⁸ This was a neat, imaginative arrangement because Ann and Catherine Frost had for years lived on poor relief, and both parties benefited from the boarding arrangement.⁴⁷⁹ A similar private arrangement was found for two 'pauper lunatics', two mentally ill women who were held in prison:⁴⁸⁰ the Legislature accepted William Smith's offer to house them and care for them at public expense.⁴⁸¹

The first attempt at physically separating mentally ill from criminal prisoners and of creating a separate institution was made in 1833: the Legislature decided to build a lunatic asylum within the jail yard.⁴⁸² Just

⁴⁷² PP, LB 28: Charles Pinney, to JC Mills, 13 December 1824

⁴⁷³ UKNA, CO 186/13: 27 August 1829

⁴⁷⁴ UKNA, CO 186/13: 31 January 1829, 22 December 1828, and 26 June 1829

⁴⁷⁵ UKNA, CO 186/13: 22 January 1829, and [no day] 1829

⁴⁷⁶ UKNA, CO 186/10: 2 February 1815

⁴⁷⁷ UKNA, CO 186/13: 29 April 1828

⁴⁷⁸ UKNA, CO 186/13: 29 November 1829 and CO 186/14: 18 July 1830

⁴⁷⁹ UKNA, CO 186/12: 9 December 1824, CO 186/13: 29 November 1829, CO 186/14: 28 March and 2 July 1832, 20 August 1833

⁴⁸⁰ UKNA, CO 186/14: 19 December 1831

The two insane prisoners were Sukey Weekes and Sally Erskine. The former was incarcerated for riotous behaviour in the streets, the latter for exposing herself without clothes in a public place (CO 187/5 Blue Book Nevis 1831).

⁴⁸¹ UKNA, CO 186/14: 16 December 1832

⁴⁸² Mr WM Mills was again employed to build the lunatic asylum. He may have been the same Mr Mills who in 1810 had been given the job of enlarging the jail. Messrs J & L Nicholson stood security for the Mills's tender to repair the jail (UKNA, CO 186/14: 16

as people guilty of minor criminal deeds were disciplined on plantations, 'lunatics' had been looked after on the estates. However, with a growing number of freed people there was a need for public institutions to provide care and containment for the mentally ill, as well as treatment for the physically ill. When the first public hospital in Nevis was built, it was small and badly ventilated but it was, nevertheless, a new community resource.⁴⁸³

In 1823 a seemingly minor incident occurred on Bush Hill plantation that drew attention to a loophole in the legislation in Nevis. In a legal system based on the offenders' and the witnesses' status – free or enslaved – anomalies could occur and one such case involved an African woman. She was not an enslaved person but an 'apprentice' according to the Act of 1807 that had ended Britain's involvement in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. One of its clauses allowed for the capture, seizure and detention of ships trading in African captives, and this woman had been taken from one such vessel. Ships' crews were encouraged by a bounty paid by the British government to watch out for slavers but, rather than return the captives to Africa, they were placed under the protection of civil or military officers. The Africans were enlisted into the British army or the navy, or bound to civilian masters as so-called apprentices. Children and adults alike could be indentured for a maximum of fourteen years. Those who were enlisted to the services were to be treated like regular soldiers or seamen but, unlike regular soldiers and seamen, they were not entitled to any pensions. The interests of Britain – then at war with France - were therefore served by the Act that had enabled Britain's withdrawal from the slave trade.⁴⁸⁴

Those Africans who were apprenticed to civilians were not to be regarded as enslaved, or doing the work of enslaved people. They were supposed to be taught skills and treated in such a way that, at the end of their contracted time, they were capable of supporting themselves. The British Parliament set up an enquiry into these apprenticed Africans and sent commissioners to the colonies to report on the effectiveness of the measures undertaken by the masters. Since 1814 Nevis had received over thirty such 'apprentices'. Most worked on George Clarke Forbes's estate, Bush Hill, four were employed as military labourers at Fort Charles, and three were indentured to individuals.⁴⁸⁵

December 1832). The Legislature allowed Mr Mills £120 for building the asylum (CO 186/14: 3 October 1833, and 12 December 1833).

Some years earlier a Mrs Roper had applied for her 'lunatic' son William to be incarcerated because she had needed a 'safe place of confinement and some maintenance'. She had been granted an allowance of N3s a day. This arrangement had lasted for three months until the Legislature had decided to build a room next to Mrs Roper's house so that her son could benefit from the company of his family while at the same time freeing the jail for criminals and debtors (CO 186/12: 14 May and 16 August 1821). William Roper's case was the first mention of a public provision for a mentally ill person in Nevis.

The establishment of a lunatic asylum in Nevis was not only the result of the growing free population needing institutional care; it was part of a wider process of reforming provisions for the mentally ill. In Britain the first private lunatic asylums had been set up in the mid-eighteenth century but changes had taken place since then – in part spurred on by the illness of 'mad King George'.

⁴⁸³ UKNA, CO 186/14: 6 March 1831

⁴⁸⁴ Wesley, Charles H 'The Neglected Period of Emancipation' pp159-60

⁴⁸⁵ The four 'military labourers' attached to the barracks at Nevis had all been rescued from a Spanish brig, the *Carlos*, and had been indentured at Antigua in April 1814. On 24 August 1817 they were handed over to Quartermaster General's department at Brimstone Hill and from there three were sent to the barracks in Nevis. About one man, Hickes, nothing is known, except that in 1823 he was admitted to the hospital with a fever and that he deserted from there. However, details exist about the other three men. One was a 26-year-old from the Congo region called Green who was employed to cut grass for horses, carry letters and do similar errands. He was said to have been 'a well behaved and sober man'. Another was George Nunn, a 28-year-old 'in good health' who 'conducted himself well'. They received military rations and 3d per day. Later they were joined by Narcisse (whose African name was said to have been Bourbon), a 40-year-old 'very harmless, inoffensive character' in good health. At 5'7" he was slightly taller than the other two who stood 5'6" tall. The Commissioner commented that 'This class of liberated Negroe, being still subject to some degree of military discipline, attend church, although many of them appear never to have been baptised'.

The three people apprenticed to individuals in Nevis were Waanche, whose English name was Diana. Indentured to Miss Jemima Bridgwater and, according to an affidavit sworn by Nancy Bridgwater, Waanche died some time in 1817. Another apprentice was Errauno who was known as George. A 'stout, healthy' 22-year-old man, he stood 5' 6 ½ " tall and had tattooed temples. He was indentured to Francis John Galpine and after working as a domestic he was given up temporarily to Jack Abbott, a free cooper in Charlestown, to learn the trade of cooper. Abbott allowed him to do small work on his own account, and George bought his food and

The case which highlighted the anomaly in the laws of the island concerned Abecu, who was known by her English name, Rebecca. She lived on George Clarke Forbes's Bush Hill. A healthy, active woman aged 23 who stood five foot four inches tall, she was an Ebo woman with tattoos on her temples and between her eyebrows. She was regarded by Forbes as a very good, well behaved domestic servant. That was until another African apprentice accused her of stealing in her master's house. The accuser was Umorin, a 17-year-old known as Mocco George. A mason who grew and sold vegetables, tailored his own clothes and could turn his hand to many household duties, he was thought of as a 'remarkably ingenious sort of person', but Rebecca's accuser was also said to be 'inclined to thieve'. To clear her name and to retain her good character, she was told to go and see two Justices of the Peace. Both worked at the Customs House as the Acting Collector and the Comptroller of Customs. This meant walking from St John Figtree parish to Charlestown. After a hearing that included the master and the accuser Rebecca was acquitted, but she was detained in prison for 24 hours for having absented herself from her master's house. This clearly was intended to intimidate and 'to prevent all future attempts at complaining on the part of these people [African apprentices]'. At other times this would have been the end of the story had not a Mr JP Gunnon and a Mr TH Bowles stayed in the island just then. As Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Captured Africans they were charged with assessing the terms of the Africans' apprenticeships and to enquire into their welfare. Commissioner Gunnon's investigation revealed that Rebecca had, in fact, been tried under legislation applicable to slaves. In the case of free people committing crimes, one witness was sufficient, in the case of enslaved people, this required two people to give evidence. (This was to stop abuses whereby owners used fabricated evidence that would result in the execution of that person and subsequent compensation from public funds.) Because the only witness was her accuser, Rebecca had been acquitted 'for want of sufficient evidence' when in fact one witness should have been sufficient. Not only that, but she had also been committed to prison and Commissioner Gunnon questioned under what colonial law she was imprisoned. The Justices of the Peace justified themselves: Act No 48 authorised them to act against *white* apprentices and they had 'acted from dictates' of their conscience. Robert Claxton and Lockhart Gordon added: 'and by the law of England which we believe to be in force in this country.'⁴⁸⁶ In fact Nevis had no legislation in place that dealt with *black* apprenticed labourers. The last indentures of the African apprentices were due to expire in 1828, and it appears that local laws were not amended to specifically cater for them. The lawmakers were too busy adjusting to the changing circumstances and with framing legislation that applied to the enslaved population.

In 1825 a case against two freed men for the attempted murder of an absconder led to a major change in legislation. The background to this would have been known to everyone: Branch Hull, a mulatto man who belonged to George Webbe,⁴⁸⁷ had accepted the help of two freedmen to assist his escape. John Fletcher and William Arrindell had offered to take him to St Bartholomew's in exchange for two sheep,

clothes out of money he earned as a cooper. According to Jack Abbott, George could 'work pretty well as a cooper'. The apprentices were meant to receive moral and religious education but George, an Ebo, remained unchristened because he refused to attend 'preparatory instructions'. The Commissioners judged George 'of doubtful moral conduct'. Another apprentice, Adea or Adean, was a nine-year-old boy who underwent training as a carpenter. Originally indentured to the Clerk of Customs, John Frederick Bertrand, Adea then appears to have been taken on by Lockhart Gordon, the Collector of Customs. The boy had been seized by Robert Claxton while he was Acting Comptroller of Customs (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, and UKNA, CO 239/4).

⁴⁸⁶ 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

When in the case of Rebecca the Justices of the Peace applied English law, there were echoes here of the accusation by Governor Sir Nathaniel Johnson who observed as far back as 1688 that in Nevis English law was applied selectively and when it suited the needs of the ruling elite (Bridenbaugh & Bridenbaugh *No Peace Beyond the Line* p405).

⁴⁸⁷ PP, LB 54: PA & Co to George Webbe, Southampton, 29 October 1819

one hog and a \$2 fare.⁴⁸⁸ Branch Hull had to be persuaded that they could get him away safely, and by way of testimonial Fletcher told Branch Hull about another of Mr Webbe's men, William Laurence, whom he had assisted in leaving the island and who was now 'making plenty of money'. Hull, sworn to absolute secrecy, on the night of 10 October 1824 hid himself not far from Mountravers, at Black Rock Fort. There he waited for Fletcher and Arrindell. They came on the aptly named *Vigilant*, a vessel that belonged to a free woman, Mary Gardner.⁴⁸⁹ To get away more speedily, Branch Hull assisted in loading boxes of salt fish and other goods into the craft, and the three men set off in the direction of St Bartholomew's. However, between about one and two o'clock in the morning, as they were sailing in the channel between Redonda and Montserrat, Fletcher and Arrindell contrived a situation whereby they could shove Hull into the water and throw him overboard. When he tried to cling to the boat, Fletcher tried to kill him. But Branch Hull had been on guard; the men had behaved suspiciously and 'spoke in a language he did not understand', and to save his life, he pretended that he could not swim. Thinking he would drown in due course, Fletcher and Arrindell sailed off to St Bartholomew's. Branch Hull started to swim back towards Nevis. By nine or ten o'clock the next morning he had made it to within about three miles from the island when he was spotted by a man out fishing. John Wilkinson picked him up⁴⁹⁰ and landed him at Indian Castle.⁴⁹¹ The Legislature offered a reward for the capture of Fletcher and Arrindell. Not long after the incident they were caught in St Bartholomew's. Several people were involved in apprehending them and getting them safely back to Nevis. A Captain La Pompe picked up a reward of \$50 and Captain Robert Reap received N£33 for 'his personal services' and for the hire of his vessel, the *Henry*.⁴⁹² The freedman John Ray, who had gone to St Bartholomew's to fetch the culprits, picked up a reward of \$8 and an additional N£3:12:0.⁴⁹³ The accused were imprisoned and put on trial at the Court of Admiralty in St Kitts on a charge of 'felony on the high seas',⁴⁹⁴ or 'felony and piracy'.⁴⁹⁵ The Court, however, faced a dilemma. There was no law 'whereby the evidence of a slave is rendered admissible in regard to free persons', and Branch Hull was the only prosecution witness.

The Court was keen to convict Fletcher and Arrindell. It was important to stop their people-smuggling operation – how many more men and women would they help to escape? Indeed, how many others, besides William Laurence, had they already taken off the island? It was vital to set an example to others who may have been tempted to follow this line of business, and after much deliberation the Chief Justice decided to admit the victim's evidence. The main thrust of his legal case was that the old argument that 'slaves were savages from the coast of Africa' who, for 'want of reason and understanding', would not be able to give evidence, no longer held because through the spread of Christianity they had become civilised. Whilst in principle this was a welcome shift, double standards still prevailed. The perpetrators were free blacks and stood accused of assisting a runaway, and it was therefore convenient to accept the validity of both the character of the witness and of his evidence.⁴⁹⁶ Some years later, when legislation had

⁴⁸⁸ UKNA, CO 186/12: 21 October 1824

⁴⁸⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1799-1801 ff147-51

Some years earlier the sloop *Vigilant* had been condemned in the Court of Vice Admiralty 'for breach of the laws for the Abolition of the Slave Trade' (UKNA, CUST 34/509 Bundle (a) No 30).

⁴⁹⁰ *The Annual Register* 1825

⁴⁹¹ UKNA, CO 186/12: 21 October 1824

⁴⁹² UKNA, BT 107/484

⁴⁹³ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p304: 21 October 1824, and UKNA, CO 186/12: 10 February 1825

⁴⁹⁴ *The Annual Register* 1825

⁴⁹⁵ UKNA, CO 186/12: 27 January 1825

⁴⁹⁶ *The Annual Register* 1825

Since 1809 British military courts in the West Indies had allowed enslaved people's testimony in cases where active servicemen stood accused of offences such as rape, treason or murder. Nearly a hundred years earlier, a case against two freed black men, the brothers Benjamin Johnson and William alias Billy Johnson, ended in their deaths despite there having been only enslaved witnesses. The Johnson brothers were accused of having been involved in an uprising in St Kitts, and although 'By the laws and practises' an enslaved person could not 'give evidence against a free man', it was argued that 'it appears with all moral certainty they [were] guilty'. They were 'accordingly hereby convicted and attained of high treason' and sentenced to death. Their lands and goods were to be used to pay the expenses of their incarceration and execution (CSP 1737 Numbers 287i, 287iii, 451 and 623).

finally been passed that allowed enslaved people to give evidence in cases other than murder, the jury in the trial of a white overseer charged with the manslaughter of several people wriggled out of a conviction by not allowing slaves' evidence because this man had committed his crimes just before the new legislation had been put in place. Nevertheless, the admission of Branch Hull as a witness able to give evidence was the first sign that times were changing and that the law was beginning to catch up with changing circumstances: free people were increasing in numbers and free people committed crimes against enslaved people.⁴⁹⁷

Based on Branch Hull's statements, Fletcher and Arrindell were found guilty and sentenced to be hung. Gallows were erected near the bay at the foot of the Pond estate and on 16 July 1825, 'in the presence of an immense concourse of spectators', they 'were both launched into eternity'.⁴⁹⁸

The story of Fletcher, Arrindell and Branch Hull had a preface and a postscript. Hull had escaped before and had been returned to George Webbe's Bachelors Hall estate by none other than Charles Pinney. In 1819 Branch Hull had hidden aboard the *Sally*, bound for England, and according to Captain George Browne, the stowaway was not discovered until after the vessel had been at sea for three days. The *Sally* arrived in England the day before Charles Pinney was due to sail to Nevis and because he had no time to consult the owner, he took Hull with him. According to the House, he was 'a fine young man and a tradesman' and consequently thought that he would be a 'great loss' to Webbe's estate. They used their 'best endeavours to persuade' him to return to Nevis with Pinney on the *Rawlins*, and Branch Hull consented on the condition that Charles Pinney would intercede on his behalf and prevent him being punished. As it turned out, his return to Nevis was against George Webbe's wishes. His owner had wanted him to remain in England but by then it was too late.⁴⁹⁹

The postscript concerned the 'poor free negro' John Ray, who had taken part in the capture of Fletcher and Arrindell. He was attacked 'by a formidable number of persons of colour', resulting in a 'very serious case of riot and assault, and conspiracy'.⁵⁰⁰ He was tried in court in which the majority of the jury were freedmen. Neither the charges nor the outcome are known but the implication was that he did not get a fair hearing. An indication of the case against him may be that Christopher Claxton referred to him as 'an informer'.⁵⁰¹ Whatever prompted the trial, the last reference to John Ray was from May 1833, when he married an enslaved woman, Monimia Burke.⁵⁰²

Branch Hull escaped once more. When slavery was replaced by the apprenticeship system, he was not on Bachelors Hall.

⁴⁹⁷ The trial against Fletcher and Arrindell took place at a time when the British government sought to make enslaved people's evidence admissible in all cases, in all its colonies. See Russell Smandych "To Soften the Extreme Rigor of their Bondage": James Stephen's Attempt to Reform the Slave Laws of the West Indies, 1813-1833' in *Law and History Review* Vol 23, No 3 (Fall 2005) pp575-586

⁴⁹⁸ *The Annual Register* 1825, and RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

Henry Nelson Coleridge during his visit claimed that in the jail in Nevis were two men, one of them white, who, for payment, had lured runaways out to sea on the pretence of getting them to a ship and to freedom and then thrown them overboard. Given the timing of his visit – May 1825 – it is very likely that he referred to Fletcher and Arrindell. From the court case, however, it is apparent that both of them were free blacks (*Six Months in the West Indies* pp187-203).

⁴⁹⁹ PP, LB 54: PA & Co to George Webbe, Southampton, 29 October 1819

⁵⁰⁰ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p331

⁵⁰¹ PP, Dom Box S3: Claxton, Christopher, Lieut RN *A Letter to Lord Combermere* p31, note for p19

⁵⁰² NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842

Cruel treatment and failed prosecutions

Fletcher and Arrindell had been hanged but the subsequent trials of five planters, managers and overseers ended quite differently. Between March 1825 and June 1830 these five were prosecuted for the murder, manslaughter or maltreatment in twelve cases concerning eight individuals. Despite overwhelming evidence that should have resulted in severe punishment, the offenders got off entirely or more lightly than they deserved. Each case demonstrates that enslaved people could not get justice; legal processes were still in the hands of planters and other slaveholders. The law was as flawed and difficult to enforce as before.

The first two cases concerned manager Thomas Hodson and overseer John Beard from Ward's Estate. They were acquitted on charges of maltreating Bitchey and of exceeding ten stripes as laid down by a law passed in March 1825. The case against Bitchey was that she had behaved badly in the field and that she had not accepted the driver's authority. Apparently the gang and her sister Louise had told her to be quiet, but Bitchey had fought with her sister and, under direction of the overseer John Beard, the driver had beaten Bitchey with a tamarind switch 24 times. The people on Ward's had a long history of defying authority, and at least one man from Ward's, Cuffy, had been executed for murder.⁵⁰³ Many absconded for long periods, particularly women, and twice large groups had left.⁵⁰⁴ Bitchey had also absented herself and just then six people were on the run. Hodson felt he needed to set an example. Floggings and foot stocks had proved ineffectual and he applied to Peter Thomas Huggins, who was Ward's attorney, for another method. Huggins recommended handcuffs 'after the method established at Trinidad'. Hodson handcuffed Bitchey and put her in the stand-up stocks in the sick-house on the estate and imprisoned her, without food, from four or five o'clock on Saturday afternoon until Monday morning. Hodson assured the Court that he confined only the most refractory people in the kind of stocks in which Bitchey had been held. Overseers could impose a maximum of ten stripes while managers were not bound by such restriction, and Beard escaped justice by being promoted to manager. King's Counsel John Peterson was frustrated that 'immediately after the last bill of indictment had been ... disposed of, Beard was raised from an *overseer* to the designation of a *manager*, which was calculated to take him out of the operation of the Act on this point.'⁵⁰⁵

This blatant side-stepping of the law was, of course, open to challenge but in Nevis John Peterson stood very much alone in condemning such abuses of the justice system. A barrister-at-law,⁵⁰⁶ John Peterson doubled up as Captain Gunner of Fort Charles, a post which he had taken over from his father.⁵⁰⁷ In that role he had been prosecuted for false accounting of powder duty and of stealing powder but had been acquitted.⁵⁰⁸ He had retained both his positions as Captain Gunner as well as King's Counsel. Although a native of Nevis (his father was Dr Bates Williams Peterson, a long-serving Assembly member),⁵⁰⁹ his detractors accused him of having 'intentions to force himself upon this community'.⁵¹⁰ He appears to have

⁵⁰³ Cuffy was executed on 2 October 1813 (RHL, MSS W. Ind. S. 24 (b)). James Weekes petitioned on behalf of the attorney of the Trust Estate of John Ward to pay compensation for Cuffy. The Legislature allowed N£200, suggesting that Cuffy had been a skilled man (UKNA, CO 186/10: 11 and 18 August 1814).

⁵⁰⁴ UKNA, CO 152/100 Cottle Pamphlet 1811 p15

⁵⁰⁵ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p313

⁵⁰⁶ Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Reviderede regnskaber, Vestindiske regnskaber, Overformynderiregnskaber 1805-1917, Box 78.6, St Croix 1825-1827 Schedule B (Courtesy of George Tyson)

⁵⁰⁷ PP, Dom Box S1: Revd Wm Jones to WB Weekes, 29 July 1795

⁵⁰⁸ John Peterson stood accused of letting powder duty slip out of the control, of mismanaging the powder commutation accounts, of overcharging and of taking powder for his own use to such an extent that the Legislature had to raise extra money for the forts. Statements were taken from a number of merchants in Nevis (PP, Dom Box Y: Memorial of Council and Assembly to John Julius, Commander-in-Chief Leeward Islands, May 1815). Peterson was acquitted in November 1815 (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)).

⁵⁰⁹ UKNA, CO 186/3: 22 March 1753

⁵¹⁰ UKNA, CO 186/11: 22 August 1816

been a lone voice, an outsider. It may have been this sense of being an outcast that reinforced his will to fight injustices. As for Beard and Hodson, they both died within a few years of their trial.⁵¹¹

Another injustice occurred over the case of the mulatto domestic Harriet Knight alias Harriet Sampson. Her owner, the planter Edward Thomas Wolfe, was charged with cruel mistreatment 'by whipping and beating her without any reasonable cause whatever'. After refusing Wolfe's sexual advances – 'he wanted to have her, and she would not let him' - she had resisted attempts to demote her to work in the field. Magistrates decided that, while binding over Wolfe in the sum of N£400, Harriet Knight had been 'guilty of gross insolence and disobedience to the lawful commands of her master when ordered to work ... thereby setting an example of insubordination to the slaves.' They ordered her to be held in the 'common jail for 48 hours only, in consideration of her having been already confined for five days', and had she not already received 'two severe floggings; one of 12, and the other of 18 lashes', her punishment would have been even more severe. Until the case was heard in court, Harriet was 'placed in the custody' of Revd Joseph Herbert Pemberton, the rector of the parish, who gave security of N£100, but after the hearing and once she had completed her jail sentence, Harriet Knight was returned to Wolfe.⁵¹²

The case against the manager of Brazier's Estate, George Cousins, did not go to trial because the Grand Jury found this case 'frivolous and vexatious'. Cousins had whipped, flogged and beaten two men called George Tobin and Monmouth. They complained to Mr Justice Galpine of unjust punishment but, after investigating the matter, Galpine concluded that the men had been 'deservedly punished with a cat-o'-nine-tails'. Galpine must have known Cousins's character, or his reputation, because he warned him not to punish the two again. But Cousins did; he flogged them with the cart-whip. This time Justices Ede and Galpine summoned him and found that the second flogging had been vindictive and a result of George's and Monmouth's complaint to them. The two magistrates requested from President Maynard that the man be prosecuted 'at the public expense'. Maynard then received, what later turned out to be, 'a fictitious letter having been written in the names of the magistrates ... importing that upon re-consideration they wished the matter dropped.' Accordingly, Cousins was discharged. Once it was ascertained that the President had based his decision on a forged letter, Senior King's Counsel John Peterson submitted his prosecution for 'wanton maltreatment' but the Grand Jury considered a prosecution 'frivolous and vexatious'. John Peterson was frustrated that the case did not proceed and submitted the details to Governor Maxwell for consideration. Wearily he wrote: 'I was disposed to treat the matter as one of those anomalies which too frequently mark the records of the courts of law in this part of the world.'⁵¹³

Another man who escaped punishment he 'so justly' deserved was John Walley. This 'inhuman perpetrator of several atrocious acts of cruelty' had been manager for several years at Lord Combermere's plantation – Lady Stapleton's old estate. When Mr President Maynard called all the magistrates in the island to investigate the charges against Walley, John Peterson alone was not invited; his presence, presumably, was unwelcome because he might have questioned the witnesses more rigorously. Peterson had charged Walley with eight offences of murder, manslaughter or maltreatment concerning four individuals called Davis, Frances, Bolam and Innis alias Eneas. In brief, the charges were as follows: Davis, although sick, emaciated and exhausted, was made to labour beyond his strength, was denied medical attendance 'and other necessaries proper and requisite for [his] due sustenance, cure and recovery.' He died. Frances was imprisoned by Walley in a fowl-house, 'amongst the poultry and amidst the filth thereof', kept in stocks and confined for a period of about seventy hours 'without proper conveniences for the calls of nature, and in great pain and torture.' She survived. Bolam was forced to work despite suffering a badly ulcerated leg. He, too, was denied proper medical care and died in the

⁵¹¹ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p313

⁵¹² NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p313, p319 and p322

⁵¹³ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p332

sick-house, having suffered 'maltreatment, neglect and ill-usage'. The fourth, Innis, suffered Walley's 'whipping, beating, scourging and flogging' several times in one day. He died in the sick-house 'with a kind of dropsy'. Under oath, in January 1830 Thomas Brown, an enslaved mason, gave evidence to four magistrates: Charles Pinney, Peter Thomas Huggins, Huggins's neighbour Job Ede and George Bucke who held the chair. Brown detailed the treatment Innis had suffered:

Mr Walley flogged him four times one day with a cat with his own hands; I held him all four times; he was a fireman; he licked him because he said the fire was not good; he flogged him on his bare back; he was held by me and Foe twice, and me and Aleck twice. Miss Polly England was in the boiling-house at the time, and looked out the first time, when the man fouled himself. The first flogging was not very severe. I do not know how many stripes he got this time; does not know how many he got the second and third times, but I reckoned the last flogging he got about 50 stripes the last time, when he again fouled himself, all this in one day. Foe was the boatswain of the mill. I cannot see whether the overseer was Mr Souch or Mr Ivancy. The boiler-men did not see the flogging at the copper-holes, but I saw the first in the boiling-house, when he fouled himself. After receiving the last flogging he went back to make his fire, when Mr Walley ordered him to be locked up. I saw a man carry him to be locked up.....

Thomas Brown and others gave evidence to a Grand Jury made up of magistrates. While there appears to have been dissent among the investigating magistrates, the Grand Jury, contrary to the duty laid before them, quashed the prosecutions and did not send Walley to trial on three of the eight charges against him. This denied the trial jury, the Petty Jury, the opportunity to sift the accusations and hear further evidence regarding Frances and Davis, although, as it turned out, this would hardly have changed the outcome. Almost two years had passed since some of the offences had taken place, and it was important, for instance, to establish the date Innis died. The attorney and the plantation doctor were not called to give evidence, and all witnesses for the Crown were enslaved people but they 'were very discordant in their testimony' and could not agree on the date of Innis's death. One stated it happened in March, 'another in November or December', and others were certain that Innis had been flogged either on 13 October or on 23 October. Five defence witnesses, however, declared that Innis had died on 12 July 1828. This would have rendered several people's evidence inadmissible because enslaved individuals were only able to legally testify from 10 October 1828 onwards. Their statements were, therefore, not accepted and the jury 'immediately returned a verdict of Not Guilty.' In the case of Bolam, Walley was not tried for murder, only for manslaughter and maltreatment, and the jury 'in about 25 minutes returned with a verdict of Not Guilty'.

The hearing uncovered further abuses by Walley. He had contravened the 1798 Leeward Islands Melioration Act by failing to give notice to the coroner of Innis's death, and he was suspected of having falsified the returns for payment of parish levies in order to prevent questions being asked about the large number of people lost on the estate. These abuses were said to require investigation but the main issue, the failure to convict on the charges brought by the King's Counsel, demonstrate the connivance between the different classes of white men in Nevis: the Grand Jury of magistrates, who were mostly major planters and professional men, and the Petty Jury, who were mostly managers, overseers and tradesmen. In the case against Walley the trial jury consisted of one planter (John Huggins), three managers (among them George Cousins), five overseers, the President's coachman, a blacksmith, and a shoemaker. Peter Thomas Huggins commented after the acquittal that Mr Walley's conduct could not be justified but blamed Mr Maynard for bringing the prosecution.⁵¹⁴ Long-held views did not shift easily.

⁵¹⁴ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 July 1830; also PN 230

In this messy affair John Peterson was removed from the bench and Governor Maxwell, worried about the lack of successful prosecutions, examined the bills of indictment. He found that the Grand Jury had failed to 'fulfil their important duty' by totalling disregarding 'very strong and circumstantial evidence.' In 'several cases' this had led to the offenders escaping justice 'with impunity'. Legally trained and intent on abolishing slavery, in Britain Viscount Goderich concurred with Governor Maxwell: evidence had been presented 'of systematic cruelty and oppression' and atrocities had been perpetrated. Goderich blamed 'defects in the recent slave-code of Nevis, and ... the inefficient administration of the law in that island' and ordered Maxwell to inform the Legislature how much the case against Walley demonstrated 'the necessity of establishing' that an enslaved person's evidence should not be rejected 'on account of his servile condition'. Goderich's frustration was evident. People in Nevis still found it hard to accept that enslaved people could give evidence and tried to weasel out of their legal responsibilities whenever the opportunity offered itself.

And, very importantly, in the evidence sent to him Viscount Goderich picked up on details about working conditions and allowances given by William Huggins, the overseer on Lord Combermere's estate. Goderich was aghast:

If he is to be credited ... if this were really to be understood as a correct description of the prevailing practice in the colony, it would lead to the alarming conclusion, that at certain times labour was continued for more than thirteen hours every day, with scarcely any intercession. Considering the heat of the climate ... and the nature of the provisions by which slaves are sustained; and recollecting that the physical strength of the labourer is not supported by the hope of receiving wages, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that such a system must be destructive to human life, and incompatible with any reasonable degree of comfort.

Goderich asked Governor Maxwell for further information on the conditions and, if Huggins's evidence was definitely true, he wanted Maxwell 'to immediately urge upon the Council and Assembly the necessity of passing an effective law for placing some reasonable limits to the labour of plantation slaves.' As to 'the gentlemen of the colony [who] do not understand the duties which ... it behoves them to perform', he found it hard 'to believe that persons in their station of life could be so insensible to the sacred obligations of oath.' He entrusted Maxwell with pointing out to the legislatures of St Kitts, Nevis and Tortola the necessity for Grand Juries to understand their roles and to respect the law. Change might not be immediate 'But such a message will at least have the effect of awakening the attention of the colonial society at large to the subject.'

The case against John Walley caused 'considerable excitement' in Nevis and, in an effort to down-play its ghastliness, his supporters claimed that the public was 'abused by innumerable false and distorted reports'.⁵¹⁵ While not everyone would have known the exact circumstances, they would have been aware that, despite new legislation, testimony by enslaved witnesses had been ignored once again. The white folk in Nevis just could not bring themselves to move with the times.

⁵¹⁵ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p334 pp289-334

An update on the reserved people on Clarke's Estate

John Henry Clarke's seven-year hire agreement for 29 of JPP's reserved people ended in June 1821.⁵¹⁶ Although some had died, overall the number had risen and by then there were 32 in all – the original people and their descendants. To take account of this increase, a new lease was drawn up and the rent increased from £160 to £196 a year. However, twelve months on and the situation was reversed: more people had died than were born and, in theory, Mrs Clarke was due a refund,⁵¹⁷ but previously she had failed to pay the annual hire charges and her debt was mounting.⁵¹⁸ Crops were poor and she could not feed her people. They mutinied, refused to work. Everyone was suffering. The whole enterprise was falling apart. Worn out, the widow Mary Hannah Clarke died on 11 October 1822.⁵¹⁹

Mrs Clarke's death did not stop the debts from mounting. Another letter from the House arrived, pressing for payment. Her executor, Finlay Nicholson,⁵²⁰ bought provisions to prevent the plantation people from starving and reminded the House that among them were 'thirty odd of your own people'.⁵²¹ During the period 1817 to 1822 an almost unimaginable number of people lost their lives on Clarke's. Close to a quarter (23.5 per cent) of all the people on that plantation died, 55 out of 234. Of a random sample of 25 estates, in terms of the number of deaths only the neighbouring Jessup's plantation fared worse than Clarke's.

Decrease in the number of enslaved people on 25 selected plantations during the period 1817 to 1822 in ascending order

| Plantation | Parish | Proprietor | R = Resident, NR = Non-Resident | Total number of slaves, 1817 | Number of deaths, 1817-1822 | Decrease of total in % | Average annual decrease, 1817-1822 in % |
|---------------|--------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Eden | St JW | Ann Hutton, John Huggins | NR R | 152 | 11 | 7.24 | 1.45 |
| Spring Valley | St JW | Peter Jefferys | NR ⁵²² | 150 | 12 | 8 | 1.6 |
| Ward's | St P | Trustees of John Ward dec'd | NR | 283 | 27 | 9.54 | 1.91 |
| Low Grounds | St JF | Martha W Hamilton/dec'd | R | 154 | 15 | 9.74 | 1.95 |
| Golden Rock | St GG | Edward Huggins senior | R | 255 | 25 | 9.8 | 1.96 |

⁵¹⁶ PP, AB 65 f95, and G Ledger f119

⁵¹⁷ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to GC Forbes, Nevis, (nd) June 1822

⁵¹⁸ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to MH Clarke, 15 November 1822

⁵¹⁹ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 13 October 1822

⁵²⁰ PP, Dom Box T3

⁵²¹ PP, LB 56: Finlay Nicholson, Nevis, to PA & Co, 3 October 1823

⁵²² Peter Jefferys sought twelve months leave of absence in 1816 and returned in 1825 (UKNA, CO 186/11: 2 September 1816 and CO 186/12: 31 December 1825).

| Plantation | Parish | Proprietor | R = Resident, NR = Non-Resident | Total number of slaves, 1817 | Number of deaths, 1817-1822 | Decrease of total in % | Average annual decrease, 1817-1822 in % |
|-------------------------|--------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Black Rock | St TL | Edward Parris, James Parris, mortgaged to the House | R | 132 | 14 | 10.6 | 2.12 |
| Richmond Lodge | St JF | Thomas Arthurton | R | 85 | 10 | 11.76 | 2.35 |
| Round Hill | St JW | Thomas John Cottle | R | 151 | 18 | 11.92 | 2.38 |
| New River | St JW | Walter Maynard | R | 107 | 13 | 12.15 | 2.43 |
| Mountravers | St TL | Peter Thomas Huggins | R | 159 | 20 | 12.58 | 2.52 |
| Cane Garden | St JF | Richard Neave Parris | R | 99 | 13 | 13.13 | 2.63 |
| Cox Heath | St JF | Martha W Hamilton | R | 128 | 17 | 13.28 | 2.66 |
| Montpelier | St JF | Martha W Hamilton/dec'd | R | 185 | 25 | 13.51 | 2.7 |
| Stoney Grove | St JF | George Tobin, mortgaged to the House | NR | 213 | 29 | 13.62 | 2.72 |
| Saddle Hill | St JF | Martha W Hamilton/dec'd | R | 117 | 17 | 14.53 | 2.91 |
| Bush Hill | St JF | GC Forbes Jane Forbes | R/NR | 96 | 14 | 14.58 | 2.92 |
| Prospect | St JF | Trustees of late John Mills/ John C Mills | R | 120 | 18 | 15 | 3 |
| Clay Ghut | St GG | Martha W Hamilton/dec'd | R | 164 | 26 | 15.85 | 3.17 |
| New River | St JW | Edward Huggins senr | R | 173 | 28 | 16.18 | 3.24 |
| Brazier's/ Willett's | St JF | Edward Brazier/ Samuel Long | R | 135 | 22 | 16.3 | 3.26 |
| Hamilton | St P | Thomas Latham | NR | 221 | 38 | 17.19 | 3.44 |
| | St TL | John Taylor | NR | 171 | 33 | 19.3 | |

| Plantation | Parish | Proprietor | R = Resident, NR = Non-Resident | Total number of slaves, 1817 | Number of deaths, 1817-1822 | Decrease of total in % | Average annual decrease, 1817-1822 in % |
|---------------|--------|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Tower Hill | | | | | | | 3.86 |
| Scarborough's | St TL | Scarborough's heirs/mortg'd, then bought by PT Huggins | NR/R | 74 | 16 | 21.62 | 4.32 |
| Clarke's | St TL | JH Clarke, Mary Clarke, mortgaged to the House | R | 234 | 55 | 23.5 | 4.7 |
| Jessup | St TL | John and Job Ede | NR | 146 | 42 | 28.77 | 5.75 |

⁵²³ St JW = St James Windward; St JF = St John Figtree; St GG = St George's Gingerland; St P = St Paul's; St TL = St Thomas Lowland.

While Clarke's Estate did terribly badly in a league table of deaths, in terms of births it had a much better record than some of the other plantations. Most likely this was due to the demographics; females outnumbered males. In 1817, out of 234 people 107 were male (45.7 per cent) and 127 female (54.3 per cent). Of these 127 females, 62 (48.8 per cent) were of child bearing age (those aged between 15 to 49 years).

There were, however, relatively fewer women of child bearing age on Clarke's than, for instance, on Mountravers (55.4 per cent).⁵²⁴ Mountravers' larger share of females in the age range where they were likely to give birth might be an additional factor in the relatively larger number of births on Mountravers.

While a complete analysis of, and a comparison with, the other estates would go beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noting, however, that generally estates that had more females than males did produce more births. As the examples of those with annual increase in births above three per cent show (Jessups and Mountravers), other factors would have played a role, such as the ages of the females, the plantation's geography, work regimes, punishments, investment in food, housing, health and midwifery provisions, and so on.

⁵²³ UKNA, T 71/364 and T 71/365

⁵²⁴ UKNA, T 71/364

The ratios of women in the age ranges 15 to 29 and 30 to 49 were exactly half on both Clarke's and Mountravers: on Clarke's 31 out of 62 women were aged 15 to 29 while on Mountravers it was 23.

Increase in the number of enslaved people on 25 selected plantations during the period 1817 to 1822 in descending order

| Plantation | % of males, 1817 | % of females, 1817 | Total number of slaves, 1817 | Number of births, 1817-1822 | Increase of total in % | Average annual increase, 1817-22 in % |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Saddle Hill | 35.9 | 64.1 | 117 | 19 | 16.24 | 3.25 |
| Jessup | 48 | 52 | 146 | 23 | 15.75 | 3.15 |
| Montpelier | 44.3 | 55.7 | 185 | 29 | 15.68 | 3.14 |
| Mountravers | 47.8 | 52.2 | 159 | 24 | 15.09 | 3.02 |
| Tower Hill | 43.9 | 56.1 | 171 | 25 | 14.62 | 2.92 |
| Stoney Grove | 47.9 | 52.1 | 213 | 31 | 14.55 | 2.91 |
| Richmond Lodge | 45.9 | 54.1 | 85 | 12 | 14.11 | 2.83 |
| Clarke's | 45.7 | 54.3 | 234 | 30 | 12.82 | 2.56 |
| New River (Maynard) | 45.8 | 54.2 | 107 | 13 | 12.15 | 2.43 |
| New River (Huggins) | 45.1 | 54.9 | 173 | 21 | 12.14 | 2.43 |
| Spring Valley | 44.7 | 55.3 | 150 | 18 | 12 | 2.4 |
| Black Rock | 46.2 | 53.8 | 132 | 15 | 11.36 | 2.27 |
| Ward's | 45.6 | 54.4 | 283 | 32 | 11.3 | 2.26 |
| Clay Ghut | 44.5 | 55.5 | 164 | 18 | 10.98 | 2.2 |
| Scarborough's | 58.1 | 41.9 | 74 | 8 | 10.81 | 2.16 |
| Cane Garden | 53.5 | 46.5 | 99 | 10 | 10.1 | 2.02 |
| Eden | 44.7 | 55.3 | 152 | 15 | 9.86 | 1.97 |
| Cox Heath | 45.3 | 54.7 | 128 | 12 | 9.38 | 1.88 |
| Prospect | 56.7 | 43.3 | 120 | 11 | 9.16 | 1.83 |
| Bush Hill | 63.5 | 36.5 | 96 | 8 | 8.33 | 1.67 |
| Low Grounds | 49.4 | 50.6 | 154 | 12 | 7.79 | 1.56 |

| Plantation | % of males, 1817 | % of females, 1817 | Total number of slaves, 1817 | Number of births, 1817-1822 | Increase of total in % | Average annual increase, 1817-22 in % |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Golden Rock | 55.7 | 44.3 | 255 | 18 | 7.05 | 1.41 |
| Brazier's/ Willett's | 56.3 | 43.7 | 135 | 9 | 6.66 | 1.33 |
| Round Hill | 49 | 51 | 151 | 7 | 4.64 | 0.93 |
| Hamilton | 55.2 | 44.8 | 221 | 7 | 3.17 | 0.63 |

⁵²⁵ St JW = St James Windward; St JF = St John Figtree; St GG = St George's Gingerland; St P = St Paul's; St TL = St Thomas Lowland.

For the enslaved people on Clarke's Estate a period of great uncertainty began: who would buy the property and who would manage it? After Mrs Clarke died, her son Joseph was in charge for a while.⁵²⁶ A well-liked and 'well-disposed' young man,⁵²⁷ Joseph Clarke, however, died six months after his mother, in April 1823,⁵²⁸ and managing the estate fell to his brother John Henry.⁵²⁹ He, it appears, was assisted by another brother, Frederick William. Already weakened by lack of investment, the estate received a further setback when William Laurence withdrew 69 people from Clarke's and placed them on the neighbouring estate, Belmont (Wansey's). This plantation had been mortgaged to Laurence and he took possession of it shortly after Joseph Clarke was buried.⁵³⁰ It was claimed that Laurence withdrew 'the most able people...' to Belmont,⁵³¹ leaving a weaker cohort to hold together Clarke's Estate.

According to the Pinneys' attorney George Clarke Forbes, the new manager was considered the best in the island 'and perfectly honest'.⁵³² Under John Henry Clarke junior's leadership, the hire payments looked secure⁵³³ but it was not. He paid the last money in June 1823.⁵³⁴ The hire charges should have come out of the crop⁵³⁵ but after a succession of poor harvests there was no money. Because of the dire financial situation food was scarce and Mrs Clarke's executor hard pushed to get credit in the island. He had to draw bills on the House for provisions. Finlay Nicholson warned that 'the negroes most likely to starve'.⁵³⁶ Over the following two years the situation got worse,⁵³⁷ but the losses through deaths fell sharply by half to an annual average of 2.25 per cent. Only Edward Brazier's estate could register similar progress. Previously owned by Edward Brazier and mortgaged to the Pinneys, it was sold in 1820, and it appears that the new proprietor set out to improve conditions. The reason for the changes at Clarke's is less clear.

⁵²⁵ UKNA, T 71/364 and T 71/365

⁵²⁶ PP, LB 56: Finlay Nicholson, Nevis, to PA & Co, 14 December 1822

⁵²⁷ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 18 March 1823

⁵²⁸ NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825 f46A

⁵²⁹ PP, LB 56: Finlay Nicholson, Nevis, to PA & Co, 8 April 1823

⁵³⁰ The Deed of Agreement was dated 23 April 1823 (UKNA, T 71/366).

⁵³¹ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 8 October 1826

⁵³² PP, LB 58: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 16 January 1824

⁵³³ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to GC Forbes, 2 June 1823

⁵³⁴ PP, LB 59 PA & Co to GC Forbes, 29 November 1825

⁵³⁵ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to GC Forbes, 1 September 1823

⁵³⁶ PP, LB 56: Finlay Nicholson, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 July 1823

⁵³⁷ PP, LB 58: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 4 September 1825

Decrease in the number of enslaved people on 25 sample plantations during the period 1817 to 1825 in ascending order

| Plantation | Parish | Total number of slaves, 1817 | Decrease, 1817-1822 in % | Average annual decrease, 1817-22 in % | Total number of slaves, 1822 | Decrease, 1822-1825 in % | Average annual decrease, 1822-25 in % |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Brazier's/ Willett's | St JF | 135 | 16.3 | 3.26 | 122 | 3.27 | 0.65 |
| Richmond Lodge | St JF | 85 | 11.76 | 2.35 | (88) | 3.41 | 1.14 |
| Bush Hill | St JF | 96 | 14.58 | 2.92 | 90 | 4.4 | 1.47 |
| Spring Valley | St JW | 150 | 8 | 1.6 | 155 | 5.16 | 1.72 |
| Ward's | St P | 283 | 9.54 | 1.91 | 288 | 5.56 | 1.85 |
| Tower Hill | St TL | 171 | 19.3 | 3.86 | 162 | 9.88 | 1.98 |
| New River Maynard | St JW | 108 | 12.15 | 2.43 | (109) | 6.42 | 2.14 |
| Clarke's | St TL | 234 | 23.5 | 4.7 | 207 | 6.76 | 2.25 |
| Prospect | St JF | 120 | 15 | 3 | 113 | 7.08 | 2.36 |
| Cox Heath | St JF | 128 | 13.28 | 2.66 | 122 | 7.73 | 2.58 |
| Saddle Hill | St JF | 117 | 14.53 | 2.91 | 115 | 7.83 | 2.61 |
| Hamilton | St P | 221 | 17.19 | 3.44 | (190) | 7.89 | 2.63 |
| Montpelier | St JF | 185 | 13.51 | 2.7 | 184 | 8.15 | 2.71 |
| Cane Garden | St JF | 99 | 13.13 | 2.63 | 96 | 8.33 | 2.78 |
| Eden | St JW | 152 | 7.24 | 1.45 | 156 | 8.33 | 2.78 |
| Low Grounds | St JF | 154 | 9.74 | 1.95 | 149 | 9.4 | 3.13 |
| Golden Rock | St GG | 255 | 9.8 | 1.96 | (248) | 9.69 | 3.23 |
| Stoney Grove | St JF | 213 | 12.5 | 2.5 | 215 | 9.77 | 3.26 |
| Black Rock | St TL | 132 | 10.6 | 2.12 | 131 | 9.92 | 3.31 |
| New River Huggins | St JW | 173 | 16.18 | 3.24 | 170 | 10 | 3.33 |
| | St TL | 159 | 12.58 | 2.52 | 170 | 11.18 | 3.73 |

| Plantation | Parish | Total number of slaves, 1817 | Decrease, 1817-1822 in % | Average annual decrease, 1817-22 in % | Total number of slaves, 1822 | Decrease, 1822-1825 in % | Average annual decrease, 1822-25 in % |
|--------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Mountravers | | | | | | | |
| Clay Ghut | St GG | 164 | 15.85 | 3.17 | (155) | 11.61 | 3.87 |
| Jessup | St TL | 146 | 28.77 | 5.75 | 127 | 11.81 | 3.94 |
| Round Hill | St JW | 151 | 11.92 | 2.38 | 149 | 12.75 | 4.25 |
| Scarborough's | St TL | 74 | 21.62 | 4.32 | 66 | 13.64 | 4.55 |

Figures in brackets are totals which have been corrected because the total given in the slave register was incorrect, or they are totals which have been deducted from the births and deaths when no total was given.

When Mrs Clarke died, Peter Thomas Huggins had been on a visit to England. The House had hoped that they could persuade him to make an offer on her estate,⁵³⁸ arguing that it would be a good addition to Mountravers and Scarborough's. Having entered into discussions with Huggins,⁵³⁹ the House, while negotiating, received a letter from John Henry Clarke junior, informing them that the people were 'very unwilling to belong to' Peter Thomas Huggins. According to Clarke, this applied to the estate people, as well as the Pinney group rented to the estate.⁵⁴⁰ Once again the enslaved people had made their views known. And they had persuaded the young Mr Clarke to change his mind and to put forward an offer for taking on the estate. He did not have the money to buy the property and was not interested in acquiring it,⁵⁴¹ but he and the enslaved people had hatched a plan: he would take it on if they could buy their freedom. He explained that if 'the negroes are likely to be emancipated ... merchants and mortgagees will loose out,' and a way of satisfying everybody was a scheme whereby merchants would get a certain percentage in lieu of mortgages, and the people would get their freedom and acquire some land. He proposed that, as soon as each hundred people had handed over a total of S£5,000, they would be freed. The merchants would get S£5,000 for each hundred people and they would keep half the land, with the other half going to the freed people. Clarke let it be known that he was only willing to proceed on these terms. As to the hire charge, he thought it was too high and wanted it lowered.⁵⁴² The House would not accept any of his proposals. Land without workers was useless, and under Clarke's scheme the estate would only sell for around S£10,000. Instead, they thought that a quick 'amicable foreclosure' would be 'the best plan'.⁵⁴³ Mrs Clarke's executor, Finlay Nicholson, who also held mortgages on Mrs Clarke's Estate, wanted to foreclose as well,⁵⁴⁴ and, having considered 'the distress to which the estate and

⁵³⁸ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to MH Clarke, 15 November 1822; LB 57: PA & Co to GC Forbes, 18 December 1822 and 1 February 1823

⁵³⁹ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to PT Huggins, 23 March 1823

PT Huggins suggestion to hire out Pinney's group onto Cox's land - 59 acres that had formerly belonged to Christian Helme (SCRO, Moberley and Wharton Collection, D/MW 35/17) - may not have been without ulterior motive. It is likely that he considered the reserved people particularly obstreperous and that he thought they might veto the sale of Clarke's Estate to him. PT Huggins put it to the House that the thirty plus Pinney people would work Cox's land very well and make 40 to 50 hogsheads of sugar every year (LB 56: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 11 July 1823). But this plan came to nothing and the reserved people remained attached to Clarke's. The House later stated that without people the value of land such as Cox's could 'scarcely be worth holding'. The 'great depreciation of West India property' was to blame (LB 62: PA & Co to Charles Bowles, Solicitor, Shaftsbury, 25 April 1827).

⁵⁴⁰ PP, LB 56: John Henry Clarke, Nevis, to PA & Co, 12 April 1823

⁵⁴¹ PP, LB 58: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 16 January 1824

⁵⁴² PP, LB 58: JH Clarke, Nevis, to PA & Co, 11 May 1824

⁵⁴³ PP, LB 58: PA & Co to GC Forbes, 12 March 1824

⁵⁴⁴ PP, LB 58: PA & Co to Finlay Nicholson, 26 May 1825

negroes would be reduced', ⁵⁴⁵ the House instructed Forbes to re-possess quietly.⁵⁴⁶ Perhaps knowing that foreclosure was imminent, Clarke did not pay the hire charges for the reserved people,⁵⁴⁷ nor their taxes and those of the other people on the estate.⁵⁴⁸

The attorney George Clarke Forbes came to inspect Clarke's and also Parris's, another estate in St Thomas Lowland that was mortgaged to the House. Deeply in debt, it, too, was to be foreclosed.⁵⁴⁹ Forbes considered both in good order; there was nothing 'slovenly' about the properties.⁵⁵⁰ But Finlay Nicholson's assessment was quite different. On Clarke's the buildings were getting 'dreadfully out of order', and he warned that 'Nobody will give credit to the estate for anything situated as it is.'⁵⁵¹ Then John Henry Clarke somehow found the money to pay four years' rent arrears for the reserved people.⁵⁵² Nicholson suggested the House settled with Clarke.⁵⁵³ It was too late; the process of possession was already put in motion.

A decision was needed as to who should manage the estate. Forbes proposed that Henry Ransford, the manager from Stoney Grove, should be put in charge of superintending Clarke's, with a mixed-race man doing the day-to-day work. He even had someone in mind, 'an excellent planter'.⁵⁵⁴ Mills was against the idea. Not only was the 'very clever and industrious' Mr Ransford fully engaged with erecting a steam engine on Stoney Grove, but Clarke's had been very badly managed and needed a competent person on the spot.⁵⁵⁵ Nor was Mills impressed by the mixed-race man Forbes had put forward, claiming he had 'a dozen children and a drunken wife who rules him.' Instead, he proposed William Murray from Stoney Grove.⁵⁵⁶ Having previously worked for Jesup's Estate ⁵⁵⁷ and afterwards on Stoney Grove,⁵⁵⁸ he was an experienced man. The House agreed.⁵⁵⁹ But another worrying issue was the workforce. Mills knew from John Henry Clarke that there were too few people robust enough to do the heavy work. Mills informed the House accordingly: 'He tells me that with the present state of his gang he is obliged to cut canes two days to enable him to grind one - and that when he has to dig cane holes he can only find twenty negroes fit for that employment - this from a gang of one hundred and forty people.'⁵⁶⁰ Clarke's needed more workers, and Mills advised buying those from Belmont whom Laurence had taken.⁵⁶¹ He was particularly concerned that on Clarke's females outnumbered males and that therefore many jobs usually done by men or boys had to be done by women.⁵⁶² To improve conditions, Mills immediately ordered clothing and other supplies for everyone on the estate.⁵⁶³

⁵⁴⁵ PP, LB 58: Finlay Nicholson, Nevis, to PA & Co, 4 September 1825

⁵⁴⁶ PP, LB 59 PA & Co to GC Forbes, 29 November 1825

⁵⁴⁷ PP, LB 59 PA & Co to Finlay Nicholson, Nevis, 25 June 1825

⁵⁴⁸ PP, LB 58: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 4 September 1825

Although the agreement to hire 29 people was renewed, in a list of everyone resident on Clarke's Estate in the mid-1820s only 24 people were identified as having been Pinney-reserved: nine men, 12 women, one boy and two girls (Dom Box T3).

⁵⁴⁹ PP, LB 60: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 11 February 1826

⁵⁵⁰ PP, LB 60: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 11 February 1826

⁵⁵¹ PP, LB 60: Finlay Nicholson, Nevis, to PA & Co, 31 May 1826

⁵⁵² PP, AB 76 PA & Co a/c

⁵⁵³ PP, LB 60: Finlay Nicholson, Nevis, to PA & Co, 31 May 1826

⁵⁵⁴ PP, LB 60: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 5 July 1826

⁵⁵⁵ PP, LB 60: JC Mills to PA & Co, 6 July 1826

⁵⁵⁶ PP, LB 60: JC Mills to PA & Co, 24 July 1826

⁵⁵⁷ UKNA, T 71/365

⁵⁵⁸ PP, WI Box 1823-1825: Accounts Stoney Grove Estate 1824

⁵⁵⁹ PP, LB 59: PA & Co to JC Mills, 4 October 1826

⁵⁶⁰ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 8 October 1826

⁵⁶¹ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 22 December 1826

⁵⁶² PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 15 March 1827

⁵⁶³ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 18 October 1826

George Clarke Forbes was ill,⁵⁶⁴ and on 8 October 1826 he departed from Nevis.⁵⁶⁵ This left John Colhoun Mills in sole charge, and at the end of the month Mills took possession from the brothers John Henry and Frederick William Clarke. The two young men were paid their salaries as manager and overseer, as well as some additional money.⁵⁶⁶ For Frederick William the House found a situation in St Croix⁵⁶⁷ and for John Henry on Parris's.

When Mills visited Clarke's, he found the estate in a complete mess:

The buildings are all in the most disgraceful state of ruin from neglect, even the house ... The estate is bare of everything ... and the boiling house is so much out of repairs [that] I fear it will be necessary to do some repairs before crop is finished. There are the greatest number of negroes with sore legs, rose, and elephantitis, and several useless from other infirmities that I ever met with on any estate - from the little I have seen of them I think them well disposed. Mr Clarke was desirous of making out that on his quitting the estate they would all run away - on the contrary they have behaved exceeding well.⁵⁶⁸

John Colhoun Mills dispatched another long list of requirements: bread and medicines, material for clothing, hoes, cane bills, and blacksmiths tools. The estate needed investment in building, starting with a chimney for a blacksmith shop. A man from the estate 'capable of shoeing the horses and doing the rough work of the estate' was then working in town and Mills wanted to employ him on the estate,⁵⁶⁹ but before the man could begin, the chimney for the blacksmiths shop had to be built. Mills asked for bricks to be sent out.⁵⁷⁰ A further inspection revealed that not only were many of the buildings 'in ruins, but the filth and dirt within them even exceeded the outward appearance - the place had been stripped of everything that was moveable.' To secure the rest a set of good locks was required. But at least, according to Mills, there were no problems with the workers: 'The negroes I am happy to say are well contented and have conducted themselves much to my satisfaction.'⁵⁷¹ And he could report that the young crops looked well.⁵⁷² However, within a month of his reassurances the land was covered in water when a waterspout dropped a deluge over St Thomas Lowland.

The House was genuinely shocked by the news from Nevis. They had 'not the least idea of the very wretched state of Clarke's Estate.'⁵⁷³ Forbes's reports had been deceptively up-beat about both Clarke's and Parris's, and he had over-estimated John Henry Clarke's capabilities. Both men may, possibly, have been ill: Forbes died some time before June 1827⁵⁷⁴ and John Henry Clarke junior soon after. He died on Parris's estate in June 1827.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁶⁴ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 8 October 1826

⁵⁶⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

⁵⁶⁶ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 November 1826

⁵⁶⁷ PP, LB 60: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 5 July 1826 and JH Clarke, Nevis, to PA & Co, 5 September 1826

Frederick William Clarke, the only surviving son of John Henry and Mary Hannah Clarke, later returned from St Croix and was employed by Peter Thomas Huggins to manage Clarke's Estate. He got married; in August 1835 Henry, his eight-year-old son with Catherine Clarke, was baptised (NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873).

⁵⁶⁸ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 November 1826

⁵⁶⁹ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 November 1826

⁵⁷⁰ PP, LB 60: JC Mills to PA & Co, 17 April 1827

⁵⁷¹ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 2 December 1826

⁵⁷² PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 November 1826

⁵⁷³ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 9 March 1827

⁵⁷⁴ UKNA, PROB 11/172

⁵⁷⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke: 11 June 1827. Another version of the same document gives the date as 10 June 1827 (MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)).

The intention had been for William Murray from Stoney Grove to manage Clarke's but it is not clear whether he did do so. John Colhoun Mills had placed a nephew of his on the property and another, unnamed man. Mills thought he had assembled a good team.⁵⁷⁶ The House, however, considered the man placed on Clarke's as too young and too inexperienced 'to superintend a gang of negroes.' Furthermore, 'economy' was needed.⁵⁷⁷ They suggested that Mills should employ some workmen from Parris's and train two or three of the boys on Clarke's to the particular trades needed. Unhappy with the young man placed on Clarke's, the House revived the idea of sending out someone from England if Ransford would train and superintend him.⁵⁷⁸

Once more, the House resumed its negotiations with Peter Thomas Huggins about him buying Clarke's,⁵⁷⁹ and at the same time Huggins approached the House. Their letters would have crossed mid-Atlantic. Believing he would be able to pay off a debt 'in less time than anyone in this island could', Huggins cited the proximity of Mountravers and the advantage his steam engine gave and promised that he would consign to the House 'every ounce of sugar made'. Although he was prepared to invest money, at foresaw a gloomy future. West India affairs were shaky, and he wrote wearily that 'every year brings with it fresh innovations with new expenses and how it will end God knows ...'⁵⁸⁰ As it turned out, the following year, 1827, produced the worst crops and then in August a hurricane caused damage all over the island.⁵⁸¹ A month later, on the night of 18th September someone started a fire at Clarke's. The blaze destroyed the whole of the works,⁵⁸² the store house and liquor lofts⁵⁸³ and flames damaged the roof of the sick house.

This was arson. This was open rebellion. In the past the people on Clarke's had refused to work because they had endured long spells of shortages. Then the House had rejected their scheme of buying land and their freedom. One after another their long-time owners had died, and no one wanted to belong to Peter Thomas Huggins. People had gone through much uncertainty as to who was buying or managing them, and the employment of 'that inexperienced youth' appears to have added to an already volatile situation. Now they made their views known and the young man was unable to contain their discontent.

The House, for their part, felt that since they had got involved in the estate, Clarke's had always produced the 'most untoward and disastrous circumstances.'⁵⁸⁴ The buildings were not insured and rebuilding costs were estimated at £2,000-£3,000.⁵⁸⁵ They sent out articles to help 'proceed with the building of the works' while suggesting that tradesmen from the mortgaged estates - Parris's, Stoney Grove and Symonds - should assist in the reconstruction.⁵⁸⁶ The roof of the sick house was repaired quickly,⁵⁸⁷ and by December the building works at Clarke's were 'in a state of forwardness'.⁵⁸⁸ The House also dispatched more mules for Clarke's and for Parris's⁵⁸⁹ and promised further shipments but wanted 'an experienced person' to supervise the building work. They stressed that it required 'efficient attention' and feared a repeat of the 'unpleasant effects similar to what has lately occurred', particularly if the young

⁵⁷⁶ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 2 December 1826

⁵⁷⁷ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, 6 February 1827

⁵⁷⁸ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 9 March 1827

⁵⁷⁹ PP, LB 28: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, Nevis, 3 November 1826

⁵⁸⁰ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 11 November 1826

⁵⁸¹ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke

⁵⁸² PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 27 September 1827, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 21 November 1827, and RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 19 September 1827

⁵⁸³ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to Chas Shearman, Solicitors, London, 6 February 1829

⁵⁸⁴ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 21 November 1827

⁵⁸⁵ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to Evans, Stevens & Evans, 11 December 1827

⁵⁸⁶ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 21 November 1827

⁵⁸⁷ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 12 November 1827

⁵⁸⁸ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 4 December 1827

⁵⁸⁹ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 6 January 1828

man oversaw the work. Again they recommended Ransford as a suitable supervisor.⁵⁹⁰ It appears that at some stage another man, Robert Washington, took over as manager on Clarke's Estate.⁵⁹¹ He may have been a white Creole in his late twenties⁵⁹² (in addition to being a planter, Robert Washington also held the post of coroner),⁵⁹³ but he could also have been a young mustee who had been manumitted by Thomas Powell in 1820.⁵⁹⁴

The House had wanted to expedite the building work in order to 'prevent plunderage by the negroes',⁵⁹⁵ and plunder they probably did and soon the lack of building materials hampered further construction work at Clarke's.⁵⁹⁶ At this stage Charles Pinney arrived in Nevis.

Amelioration measures and Charles Pinney's third visit to Nevis

When Charles Pinney came to Nevis he could see that much had changed since his last visit in 1819/20. A major slave revolt had made people with West India interest jittery, the abolition debate in Britain had resumed with vigour, and the British Parliament had encouraged the colonies to pass new legislation. Against a background of ameliorationist measures, Christian institutions were established in Nevis and elsewhere in the colonies. Charles Pinney would have noticed how the pulse of the island had changed. Since his last visit the white population had become more beleaguered, the free people more confident, and the enslaved people more restless.

According to Charles Pinney, he went to the West Indies with the intention of collecting debts,⁵⁹⁷ thereby, in effect, divesting the House of the properties on which they held mortgages. Another source, however, states that he had claimed that this trip was 'for the express purpose of ameliorating the conditions of his negroes'.⁵⁹⁸ Whatever his motivation, he certainly left for Nevis not long after he had been rejected as a suitor by the family of the most well-known British abolitionist, William Wilberforce.

Charles Pinney had formed an attachment to one of William Wilberforce's daughters, Elizabeth (Lizzy). Her elder sister, Barbara Wilberforce, and Charles's sister Mary Ames had been on friendly terms until Barbara's death in 1821, and the initial meeting between Charles and Lizzy appears to have come about through the agency of Mary Ames. Charles Pinney got as far as proposing terms of a marriage settlement but then the Wilberforces broke off negotiations. Although William Wilberforce knew that Charles Pinney traded as a West India merchant, he had not realised that in his capacity as a merchant Pinney was lending money to planters. By doing so, he was more deeply implicated in plantation affairs than Wilberforce and his wife had at first understood. Once they knew, the Wilberforces withdrew politely.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁰ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 5 December 1827

⁵⁹¹ When Robert Washington lived on Clarke's Estate, he and Christiana Lawrence had a daughter called Emily. The girl was baptised in April 1828 (NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 330). Robert Washington died at Parris's on 12 December 1833 (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke).

⁵⁹² Robert Washington, the son of Robert and Elizabeth Washington, was baptised in May 1794 (<http://searches1.rootsweb.com/us/genweb/archives/va/schools/wmmary/notes0003.txt> – page 63).

⁵⁹³ ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 1 f26; NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p322, and UKNA, CO 186/13 Accounts 1828

⁵⁹⁴ ECSCRN, CR 1819-1823 ff168-69

⁵⁹⁵ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 5 December 1827

⁵⁹⁶ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 14 February 1828

⁵⁹⁷ PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney, to RE Case, 30 July 1828

⁵⁹⁸ Dresser, M *Slavery Obscured* pp 202-4, quoting BULSC, Moravian Collection, Elder Committee Minutes, 1827

⁵⁹⁹ At some stage in 1826 Charles Pinney enquired through an intermediary whether his being involved as a West India merchant would be an impediment for Wilberforce to a formal proposal of marriage. Wilberforce, without consulting his friends, stated that although it was an 'objection', it was not an insuperable one. Then Wilberforce had someone investigate Charles Pinney's business affairs to see whether they were free from mercantile risk and sufficient to provide for his daughter's secure comfort. By 11 April 1827 matters had progressed to the point that Wilberforce agreed that Charles Pinney's proposed marriage settlement was 'very handsome' and that he himself was proposing to settle £10,000 on his daughter. However, five days later there was either a discussion or an exchange of letters (according to an undated letter from Mrs Wilberforce, a letter from Charles Pinney) between

Charles Pinney left England late in 1827. He sailed on the *Jane*, a new Pinney-owned ship that was named after his mother. On arrival he would have been aware just how much hardship Nevis had to endure since his last trip. Several hurricanes had swept across the island, droughts had taken their toll, crops had been appalling, and disturbances in the plantations and in Charlestown were now more common. What he saw depressed him.

His personal circumstances did not improve matters. In preparation for his going, he had asked for two rooms to be fitted up⁶⁰⁰ but only got a 'rotten house' on Clarke's Estate.⁶⁰¹ His domestic servants wore tatty, dispiriting clothes and to smarten them up, he ordered new cloth from England for their trousers and jackets.⁶⁰² In his rundown abode he did not have sufficient bedding, was bothered by mosquitoes but did not have a protective net. He became miserable. He suffered from what today would be seen as culture shock. Letters from his sister Mary kept him diverted; without her comforting correspondence, he confided, 'this dreadful place would be quite unsupportable.'⁶⁰³

Several months later his mood had not lightened. Selling the mortgaged properties proved difficult; the estates had not been cared for in a way he would have wished, and he did not have much faith in the people in the island: 'I am so sick of the vexation and expense of contending with West Indians in law and also the annoyance and no less expense of receiving back West India estates in a dilapidated condition...'⁶⁰⁴ Only Henry Ransford, a Bristol man, had his confidence: 'I would rather trust him than most others in Nevis ... I myself am sick of West India concerns ...'⁶⁰⁵

As an Evangelical Christian, Charles Pinney would, however, have found some cheer in several aspects of the latest Leeward Islands Amelioration Act. It came into force while he was in Nevis, on 10 October

Wilberforce and Charles Pinney, probably on the subject of Charles Pinney's involvement in the West Indies. As a result of this Wilberforce wrote the next day that, after 'much anxious pillow meditation' and prayer, he wanted time for serious reflection and to consult an old friend of 'sound Christian judgement' (who turned out to be Babington at Rothley Temple, near Leicester) before the affair between Charles Pinney, and his daughter assumed 'the form of a definite proposal'. Wilberforce stressed that the issues were not Charles Pinney's character of which he had heard many good things, or his financial position. On 18 April Charles Pinney, replied with a hurt letter, stating his own great distress and that he had himself raised the West India question and that, had he been less cautious in 1826 and prevented his feelings from governing him, 'I should have sought every opportunity to have enjoyed your daughter's society'. Wilberforce's reply on the same day acknowledged Charles Pinney's hurt but in mitigation noted some considerations 'which have been since suggested to me by a friend', meaning since his initial approval. Having consulted Babington, on 26 April 1827 Wilberforce dictated the 'fatal' letter to his wife. He told Charles Pinney, that his view of the matter had changed, causing himself great distress, but most of the letter was about him trying to relieve Charles Pinney's pain and stating that, while his daughter should have the relevant information, he would not use his parental authority to stop any proposal Charles Pinney might make, or to stop his daughter from seeing Charles Pinney. Mrs Wilberforce wrote to Mary Ames two days later which explained the Wilberforces' reasoning in full. Mr and Mrs Wilberforce had first understood that Charles Pinney was a West India merchant and 'not a proprietor possessed of lands and negroes'. The problem was not that Charles Pinney managed 'the elder Mr Pinney's estates', nor that he belonged to a West Indian family, or that he was engaged in trade. It was that the Wilberforces had been told that a West India merchant lends money on mortgage so that, in effect, the land and people were worked for his use but that, since he had no part in the management of the estates, he could not use humanity, influence, authority and revenue to benefit them. More than that, the person to whom he lent the money was going to be squeezed between providing for his people and paying off the mortgage. In short: mortgages underpinned the worst parts of the system of slavery. On 20 April Charles Pinney replied to Wilberforce: 'Providence surrounded me with West India duties', and he made an intriguing statement: 'I imagined such connections and associations were most likely to produce beneficial results to the improvement of the slave population, not considering the subject in the insulated view of a mere party question'. However, he withdrew his proposal and declined to accept 'the enticing invitation of again enjoying her society'. His sister, Mrs Ames's, was stung by the rebuff. In an undated answer to Mrs Wilberforce she suggested that the couple's 'partiality I must say probably would never have existed had not the overtures in the first instance been made by her [Mrs Wilberforce's] family independent of natural affection for my valued brother'. She also pointed out her embarrassment in front of friends and family, believing that the Wilberforces' conduct would be a blow to 'that cause which it has been my earnest desire to promote amongst them. Nothing proves more injurious to the true interests of religion than the inconsistent conduct of its professors'. The letter ended in a friendly but firm fashion (PP, Dom Box S4-21).

⁶⁰⁰ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 1 August 1827

⁶⁰¹ PP, WI Box O-3/1: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs Pinney, 6 August 1828

⁶⁰² PP, WI Box O-3/1: Charles Pinney, to RE Case, 9 March 1828, and undated

⁶⁰³ PP, WI Box O-3/1: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs Pinney, 8 March 1828

⁶⁰⁴ PP, Dom Box L2-28: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 26 September 1828

⁶⁰⁵ PP, WI Box O-3/1: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs Pinney, 19 June 1828

1828. The Legislature had taken five years to put in place those measures sought by the British Parliament – despite Bathurst’s reminder in 1825 for the Legislature to frame laws that would ameliorate the conditions of enslaved people ‘without further delay’.⁶⁰⁶ Both the Assembly and the Council had at first insisted, ‘humbly but firmly’, that there was no necessity for new legislation and that, with ‘certain alterations and amendments’, the existing legislation would prove fully adequate. One reason for declining to pass new legislation was a way of asserting their independence – these head-strong colonists were not going to accept dictates from London! – but there was another motive. This was identified by the historian Mathieson who stated that ‘The effect, and no doubt also the object’ of amending the old laws rather than passing new ones was to make it ‘impossible to judge accurately how much or how little had been done in the way of reform.’⁶⁰⁷ But the Legislature’s dodging proved futile, and eventually the ‘Bill for the improvement of the condition and morals of the slaves’ made its way from the Assembly to the Council. The legislation covered most of the measures envisaged by the British Parliament in 1823. For instance, the new Act abolished the cart-whip and the cat-o-nine-tails as emblems of authority, finally regulated the number of lashes that could be administered, and introduced a one-day cooling off period so that enslaved people could no longer be flogged in anger. Another new requirement was that anyone with visible marks from a recent flogging was not to be whipped until the wounds had healed. Cruel as this seems now, the prohibition on thrashing injured people was a step forward.

One point from which the Legislature veered away was the Metropolitan idea of appointing an individual to whom wronged individuals could turn for independent support. Instead of selecting a single Protector of Slaves, Nevis made ‘the magistracy their protectors *ex officio*’. This gave enslaved people the option to find help from a number of magistrates but was also a nifty way of not saddling one man with sole responsibility for what most planters saw as a deeply unpopular task. In British Guiana no one could be found to act as Protector of Slaves and the Governor had to ask for one to be sent from England, while in Trinidad the appointment was openly made with one eye on the planters. The ‘temper and judgment’ of the man who was offered the post was, according to the Governor, ‘not only well calculated for the situation but acceptable to the planters.’⁶⁰⁸ As to the proposed legislation, while it was being drafted a member of the Nevis Assembly pondered the impact it might have across the Atlantic: ‘How it will be received in England I know not but it is as much as we can do safely.’⁶⁰⁹ As it turned out, in the view of the Colonial Office’s legal adviser James Stephen, an abolitionist, ‘Nevis constituted “the most perfect approach which has hitherto been made in any part of the West Indies to the Slave Code recommended by His Majesty’s Government for adoption in those Colonies.”’⁶¹⁰

Peter Thomas Huggins resented the measures the British government forced on the colony. He feared they would not only seriously deteriorate the value of properties but also encourage labourers to slacken in their efforts so that planters would ‘not be able to get half the work done.’ He was concerned, too, about planters facing additional financial burdens, and, fretting, upset and almost tearful, he made ever more melodramatic predictions: ‘the enormous expense that will be entailed to us that are already ruined is quite dreadful to contemplate’. He believed that the colony had done its bit and would not make any

⁶⁰⁶ UKNA, CO 186/12: 10 February 1825

⁶⁰⁷ Mathieson, William Law *British Slavery and its Abolition* 6 pp174-75

⁶⁰⁸ Williams, Eric (comp and ed) *Documents on British West Indian History*: Gov D’Urban to Horton 23 April 1826 (UKNA, CO 111/54) and Gov Woodford to Bathurst 7 May 1824 (CO 295/62)

⁶⁰⁹ PP, LB 60: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 11 February 1826

⁶¹⁰ Russell Smandych “To Soften the Extreme Rigor of their Bondage”: James Stephen’s Attempt to Reform the Slave Laws of the West Indies, 1813-1833’ in *Law and History Review* Vol 23, No 3 (Fall 2005) p585, quoting CO323/46 f88 Stephen to Murray, 11 May 1830

further concessions: 'We have gone quite as far as we can go; if we are to have our throats cut let Government do it - we will not ourselves.'⁶¹¹

While Huggins and others deeply resented any Metropolitan interference, the Legislature received ever more dispatches from London with directives to change laws, or with questionnaires soliciting statistical information. At first the British government sent paper but then they sent people. Officials from Britain toured the colonies and arrived in Nevis, expecting to interview some of the legislators, judges and other professionals into the state of the judicial system in the island.⁶¹² The Kings Counsel, John Peterson, readily gave fulsome answers about the administration of justice but when commissioners questioned two of the Justices of the Peace, Robert Claxton and Lockhart Gordon, these men made their displeasure known. Miffed that these snoopers asked them to justify their actions, Claxton and Gordon replied curtly and arrogantly: 'We are not in the habit of being called upon to assign the reasons for our decisions as justices of the peace.'⁶¹³

With everyone in Britain watching what was going on in the colonies, whites in Nevis felt under pressure and sought to align themselves with anyone who seemed to be on their side. When the *Glasgow Courier* published a piece agreeable to the members, the Council ordered twelve subscriptions and voted to send £100 to Mr McQueen, the editor, for 'defending the island' in his 'disinterested and ingenious' article on the 'vilified colonies'. The subscriptions ran for five years until Charles Pinney proposed cancelling these. By then, July 1831, the debate had moved on, and he considered the subscriptions 'an unnecessary outlay of public money.'⁶¹⁴

While the whites felt defensive when their old slave-owning ways were being questioned, the free population displayed a new self-assurance. Many of them had lived independently for a long time, or they were second, even third generation free-born people. Free coloureds and, to a lesser extent, free blacks had established themselves as stakeholders in the economy of the island.⁶¹⁵ Many of them – particularly women - possessed property. They had land and houses with furniture, they owned people, cattle, canoes, small boats and big vessels. The free sambo woman Martha Fox from Charlestown, for instance, was the sole owner of a sloop, the *Fox*,⁶¹⁶ which meant that she was in charge of others (some of whom would have been white seamen) and that she operated on the same footing as white people. Free people ran shops and workshops and provided services. Free people served the community not only as coopers, carpenters and fishermen but also as police constables and writing clerks. Some held important jobs. The only newspaper in St Kitts, for instance, was run by a mixed-race man and, as Henry Nelson Coleridge observed, he was 'as well conducted as any other in the West Indies.'⁶¹⁷ Knowledge that there were

⁶¹¹ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 23 September 1826

⁶¹² UKNA, CO 318/64 and CO 318/65 Third Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice in the West Indies: Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, St Kitts, and the Virgin Islands
Three Commissioners arrived in Nevis on 21 October 1823. Landing at night, one broke his right arm and another fell ill 'with a fever of the country' so that the third had to undertake most of the work unaided.

⁶¹³ 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

⁶¹⁴ UKNA, CO 186/13: 11 February 1826, 6 April 1826, and 12 January 1829, and CO 186/14: 21 July 1831

⁶¹⁵ UKNA, CO 111/60 Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter No 19 (31 December 1826) p281 and p278

It is possible that some free people had fared better than their white namesakes who had set them free: although making up a smaller proportion of the population, white paupers claiming poor relief vastly outnumbered black and coloured paupers. However, this could have been due to the fact that freedpeople were discouraged from applying for poor relief, or that their pride stopped them from asking for help. Equally well they may have enjoyed a better support network.

⁶¹⁶ UKNA, BT 107/484 Ports: Antigua – Nevis 1824

Martha Fox of Charlestown was in her early forties when she owned the sloop *Fox*. She died in 1841 (NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1873 No 226).

⁶¹⁷ Coleridge, Henry Nelson *Six Months in the West Indies* p203

In Jamaica the radical newspaper *The Watchman* was edited by the mulatto Edward Jordon (Caton, *M Sinews of Empire* p278), and a mixed-race newspaper man, Henry Loving, whose relatives were enslaved, edited the *Weekly Register* in Antigua (Blouet, Olwyn M 'Earning and Learning' p402).

capable mixed-race people in Nevis had spread to Britain. When teachers were difficult to find, Mary Ames suggested that, instead of employing men, 'some religious mulatto women' might do the job just as well.⁶¹⁸ That free people were integrated into Nevis society can be seen, for instance, in the ledgers kept during the 1817 slave registration process. Only four slaveholders were identified as 'free coloured' yet at least twenty times as many free black and mixed-race people registered their slaves. Those who for many years had lived as free no longer needed to be labelled as such. But while many of the free inhabitants had become economically secure, they were still denied rights taken for granted by whites. Now free people demanded their rights. In 1823 a group from St Kitts presented Memorials to the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Administration of Justice in the Colonies. They complained that they paid taxes but did not have a say in the public administration of the island - 'taxation without representation' – and called for admission to juries and to the bar. They sought guaranteed free movement for all free people and aired other grievances.⁶¹⁹

One of the greatest changes Charles Pinney would have noted and supported was how the church had changed in the seven years since his last visit. Enslaved people were now getting baptised and married in church and even had purpose-built places of worship. There were two chapels specifically built for enslaved people, and one of these was on Mountravers. Whatever Cottle's motivation might have been – atonement for the support he had given when his father-in-law stood accused of brutality, the hope of a heavenly blessing for his endeavours, or a genuine desire for the everlasting welfare of his people – by proceeding to build a chapel on his estate he had set an example to other planters. Work had begun in 1822 (the year Cottle's brother-in-law John Huggins was killed in a duel) and on Wednesday, 5 May 1824,⁶²⁰ in place of a consecration the rector of St Paul's, Daniel Gateward Davis, conducted the first service at St Marks-at-Ease.⁶²¹ Some individuals had always accompanied their masters into church when they attended services, but this was the first purpose-built place of worship in Nevis in which a master and his enslaved people would gather. While praying together under one roof was a laudable, seemingly egalitarian sentiment, at the same time it offered Cottle an entirely new arena in which to control his people: he could keep an eye on who attended services and an ear on what was being preached. After all, Christian teachings could have a destabilising effect. This had been recognised by those planters who, in the early days of Methodist missionary activity in Nevis, forbade private worship among their people.⁶²²

Nevertheless, Cottle's chapel was, and was seen as, something entirely new. Back in Britain, members of his family understood the opposition his 'liberal ways of thinking' might attract in Nevis and hoped that others would follow his example.⁶²³ Cottle's brother-in-law Peter Thomas Huggins almost immediately did. During his visit to Nevis in May 1825 Henry Nelson Coleridge found both Cottle's and Huggins's chapels 'spacious and well adapted to their purpose'⁶²⁴ although, at that stage, Huggins's had not yet been completed and was only 'in a forward state'.⁶²⁵

⁶¹⁸ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mary Ames to Charles Pinney, 8 November 1829

⁶¹⁹ UKNA, CO 318/76 f153, f164 etc Memorials and Papers Collected by the Commissioner: Free People of Colour Disabilities and Grievances

Restrictions on free movement applied to freed people in Nevis as well but, unlike St Kitts, in Nevis free inhabitants, who satisfied the property qualifications, were allowed to stand for elections to the Assembly and they could sit on most juries (CO 318/63 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).

⁶²⁰ Anon 'Report from the Select Committee on the Extinction of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix and Index' – 'Negro Apprenticeships, with Minutes and Evidence' Vol 3 Appendix p578 Evidence to the Select Committee 11 August 1832 by Revd Jonathan Tyers Barrett DD

⁶²¹ Gordon, Joyce *Nevis* p27

⁶²² Horsford, John Revd *A Voice from the West Indies* p299

⁶²³ NHCS, MG 1.16 (2): Grace Selfe, Ash Hall, to TJ Cottle, Round Hill, Nevis, 6 February 1821

⁶²⁴ Coleridge, Henry Nelson *Six Months in the West Indies* p187

⁶²⁵ Gordon, Joyce *Nevis* p27

Charles Pinney would have been delighted to find that church-going had become a regular pastime for enslaved and freed people. At Cottle's chapel services were being held on every alternate Sunday afternoon and alternate Monday evenings, and congregations tended to consist of about 120 to 130 people.⁶²⁶ Although the field workers were not enthusiastic about attending, the monthly communion attracted 35 regular communicants - enslaved and free coloureds – and a 'morning school', too, was popular. In Charlestown, in 1823 about eighty parishioners - enslaved domestics and free coloureds – had attended daily morning services in St Paul's church,⁶²⁷ and over time the numbers increased. The church was 'generally well filled', and so were the churches in St John Figtree and St George's Gingerland. They attracted congregations of about one hundred and fifty each. The Methodists, too, were doing well and by the mid-1820s 90 per cent of their 738 members were enslaved people.⁶²⁸ There were then no Methodist chapels in the parishes of St John Figtree or St Thomas Lowland but in St James Windward about thirty people attended chapel, and a congregation of Wesleyan Methodists met in a small room in Newcastle. In St Thomas Lowland over two hundred people worshipped in the Anglican church and another 150 attended Peter Thomas Huggins's private chapel.⁶²⁹

The 1798 Leeward Islands Melioration Act had enshrined that enslaved people were to be permitted to attend church on Sundays but another Act had since been passed that strengthened religious instruction: slaveholders were now supposed to encourage and prepare their people for baptism.⁶³⁰ Many people underwent baptism individually, with parents often having their children baptised before undergoing the ceremony themselves. Sometimes large groups got baptised together: one day it was 13 from Clifton's estate, another 17 from Taylor's, then 47 from Ward's.⁶³¹ While mass baptisms suggest a drive by the slaveholders (and John Taylor and John Ward were known to have supported early Methodist missionaries),⁶³² individual baptisms indicate that people were able to exercise personal choice. This was underscored by the unusual wording used to record the baptisms of several enslaved individuals in the parish of St James Windward. When he was baptised, David Jeffers from Jeffries Estate, for instance, was recorded as a slave and 'a young person old enough to answer for himself'.⁶³³

The first Mountravers inhabitant known to have been baptised was a seven-months-old boy called Samuel, the son of Polly Pinney and a field worker called Jack. In May 1825 he underwent baptism in the Methodist Chapel.⁶³⁴ The first person known to have been baptised in an Anglican church was the 25-year-old James Parris. He was one of the elite people, and his getting baptised in St Paul's church (in March 1826) an indication of his status.⁶³⁵ It appears that, generally, field workers tended to frequent the Methodist chapels while the elite people were more likely to gather in the Anglican churches - traditionally the planters' place of worship.

In a few cases, baptism was followed by marriage. By the end of 1826 the first five weddings had taken place between enslaved people, and another three in which one party was enslaved and the other free.⁶³⁶

⁶²⁶ UKNA, CO 187/4 Duplicate Blue Book Nevis 1826

⁶²⁷ Walker, GPJ *The Life of Daniel Gateward Davis*, quoting Christian Faith Society Letterbook 1822-1832 Davis to Barrett

⁶²⁸ Anon *The Missionary Register for 1827* London 1827

⁶²⁹ UKNA, CO 187/4 Duplicate Blue Book Nevis 1826

⁶³⁰ UKNA, CO 318/64 Law No 2881

⁶³¹ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835

⁶³² Horsford, John Revd *A Voice from the West Indies* p299

⁶³³ David Jeffers was baptised on 28 April 1833 (NHCS, St James Registry and Deaths 1839-1877, contains loose pages).

⁶³⁴ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 4

⁶³⁵ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 159

⁶³⁶ UKNA, CO 111/60 Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter No 19 (31 December 1826) p269

Revd Daniel Gateward Davis, who in Nevis had set the issue of enslaved people marrying in church in motion, had left the island by the time the first couple was getting married.

This was in contrast to one area in Jamaica where between 1811 and 1835 hundreds of baptisms of enslaved people were recorded, but not one wedding.⁶³⁷ The first marriage of a couple from Mountravers was that of George Smith and Kitsey Greathead in May 1831. Again, it was an elite person who led the trend. George Smith was mixed-race and had been among the people reserved by JPP. The first recorded church burial of a Mountravers slave was also of a man who had been reserved. A mason and mulatto, the 49-year-old William Fisher was buried in January 1825.

In 1825 the Legislature for the first time mentioned setting up a National School.⁶³⁸ Already established in each of the four country parishes were Sunday Schools in which a total of 682 enslaved and 24 free people received instruction. Charlestown had its own Sunday School which eighty enslaved people attended, as well as a daily school with 105 white, free and enslaved pupils. Within a year, this increased to 150 scholars. Each school had a master and in Charlestown there was also a school mistress. In addition, two catechists visited the estates.⁶³⁹ One of these catechists was James Hendrickson, 'a very respectable coloured young married man'. He assisted Revd Pemberton, the rector for St George's Gingerland and St John Figtree. Mr Hendrickson's efforts met with success; within church circles it was felt that among the plantation people there was 'an evident change for the better'. Some proprietors, however, claimed that they could not spare anyone during crop time and they forbade their people to attend Hendrickson's instruction. For his work Hendrickson received a salary of £5 a quarter, paid through the treasurer (a planter, Finlay Nicholson) on behalf of 'the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the British West India Islands'. Not wanting to be totally reliant on money from abroad, through subscriptions and occasional donations the Nevis Branch actively raised its own funds. The list of supporters reads like a Who's Who of the Nevis elite: at the forefront was the Collector of Customs, Lockhart Gordon, with an annual subscription of N£4, followed by those with annual contributions of N£2:5:0 each – the planter Magnus Morton and the lawyer John Peterson – and others who committed N£2 a year: George Bucke, Peter Thomas Huggins and his father, old Edward Huggins, and Mr and Mrs Cottle. Several people gave N£1 a year, among them Dr Henry Richards Cassin, Revd Daniel Gateward Davis, his wife and daughters, the planters Finlay Nicholson,

Born in St Kitts in 1788, the young Daniel Gateward Davis, like several other West India charges, went to Revd Dr Valpy's school in Reading. He then entered Pembroke College, Oxford, and in 1812 returned to the West Indies where he served as rector of St Paul's and St Thomas Lowland's. In December 1813 he married Ann, the daughter of the planter Butler Claxton (NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825). While living in Nevis, Davis was appointed as a magistrate (UKNA, CO 186/11: 7 November 1818).

Davis was widowed in 1820. His wife died young, in her early thirties (Oliver, VL *Monumental Inscriptions of the British West Indies* p67, quoting a memorial inscription in St Paul's church, Charlestown). In the autumn of 1823 Davis travelled to Britain for a holiday and stayed with planters in Bristol and in London. While in Bristol he studied Dr Bell's method of elementary education as was practised in the National Schools. He re-married and in 1825 went to St Kitts to take up an appointment in Basseterre (Walker, GPJ *The Life of Daniel Gateward Davis* Chapter 2).

Mrs 'G Davis', 'the Misses Davis' and Revd Davis were among the active supporters of the Nevis Branch of 'the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negroe Slaves in the British West India Islands'. They each contributed £1 to the cause (Anon *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negroe Slaves...*).

Committed to allowing enslaved people to marry in church, Davis did, however, have few qualms about owning them. After he manumitted three, he took with him three to work as his servants (UKNA, T 71/367). While working in Basseterre as rector of St George's, he recorded the manumissions of the mixed-race infant girls Anne Amelia, Harriett and Jane, the daughters of his domestic Judy. Security of N£100 was given by the free woman Judith Noble and by John Peterson, who presumably was the father of the girls, while Revd Davis gave another N£55 'according to Nevis legislation' (ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 2 ff301-03).

Revd Davis worked in St Kitts for 14 years, and from 1842 until his death in 1857 served as Bishop of Antigua (Foster, Joseph (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses* and *The Gentleman's Magazine* Vol III New Series (July to December 1857) pp675-76).

⁶³⁷ Craton, M *Searching for the Invisible Man* p166

⁶³⁸ UKNA, CO 186/12: 22 October 1825

⁶³⁹ Hamilton College Archive, African Repository and Colonial Journal Vol 2 June 1826, quoting the Philadelphia Register (Courtesy of VK Hubbard), and UKNA, CO 187/4 Duplicate Blue Book Nevis 1826

John Henry Clarke, Edward Thomas Wolfe and his wife, and the newly appointed Director of Police, William Keepe. Free folk were among the donors: Miss Hester Smith and the mestee writing clerk Edward Jones committed N£1 a year each and John Fraser Arthurton N£3. His single donation was among the largest. From its funds the 'Incorporated Society' paid regular salaries to the catechists, the Sunday School teachers and their assistants, as well as occasional items, such as 'a dozen cards for the school'. The rent for a school room (hired from Miss Brazier) accounted for the biggest item of expenditure.⁶⁴⁰

The first National School was built in Charlestown in 1826. It was staffed by a master and a mistress who taught 127 children: 69 boys (50 free, 17 enslaved people, 2 whites) and 58 girls (40 free, 16 enslaved people and 2 whites). In addition, nine children left to learn trades, two were sent to England and seven recalled by their parents. The curriculum followed that of the National Schools in England. Children were taught reading, writing and arithmetic, and the girls received instruction in 'plain work' (needlecraft).⁶⁴¹ One of the school teachers may have been John Cox of Grenada, a free black man and schoolmaster, who was in Nevis in July 1829;⁶⁴² another was Robert Hurman.⁶⁴³ The school staff received annual salaries in the region of £20 to £25, which was paid by British charities concerned with the moral improvement of enslaved people.⁶⁴⁴ In Bristol the West India Association raised funds from its members who included planters and merchants with interests in plantations in Nevis: Thomas Daniel, Charles Pinney and Philip Protheroe.⁶⁴⁵

These men no longer saw any contradiction in supporting schools. Times had changed. They could see that religious education was the key to reforming plantation slavery: schools would educate and deliver a sober, obedient workforce that would procreate sufficiently to sustain the slave population. For the enslaved people, the opportunity to learn to read and write provided proof that they were intellectually as capable as whites. Acquiring literacy skills had long been a means of resisting their enslavement – if their masters did not want them to be literate, learning to read and write had become a tool with which they could assert power over their masters while expressing their sense of self-worth. Literacy, like almost every other facet of their lives, had been a weapon, and now they were able to appropriate that weapon for themselves. Attending school was more than an act of learning; it meant that they had overcome one of the obstacles that planters had employed to shackle their minds.

The British government envisaged that enslaved people would buy their freedom, but planters knew that it would take a generation, possibly two, for slavery to dissolve itself. For anyone with West India interests this gradual abolition was preferable to the total, immediate abolition that others demanded. Among those who fought for complete abolition was Elizabeth Heyrick. From a dissenting background and widowed young, she devoted herself to social reform. In 1824 she followed up the Parliamentary debate on slavery by publishing a pamphlet entitled *Immediate not Gradual Abolition*.⁶⁴⁶ Elizabeth Heyrick's aims were more radical than those of the male-dominated Anti-Slavery Society which stood for gradual, not immediate abolition. She gathered other women around her, organised a sugar boycott in Leicester, and with Mary Lloyd, Sophia Sturge, Lucy Townend, and Sarah Wedgwood helped to form the Birmingham Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. While these women were active in the anti-slavery campaigns,

⁶⁴⁰ Anon *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negroe Slaves...* Appendix V

⁶⁴¹ Anon *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negroe Slaves...* Appendix V

⁶⁴² ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 1 f216

⁶⁴³ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835

⁶⁴⁴ Hamilton College Archive, African Repository and Colonial Journal Vol 2 June 1826, quoting the Philadelphia Register (Courtesy of VK Hubbard), and UKNA, CO 187/4 Duplicate Blue Book Nevis 1826

⁶⁴⁵ Dresser, M *Slavery Obscured* p200, quoting SOMV, WIA Papers 1813-26/31, Bodleian Library, 'Society for the Conversion...' in the John Johnson Collection

⁶⁴⁶ <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/reheyrick.htm>

other women in Britain became heavily involved in establishing and supporting schools, and there is evidence that several of them networked with women in Nevis. The Nevis Creole Caroline Nisbet recalled that her mother, Mrs Nisbet, had been ‘the first in Nevis to call the attentions to the religious information for the negroes’, and writing from London, she engaged with Mrs Grace Cottle. She informed Mrs Cottle of another society which had been formed by ‘Ladies’ that also aimed to support existing schools and to establish new schools. Caroline Nisbet and other women were particularly keen to set up infants schools because these would help in a society where ‘labour is early required ... as they take the children from the earliest age to keep them till seven years old.’⁶⁴⁷ This would have been a measure acceptable to planters because children below the age of seven contributed relatively little to the plantation economy.⁶⁴⁸ The organisation Caroline Nisbet referred to was the ‘Ladies Society for Promoting the Early Education and Improvement of the Children of Negroes and of People of Colour in the British West Indies’. Established in 1825, its chief patroness was the Duchess of Beaufort. The society’s stated aims included the need to remove ‘ignorance and depravity’. In today’s terms, the Ladies’ language was deeply offensive – the enslaved people’s happiness was ‘rather the happiness of the inferior animals, than that of rational and immortal beings’ – and the aims of the society self-serving: ‘instructed negroes have invariably been found the most faithful to their masters’. But behind the insulting, patronising language was a real desire to achieve something constructive. For women who could not vote in elections and who were generally on the margins of economic activity, taking on the cause of ameliorating the enslaved people’s conditions was a positive, liberating experience. It is noticeable how in Nevis married women contributed separately from their husbands to the funds collected by the ‘Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negroe Slaves in the British West India Islands’.⁶⁴⁹ In England both Mrs Mary Ames and Mrs Baillie donated money to the Ladies Society.⁶⁵⁰ It shows a degree of independence that these women supported what they saw as a worthwhile cause. For some the commitment went beyond giving money; Mary Ames, for instance, also became a founder member of a Bristol branch of the London-based ‘Ladies Society for the Early Education of Negro Children’. The Bristol Committee raised funds to make grants to planters so that they would establish schools on their estates.⁶⁵¹ The drive to educate the deprived classes had its parallels in Britain; Mrs Ames’ and Mrs Baillie’s niece Anna Maria Pinney, John Frederick Pinney’s daughter, was involved in a similar enterprise in the Somerset village where she lived. She financially supported establishing an infants’ school which commenced in April 1828.⁶⁵²

Charles Pinney commended the chapel on Peter Thomas Huggins’s estate for its central situation and thought it ‘would answer remarkably well for an infant school’. Although a member of the Anglican Church, Charles Pinney thought that the attitude of the Church of England was ‘uncertain’ and hoped that he could persuade Huggins to employ a Methodist Minister. Charles Pinney estimated that in total 450 adults and young people and 50 infants needed instruction. 300 of these were from the estates mortgaged to the House, the remainder from Huggins’s estates, Mountravers and Scarborough’s. Charles Pinney was then staying on Clarke’s Estate, about a mile from the chapel, and as the Clarke’s people were to attend the school, a problem arose over its location. Huggins did not want to let mothers carry their infants the distance between their work and the chapel but Charles Pinney proffered the idea of Huggins providing transport for the women: a donkey wagon.⁶⁵³ From England Charles Pinney’s sister

⁶⁴⁷ PP, Dom Box S3-10: Caroline Nisbet, 25 Gower Street, London, to Mrs Cottle, 2 June 1826

⁶⁴⁸ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mary Ames to Charles Pinney, 8 November 1829

⁶⁴⁹ John Fraser Arthurton, no doubt, was noted as ‘GF Arthurton’ in Appendix No V of the ‘Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negroe Slaves...’

⁶⁵⁰ PP, Dom Box R-4: Printed prospectus 23 September 1825

⁶⁵¹ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mary Ames to Charles Pinney, 18 November 1828

⁶⁵² Anna Maria Pinney, is remembered in Somerton for founding the Monteclefe Mixed School (*The Parish Church of St Michael, Somerton*).

⁶⁵³ PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney, to Mrs Ames, 3 March 1828

Mary Ames sent a missionary couple, Mr and Mrs Jones, and once Charles Pinney was assured of his sister's wholehearted support,⁶⁵⁴ as well as Huggins's, he laid out his vision for the school: Mr and Mrs Jones, the master and mistress of the school, were to be employed on a stipend of £100 which was to be shouldered by Charles Pinney and his sister Mary. Under the general superintendence of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, Mr and Mrs Jones were to provide religious education in the Infant and the Sunday Schools. The school was to open every morning at ten o'clock, with one lot of the plantation's children attending until 12 noon and another attending from 12 until four o'clock in the afternoon. The Infants School was to close at four, except for Saturdays when school for the older children was to run later in the afternoon. As far as adults attending worship in the chapel was concerned, Charles Pinney fixed a day and a time: during crop on Tuesdays at seven in the morning, and out of crop after work at six o'clock in the evening. Keeping a regular time meant no one had to get tickets from an overseer if they were to attend service - people were reluctant to ask for these tickets - but an element of compulsion crept in: according to Charles Pinney the adults did not 'value attendance at service' and by fixing a day and time, it gave 'the others as far as possible' no excuse to stay away.⁶⁵⁵

Charles Pinney believed that people who lived in or near Charlestown required more discipline and instruction, and 'to counteract the effect of the temptations of the town'⁶⁵⁶ he widened his brief and initiated a move for public funds to be provided for the Rector or Minister of St Paul's, and later also for the clergymen in other parishes. Up and until then they had received levies from planters, usually in the form of sugar.⁶⁵⁷

In Henry Ransford, the manager on Stoney Grove, Charles Pinney found a keen supporter of his ideas. During a holiday in England Ransford had become deeply spiritual. He had 'made acquaintance with some friends who had studied Prophecy connected with the return of the Jews and the 2nd coming of our Saviour.' He 'was much taken with it', studied books on the subject, examined the Scriptures and 'thought more seriously on religious matters'. In keeping with his new beliefs, he converted an old boiling house on the plantation into a 'generally well fitted' chapel. The preaching was regularly attended by the missionary, Mr Hyde, who 'always went there with pleasure, owing to the negroes evincing a strong desire to attend'.⁶⁵⁸ Mr Hyde's wife Sarah was also active in missionary work; she taught at the Sunday School in Charlestown. From experience Mrs Hyde knew that it was 'very rare for any child to learn the alphabet in less than two years'. Generally it took three, but not because it was a matter of mental incapacity but simply from the 'want of time and proper teachers'.⁶⁵⁹

While Charles Pinney was in Nevis, his brother Pretor died in the lunatic asylum in Halstock in Somerset. Their father had appropriated the rents from certain properties in Halstock for Pretor's use,⁶⁶⁰ and it took some time to settle the accounts.⁶⁶¹ Although Charles' other brother, John Frederick, benefited from Pretor's estate he shirked paying one of his bills. John Frederick's mean-spirited reaction distressed Charles and in a strong letter reminded him of his moral obligations towards their dead brother.⁶⁶² Charles

⁶⁵⁴ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mary Ames to Charles Pinney, 20 September 1828

⁶⁵⁵ PP, Dom Box R-4: 'Memorandums reports etc respecting schools in Nevis'

⁶⁵⁶ PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney, to Mrs Ames, 3 March 1828

⁶⁵⁷ UKNA, CO 186/14

⁶⁵⁸ PP, Dom Box R-4: J & E Jones to Mrs Ames, Bath, 13 March 1830

Both Mr and Mrs Hyde died in January 1830. They were survived by at least two children (Burkhardt, Friedemann *Christoph Gottlieb Mueller* Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen, Germany p150).

⁶⁵⁹ PP, Dom Box R-4

⁶⁶⁰ PP, AB 58: JPP's a/c

⁶⁶¹ PP, LB 61: Misses A and B Mercer to PA & Co, 9 October 1829, and LB 62: PA & Co to Misses A and B Mercer, Halstock, 29 December 1828

Mrs and Miss Mercer were still tenants in 1833. When Charles Pinney, or John Frederick Pinney, wanted to sell the house at Halstock, they were given the option to buy it (LB 63: PA & Co to Miss Mercer, 17 May 1833, also AB 76)

⁶⁶² PP, LB 29: Charles Pinney, to JF Pinney, 6 July 1831

and John Frederick fell out until years later the ever sensible Mrs John Frederick Pinney initiated their reconciliation.⁶⁶³

During his visit Charles Pinney acquired several people for Clarke's Estate. He purchased two from Robert Washington and another two from the company of Mills & Galpine: Pallas and Fame (or Frame, also Flame). They had worked on the *Prospect*, the drougher or sloop that some years earlier had got lost in fine weather at Indian Castle. The vessel had been owned by Mills & Galpine,⁶⁶⁴ but three of the workers on it had been owned by one of the partners, John Colhoun Mills. After the vessel had been lost, he had sent them to St Kitts to work on board the Pinney ship, the *Hope*. As they had no certificate of registration with them, they had been seized by the Collector and Comptroller in St Kitts. The Board of Customs had ordered their release,⁶⁶⁵ and Mills had pressed for compensation, wanting £100 for two and £75 for one of the men.⁶⁶⁶ Then almost certainly one of them, Phoenix, had died. He had been buried in Charlestown in October 1824.⁶⁶⁷ For three years Mills had pursued the case of the two remaining men through the courts, with the House lobbying on Mills's behalf.⁶⁶⁸ Eventually Pallas and Fame had been restored to Mills, who had then offered them for sale to the House at half their value, S£50 each.⁶⁶⁹ At the same time Mills had offered to cover debts of the company Mills & Galpine to the House by handing over four other people, the 58-year-old Peggy and her children John, Charles and Sarah. They were all house servants, and Charles Pinney thought they might 'be useful on Clarke's Estate and the sailor negroes may be employed by our ships when there'.⁶⁷⁰ However, Charles Pinney only purchased Pallas and Fame (sic) for S£210,⁶⁷¹ and attached them to Clarke's Estate.⁶⁷² One of them – it is not known which one – was known as 'a good sailor negro' and put to work on board a transatlantic ship, the *Earl of Liverpool*.⁶⁷³

While sorting out Clarke's, Charles Pinney managed to sell several estates in St George's Gingerland which had belonged to his brother John Frederick.⁶⁷⁴ Two other estates Charles Pinney tried to sell were Stoney Grove and Symonds, for which his sisters Mary Ames and Elizabeth Baillie had inherited the mortgages. Mary Ames held firm ideas about finding the right kind of buyer. She not only wanted an infant school established at both estates,⁶⁷⁵ but her religious convictions shone through most strongly when she pressed her brother into making 'every exertion' to ensure that buyers committed themselves to the 'slaves' moral and temporal improvement'. This was to be done 'by placing religious agents to manage them, affording them religious instruction and by establishing the lawful observance of the Sabbath Day'.⁶⁷⁶ Mary Ames had heard that Mrs Wilberforce had approved of her efforts to advance the Christian

⁶⁶³ PP, LB 29: Charles Pinney, to JF Pinney, Somerton, 24 March 1836

⁶⁶⁴ UKNA, BT 107/484 Ports: Antigua – Nevis 1824

⁶⁶⁵ PP, LB 58: R Claxton to Richard Hart Davis MP, 20 October 1824

⁶⁶⁶ PP, LB 59: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 7 September 1824

⁶⁶⁷ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837: 4 October 1824

⁶⁶⁸ PP, LB 58: Richard Hart Davis to PA & Co, 2 December 1824; LB 59: PA & Co to JC Mills, 12 April 1826; also LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 18 July 1827

⁶⁶⁹ PP, LB 60: FJ Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 30 March 1827

⁶⁷⁰ PP, LB 28: Charles Pinney, to JC Mills, Nevis, 18 July 1827

Peggy was 58 and valued at S£50; her children John, Charles and Sarah were 14, 10 and 8 and valued at S£50, S£40 and S£30. Again, as in his JPP's appraisalment in 1783, there was a definite progression in the value of children, based on ages.

⁶⁷¹ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 ff674-75, and PP, AB 76 PA & Co a/c

⁶⁷² PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney, to RE Case, 10 March 1829; also UKNA, T 71/368

⁶⁷³ PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney, to Case?, 20 January 1829

⁶⁷⁴ The histories of the ownership of the estates are long and complicated and not worth recounting here. Some of the documents relating to the sales of Hendrickson's, Symonds and Vervaine can be found in PP, DM 1173 Add Pinney, Materials Dom Box 4 (Vol of Deeds, Bonds etc) ff8-9; LB 44 : Misc. documents JF Pinney, Somerton Erleigh, and Edward Huggins, 1 September 1828; Dom Box L2-28: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 26 September 1828; WI Box 1823-1825; WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to RE Case, 24 October 1828; and Dom Box C2-13: RE Case to Charles Pinney, Nevis, 7 November 1828. In the Nevis Court House the sale of Hendrickson's to John Frederick Pinney, is documented in CR 1829-1830 Vol 1 ff129-31 and f133.

For Symonds see DM 1173 Add Pinney, Materials Dom Box 4 (Vol of Deeds, Bonds etc) pp3-5; Deeds and Papers in relation to Symond's and Vervaine estates 16 December 1829.

⁶⁷⁵ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mary Ames to Charles Pinney, 20 September 1828

⁶⁷⁶ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mary Ames to Charles Pinney, 20 August 1828

education of the enslaved people under her care, and perhaps with Mrs Wilberforce in mind, Mary Ames required to know the moral character of any potential purchasers. She did not want to sell her West India estate to an unsympathetic person. As to James Maynard, one of the men interested in buying the Symonds estate, Charles Pinney spoke well of his character but before deciding to sell to him, Mrs Ames wanted reassurance. She was 'anxious to know how he treats his slaves and if he would allow the missionaries access to his estate'. Of anyone interested in purchasing Symonds, she wanted Charles to ascertain 'the real character ... as it respects the treatment of their slaves'. Her brother was enquiring from the ships captains and from others, too, while back in England she was going to tap into the unofficial ladies' network and consult Mrs Claxton for her opinion. Perhaps remembering her father's sale of Mountravers to Edward Huggins, as well as William Wilberforce's refusal to let his daughter marry Charles, Mary Ames went so far as to say that she would prefer to forego the money than sell to the wrong kind of proprietor: 'I would not for the world sell the estate to a person of severe temper and likely to misuse the negroes. I would far rather get no profits from the estate.'⁶⁷⁷ Charles sold Symonds to Walter and James Maynard ⁶⁷⁸ but failed to find a buyer for Stoney Grove.

As to Clarke's Estate, another property Charles wanted to get rid of, in 1828 one eighth was still owned by a Mr Wayte, a 'pastry cook', and in order to sell the whole estate, he was eager to acquire this portion but,⁶⁷⁹ after recently spending a lot of money on that plantation, investing another £1,000 to buy Wayte's share was more than he was willing to give.⁶⁸⁰ But Charles was willing to invest in mechanisation as it lessened people's work and saved workers. He wanted to try ploughs on 'a great part of Clarke's', as well as on Parris's and another mortgaged estate, Hendrickson's, and ordered a plough from England. Unable to 'get Walker's plough from Bristol', he ordered another from London.⁶⁸¹

It took the House until February 1830 to acquire the remaining one eighth share and, finally, to receive the conveyance and mortgage deed.⁶⁸² This paved the way for the sale of Clarke's. For £12,500, of which £10,500 was financed by way of a mortgage, Peter Thomas Huggins purchased the estate with its 144 people.⁶⁸³ These included the reserved group. They had resisted becoming Huggins's but now they belonged to him.

According to Peter Thomas Huggins, his 'old father always said Parris's was the worst property in Nevis',⁶⁸⁴ but in February 1830 Peter Thomas, together with his brother Edward, also purchased Parris estate, which bordered Scarborough's to the south.⁶⁸⁵ The House had initiated a suit in Chancery against James Parris back in 1823,⁶⁸⁶ and had foreclosed on him three years later.⁶⁸⁷ Unable to find a buyer

⁶⁷⁷ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mary Ames to RE Case, September 1828

⁶⁷⁸ PP WI Box O-4: Deeds and Papers in relation to Symond's and Vervaine estates, late property of Henry Rawlins Esq in Nevis, sold Walter and James Maynard Esq

⁶⁷⁹ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to Chas Shearman, Solicitors, London, ca. 8 October 1828

⁶⁸⁰ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to Chas Shearman, Solicitors, London, 30 October 1828

⁶⁸¹ PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney, to RE Case, undated; Dom Box I i-9: Charles Pinney, to JF Pinney, 28 March 1828 and Dom Box C2-13: RE Case to Charles Pinney, Nevis, 3 June 1828

⁶⁸² PP, LB 62: PA & Co to Charles Shearman, Solicitors, London, 17 February 1830. See also LB 62: PA & Co to Chas Shearman, 23 January 1829

⁶⁸³ PN 1534 b (reverse), also pers. comm., WA Pinney, 2 January 1999

⁶⁸⁴ PP, Dom Box I i-10: PT Huggins to JF Pinney, 5 October 1829

⁶⁸⁵ According to the slave register for 1825, the estate neighbouring Mountravers to the south, Ward's, was owned by Samuel Laurence and PT Huggins. Samuel Laurence died in 1826, and in 1828 PT Huggins registered 297 people as owner. The register was signed by RN Shea (PTO, T 71/366 and T 71/367). No further details are known. Slave compensation was claimed by Sir Thomas Neave as trustee to the heirs of John Ward (T 71/1039 Claim No 158).

Given that the name did not appear elsewhere in Nevis, the man who signed the register on PT Huggins's behalf may well have been the 'KN Shea', for whom Edward Thomas Wolfe presented a petition for poor relief. He was said to have been a 'late Lieutenant in the British Army'. Mr Shea was awarded N13s6d a week (UKNA, CO 186/14: 25 May 1833).

⁶⁸⁶ Four individuals who belonged to Parris's estate were levied on: Charles, a mason, Jane, and her two children Betsey Corbin and Mary (PP, WI Box 1823-1825 Unnumbered item). See also LB 57: PA & Co to GC Forbes, 12 March 1824 for John Huggins levying

because it was difficult to work as a single estate, Charles Pinney had considered improving both by putting Parris's and Clarke's together, and then offer the combined estates for sale.⁶⁸⁸ John Frederick Pinney had been willing to sell Parris's on its own for £10,000 but Peter Thomas Huggins, the only contender, considered this 'so very much beyond its value' and offered half. Charles Pinney had to persuade his brother to accept this and did so by pointing out that Peter Thomas Huggins was the only man in the island who would actually pay the money.⁶⁸⁹ Huggins ended up paying S£5,250 for Parris's, and with this purchase acquired another 133 people and another property in a poor state. Buildings were out of repair, there was no still on the estate, and after a prolonged drought the land was burnt. There was good land further up the mountain but, having been worked without manure for a long time, the soil was in poor condition. Although Parris's had a windmill, it was badly situated, so that most of the canes had to be ground in the animal mill. But there were not enough animals to work it; 15 to twenty mules were needed.⁶⁹⁰ The estate was managed by a man from Montserrat, Horatio Iles,⁶⁹¹ whom James Parris had left in charge after leaving Nevis some years earlier.⁶⁹² Iles was married to a free woman of colour, Grace McKinnon, with whom he had an illegitimate daughter. She had her own enslaved people who presumably would also have lived on Parris's.⁶⁹³ Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that he was employed by Peter Thomas Huggins, Iles later was among those men who supported Edward Huggins's campaign to be allowed a seat on the Council.⁶⁹⁴

The transfer went off more smoothly than expected. Peter Thomas Huggins later reported that 'everything has gone on quietly and peaceable. I have never heard the slightest murmur, all are happy and contented and as regards Parris's Estate the people have behaved extraordinary (sic) well. I have never had occasion to punish one since I purchased the estate.' Eighteen months after it was established, the infant school on his estate was already bearing fruit, because Huggins attributed people's accepting behaviour to the school: 'This is more than I expected and I must say our infant school has some credit for this. It is pleasurable to reflect upon.'⁶⁹⁵ Huggins found that the 'little people' attended the chapel and the school regularly, and not only they but also their parents were 'very much improved in their general conduct'.⁶⁹⁶

on people belonging to Parris. It is possible that this transaction, however, referred to the estate of Richard Parris. In 1822 Messrs Frederick & James Huggins bought Richard Parris's Cane Garden (LB 56 and LB 57: PA & Co to GC Forbes, 3 December 1822).

Richard Neave Parris (the son of Edward Parris, 'late of Nevis') was deeply in debt. He had six under-age children to support. He had become destitute to the point where the four children by his first wife were 'entirely dependent' on their maternal grandparents. The two children he had with his second wife were worse off still. The Legislature allowed him N£40 immediately plus £100 a year (UKNA, CO 186/12: 11 August 1825). Four years later Parris petitioned the Legislature for N£100 assistance to reach England in the brig *Brislington*, to be with his friends. The motion was proposed by Mr Webbe and seconded by Charles Pinney. Parris died shortly afterwards. His funeral expenses of N£32 were paid by the Council to Samuel Pemberton (CO 186/13: 11 April, 26 June and 2 July 1829; also RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 12 June 1829).

⁶⁸⁷ PP, LB 60: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 11 February 1826, and UKNA, T 71/367: 1 October 1826

⁶⁸⁸ PP, Dom Box L2-28: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs (J F) Pinney, 26 February 1829

⁶⁸⁹ PP, WI Box O3-4: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs Pinney, 27 August 1829

⁶⁹⁰ PP, Dom Box I i-10: Charles Pinney, to JF Pinney, 3 November 1829; Dom Box I i-11: Charles Pinney, to JF Pinney, 1 January 1830; WI Box O3-3: Charles Pinney, to Mrs Pinney, 4 May 1829; LB 60: JC Mills to PA & Co, 4 March 1827 and Dom Box L2-28: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs (J F) Pinney, 26 February 1829

⁶⁹¹ Oliver, VL *Monumental Inscriptions in the British West Indies*, quoting inscription in St Paul's churchyard

⁶⁹² PP, Dom Box C1-7: JC Mills to Charles Pinney, 12 August 1823

⁶⁹³ Lucretia, the illegitimate daughter of Horatio Iles and Grace McKinnon (MacKenion, Mackinnen) was baptised on 16 November 1828. Horatio Iles married the child's mother in September 1829 (NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 and St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842. See also ECSCRN, CR 1814-1817 ff719-20; UKNA, T 71/364 and HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlvi: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08).

⁶⁹⁴ UKNA, CO 239/29

⁶⁹⁵ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 July 1830; also PN 230

PT Huggins's Infant School was first opened on 9 February 1829 under the 'superintendence of Mr and Mrs Jones' (Dom Box R-4: 'Memorandums reports etc respecting schools in Nevis').

⁶⁹⁶ PP, LB 65: PT Huggins to PA & Co, 17 July 1831

Huggins's comment about the improved behaviour of his people was in reply to a letter from Charles Pinney, in which Pinney had expressed his hope that school master Jones's efforts to improve Huggins's 'by instilling Christian principles into their hearts may render them more obedient and more tractable and their services consequently more efficient'. In particular Pinney, wanted to hear about the infant school 'and whether it has had any beneficial effect on the negroes' (LB 63: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, 2 June

The first examinations had already taken place. 79 infants had been present but the other 18 had been sick. The teachers celebrated the event and reported to Mrs Ames that 'There were about 80 other children present the whole of whom received a large slice of cake.'⁶⁹⁷ When Bishop Coleridge visited Nevis, he expressed his admiration for Huggins's school and the teacher, Mr Jones.⁶⁹⁸ How times had changed from only half a century earlier when Revd James Ramsay had been attacked and maligned for submitting 'a plan for the education and gradual emancipation of slaves in the West Indies'.⁶⁹⁹

Before he sold Clarke's and Parris's, Charles Pinney had spent some weeks in St Croix to tend to business there,⁷⁰⁰ and when William Worthington Coker, the grandson of his father's old manager, arrived in Nevis in January 1830, Charles Pinney knew that there would be an opening for him on one of the mortgaged St Croix estates. Coker left at the end of January to take up a job in St Croix, and Charles Pinney departed from Nevis, the 'detestable country',⁷⁰¹ in mid-March.⁷⁰² He was back in Bristol just over five weeks later.⁷⁰³ Peter Thomas Huggins missed his company; they had become friends. Charles Pinney had stood godfather to the latest Huggins baby, Charles Pinney Huggins, born during his stay in Nevis. The child was 'growing a fine strong fellow'.⁷⁰⁴

One question that needs to be addressed is whether Wilberforce's rejection of Charles Pinney as a suitor produced any ameliorative effects on his estates in the West Indies. Pinney wrote from Nevis in a small, tight hand on paper that has since faded, and of his words only the ghostly mirror impressions are left.⁷⁰⁵ The letters are extremely difficult to read but what has been deciphered is mostly about business and the process of sorting out the mortgaged estates. But by careful examination some details about his attitudes can be gleaned. Like his father before him, he used presents as inducements - shoes, hats and great coats for men; handkerchiefs for women - and (his father would have approved of his thrift), these items were to be bought 'cheap'.⁷⁰⁶ For Clarke's Estate he ordered a common tin lantern 'for negroes to use to clean out the mill at night',⁷⁰⁷ and night work was something to which William Wilberforce and other abolitionists had always objected.⁷⁰⁸ On the other hand, there is evidence that he facilitated the manumissions of several individuals: Nancy Williams's in 1820 and on his second visit that of a mother

1831). It was, of course, in Huggins's interest to confirm that his people's behaviour had improved if he wanted to continue to receive funding from Britain.

⁶⁹⁷ PP, Dom Box R-4: J & E Jones to Mrs Ames, 4 Cavendish Place, Bath, 13 March 1830

⁶⁹⁸ PP, LB 29: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, 31 August 1831

⁶⁹⁹ Brown, Christopher L *From Slaves to Subjects: Envisioning an Empire without Slavery 1772-1734* in Philip D Morgan and Sean Hawkins (eds) *Black Experience and the Empire* pp110-40

Brown notes that Ramsay may have hated the American rebels even more than he hated slavery; central to his argument was that Parliament should take control of the islands away from the island assemblies.

Ramsay's submission to the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury is catalogued as 'Memorial on the Conversion of Slaves in the Sugar Colonies by James Ramsay' London Lambeth Palace, Fulham Papers XX, f80; copy to the Bishop of London in Lambeth Palace Library, SPG Papers, XV11, ff221-23

⁷⁰⁰ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 5 October 1829

⁷⁰¹ PP, WI Box O-3/1: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs Pinney, 6 August 1828

⁷⁰² RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke

⁷⁰³ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to George Tobin, 29 April 1830

⁷⁰⁴ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 10 April 1830

⁷⁰⁵ It is possible that Charles Pinney's letters from Nevis are copies that he made with a machine that had been invented not long before. It was, in effect, a forerunner of the photocopier. Using such a gadget would suggest that Charles Pinney, was willing to try out new technology and innovations. This is also evident from the fact that he had a steam engine installed at one of the mortgaged estates, Stoney Grove.

⁷⁰⁶ PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney, to RE Case, 9 March 1828, and undated

⁷⁰⁷ PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Pinney, Ames & Co, ?18 April 1828

⁷⁰⁸ Wilberforce wrote about two gangs who worked on the plantation during the day and 'the whole of the night, or alternate nights'. He pointed out that 'Their labour, during crop time, is thus equal to six day and three nights in the week. And in the exaction of this labour, no distinction is made between men and women; both are subjected to the same unvarying rule.' (Wilberforce, William *Slavery in the West Indies* Part II p37) By the 1820s Nevis had a law in place which forbade the mills operating between 8 o'clock on Saturday night until 5 o'clock on Monday morning (UKNA, CO 318/64 Law No 288 Clause III).

and her five children. He sold them to William Archbald, the overseer at Stoney Grove,⁷⁰⁹ who then freed them all.⁷¹⁰ (Tragically, the woman, Nanny, and two of her children died in a space of six weeks.)⁷¹¹ Charles Pinney also bought more people from Archbald – Betty and her children Charles and Fanny – whom he placed on Stoney Grove,⁷¹² and from Parris's Estate he sold three females, who may have been a mother and her two daughters. They were bought by a free man, Joseph Herbert, who immediately mortgaged them.⁷¹³ It could be argued that through these transactions Charles Pinney very directly engaged in slave-dealing and that he did not use his influence sufficiently to determine the worthiness of the buyer which meant that a mortgaged person could easily end up in someone else's hands. Pinney certainly did spend a considerable amount of time and money on patching up both Clarke's and Stoney Grove and, although his efforts were primarily aimed at improving the estates so that they would sell better, in theory this should have produced effects beneficial for the people living on the estates. Pinney very much approved of Ransford treating people on Stoney Grove with kindness and certainly Ransford's organised management was better than the previous chaos. But even so, Pinney was willing to hand over estates to Peter Thomas Huggins and to see him screw down the expenses. In the end business interests prevailed – just as they had done in his father's time.

More telling, perhaps, was that soon after returning from Nevis he actively supported an election campaign that was contrary to anything Wilberforce stood for. Charles Pinney had declined contesting a seat himself, not wanting the trouble and expense of an election,⁷¹⁴ but instead of distancing himself, he actively got involved in the election by proposing as a candidate an unashamed supporter of the pro-slavery West India interest. He was a relative, James Evan Baillie, a brother of one of his brothers-in-law. According to Charles Pinney, at that time more than half of Bristol's trade was with the West Indies,⁷¹⁵ and Baillie's election placard reminded Bristolians of the benefits the colonies brought to the city: 'Bristol owes ALL her prosperity, nay,... her existence to her commerce with the WEST INDIES.'⁷¹⁶ Africans and slavery were not mentioned.

Baillie's opponent, Edward Protheroe junior, also came from a plantation-owning merchant family but he stood on a reform ticket. He wooed the politically active women who could not vote in the elections but who could influence their male relatives. He appealed to their maternal feelings, using as his medium a phoney, saccharine ten-verse rhyme entitled 'The Negro Mother's Petition to the Ladies of Bristol that, in

⁷⁰⁹ UKNA, T 71/1543 Bundle 7

⁷¹⁰ UKNA, T 71/368

Later the House also freed a sambo woman, Peggy Parris, and her three sambo children Richard, Samuel and Maria, against payment of N£85. They were not likely to be chargeable to public funds except that Peggy Parris was troubled 'with a malady called the Rose' (ECSCRN, CR 1831-1835 f127).

⁷¹¹ PP, LB 60: Henry Ransford, Stoney Grove, Nevis, to PA & Co, 7 May 1830

⁷¹² On 8 March 1830 W Bryan Archbald sold to Charles Pinney, the woman Fanny and her children Betty and Charles for N£205. Henry Ransford witnessed the sale (ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 2 ff27-9). In 1831 these three people were registered on Stoney Grove as bought from WB Archbald: Fanny Pinney, (African, 35 and black), Betty Pinney, (3 years-old, black) and Charles Pinney, (2, black). It was noted that Charles Pinney, had died (UKNA, T 71/368).

⁷¹³ The three females Charles Pinney sold to Joseph Herbert were Ann Mulatto (she was aged 35 in 1817), Maria Sambo (aged 12 in 1817), and Marian, a sambo, who was aged two in 1825 (UKNA, T 71/364, 366 and 368). Almost immediately Joseph Herbert mortgaged these three, together with eight others, to the free sisters Hester and Christiana Smith (ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 2 ff162-70).

⁷¹⁴ PP, LB 63: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, 7 July 1830

Two Whig factions supported either side of the slavery debate in the 1830 election. The pro-slavery group supported James Evan Baillie, the other side supported Edward Protheroe. According to Peter Marshall, they 'confronted one another at a meeting held on 16 July at the Assembly Room, Prince Street. Supporters of Protheroe proved to be in the minority, but the majority had no candidate immediately to hand. Charles Pinney was proposed, but his preference was for making profits rather than speeches, and he contented himself with nominating James Evan Baillie, a member of a still larger West India house. His speech was largely inaudible but the seconder made a much stronger impression on the gathering: Captain Christopher Claxton, a master of Pinney-owned ships, announced that he had "just arrived" from the Caribbean and therefore pretended ignorance of recent events. He then, while fortifying himself with draughts of "heavy wet", supported the nomination of Baillie. This was carried by the meeting.' (Marshall, *Peter Bristol and the Abolition of Slavery* p6, quoting 'Bristol Mirror' 17 July 1830) See also Dresser, m *Slavery Obscured* pp206-12.

⁷¹⁵ MacInnes, CM *Bristol: A Gateway of Empire* p370

⁷¹⁶ 1830 Election placard quoted in Dresser and Giles *Bristol and Transatlantic Slavery* p80

Pity to Poor Slaves they would entreat their Fathers, Husbands, Brothers and Sons to vote for Edw.d Protheroe Esq.' Written supposedly by an enslaved person, the ninth verse, for instance, read:

Toder man – call Massa Baillie,
 He no ware what Neger ail'e!
 Massa Protheroe – he de Man!
 Send him, Missey – SURE YOU CAN!⁷¹⁷

Voters in Bristol were not swayed. Protheroe lost, and in due course Pinney received from Nevis congratulations on the part he had played in Baillie's success.⁷¹⁸ Having followed the elections in the Bristol papers, Peter Thomas Huggins was pleased at the defeat of Protheroe who 'deserves no encouragement from the West Indies',⁷¹⁹ and when ordering stock from the House, he wanted the House to use its economic muscle and boycott anti-slavery merchants: 'I hope you will not deal with any of Protheroe's men. I would not purchase a thing from them ...'⁷²⁰

Cockily the House declared that 'the anti-slavery opponents in the Bristol election ... will be hardly daring enough to show their heads a second time.'⁷²¹ But up and down the country the opponents were gathering strength. To further their campaign, in 1831 the Abolition Society published the first narrative told by an enslaved woman from the British Caribbean: *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave. Related by Herself*.⁷²² Mary Prince's voice was authentic and her story contemporary. A young woman from Antigua, she had been brought to London and had run away from her master, thereby taking control and shaping her own life - something that particularly appealed to women readers who had no public role and no public voice. Mary Prince's story of suffering and endurance went to the core of the anti-slavery debate and immediately grabbed the British public's attention so that in its first year of publication the book reached three editions. Citizens eagerly signed petitions in support of abolition,⁷²³ and among them would have been some of the 10,000-15,000 black people who then lived in Britain.⁷²⁴ The women's organisations involved in the movement had grown to over seventy. They actively campaigned for the immediate abolition of slavery. In fact in 1827 one such women's group in Sheffield had been the first anti-slavery society to call for the immediate emancipation of enslaved people. Although women were excluded from the leadership of the Anti-Slavery Society, in Manchester, for instance, women made up over a quarter of all subscribers. Unable to vote or stand for election to Parliament, women empathised with the plight of the enslaved people, and in their fight for emancipation found an outlet for their own discontent. The women's groups were able to use their economic strength to push forward the call for immediate abolition. The Anti-Slavery Society was still committed to gradual abolition but, as one of its largest donors, the women from Birmingham threatened to withdraw their funding if the society did not support their stance. Accordingly, at their conference in May 1830 the Anti-Slavery Society agreed to drop

⁷¹⁷ PP, Dom Box 10, Anna Maria Pinney's Scrapbooks

⁷¹⁸ PP, LB 60: Job Ede, Nevis, to PA & Co, 4 October 1830

⁷¹⁹ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 30 September 1830

⁷²⁰ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins to PA & Co, 15 December 1830; also in P Marshall *Bristol and the Abolition of Slavery* p14.

When ordering goods from Bristol, PT Huggins requested that the House boycotted Protheroe's firm and those who supported Protheroe, but Pares made the more general claim that Charles Pinney, 'boycotted Protheroe's supporters by withholding from them his correspondents' orders for plantation stores'. For this claim he cites a generic and unspecific source, 'the correspondence of Messrs Pinney, Ames & Co' (Pares, R A *West India Fortune* p169 and fn6 p356).

⁷²¹ PP, LB 63: PA & Co to PT Huggins, Nevis, 15 September 1830

⁷²² For documentary evidence about Mary Prince's enslavement, see BASA *Newsletter* No 46 (November 2006) p18.

⁷²³ By 1824 over two hundred branches of the Anti-Slavery Society operated up and down the country, and during the period 1828 to 1830 presented Parliament with over five thousand petitions. In the small town of Nailsworth in Gloucestershire, for instance, at a meeting on 15 October 1830 Quakers called on its citizens to support a petition to Parliament (*Nailsworth, Slavery and Abolition*, CRL). Before 1833, anti-slavery organisers managed to collect one and a half million signatures that called for immediate emancipation (<http://www.understandingslavery.com>).

⁷²⁴ Ferguson, Moira (ed) *The History of Mary Prince* p228, quoting Peter Fryer *Staying Power*

'gradual' from its title and agreed to support the female societies' aims for immediate abolition.⁷²⁵ But the anti-slavery movement was divided in its support for female anti-slavery associations; William Wilberforce, for instance, objected to them. He believed that 'for ladies to meet, to publish, to go from house to house stirring up petitions – these [were] proceedings unsuited for the female character as delineated in Scripture.'⁷²⁶

As to Wilberforce's daughter Elizabeth, the woman whom Charles Pinney had wanted to wed, she married a clergyman in January 1831. The following year she suffered from a chest infection and died soon after.⁷²⁷ Charles Pinney quickly recovered from the Wilberforces' rejection and also got married.

In September 1831 he was elected Mayor of Bristol but as soon as he had taken office he had to deal with a very violent riot that left many dead and wounded. It was claimed that he failed to take proper steps to contain the disturbances and was put on trial for neglect of duty. He was acquitted and went on to serve as Alderman for the city for almost two decades.⁷²⁸

Just before the end of plantation slavery

Nevis and the other Leeward Islands had become minor players in the sugar market.⁷²⁹ Against a backdrop of revolts, their decline went hand in hand with parliamentary agitation in London about the welfare of enslaved people and the abolition of slavery, as well as social and political reforms that were shaping a new Britain. Peter Thomas Huggins's timing was poor. He had enlarged his holdings just when the British West Indian plantation economy underwent an 'acute crisis'.⁷³⁰

The sugar market was no longer stable. By 1820 an oversupply had depressed the prices; Europe now produced its own beet sugar. Cane sugar had to compete with products from Cuba and territories that had been acquired in the war with France - among them Mauritius, Trinidad, and St Lucia. While the sale of sugar yielded little money, production costs had risen. Import duties were still at high wartime rates and, with the United States having developed into a self-confident trading partner, the prices for goods from America had risen. The cost of the basic raw material for making hogsheads, white oak staves, for instance, which had stood at £3 per thousand in the 1750s had by the 1820s risen almost seven-fold to £20 per thousand.⁷³¹ Other imports also cost more so that by the 1820s the average outlay on the main items of plantation expenditure had doubled whereas the produce fetched less: sugar was back to its 1750s level and rum was down by 15 per cent.⁷³² Profitability dropped accordingly and many estates in Nevis were pushed below the margins of viability. During the Napoleonic period Nevis had done well; it had been the only one of the Leeward Islands whose exports had reached its maximum. But this had come at a cost. The introduction of Otaheite cane was accompanied by a period of intensive agriculture that could only work as long as sugar prices remained high. Much of the profits were swallowed up by the cost in buying enslaved people and their relatively expensive maintenance - mostly imported food - as

⁷²⁵ <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/reheyrick.htm>

⁷²⁶ Harvey, AD *Sex in Georgian England* p156

⁷²⁷ Pollock, J *Wilberforce* p305

⁷²⁸ For details of the riot which was triggered by the rejection of the Reform Bill, see JF Nicholls and John Taylor *Bristol Past and Present* JW Arrowsmith, Bristol 1882 and *The Trial of Charles Pinney, Esq. late Mayor of Bristol, in the Court of King's Bench, for imputed neglect of duty during the riot of 1831* WH Somerton, Bristol 1832. Another version was published by Philip Rose in Bristol in 1832.

⁷²⁹ One very graphic illustration comes from the documents Eric Williams listed for the period 1807 to 1833: in total five relate to Antigua, three to St Kitts, and none to Nevis (Williams, Eric (comp and ed) *Documents on British West Indian History*).

⁷³⁰ Ward, JR *British West Indian Slavery* p58

⁷³¹ Pares, R A *West India Fortune* p91

⁷³² Ward, JR *British West Indian Slavery* pp43-5

well as the outlay on other imports such as fertiliser. Once sugar prices dropped, the expenses outweighed the profits and estates became uneconomical. The scope for change and for reducing overheads was limited, and neither could productivity be improved. Nevis, with its rugged terrain and rocky soil, had good cane pieces but these lay scattered about on hillsides and therefore did not easily lend themselves to being worked with ploughs, and there was little spare land for growing food crops.⁷³³ In the years 1756 to 1762 annual profitability in the Leeward Islands had been 12.9 per cent; during the period from 1820 to 1834 it sank to 3.9 per cent.⁷³⁴ Once the damage from hurricanes and droughts was added to the equation, for some plantations, particularly the smaller ones, there was no chance of recovery. They went under.

An example of a small-time planter who went under was Thomas Powell and his wife Mary. Mortgaged, with 41 people, their estate had sustained hurricane damage, then their son died⁷³⁵ and, 'worn down' and unable to work, they were forced to apply for poor relief.⁷³⁶ It was recognised that their poverty had 'not arisen from a lavish expenditure of their means in better days but is solely to be attributed to the general depression of Colonial Interest which has born with peculiar hardship on properties of a limited extent.'⁷³⁷ Mr Powell died just three months after poor relief was granted,⁷³⁸ and his widow continued to receive it until 1829. Then the Treasury became short of money and she was among several people whose money was stopped.⁷³⁹ A year later, however, it had to be re-instated due to the widow's 'extreme poverty'.⁷⁴⁰ By then Powell's estate was in the hands of the London West India house Manning & Anderdon, which shortly afterwards went bankrupt.⁷⁴¹ But debts were not only owed to metropolitan concerns; there was also an increase in small amounts of money owed in the island so that in 1830 the Legislature started to discuss the need for establishing a special court to deal with these cases.⁷⁴²

While planters and merchants made their plight known to the British government,⁷⁴³ the anti-slavery lobby could see that reform was, after all, possible when a major piece of legislation concerning another oppressed group was passed. Known as the Catholic Emancipation Act, for the first time in three centuries it gave Roman Catholics full political and civil rights. This legislation passed Parliament shortly before King George IV died. Some planters and merchants, among them the House, believed that the King's successor, his brother William IV, was favourably disposed towards the West Indies and optimistically predicted that planters could expect some relief.⁷⁴⁴ (Their belief, no doubt, was based on the now legendary visit to Nevis in the 1780s when the young William had served in Royal Navy.) The House was also convinced that the British Parliament still supported the West-India interest and re-assured Peter Thomas Huggins that no one had 'any idea that immediate emancipation can take place, and certainly not without the proprietors of estates receiving compensation.'⁷⁴⁵ Indeed, when shortly

⁷³³ Ward, JR British *West Indian Slavery* pp79-80

⁷³⁴ Ward, JR British *West Indian Slavery* p47

⁷³⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 16 June 1825

⁷³⁶ UKNA, CO 186/12: 18 August 1825

⁷³⁷ UKNA, CO 186/12: 18 August 1825

⁷³⁸ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 20 November 1825

⁷³⁹ UKNA, CO 186/13: 29 November 1829

⁷⁴⁰ UKNA, CO 186/14: 7 June 1830

⁷⁴¹ The company of Manning & Anderdon suspended payment in July 1831 and went bankrupt. They had debts of nearly £375,000, although they were owed £187,000 and either owned or had mortgages or leases on 31 estates with a notional book value (before bankruptcy) of £310,000. The commissioners valued these at half that amount. Of the 13 estates owned outright two were in Nevis, seven in St Kitts, two in Antigua and two in Trinidad. The company had already mortgaged twenty of the estates to assignees to secure loans. Four volumes of the Manning bankruptcy commission are to be found in the National Archives (Sheridan, Richard B 'The West India Sugar Crisis and British Slave Emancipation, 1830-1833' in *The Journal of Economic History* Vol 21 No 4 December 1961 pp539-51).

⁷⁴² UKNA, CO 186/14: 9 August 1830

⁷⁴³ See, for example, the Memorial of Planters and Merchants connected with Trinidad, dated 26 May 1831, quoted in Williams, Eric (comp and ed) *Documents on British West Indian History*

⁷⁴⁴ PP, LB 60: PA & Co to Charles Pinney, 15 September 1830

⁷⁴⁵ PP, LB 63: PA & Co to PT Huggins, 11 February 1831

afterwards Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton presented a resolution for the abolition of slavery, it did not pass Parliament. Buxton had used demographic statistics which showed that, since the British withdrawal from the slave trade, plantation populations in the West Indies had declined from 800,000 to 700,000. He could demonstrate that withdrawal from the slave trade had not improved conditions. Amelioration had failed.⁷⁴⁶ The government, however, tried to pursue the ameliorationist line, and in November 1831 sent new orders to its Crown colonies to adopt further measures to improve the lives of their people. Parliament threatened fiscal and trade penalties if the colonies failed to comply.

As enslaved people in the West Indies got to hear of the steps taken on their behalf in London, they took their own, and each group fuelled the other's actions. While the anti-slavery lobby went through political channels, the enslaved people used the means which they had at their disposal. In February 1831 they rose in Martinique in an insurrection and in the following month people in Antigua followed suit,⁷⁴⁷ while in Jamaica decisions taken by the Legislature laid the foundations for a massive uprising. In Nevis people were restless and seemed 'much inclined to follow' the example of their brethren in Antigua,⁷⁴⁸ but some dismissed their restlessness as 'a very unnecessary state of excitement and alarm', brought about by 'exaggerated statements'.⁷⁴⁹ The Senior King's Counsel, John Peterson, was blamed for deceiving people with 'false expectations' and slaveholders sought to convince people 'of their error'.⁷⁵⁰ Rumours abounded that the new King wanted to set them free but that the planters refused to enact the King's wishes. This was a repeat of what had happened in Jamaica in the 1780s⁷⁵¹ and in Barbados in 1816, and mindful of how rumours had triggered the Barbados rebellion, the British government sent a Circular Dispatch to all the Governors of the West Indian colonies, to be issued 'in the event of any excitement or false impressions being observed among the slaves.' The proclamation appealed directly to the people, informing them that no orders had been made for their emancipation and warning them that any act of insubordination excited the 'highest displeasure' and would prove counter-productive. Anyone who failed to submit to the law or did not show 'dutiful obedience to their masters' would forfeit any claim to protection.⁷⁵²

But people rebelled. They demanded their freedom. In Charlestown arson became such a problem that when in November 1831 Peter Thomas Huggins tried to get a carpenter he found they were in short supply. They were dealing with 'the dreadful destruction of houses in this city by incendiaries'.⁷⁵³ It was in this climate that on 22 December 1831 the Nevis Legislature decided to enlarge the jail.⁷⁵⁴ A few days later, on New Year's Night, another fire was burning, this time at St Thomas Lowland.⁷⁵⁵ Meanwhile in Jamaica some 20,000 enslaved people rose in rebellion in what became known as the 'Baptist War'. After the Jamaican legislature had insensitively handled other issues throughout the year, the revolt was sparked by a shortened Christmas holiday and fuelled by the belief that freedom had been granted in England but withheld by the planters. As in Demerara, the uprising was headed up by a Baptist. He was Samuel Sharpe, an enslaved man and a lay preacher in a mission headed by a white minister. The rebels

⁷⁴⁶ Blouet, Olwyn Mary 'Buxton, Sir (Thomas) Fowell, first baronet (1786-1845)' in *Oxford DNB*

⁷⁴⁷ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 9 February 1831 and 20 March 1831

⁷⁴⁸ PP, Dom Box I i-12: Charles Pinney, Plymouth, to Mrs Pinney, 1 June 1831

⁷⁴⁹ PP, LB 60: Capt Joseph Bailey to PA & Co, 7 March 1831

⁷⁵⁰ PP, LB 63: Charles Pinney, to Peter Thomas Huggins, Nevis, 2 June 1831

John Peterson, the son of John Bates Peterson, departed for St Vincent on 21 May 1831. This was the last mention of the Senior King's Counsel in Nevis (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke).

⁷⁵¹ Stapleton Cotton MSS 9: Richard Neave, London, to Catherine Stapleton, 22 July 1788

⁷⁵² <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/> House of Lords Journal 1831-1832 Vol 64 pp129-34

⁷⁵³ PP, LB 63: PA & Co to PT Huggins, Nevis, 5 November 1831

⁷⁵⁴ When it was decided to enlarge the jail, the Legislature bought land from two surrounding properties. The neighbours who gave up part of their properties were two free women. For N£90 Mary Gardner sold 25' frontage on the northside to extend the backwall and for N£20 Ann Huggins sold 6' to the south (UKNA, CO 186/14: 22 December 1831 and 16 September 1832; also CR 1799-1801 ff147-51 and CR 1810-1814 f605).

⁷⁵⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

managed to hold a third of Jamaica until their protest was brutally suppressed by British troops and the local militia.⁷⁵⁶ A small number of whites had died, but the deaths of these 14 were avenged by killing and executing 500 people, and by torching twenty Baptist and Methodist chapels. Naively Charles Pinney believed that somehow the 'melancholy events in Jamaica' might benefit the West India interest. He thought they would force the Government 'to consider the distress they in a great measure have created by not attending to the interests of the planter, and by encouraging mistaken philanthropy.'⁷⁵⁷ For the British public, however, the attacks on chapels and the missionaries by the white authorities in the biggest of the sugar islands only increased anti-slavery feeling and reached a peak after the rebellions in the colonies. It became clear that the old system could not be sustained any longer. A decision needed to be reached to end it once and for all. The British Parliament took the first step by setting up a Select Committee which was 'to consider the extinction of slavery'. The Committee came up with a plan whereby each year ten per cent of enslaved people would be emancipated until, after ten years, all were free. Freedom would be conditional on people's 'progress in religious, moral and orderly behaviour'. Revd Thomas Morgan, the only witness who exclusively represented Nevis, St Kitts and Antigua in front of the Committee, pointed out that such a staggered plan would create a good deal of jealousy among those not yet freed.⁷⁵⁸

For Peter Thomas Huggins any thought of immediate emancipation had always been galling. He had hoped that if the government was determined to free people, it would not happen for another twenty or thirty years because 'it would take at least that time to prepare the negroes for the enjoyment of freedom'. Should they be set free immediately he feared for the safety of the minority population. His views were bleak, apocalyptic even: 'if it is done sooner all the white inhabitants must quit or they will be massacred. ... to stop here with the females of my family would be quite impossible.'⁷⁵⁹ He wrote this before the rebellions took place. After Nevis had been on the brink of its own uprising, he accused the 'anti slavery clan' of a 'mad infatuation'; these people would not shift their views even if faced with what he saw as convincing arguments.⁷⁶⁰ The thought of having extended his property made him hysterical; he claimed that his 'imprudence in purchasing Clarke's and Parris's' estates would ruin his family. To him, 'the moment Emancipation takes place there will be an end to these colonies' - indeed, there would be no need to 'send another ship for sugar'.⁷⁶¹

Peter Thomas Huggins wrote this in July 1831 but two months later he talked of planning to build a big house.⁷⁶² This was typical of him. He bemoaned his situation, forecast doom and gloom but at the same time advanced and strengthened his position. He enlarged his holdings because it was more economical to run several properties as one unit. Just as William Freeman had realised in the seventeenth century that 'the charge of the large plantation is not much more than a small one', so it made sense for Huggins to combine the surrounding smaller estates with Mountravers. He could use the steam engine to full capacity and he would work some of the land with the plough. If he moved his workforce between the different estates, he could employ them where they were most needed. It is evident from the parish registers that there was considerable movement of people within Huggins's properties. Most of the transfers would have been done without anyone having a say but some people may also have chosen to relocate because they had family and friends living on another Huggins plantation.

⁷⁵⁶ <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/reantislavery.htm>

⁷⁵⁷ PP, LB 29: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, 9 March 1832

⁷⁵⁸ Blouet, Olwyn M 'Earning and Learning' p400 and p406, quoting Parliamentary Papers 1831-2 Vol xx, p238

⁷⁵⁹ PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 15 December 1830

⁷⁶⁰ PP, LB 65: PT Huggins to Pinney, & Ames, 19 July 1831 Rec 22 August 1831

⁷⁶¹ PP, LB 65: PT Huggins to PA & Co, 6 July 1831

⁷⁶² PP, LB 65: PT Huggins to PA & Co, 7 September 1831 Rec 8 October 1831

Amid the rumours of freedom and the fights for freedom, two milestone events took place in Nevis; one legal, the other religious. On 3 May 1831 mixed-race people were admitted to sit on a jury - it was claimed at the time that this was the first instance in the West Indies - ⁷⁶³ and a month later Bishop Coleridge confirmed the first 35 people in the church of St Thomas Lowland.⁷⁶⁴ At the beginning of the century, or even a decade earlier, no one in Nevis would have believed such progress possible.

Earthquakes shook Nevis on 5 November 1831 and on 5 January 1832.⁷⁶⁵ Everyone thought it was over but a year later, on 8 February 1833, another tremor occurred at eight o'clock in the evening and during the night people counted eight to ten more. For the next seven weeks the earth did not keep still.⁷⁶⁶ Worn out and afraid for their lives, people sheltered in St Paul's church for safety.⁷⁶⁷ Only very old men and women would have remembered the series of earthquakes that had happened when they were young children in the 1750s.⁷⁶⁸

Drought accompanied the earthquakes,⁷⁶⁹ and it was later estimated that both calamities claimed a quarter of the island's agriculture and livestock.⁷⁷⁰ These heavy losses were to affect the island's economy for years to come. But once again Nevis was not alone in its suffering. In Anguilla, an island that relied on ground provisions, the harvest had failed and rain had washed away the crops. People were starving. They left the plantations and to survive, committed robberies. Many perished. Anguilla appealed for urgent relief from the other Leeward Islands.⁷⁷¹

The earthquakes, the drought and the loss of crops and animals occurred at a time when another catastrophe befell the islands. A cholera outbreak, which had started in the early 1820s in India, had migrated across Europe to North America and then moved south until it reached the Caribbean. In America it had already caused the 'most lamentable ravages',⁷⁷² and it was to do the same in the West Indies. In Nevis the cholera pandemic claimed the lives of some of the Mountravers inhabitants, and probably also of three employees associated with Clarke's and Parris's estates. Finlay Nicholson died in November 1832,⁷⁷³ Robert Washington, who had managed Clarke's for some time, died on Parris's in December 1833,⁷⁷⁴ and Horatio Iles, a former manager at Parris's Estate, died three weeks later.⁷⁷⁵ Earthquakes, drought, hunger and cholera – people must have felt that the day of reckoning was near.

Early in 1833 a new Parliament was set up in England. The election process had recently been reformed and parliamentary seats could no longer be bought or inherited. This meant that voters could choose men from a wider range of social backgrounds and the West India lobby lost many of its supporters. Now the abolition debate could continue in a more positive political climate. Planters tried to rescue what they could by pressing for compensation. At first a loan of £15 million was proposed, together with a transitional 12-year-apprenticeship period, but by May the slave-holding faction settled with the Government on a six-year apprenticeship period, immediate freedom for children under the age of six and compensation worth S£20 million. This fund, which represented almost 40 per cent of Britain's national

⁷⁶³ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke

⁷⁶⁴ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 Notes at the back of the Register

⁷⁶⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

⁷⁶⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke

⁷⁶⁷ Caswell, Henry *The Martyr of the Pongas*

⁷⁶⁸ Earthquakes were reported on 18 August 1753, and 26 and 27 January 1755 (Yorke, Philip Chesney (ed) *The Diary of John Baker* p72, p79 and p80).

⁷⁶⁹ PP, LB 29: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, 4 May 1833

⁷⁷⁰ Iles, AJB *An Account Descriptive of the Island of Nevis*

⁷⁷¹ UKNA, CO 186/14: May 1832

⁷⁷² UKNA, CO 186/14: 25 August 1832

⁷⁷³ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke: 11 November 1832; also NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 487

⁷⁷⁴ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke: 2 December 1833

⁷⁷⁵ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 547

budget,⁷⁷⁶ was 'to arrange matters agreeable to the West Indians'.⁷⁷⁷ The enslaved people were to get nothing. Indeed, paying compensation to their masters and mistresses only reinforced the notion that they were property. For Peter Thomas Huggins it was 'ridiculous to talk of the 20 millions being an adequate compensation'. He claimed he would 'gladly' get rid of his estates. Having purchased them for upwards of £120,000 he would sell them for a mere £50,000.⁷⁷⁸

The size of the compensation package was based on the value of individuals who had been sold at auction during a particular period. According to the Nevis Legislature, 47 people had been sold for a total of S£1,630, or close to S£35 on average. Those in St Vincent were the cheapest (S£16:15:0), followed by those in Tortola (S£17:10:0), the Bahamas (S£21:8:0) and St Kitts (S£24:2:6). Nevis came ninth in this league table of prices, and only people from Honduras, Demerara and Berbice were valued higher, at a staggering S£84, S£86 and S£90 per head.⁷⁷⁹ These prices reflected the relative value buyers had placed on people and generally mirrored their scarcity as well as the rigour of the plantation regimes prevalent in those colonies.

Compensation was made dependent on the colonies passing the appropriate legislation, and at the end of July 1833 the British Parliament passed a Bill that was to act as a model for the colonies.⁷⁸⁰ The Legislature in Nevis, meanwhile, focussed on two issues close to the inhabitants' hearts: the compensation provisions ('totally inadequate'), and law and order under the new system. Members stressed the need to maintain a 'native and powerful system of police' capable of accommodating the 'sudden change in the condition of the labouring population' and appointed a new Chief Constable, Mr Roper, as well as four assistant constables. They were to cover two discrete areas of Charlestown: 'from the Cedar Trees to the store of Mr Stanley' and from there 'to the end of the town to the North'.⁷⁸¹ To safeguard what they could of their human possessions the Legislature introduced one final Act that dealt with runaways. The legislation aimed 'to prevent a person in a state of slavery from avoiding apprenticeship by absenting themselves from this island on the 1 August 1834 notwithstanding their subsequent return thereto.'⁷⁸²

In the summer of 1833 when news about the new apprentice system reached everyone,⁷⁸³ several people left Nevis for North America. Among them was Jenetta Scarborough, a daughter of a freed Mountravers woman, and at least two plantation managers who intended to settle in the United States. One was the

⁷⁷⁶ <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/education/resources/slave-trade/banks/>

⁷⁷⁷ PP, LB 63: P & C to PT Huggins, 21 May 1833

⁷⁷⁸ PP, Dom Box H-31: PT Huggins, Bristol, to JF Pinney, 24 December 1833

⁷⁷⁹ The value of people was determined by an exercise that had started in 1823. The British government had asked for details of manumissions and Bills of Sale for the years 1823 to 1830. George Webbe, Walter A Mills, Joseph Stanley and President James Daniell from the Nevis Office of Auxiliary Commissioners supplied the figures for those people who had been sold under 'Writs of Execution in the Marshall's Office'. According to the original details submitted, 111 people were sold between 1823 and 1830. Of these, 91 people were sold privately: 20 in 1823; 8 in 1824; 21 in 1825; 13 in 1826; 19 in 1828 and 10 in 1830. Another 20 were sold at Marshall's Sales: 3 in 1823; 12 in 1824; 1 in 1825; and 4 in 1826 (UKNA, T 71/1543 Bundles 7 A and B; also CO 111/60 Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter No 19 (31 December 1826) p283).

For a full account of the complexities of the distribution of the £20 million fund, see Ingrid Jeacle, *Calculating a life: classification, valuation and compensation in the British abolition of slavery* published on 20 October 2022 by Emerald Insight at <https://www.emerald.com/insight/0951-3574.htm>

At least two former Mountravers people, Mulatto Polly's children Elizabeth Scarborough and Paul Scarborough, played their part in this historical process: Elizabeth freed one of her people and her brother bought two at a Marshall's Sale (T 71/1543 Bundle 7 A and B).

⁷⁸⁰ On 5 July 1833 the Bill was passed 'for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies, for promoting the Industry of the Manumitted Slaves, and for Compensating the Owners of such Slaves' (4 Will IV HoCPP 1833).

⁷⁸¹ Mr Roper was paid N£60 as 'superintendent' and the four constables N£40 each (UKNA, CO 186/14: 20 August 1833, 30 November 1833 and 12 December 1833).

⁷⁸² UKNA, CO 186/14: 12 December 1833

⁷⁸³ Mathison, William Law *British Slavery and its Abolition* p249

30-year-old William Huggins, accompanied by his wife Jane and a 24-year-old Eliza Huggins. Huggins had been overseer on Lord Combermere's plantation,⁷⁸⁴ but had left after a disagreement with the manager. Huggins's evidence had prompted Viscount Goderich to ask for working hours of plantation labourers to be limited, and it is quite possible that Huggins left because he had become unpopular in the island. On board the same vessel in which Huggins travelled, the Brig *Lewis*, was also the 37-year-old William Seabrook. He had managed Job Ede's troubled estate and then Colhoun's. The party from Nevis arrived at New Haven on 18 July 1833.⁷⁸⁵

In July 1833 Peter Thomas Huggins also sailed for America with his wife Jesse and four of their children⁷⁸⁶ and then went on from there to Britain. Two of their older children, Thomas and Ann, were at school in England, and their eldest daughter Frances was living in Liverpool. She, and her sisters Jessie and Sarah Bell, had married in 1830,⁷⁸⁷ and the Hugginses, no doubt, came to England to see their son and daughters. The Hugginses also visited Charles Pinney - during their stay in Bristol Mr Huggins was not well⁷⁸⁸ and they may have enjoyed a brief holiday in the genteel town of Malvern. Peter Thomas Huggins later fondly remembered his visit there with Mr and Mrs Claxton (his daughter Sarah and his new son-in-law, Philip Protheroe Claxton).⁷⁸⁹ While in London Huggins lobbied the Colonial Office for funds for his school and attended to other business. He had left Walter Lewis Bucke in charge, an experienced manager who had also worked on Eden Browne, the estate then owned by Peter Thomas Huggins's brother.⁷⁹⁰ At some stage Peter Thomas Huggins also employed a man called Richard Morton. With his wife Ann, Morton was known to have lived on 'Pinney's Estate'. This was in October 1831, when their daughter Mary Elizabeth was baptised,⁷⁹¹ but by the time slavery ended, the family had moved to Gingerland. Having worked on Pinney's Estate as a 'planter' – either as a manager or overseer - Richard Morton became a schoolmaster.⁷⁹²

⁷⁸⁴ William Huggins was overseer on Stapleton's from 1 March 1829 until 16 October 1829 (NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton pp295-96).

⁷⁸⁵ On 15 May 1827, when he was manager on Job Ede's Estate, Anne, the daughter of William Seabrook and his wife Hannah was baptised. His wife may have died because at the baptism of his son Henry Charles on 29 April 1830 the wife's name was given as Martha. William Seabrook was then manager of Colhoun's estate (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873). Anne probably died young because Seabrook arrived in America with Henry, aged three, and another daughter called Martha Jane, who was just six months old (<http://istg.rootsweb.com/v3/1800v3/lewis18330718.html> Transcriber's note: 'First name could be Henry or Harry but letters were written very close together.' National Archives and Records Administration, Film M575, Reel 5).

William Seabrook returned to Nevis and re-married. A churchwarden for St Thomas Lowland in 1836 (UKNA, CO 187/10 Blue Book Nevis 1836), by 1837 he worked on Jessup's estate. He and Martha had at least two children: John Francis Moody and Charles. They were baptised in June 1837 and in January 1840 (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 and Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 No 576).

⁷⁸⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke

The four Huggins children would have been Elizabeth, who was baptised in 1824, Edward John, who was born in about 1825; Charles Pinney, who was born in October 1829, and Peter Thomas, who was baptised on 22 February 1833 – a week before his nephew Henry, the son of his sister Jessie with Henry Harding (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 298 and 299)

⁷⁸⁷ Frances Huggins, PT Huggins's oldest daughter, married John Southern on 21 April 1830 (PP, LB 61: Messrs Evans Stevens & Co, London, to PA & Co, 27 April 1830), while Jessie and Sarah Bell got married on the same day, 17 July 1830. Jessie married Henry Harding, the collector of HM Customs; Sarah Bell Philip Protheroe Claxton, the son of Robert Claxton of Bristol (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965).

Henry Harding may have been the son of William Harding who came to Nevis in 1783, expecting to be employed on Stapleton's estate as manager, only to find that his job was that of a mere overseer (BU, Handlist for Box 2/18 v; Stapleton Cotton MSS 18: Walter Nisbet to Catherine Stapleton, 23 October and 12 November 1783).

In 1828 Walter Lewis Bucke recorded in his diary: '10 August 1828 W Harding and the Collector arrived' (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)). This may well have been father and son.

⁷⁸⁸ PP, Dom Box I i-14: RE Case to JF Pinney, 20 September 1833

⁷⁸⁹ PP, Dom Box E4: PT Huggins to Charles Pinney, 11 September 1856

⁷⁹⁰ In 1834 Walter Lewis Bucke also signed the register for Jessup's estate (UKNA, T 71/369).

⁷⁹¹ NHCS, St George's Gingerland Baptisms 1828-1838 No 400

⁷⁹² Richard and Ann Prentis Morton's son William was baptised just days after slavery was abolished, on 4 August 1834. By January 1838, when their daughter Fanny Catherine was baptised, the Mortons lived on Liburd's (NHCS, St George's Gingerland Baptisms

While waiting 'for a wind' so that he could sail back to Nevis, Huggins considered his prospects. Exposed during his stay in England to the strength of British anti-slavery sentiment, his vision of the future was bleaker than ever: he envisaged economic collapse and a complete breakdown of order. He was returning in the hope of saving all he could 'from the general wreck' and intended to retire to America as soon as he and his family could 'no longer remain in safety' in the island.⁷⁹³ He predicted that the apprenticeship scheme was doomed; enslaved people just were 'not industrious'. The new system could not work and in due course would have to be abandoned.⁷⁹⁴

The Hugginses returned in the *Earl of Liverpool*, and from the island of Lundy onwards enjoyed a 'glorious run of 23 days'. After an absence of nine months, at the beginning of April 1834 Peter Thomas Huggins and his family stepped ashore again in Nevis.⁷⁹⁵ They brought with them a new child; out at sea and a week's sailing away from Nevis, Mrs Huggins had given birth aboard ship.⁷⁹⁶ As was often the case, the generations were jumbled because not long before the Hugginses had gone on their journey they had become grandparents. Their daughter Jessie had given birth to her first child, a son called Henry.⁷⁹⁷

On arrival, the Hugginses would have been struck by how much the island had changed since they returned from their last holiday abroad. In the past decade the modern, industrial age had arrived. There were new smells, new sounds and new sights: the smell of coal fires, the hiss of steam as it was released from the boilers, and the sight of big plumes of smoke rising upwards. Enslaved people had moved the steam engines from the ships to the plantations and they had cut and moved the stones and mixed the mortar that was needed to build the structures to hold the machinery - the engine on Stoney Grove, for instance, required 4,500 head stones and 1,000 quoins.⁷⁹⁸ Enslaved labourers had assembled all the materials and installed the machines. Plantation managers like Henry Ransford who oversaw their construction supervised major industrial projects, and a new breed of skilled men, the engineers, had emerged. In fact during Huggins's stay in England an agreement had been drawn up to send to Nevis one such 'engineer and blacksmith', a man called Daniel Dangerfield. He was allowed to do 'smith's work on his own account',⁷⁹⁹ but his main task was to look after the five steam engines then in the island.⁸⁰⁰ Today, the remnants of the ruined steam engines and boilers, particularly on some of the higher-lying plantations such as Belmont or Bush Hill, speak of the extraordinary organisation and effort that went into hauling the large, unwieldy and very heavy pieces of equipment into place, and of the skill in assembling, working and maintaining the machines.

Another change that had taken place since the Hugginses' last stay abroad in the early 1820s was that churches were actively engaging with enslaved people. A new chapel had been opened at Newcastle,⁸⁰¹ and although funds were low the Legislature approved public money for enlarging churches all over the island.⁸⁰² Enslaved people were being baptised and getting married in church, and with this came the first labelling of their children born out of wedlock as 'illegitimate'. Occasionally fathers' names were now

1828-1838 No 1002 and No 1403). In 1840 he was known to have taught, at a salary of £30, at the public school in the parish church in St John Figtree. The school was attended by 50 boys and 30 girls (UKNA, CO 187/14 Blue Book Nevis 1840 'Education').

⁷⁹³ PP, Dom Box H-31: PT Huggins, Bristol, to JF Pinney, 24 December 1833

⁷⁹⁴ PP, Dom Box C3-19: PT Huggins to Charles Pinney, 19 May 1834

⁷⁹⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke: 4 April 1834

⁷⁹⁶ PP, Dom Box C3-19: PT Huggins to Charles Pinney, 18 April 1834

⁷⁹⁷ Henry Harding was baptised on 22 February 1833 (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 299).

⁷⁹⁸ PP, LB 59: PA & Co to JC Mills, 21 July 1825

⁷⁹⁹ PP, LB 63: PA & Co to Fawcett & Preston & Co, 12 December 1833

⁸⁰⁰ PP, Misc Vols 21: Agreement dated 24 December 1833, and LB 63: P & C to PT Huggins, 5 November 1833

⁸⁰¹ PP, Dom Box R-4: J & E Jones to Charles Pinney, 31 July 1830

⁸⁰² UKNA, CO 186/14: 3 and 30 October 1833

being recorded when children were christened, and, unimaginable a decade earlier, on 3 March 1833 eight enslaved people stood together with five free mixed-race people and nine whites in the church at St Thomas Lowland to receive from Revd John Duke the 'first Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood'. The communicants included Peter Thomas Huggins's daughters Mrs Jessie Harding and Mrs Sarah Bell Claxton and his son-in-law Philip Protheroe Claxton but none of the people from his estates.⁸⁰³

Closely linked to the church were the schools. Education was now firmly on the agenda because, as Olwyn Blouet wrote, 'Just as in England, where religious and moral education of the lower orders was used to help the movement from a rural, agricultural society to an urban industrial one, so in the West Indies it was hoped that education could smooth the transition from slavery to freedom.' And, as in England 'during the early phases of the industrial revolution, Sunday Schools provided access to literacy skills for the masses for the first time.'⁸⁰⁴ In Nevis, each parish had its own Sunday School and 368 children attended nine plantation schools⁸⁰⁵ while in Charlestown a public school, funded by the Incorporated Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, catered for 142 children (78 boys, 64 girls). They received instruction from Robert Hurman, the 'National school master',⁸⁰⁶ in the 'National system' which was also taught in the plantation schools: reading, writing, arithmetic and religious instruction.⁸⁰⁷

Of all the estate schools, Peter Thomas Huggins's catered for the most pupils: 116 children (60 boys and 56 girls). These young scholars represented a quarter (24.4 per cent) of all the people who lived on his four properties, Mountravers, Scarborough's, Clarke's (including Stewart's), and Parris's,⁸⁰⁸ and they represented close to a quarter (22.8 per cent) of all 510 pupils in Nevis who then attended school. A large proportion of the children brought up on Peter Thomas Huggins's estates were therefore at the forefront of those who benefited from early education provisions in Nevis.

John Jones, the school master, was replaced in 1832. He, his wife and child had been very sick, and because Mrs Jones had needed a rest and 'a change of climate',⁸⁰⁹ Huggins had twice moved the family to Parris's and also the higher lying Stewart's estate. When this proved insufficient the Joneses returned to England. They declined to serve in Nevis again and Huggins was forced to look for a replacement.⁸¹⁰ Huggins was disappointed; he had given Mr Jones a horse and had been 'as indulgent' as he possibly could. He had believed the couple 'satisfied and grateful ... and Mrs Jones had many opportunities of

⁸⁰³ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 Notes at the back

⁸⁰⁴ Blouet, Olwyn M 'Earning and Learning in the British West Indies: an Image of Freedom in the Pre-emancipation Decade, 1823-1833' in *The Historical Journal* Vol 34, 2 (1991) p396

⁸⁰⁵ In St George's Gingerland, 31 pupils attended a private school at Stoney Hill estate, which was funded by voluntary contributions. In St James Windward six estates had their own private schools: Newcastle (32 pupils), Camp (30), Hicks (32), Stapleton's (45), Brown's (29) and Round Hill (24). All were supported by the Government except for Stapleton's which the proprietor funded. In contrast to the others, the schoolmaster or mistress at Cottle's Round Hill was an estate slave. In St Thomas Lowland the two private schools were both supported by the Government. 'Mr Huggins's Chapel on the estate for the education of slave children' was attended by 116 and a school on Clifton estate by 29 pupils. For the parish of St John Figtree no information was available.

In total, including the children who went to the public school in Charlestown, 510 children (268 boys and 242 girls) attended schools in Nevis in 1833 (UKNA, CO 187/7 Blue Book Nevis 1833).

The school on Brown's listed in the Blue Book was mentioned by Captain Charles Hamden Williams in his evidence to the 'Select Committee to consider the extinction of slavery'. He said that the school was attended by 'about eighty children' (Blouet, Olwyn M 'Earning and Learning' p409 and pp405-06, quoting Parliamentary Papers 1831-1832 Vol xx p304). Attendance figures varied greatly in different reports for all the institutions in Nevis.

⁸⁰⁶ UKNA, CO 187/7 Blue Book Nevis 1833

⁸⁰⁷ Blouet, Olwyn M 'Earning and Learning' p396

⁸⁰⁸ In 1834 Peter Thomas Huggins's 475 people represented 5.44 per cent of the total slave population of 8,722 found in Nevis in 1834 (Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p413 Table S1.1 Registered a Mean Slave Populations by Colony and Sex, 1813-1834).

⁸⁰⁹ PP, Dom Box C3-16: Revd HJ Leacock, Nevis, to Charles Pinney, 12 July 1832

⁸¹⁰ PP, LB 29: Charles Pinney, to PT Huggins, 19 September 1832

making a little money by selling bread and various other things.’ He engaged a new school master ⁸¹¹ who appears to have been joined by a school mistress, Mrs Grenion.⁸¹² The master received a salary of five dollars a month and was granted two servants: one to cook and one to wait.⁸¹³ Having ‘established and carried on at considerable expense’ his own school, Huggins tried to exploit the importance the British Government then placed on education by getting it to buy the school, or to give an annual grant and continue it under management of the parish clergy.⁸¹⁴

The enslaved people keenly desired to learn and made use of everything that was offered. They flocked to the Methodist institutions and just before slavery was abolished, Revd Henry Britten reported on progress in Nevis:

The Methodist Society has here three Sunday schools, one week-night adult school, and an infant school commenced in Charlestown, about seven months since. They contain altogether 630 scholars, of whom 480 are slaves. It is almost incredible, the effect of the proposed alteration in the civil condition of the slaves has made upon them *in this Colony*. Their desire for religious instruction is intense. By hundreds they have pounced in upon us in the last year, so that we have sometimes been almost at our wit’s end to know what to do with them. There never existed in this island such favorable openings, and such a favourable period for religious instruction and education, as now. If we had the means, we could, I have no doubt, immediately double the number of our school, and of our scholars also.⁸¹⁵

Schools, chapels and churches, missionaries and ministers – they were all becoming part of everyday life and mainstream thinking. Within two decades planters had completely reversed their stance. Instead of disapproving, they were now actively working with the clergy to such an extent that, when they feared that rumours about emancipation might result in another uprising, they appealed to Revd Henry Britten to explain to the enslaved people the provisions of the Emancipation Act. Dutifully the Revd Britten talked to the people and published ‘An Affectionate Address to the Slave Population of the Island of Nevis’.⁸¹⁶ His message may have carried greater weight than that of some other clergymen because, undoubtedly, enslaved people approved of the fact that Revd Britten did not own any people while some of his Anglican colleagues did - even the supposedly liberal reverends Daniel Gateward Davies and Hamble James Leacock.⁸¹⁷

Reaching every individual would have been quite a task because the 8,722 enslaved people registered in Nevis were spread all over the island. They lived on a hundred plantations (40 of these had a hundred or more people, and 60 between 11 and a hundred), and the rest were part of 200 small units that could be found mostly in Charlestown. These people lived with masters and mistresses who had up to ten

⁸¹¹ PP, Dom Box C3-18: PT Huggins, Nevis, to Charles Pinney, 5 January 1833

⁸¹² It is just possible that PT Huggins’s unnamed schoolmaster was Mr Grenion. He also taught in the private school on Stapletons Estate in St James Windward parish that catered for 22 boys and 23 girls (UKNA, CO 187/7 Blue Book Nevis 1833). The Grenions appear to have been a family of school teachers. They may have come from Antigua: Jane Grenion in 1817 registered two people bought from Antigua (T 71/364). In the 1830s Miss Grenion taught at the public school in St Thomas Lowland which catered for between sixty and seventy children (CO 187/5 and CO 187/10 Blue Books Nevis 1831 and 1836).

⁸¹³ PP, Dom Box C3-18: PT Huggins, Nevis, to Charles Pinney, 5 January 1833

⁸¹⁴ PP, Dom Box H-31: PT Huggins, Bristol, to John Frederick Pinney, London, 24 December 1833

⁸¹⁵ Hamilton College Archive, African Repository and Colonial Journal Vol 11 May 1835 (Courtesy of VK Hubbard)

⁸¹⁶ Easton, Revd Wilfred and Revd Dom A Parker *Kindling of the Flame 1760-1960* pp49-50

⁸¹⁷ Having manumitted several individuals, in 1828 Revd Daniel Gateward Davis nevertheless took with him three to St Kitts ‘in attendance’ of his person (UKNA, T 71/367).

Compensation paid to Revd William Henry Rawlins for his three people amounted to £44; John Hendrickson Laurence collected £23 for one and £24 for one jointly-owned person, and even Revd Hamble James Leacock, whose association with the Methodists had won the disapproval of Bishop Coleridge (Caswell, Henry *The Martyr of the Pongas*) collected £306 for 17 and £20 for one and £160 for ten people (HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlvi: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08; also mf 41.391 p314 and p315).

enslaved people.⁸¹⁸ Four fifth (7,225 people, or 82 per cent) of all enslaved people in Nevis were employed. Of these, two thirds worked as field hands, a sixth as domestics, and the rest were trades people, head people and those employed on wharves and in shipping. Of the non-working population, 14.3 per cent were children under the age of six, while 3.7 per cent were 'aged, diseased, or otherwise non-effective'.⁸¹⁹ The population in the parish of St Thomas Lowland was typical of Nevis as a whole: 14.1 per cent of the children were six years or under and 3.9 per cent of people were 'non-effective'. On Mountravers the respective figures of 9.3 per cent and 5.7 per cent show that, compared to the rest of the parish, there were fewer young children and more old people. On this well-established plantation the population was ageing.

After his holiday abroad Peter Thomas Huggins had complained that he had much to put right after his return – things had got slack during his absence - ⁸²⁰ and just before slavery was abolished he would have put pressure on everyone on Mountravers to work harder and produce more. The first clause in the Abolition Act had laid down that from 1 November 1833 until 1 August 1834 working hours were to be restricted to ten hours a day, or sixty a week, but whether any planters in Nevis heeded this is questionable. There were no independent bodies to oversee that this law was put into practice.

At midnight on Thursday, 31 July 1834, enslaved people became apprentices. Children under the age of six years were freed immediately. On Mountravers, 13 youngsters benefited from this.

All over the Caribbean the first day of August was 'observed by proclamation as a day of thanksgiving; to Almighty God for the termination of slavery.' Churches held 'Watch Nights' of quiet prayer and Thanksgiving Services and special baptism ceremonies.⁸²¹ In the Methodist Chapel, Revd Britten baptised 12 people that Friday ⁸²² and addressed from the pulpit 'many hundreds of the emancipated negroes' who 'most gratefully received' his message. Everyone had Friday and Saturday off work and continued celebrating, and Revd Britten was pleased to report to his superiors that 'they conducted themselves in the most orderly and Christianlike manner.' On Sunday he rode around the island, 'and never heard of a single improper act, not even of a man being intoxicated.' To mark the occasion, people forewent the opportunity to sell their produce or do some shopping and attended services instead: 'Without the interference of any law, they ... totally abandoned the Sunday market; and there was no more sign of this stronghold of the devil, either in town or country than if it had never existed. Hallelujah! Our chapels were crowded to suffocation.' Writing on Monday and still excited by the events, he

⁸¹⁸ The compensation claims provide good evidence that in the course of 150 years the estates in Nevis had increased in size. In 1667/8 there had been 301 slaveholders whom Watts had divided in three sizes: big estates (worked with 50 people or more), middling estates (worked with between 20 and 49) and small slaveholder who owned up to 19 people. Watts had counted 13 big estates, 37 of middling size and 251 small owners (Watts, David *The West Indies* p334, quoting Catalogue of Colonial Papers 1669-1674 No 429-31). If one applies the same criteria, then the compensation claims reveal that in 1834 Nevis had almost the same number of slaveholders (just over 300) but that the number of large estates had grown more than four-fold to 54, while those of middling size had shrunk from 37 to 16. The number of small slaveholders had also decreased slightly from 251 to 233. (The total number of claims would have been 306 but three slaveholders did not complete their claims). Of the 57 large estates in Nevis, 40 had a hundred or more people. Another 60 estates had between 11 and a hundred people (UKNA, T 71/1038 and T 71/1039).

⁸¹⁹ Of the working population, two thirds were working as field hands (4,636/64.2 per cent; 4,646 on p550), a sixth as domestics (1,207/16.7 per cent); trades people accounted for 6.8 per cent, head people for 3.9 per cent and those employed on wharves for 8.4 per cent (Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p48 Table 3.3 Distribution of Slaves between Compensation Categories by Colony, 1834).

⁸²⁰ PP, Dom Box C3-19: PT Huggins to Charles Pinney, 19 May 1834

⁸²¹ Easton, Revd Wilfred and Revd Dom A Parker *Kindling of the Flame* pp49-50

In Britain, too, people marked the abolition of slavery and showed their support. In the small market town of Wisbech in Cambridgeshire, for instance, the Independent, Baptist and Wesleyan chapels held special services and the Friends of Negro Emancipation invited its fellow citizens to a celebratory afternoon tea. Any surplus of the shilling entrance fee was to benefit chapels and congregations in the West Indies (WFM, Poster displayed in the local history section).

⁸²² On 13 July 1834, just a couple of weeks before the abolition of slavery, 26 people had already been baptised (NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835).

optimistically believed that Sunday markets were gone forever: 'We must now find room in the places of worship for the hundreds, for the many hundreds who used to be every Sunday to the market-place.'⁸²³

As elsewhere in the colonies, the British and Foreign Bible Society sought to equip the emancipated people with a moral framework based on Christian beliefs and presented them with 'the New Testament and the Psalms'. In Nevis the Society handed out 3,406 copies,⁸²⁴ which meant that every second person had their own. This would not have reflected the number of people who were literate but the acquisition of a book may well have stimulated the uneducated into wanting to learn to read. Age was no barrier to studying; a few years later a missionary commented on the fact that 'several adults' (some 'not less than 50 years of age') were among over 400 pupils eagerly learning to read in the Sunday School in Charlestown.⁸²⁵

According to Revd Britten the change from slavery to the apprenticeship system went off quietly and in a dignified manner, but this did not last. By Monday, 4th August, 'the labouring classes were in a state of most alarming insubordination'. Their 'disorderly and disaffected state' caused the immediate appointment of ten special magistrates charged with keeping the peace in the island. The men chosen for this task were six planters and four other men who were 'much connected with colonial society'; only one of the ten, the merchant Thomas Duke,⁸²⁶ had no direct association with apprentice labourers. Among the special magistrates were Peter Thomas Huggins and two of his relatives: his son-in-law, Philip Protheroe Claxton, and his nephew, the young Thomas John Cottle.⁸²⁷ A few white men continued to hold the power to control and punish.

In Nevis efforts to enforce the new labour laws were met, 'if not with insolence and opposition, at least with passive resistance, by refusing to work, during the crop, for wages on the Saturday.' But there was also active resistance and the President reported 'six cases in which valuable pieces of cane have been destroyed by fire'. According to him 'they had occurred under such circumstances as to leave no doubt but that they were the acts of incendiaries.'⁸²⁸ While in Nevis opposition to the apprenticeship system remained patchy and covert, in St Kitts people openly rebelled. Their disaffection at being denied immediate freedom was more intense because one major planter had manumitted all his people, and so others refused to work. Governor MacGregor hurried from Antigua and on 6th August placed the island under martial law. It lasted for ten days.⁸²⁹ 16 leaders were tried and five sentenced to be deported to Bermuda while nine were flogged or imprisoned or both.⁸³⁰ The St Kitts rebellion had a far-reaching effect; it contributed to the British Government's decision to reduce apprenticeships to four years and to bring forward complete emancipation in its colonies to 1 August 1838.

⁸²³ HoCPP 1836 'Papers presented to Parliament by HM command, in explanation of the measures adopted by HM government, for giving effect to the Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies' Part III (2): Enclosure No 340, President Josiah Webbe Maynard, Government House, Nevis, to His Excellency Sir EJM MacGregor 24 August 1834; Enclosure No 1, President JW Maynard to His Excellency Sir EJM MacGregor 24 August 1835, and Enclosure No 342 Charles Kenny, Nevis, to His Honour The President Administering the Government 6 October 1835 'A Report from Nevis regarding the Abolition of Slavery' in George Browne *The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, from its Institution in 1804, to the Close of its Jubilee in 1854* Vol 2 1859 (Courtesy of Brian Littlewood)

⁸²⁴ Jacobson, *Stiv Am I Not a Man and a Brother* Appendix. Source: List of the Shipments of New Test etc. to the WI for Distribution to the Emancipated Negroes on Christmas Day, 1834. The Report of the BFBS, p. xciv

⁸²⁵ SOAS, Wesleyan Missionary Archives, MMS/W.Indies correspondence/Antigua/FBN21 Item 23: Revd John Bell, Gingerland District, Nevis, to Mission House, 8 April 1839 (Courtesy of Margaret Stacey)

⁸²⁶ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873

⁸²⁷ HoCPP 1836 'Papers presented to Parliament by HM command, in explanation of the measures adopted by HM government, for giving effect to the Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies' Part III (2)

⁸²⁸ HoCPP 1836 'Papers presented to Parliament by HM command, in explanation of the measures adopted by HM government, for giving effect to the Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies' Part III (2)

⁸²⁹ Mathison, William Law *British Slavery and its Abolition* p248

⁸³⁰ Dyde, Brian *Out of the Crowded Vagueness* pp154-56

In Antigua emancipation came earlier than planned; the apprentices freed themselves. In 1831 an insurrection had taken place,⁸³¹ with the result that the island opted out of the apprenticeship scheme altogether and straightaway adopted a free wage labour system.⁸³² The injustice of people being freed in one island but not in others was not lost on the apprentice workers.



Several individuals who cannot be identified from the slave registers are recorded in the parish registers as living on 'Huggins's' or 'Pinney's' estate. They were the field workers Jupiter Huggins and June Huggins - their daughter Eisey was baptised on 7 December 1828 - ⁸³³ and a man called Alexander Oliver. Described as a slave of Peter Thomas Huggins, he was said to have been 45 years old when he was buried in November 1831.⁸³⁴ At least one free black woman lived on the plantation, Mary Brownbill. She had a son, Edward Allers, who was baptised on 9 July 1824.⁸³⁵ His was the earliest baptism in St Paul's church of anyone from Mountravers. Later Edward Allers became an overseer of roads in Nevis.⁸³⁶ Another woman, Nancy Bell, may also have been free. She and Dannill Rop (mis-spelt for Reap?), a boatman, had a daughter called Lucy. At the age of 'about 14 years' the girl was baptised on 26 January 1835. They lived on Pinneys Estate.⁸³⁷

Mary Brownbill, too, was said to have been resident on Pinney's Estate, and it is noticeable how long the core of Peter Thomas Huggins's empire, Mountravers, and the mortgaged property, Clarke's, were still known by the name of the former proprietors. Those people whom JPP had reserved for his own use and whom he had passed on to his son Charles were generally known by the family name of Pinney, as well as those who had been sold to Huggins in 1808. However, sometimes their surnames were recorded as Huggins while many of those born under Huggins's ownership also acquired Pinney (Pinny, Penny) as their surname. In the Methodist baptismal registers in particular it was unusual to find records relating to enslaved individuals with the surname Huggins, or people said to have belonged to Mr Huggins, or to have lived on 'Huggins's estate'.

The Hugginses and their overseers had presided over an appalling loss of life. Under JPP's ownership a small but important increase had kept up the numbers, which carried on after he handed over the estate to his son. Peter Thomas Huggins had started off with 182 people (Old Lucy was counted twice) and had then received another ten of JPP's reserved people – those who had lived at Woodland. Exactly eight years later, by 1817, these 192 people were reduced to 159. Although some individuals may have left the estate on their own accord, it can be assumed that almost all had died and that Huggins did not sell more than a very small number (he is known to have sold two men, Tom Penny and George Vaughan). In eight years the population had shrunk by close to a fifth (17.2 per cent), which means each year it had fallen, on average, by just over 2 per cent.

In 1822 Mountravers could count itself among the minority of large estates in Nevis (with over a hundred enslaved people) that registered an increase in its numbers: in the period since 1817 more enslaved children had been born than had died. The increase, however, was marginal: only two more babies had been born than people had died. Huggins saw the trend and sought to boost his workforce by purchasing

⁸³¹ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

⁸³² Craton, Michael *Empire Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* p380

⁸³³ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Record 1825-1835 No 535

⁸³⁴ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 433

⁸³⁵ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 39

⁸³⁶ UKNA, CO 187/32 Blue Book Nevis 1858

⁸³⁷ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Unnumbered

replacements, and he acquired nine new people so that in 1822 the slave population peaked at 170. From then on the numbers declined until they stabilised: 161 people were on the estate in 1825, 153 in 1828, 142 in 1831 and in 1834.

The numbers declined because more people died than children were born. Between 1822 and 1825, the deaths of 19 people outnumbered the 13 births. Then, between 1825 and 1828, the number of people who died declined by one to 18 but so did the number of children who were born, only ten. In the years from 1828 to 1831 the pattern of fewer deaths and fewer births was repeated but the ratio became much more dramatic: 15 people died while only four babies were born. In addition, one person was purchased and one man was sold. In the three years leading up the abolition of slavery relatively fewer people died, only seven, which was exactly equal to the number of children who were born. This, at least, halted the decline, but during that same three-year-period other plantations could register greater improvements - even Indian Castle, the estate that belonged to Peter Thomas Huggins's brother Edward: there 14 children were born and only four people died. Edward Huggins junior put this down to treating his people with 'humanity and attention'. According to him, 'an increase of nine per cent' in the population was 'unparalleled in any part of the West Indies',⁸³⁸ but other estates in Nevis, too, managed to produce small net increases when fewer people died and more children were born.

Decreases and increases in the number of people on Mountravers, July 1817 to December 1833

| Period | Decreases | | | Increases | | Total number of people |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|
| | Deaths | Runaways | Sales | Births | Purchases | |
| 16 July 1817 to 8 February 1822 | 20 | 2 | | 24 | 9 | 170 |
| 9 February 1822 to 14 February 1825 | 19 | 1 | 2 | 13 | | 161 |
| 15 February 1825 to 31 December 1827 | 18 | | | 10 | | 153 |
| 1 January 1828 to 31 December 1830 | 15 | | 1 | 4 | 1 | 142 |
| 1 January 1831 to 31 December 1833 | 7 | | | 7 | | 142 |
| Total | 79 | 3 | 3 | 58 | 10 | |

The ten people Peter Thomas Huggins had bought since 1817 had fared badly. By August 1834 fewer than half were still on Mountravers. Two had been sold and four had died. Nelson, Billy and John Keepe had lasted only around four years and Primus six years at the most.

⁸³⁸ UKNA, CO 239/29

During the period 15 July 1817 to 31 December 1833 a total of 79 people died on Mountravers, three absconded and three were sold. During the same period 58 babies were born and ten people added through purchases.⁸³⁹ Given the decrease of 85 people, the increase of 68 people could not sustain the population.⁸⁴⁰

On 1 January 1834 142 people lived on Mountravers; by 1 August two men had died and the total stood at 140 - almost the same number as had lived on the estate exactly one hundred years earlier. When James Browne had compiled his first register in September 1734 he had noted the names of 146 men, women and children. Despite all the purchases, over the past century the plantation population had decreased by six.

However, this is not the true picture because included in the total count should be those people JPP had originally reserved for himself and their offspring. Thirty of them were alive and became apprentices: Frankey Vaughan and her children Guy and Juno; Fanny Frederick; Mulatto Nanny; Hetty and her children Sally Fisher and Edward Fisher; Little Molly's sons Mickey and James and probably Little Molly herself; Domingo and her children Azariah and Patty; Sarah Fisher and her children Frank Fisher, Josiah Parris and Patty Fisher and her grandchildren William Jones, Betsey, Jeanett and Fanny Jones and her great-grandchildren Thomas Herbert and Sarah Ann; Mary Webbe, her son and daughter Walter and Mille and her grandson Frederick; and Kitty and her daughter Betsey. In addition, Black Polly probably still lived in Charlestown, virtually free, while her grandsons William Nicholson, Josiah Nicholson and John Fisher were legally free. Two other free women, Nancy Williams and Mulatto Polly, were also still alive when slavery was abolished, as were at least three of Mulatto Polly's children and two of her grandchildren. There were other descendants of former Mountravers people: the grandchildren of the African woman Judy (Molly Richens's children with the surname Levy), and the three children and two grandchildren of the deceased Betsey Arthurton. Not included are the descendants of any of the freed males.



⁸³⁹ In contrast, during the period 1817 to 1834 the population on the Spring Valley estate in St James Windward had seen an increase. Managed during absentee ownership by the attorney James Laurence, the Spring Valley slave population was among the few large estates that could register an increase through births alone. In 1817 there were 150 people; by 1834 this had risen to 179. The trend continued, and slave compensation was, in fact, paid on 181; two more children were born during the seven months period between completion of the last register and application for compensation.

⁸⁴⁰ Expressed differently, during 1817 to 1834, 73 births occurred on Mountravers for every 100 deaths. Compared to five other estates in Nevis which in 1817 started off with a similar number of people (Spring Valley: 150; Round Hill: 151; Eden: 152; Low Grounds: 154; Clay Ghut: 164), Mountravers was among the bottom four in a league table: Round Hill registered only 66 births for every 100 deaths; Clay Ghut 69 and Low Grounds 77; Eden 104 and Spring Valley a staggering 159.

Analysing the Jamaican triennial slave returns, Richard Dunn has found that on Mesopotamia plantation there were 54 births for every 100 deaths, compared to 65 births for every 100 deaths on ten other sugar estates of closest equivalent size in the same parish (Dunn, RS "Dreadful Idlers" in the Cane Fields' p800). Adjusted to the same period, 1817 to 1832, at Mountravers the figure was exactly the same: 65 births for every 100 deaths. The adjusted figures for the other Nevis estates are as follows: Round Hill 59 births for every 100 deaths; Clay Ghut 61; Low Grounds 68; Eden 92 and Spring Valley 141. [The calculation used was 100 divided by (number of deaths 1817-1834) x (number of births 1817-1834) = births for every 100 deaths : 18 years (1817-1834) x 16 years (1817-1832).

Of course, the composition of the individual plantation populations played an important role: the number of females of child-bearing age and the number of vulnerable people who were likely to die.

BIOGRAPHIES

647 Patience was black, African and born about 1791/2.

She was bought by the Hugginses after they acquired Mountravers. Patience died in her early thirties, on 20 October 1824.

648 and 649 John Tyson and Little Patty, later Patty Penny. John Tyson was a black Creole, born about 1804/5. The Hugginses bought John after they took over the plantation. His previous owner may also have been called John Tyson.⁸⁴¹ The Tysons were connected with St Kitts rather than Nevis.

John Tyson became a mason and in his early thirties had a daughter with a black woman called Patty Penny. She was born on Mountravers just after August 1807, when Joe Stanley handed over the plantation.⁸⁴² The couple's four-months-old daughter Jane was baptised on 11 September 1836.⁸⁴³

As a mason he had lucrative employment and would have earned in the region of N£30 to N£40 a year but he may have changed jobs and become a turnkey at the jail in Charlestown. With the post came free accommodation and a job for his wife. Married jailor's wives were employed as matrons who were also paid a salary. In 1841 this was £25 a year each.⁸⁴⁴ Two decades later the pay was the same but John Tyson may have changed job once more and become a police constable. His salary was £30 a year. He and the other constables were stationed at the barracks.⁸⁴⁵

650 Polly Pussey, later perhaps Polly Huggins. She was black and probably born not long after John Henry Clarke took possession of Mountravers in March 1808.

It is possible that, as Polly Huggins, she married the domestic Mike Martin. The wedding took place on 28 April 1838 in St Paul's church.⁸⁴⁶

651 Kitsey, later Kitsey Greathead, Catherine Smith and Kitty Ellis and Katharine Ellice/Ellis. She was born in 1808 during the brief period John Henry Clarke was in possession of Mountravers. Kitsey was 'black of a yellow cast', as were her younger siblings, Betsey Greathead and Richard Greathead. The Greatheads or Greatheads were a St Kitts family with connections to people in Nevis⁸⁴⁷ but it is not known how the children came to this surname.

While Kitsey was pregnant, probably with her first child, her 16-year-old sister Betsey died. A couple of months later, on 18 May 1826, Kitsey gave birth to a son, Henry Williams, and then had two more boys:

⁸⁴¹ PP, LB 37: JPP to John Tyson, St Kitts, 17 September 1785

⁸⁴² In 1817, Little Patty was said to have been ten. She was one of three girls who did not have an exact birth date (UKNA, T 71/364).

⁸⁴³ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

⁸⁴⁴ UKNA, CO 187/15 Blue Books Nevis 1841

⁸⁴⁵ UKNA, CO 187/39 and CO 187/40 Blue Books Nevis 1865 and 1866

⁸⁴⁶ NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842

⁸⁴⁷ On 7 December 1810 JPP wrote to Miss Peterson who was then staying at Bertie Greathead, Guys Cliff, near Warwick (PP, LB 23). Bertie presumably was the son of Samuel Greathead (c 1710-1765), the first surviving son of John and Frances Greathead of St Mary Cayon, St Kitts. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, and after re-joining his family for a few years settled in England. He rented Guy's Cliff from 1743 and later bought it. He was MP for Coventry from 1747 to 1761. A source for this information was given as *An Englishman in Paris 1803; the Journal of Bertie Greathead* (edited by JPPT Bury and JC Barry) (Namier, Sir James and John Brooke (eds) *The History of Parliament*). See also Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 5 p320.

John Greathead in March 1828 and Eneas Smith in June 1830. The three children were baptised together at the end of August 1830.⁸⁴⁸ Not long afterwards, on 10 October 1830 Kitsey and her brother were also baptised. They then lived on Clarke's Estate.⁸⁴⁹

It is almost certain that the father of her first child was the 34-year-old mulatto Lewis Williams (No 557) and that the father of her third child was another mixed-race man, George Smith (No 583). Kitsey Greathead married him on 19 May 1831 in the church at St Thomas Lowland.⁸⁵⁰ In March 1833 the couple's son Edwin George was born, and the boy was baptised later in the year, in the same church.⁸⁵¹

Kitsey and Lewis Williams were not married for long when her husband died. He was 37 years old. On 10 March 1834 he was buried in Charlestown in the cemetery of St Paul's church. Widowed for less than two years, on 10 November 1835 she married again. As Catherine Smith she and the bachelor John Ellis from the parish of St Paul's celebrated their union in the church in Charlestown.⁸⁵² Her husband was a few years younger than she was and was a free man.⁸⁵³ While she made a mark, he signed the register. The witnesses were John Wellington Bertrand, who, like her husband, was a carpenter from Charlestown,⁸⁵⁴ and William Browne, a clerk.⁸⁵⁵

At the time of their wedding Kitsey was said to have lived on Mountravers but some time afterwards and still during her apprenticeship period, she and her family moved to Parris's Estate. There John carried on working as a carpenter.

The couple's first child, Angelett, was baptised on 22 August 1836 in the same church where Kitsey and John had married, St Paul's,⁸⁵⁶ but after that their children were baptised in St Thomas Lowland church: on 24 June 1837 their son Octavius Alexander⁸⁵⁷ and on 28 January 1841 their son Frederick Augustus.⁸⁵⁸ In the same month Kitsey's husband witnessed the marriage of John James Scarborough and Drusilla Tennison, also in St Thomas Lowland church.⁸⁵⁹ Some years later he was called upon to witness the marriage of another couple who probably were connected with Peter Thomas Huggins's estates: Thomas Hodson and Elizabeth Huggins.⁸⁶⁰

Kitsey was widowed once more when, after twenty years of marriage, she lost her second husband. John Ellis was buried on 16 October 1856. He was said to have been aged 41 and had lived on Parris's.⁸⁶¹

⁸⁴⁸ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 Numbers 214, 213 and 212

⁸⁴⁹ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 Numbers 224 and 226

⁸⁵⁰ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

⁸⁵¹ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 388

In the Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 his name was transcribed as Selwin Smith.

⁸⁵² NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

⁸⁵³ John Ellis may, possibly, have been a descendant of John Ellice from Ledbury, who went to Nevis as an indentured servant in the seventeenth century (<http://englishamerica.home.att.net/places/br-v1-e1.htm>)

⁸⁵⁴ John Wellington Bertrand married Henrietta Galpine in 1837 (NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842). Their daughter Martha Ann was baptised on 28 March 1838 (St Paul's Baptisms 1835-1873 No 87).

⁸⁵⁵ There were several William Brownes in Nevis at that time but the same man witnessed many other marriages, often with George Vaughan or Thomas Newton (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965). Both these men were sextons at St Thomas Lowland; George Vaughan in 1831 and Thomas Newton in 1836 (UKNA, CO 187/5 and CO 187/10 Blue Books Nevis 1831 and 1836).

⁸⁵⁶ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1835-1873 No 27

⁸⁵⁷ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873

⁸⁵⁸ NHCS, Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 No 612

⁸⁵⁹ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965 No 234

⁸⁶⁰ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965 No 268

Thomas Hodson was also the name of the overseer on Ward's estate, who had been accused of maltreating a woman, Bitchey, but he had died some time before 1830 (NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p313).

⁸⁶¹ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1954 No 650

Their son Octavius Alexander was, like his father, a carpenter. He went to live on Pinney's Estate. He and a woman called May had a son, Ernest John Augustus, who was baptised on 25 December 1858.⁸⁶² The infant died aged two and was buried on 8 September 1860.⁸⁶³

Possibly after the death of her husband, the widowed Mrs Ellis moved from Parris's Estate to the nearby Craddock Road area. Katharine Ellis was buried on 20 October 1877. She was 68 or 69 years old. In the parish register her age was recorded as 68.⁸⁶⁴

652 Paul was black and born on Friday, 1 September 1809. He was the first child born after the Hugginses took possession of the estate.

Paul died a month after he turned 21, on 4 October 1830.

653 Johnny Ebony was black and born on Sunday, 10 September 1809. He died on 17 April 1823 at the age of 13 years.

654 Stephen was black and born on Sunday, 17 September 1809. His health may not have been strong; in his mid-twenties he looked after the sheep on Mountravers.

Stephen was baptised on 22 June 1836.⁸⁶⁵

655 Rebecca, later Rebecca Penny and Pinney; married name Tobin. She was black and born on Thursday, 19 October 1809.

Aged 22, she had an 'illegitimate daughter'. Leah, born in January 1832, was also black. The girl was baptised in September 1833.⁸⁶⁶

Rebecca Penny then married a man from Tobin's Stoney Grove Estate, which lay at the other side of Charlestown. Her husband, Frederick Tobin, was a sambo and a year older than Rebecca.⁸⁶⁷ They got married in St Thomas Lowland – in the same church Leah had been baptised - and celebrated the abolition of slavery by holding their wedding on 3 August 1834. On the same day, in the same church, three other couples also marked their transition to apprentice labourers by getting married.⁸⁶⁸

Rebecca's husband was not Leah's father and it appears that she had another child that was not Frederick's. This infant she took to the Methodist Chapel for baptism. There her maiden, rather than her husband's, name was registered: Rebecca Pinney and --- Taylor's unnamed child was baptised on 10 May 1835. The father was a sugar boiler on 'Penny's'. Despite being married to a man from the Stoney

⁸⁶² NHCS, Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 No 1167

In the transcript her name was given as May Octavius and his as Alexander Ellis.

⁸⁶³ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1954

⁸⁶⁴ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1954 No 1254

⁸⁶⁵ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

⁸⁶⁶ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 391

⁸⁶⁷ UKNA, T 71/364

⁸⁶⁸ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

Grove Estate, Rebecca was still living on Mountravers.⁸⁶⁹ Given that she may have lived on a different estate from her husband, it would have been difficult to maintain their relationship and it is possible that her marriage had broken down quickly.

656 Betsey Greathead, born on Sunday, 25 March 1810, was 'black of a yellow cast'. She was Kitsey Greathead's younger and Richard Greathead's older sister.

Just before she turned 16, Betsey Greathead died on 8 March 1826.

657 Violet, later Vilet Penny, possibly Violet Huggins, then Violet Pinney. She was black and born on Monday, 2 April 1810.

On 18 February 1827 Violet was baptised in the church in Charlestown, St Paul's,⁸⁷⁰ but she married in the church in St Thomas Lowland. Aged 24, on 15 November 1834, Vilet Penny married a man eight years her senior, the carter Santee Huggins (No 609).⁸⁷¹ It is likely that the boy William, born in May or June 1835 and baptised on 6 August 1835, was her son but while 'Santy Pinney' was given as the father, the name of the mother was left blank.⁸⁷²

Violet and Santee had at least two more children; both underwent baptism in the Methodist chapel. Her daughter, Hannah Hawkins, was born in April or May 1838 and baptised on 13 January 1839;⁸⁷³ her son, Charles Kneal, was born on 29 April 1845 and baptised on 20 July 1845.⁸⁷⁴ Charles's middle name presumably stemmed from the Nevis surname Neale while Hannah's, most likely, was borrowed from Robert Hawkins, the rector who carried out the child's baptism. The parents were following a new trend: that of giving middle names to their children – particularly surnames. Among white families this was an established tradition but in the nineteenth century black people in Nevis were also making use of this convention. Usually white people incorporated the mother's surname, or - less often - that of a godparent. Not only did this create a stronger connection with relatives and friends, it also allowed parents to express their sense of individuality.⁸⁷⁵ This new trend of giving children more than one name befitted the modern times.

Violet's husband had at least one child, if not more, with another woman; he was given as the father of Mary Pinney's child who was born in December 1843.

When their daughter Hannah was baptised, Santee was still working as a carter on Mountravers but by 1845 he and Violet lived elsewhere in Lowland Parish. Santee then worked as a labourer.

658 Mariah was black and born on Saturday, 5 May 1810. Aged 23, she was baptised on 25 August 1833.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁶⁹ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

⁸⁷⁰ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1837

⁸⁷¹ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

⁸⁷² NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered (This may have been a transcription error.)

⁸⁷³ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

⁸⁷⁴ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 No 265

⁸⁷⁵ Burnard, Trevor 'Slave Naming Patterns: Onomastics and the Taxonomy of Race in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica' in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol 31 No 3 (Winter 2001) p327

⁸⁷⁶ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 387

Mariah was alive on 1 August 1834.

659 William Peaden and probably Penny (Penney).⁸⁷⁷ Said to have been a mulatto, he was born on Sunday, 18 November 1810. He was a third generation Peaden; his family name went back to Tom Peaden, JPP's white servant who had died in the 1770s, and to James Peaden (No 388), who had absconded in 1800. By 1807 James Peaden was still in hiding but it is possible that he had returned and had then fathered this boy. However, although described as a mulatto, William may also have been the son of Tom Peaden's mulatto daughter, Sally Peaden (No 422). If she was William's mother, he was orphaned young; Sally Peaden died before 1816. However, he had older siblings and his grandmother was still alive: Bridget (No 225), a black woman, used to be the Pinneys' domestic. However, when he was 15 years old, she also died.

Sometimes the surnames by which people were known on the plantation were ignored, or discarded by their carriers, and so it is possible that William Peaden became in fact known as William Pinney/Penn(e)y. Several men lived in Nevis who went by that name (see below), but it is almost certain that, because William Peaden was a mulatto, he would have married a mixed-race woman. However, there were two men called William Penny who married mulatto women. One married Mary Lane from Parris's on 27 May 1837; the other married Frances Laurence from Belmont on 24 March 1838. One of the witnesses, the clerk William Browne, attended both weddings.⁸⁷⁸

Mary Lane was about six to seven years older than William Peaden, and it is therefore more likely that he was the William Penny who married Frances Laurence. She was about the same age as him. It is, of course, also possible that he first married Mary Lane and then Frances Laurence but without more documentary evidence there is no way of knowing.

Frances Laurence had first lived on Wansey's, and in 1815 had been transferred to Clarke's Estate where she had been known as Fanny Haines, a name associated with land near Mountravers. Her father, or a previous owner, may have been Robert Sherret Haynes, or his son Matthew Henry.⁸⁷⁹ In 1823 Fanny was moved to neighbouring Belmont, which was mortgaged to William Laurence senior and where, as a twelve-year-old, she was used as currency: Laurence's son William Garvey received 'the slave child Fanny worth N£60, in part payment of his salary as manager of the estate during the absence of William Laurence.'⁸⁸⁰ William Garvey Laurence manumitted the girl not long before slavery was abolished.⁸⁸¹

When Frances Laurence married William Penney, she was pregnant. Their son John was baptised later in the year, on 4 October 1838. William Penney then worked as a labourer on Belmont Estate.⁸⁸² The

⁸⁷⁷ In December 1816 his name was recorded as William Spuden; James and Charles Peaden were also listed as 'Spuden'.

⁸⁷⁸ The other witnesses at Mary Lane's wedding to William Penny were ?Clifton and James William Rawlins, the other witness at Frances Laurence's wedding was Figtree Laurence. He was not on Belmont in 1825 (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965).

⁸⁷⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1835-1838 f42

⁸⁸⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f83

Fanny being given as payment is a good example of the sort of transactions to which enslaved people were subjected. It is also an example of how difficult it can be to grasp the precise details of a transaction because in the plantation's register Fanny was simply listed as sold to William Garvey Laurence (UKNA, T 71/366).

⁸⁸¹ ECSCRN, CR 1831-1835 ff319-20

Frances Laurence was freed with another female, Emily. The volume containing their manumission documents is very brittle and it was not possible to access the record for further details.

⁸⁸² NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 550

couple remained on this plantation until he died. William Penny was buried on 14 September 1846. Said to have been aged 39,⁸⁸³ he was in fact 35.

660 William, later probably Penny or Pinney. He was black and born on Monday, 1 April 1811. Either he, or William Peaden, was baptised on 26 January 1835.⁸⁸⁴

One, or possibly even both, of these references probably applied to this man:

- William Penny married Elizabeth Phillips on 25 September 1839. Thomas Newton and William Browne signed the register as their witnesses.⁸⁸⁵
- William Pinney's daughter Drucilla (b 4 April 1845) 'by his wife Ann' was baptised on 17 August 1846. He was a fisherman and the family lived in Lowland Parish.⁸⁸⁶

He may have been buried as William Pinney, who had lived at Clifton, on 4 January 1888.⁸⁸⁷ He was said to have been aged 80 - four years older than this man would have been – but the age appears estimated; it is still possible that the man who was buried was in fact the former Mountravers slave.

661 George was 'yellow cast' and born on Tuesday, 22 October 1811.

He died between 1817 and 1822. He was at least almost six, at the most ten years old.

662 Joe Edward and probably also Joseph Huggins. He was black and born on Monday, 2 December 1811.

Judging by a later reference to him as an 'erstwhile reformed wild boy', as a child Joe was ill-behaved and rebellious. It was him whom another boy, the six-year-old George Sanders, implicated in a case of theft. George had stolen some money and, afraid of being found out, he had palmed off the coins to Joe. Later George confessed and was punished.

It is very likely that Joe, as Joseph Huggins, married Nanno Paris on 10 October 1835.⁸⁸⁸ His wife was a black woman who had grown up on Parris's estate. They were both 23 years old.⁸⁸⁹

The name Joseph Huggins was not a common one and it is very possible that he was the man who was in court in 1859. He was charged with stabbing a man, John Mills, 'in the left side of the head'. The incident had taken place on 21 May that year. It appears that he was the ringleader. At the court hearing it was said that he was assisted by several people, some of whom were also on trial: Benjamin Pemberton, Lewis Pemberton, Kitsey Webbe, Margaret Webbe, Samuel Webbe, Samuel Nelson and Sarah Chapman. It was alleged that Kitsey Webbe had also wounded John Mills but, unsure who had actually

⁸⁸³ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1954 No 398

⁸⁸⁴ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Unnumbered

⁸⁸⁵ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

⁸⁸⁶ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 No 278

Drucilla was such an uncommon name that this person may have married a man by the name of Weekes and that, as Drucilla Weekes, on 18 August 1876 she claimed property in the case of A van Romondt & Co and Peter Liburd in the Court of Summary Jurisdiction of the Leeward Islands (ECSCRN, Court Records, Volume for the Court of the Commissioners for the Sale of Incumbered Estates in the West Indies (Nevis) 1872-1887).

⁸⁸⁷ OMCC, Burials (Clifton) 1837-1961 No 82

⁸⁸⁸ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

⁸⁸⁹ UKNA, T 71/364

done the stabbing, the judge sentenced all the men, including Joseph Huggins, to three and the women to two months confinement with hard labour.⁸⁹⁰

Joseph Huggins died in hospital and was buried on 5 February 1877.⁸⁹¹ No age was given but this man was then aged 65.

There were also several men called Joseph Clarke.⁸⁹² They were born in the early 1800s but not on Mountravers, or on Clarke's Estate:

- Joseph Clarke married Elizabeth Arthurton on 10 July 1845. The witnesses were William R Solis and John Thompson.⁸⁹³
- Joseph Clarke from Pinney's Estate was buried on 16 November 1857, aged 54.⁸⁹⁴
- Joseph Clarke signed in April 1863 a letter of thanks to Revd Walter F Maynard.⁸⁹⁵ This man may have been illiterate; his name, with others, was added in one hand. He may have been the same man from Bowrins who was buried on 8 October 1863, aged 57.⁸⁹⁶

663 Rodney, later probably Rodney Scarborough. He was black and born on Saturday, 5 September 1812. It is possible that a black Creole man of the same name, who lived on Scarborough's, was his father. This man died in 1829, in his mid-forties.⁸⁹⁷

Rodney worked in the field. When he was in his twenties, he was baptised in the Methodist Chapel, on 22 June 1836.⁸⁹⁸ Rodney was an unusual name and, given that his father may well have lived on Scarborough's, it is very likely that he became known as Rodney Scarborough. A man of that name, with his wife Maria, had a daughter called Sarah Ann who was born on 23 June 1851. The girl was baptised on 14 September 1851, also in the Methodist Chapel. Rodney Scarborough was then a labourer and lived with his family in Charlestown.⁸⁹⁹

664 Anne, possibly also Ann Huggins, was 'black of a yellow cast' and born on Saturday, 12 June 1813.

Aged twenty, she was baptised on 29 December 1833⁹⁰⁰ and after emancipation may have had an 'illegitimate' daughter called Margaret Henderson. The girl was baptised on 10 May 1839. Ann Huggins lived in Charlestown and worked as a cook.⁹⁰¹

⁸⁹⁰ ECSCRN, Nevis Court Records 1859-1874 f45

⁸⁹¹ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965 No 1936

⁸⁹² A black child called Joseph was born in about 1819 on Clarke's Estate (he was aged three in 1822) and was moved to Belmont by William Laurence. By 1825 Joseph had died (UKNA, T 71/364 and 365).

⁸⁹³ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

As sexton in St Paul's and clerk in St Thomas Lowland, William R Solis was called upon to witness several marriages. John Thompson, a man manumitted in the early 1830s, later became a member of the Vestry for St Thomas Lowland (UKNA, CO 187/32, CO 187/33, CO 187/34, CO 187/35, CO 187/39, and CO 187/40 Blue Books Nevis).

⁸⁹⁴ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 672

⁸⁹⁵ SRO/I, Maynard Papers, HA 178-1/57

⁸⁹⁶ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 846

⁸⁹⁷ UKNA, T 71/364 and T 71/368

⁸⁹⁸ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

On the same day Rodney was baptised, 22 June 1836, Banda and Stephen, and Lucy and Andrew Pinney's four-year-old daughter Bridget, were also baptised – family members perhaps?

⁸⁹⁹ NHCS, Transcript of Nevis Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873

⁹⁰⁰ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 402

⁹⁰¹ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1835-1873 No 186

665 Richard Greathead was born on Saturday, 11 September 1813, and was, like his older sisters Kitsey and Betsey, 'of a yellow cast'. Betsey died in 1826.

In October 1830, when he was 17 years old, Richard was baptised in the church in St Thomas Lowland, with his sister Kitsey. Both lived on Clarke's Estate which by then belonged to Peter Thomas Huggins.⁹⁰²

Richard Greathead was uncle to Kitsey's four sons Henry, John, Eneas and Edwin George. His brother-in-law George Smith died in 1834 and his sister married again. While she and her family went to live on Parris's Estate, he moved to Charlestown.

Richard Greathead was buried on 9 June 1858. His age was over-estimated by four years; he was said to have been aged 48 when he was only 44.⁹⁰³

666 Martha, also possibly Martha Simpson, Iles or Martha Clark(e). She was black and born on Saturday, 23 October 1813. She - or a 23-year-old woman of the same name born on Parris's Estate - was baptised on 11 January 1835. The woman who was baptised then worked on Clarke's Estate.⁹⁰⁴

As Martha Simpson, on 3 August 1836 one of the women married Edward Iles, a free mixed-race man from Charlestown.⁹⁰⁵ He was a cooper who, by the time their three and a half months-old son Edward Benjamin was baptised on 14 April 1839, worked on Clarke's Estate.⁹⁰⁶ By the mid-1850s he owned or rented a small plot of land at Nugents which lay to the south of Mountravers. Among his neighbours was a man from Mountravers, Azariah Pinney (No 591) who lived there with his wife and children. Pinney called on Edward Iles and another man to witness the transfer of property to their sons, and Edward Iles signed the document.⁹⁰⁷

A few years later Edward Iles moved away from Nugents to Pollards Land. He was one of the early settlers. Having been given leases, he and 37 others built their houses but it turned out that their leases were faulty and that not all the money they had handed over to the agent in Nevis had reached the landowner in England.⁹⁰⁸ It is not known whether Edward Iles's wife Martha moved to Pollard's Land as well. She - or the woman originally from Parris's Estate - may have been known as Martha Clark (sic), a labourer who worked on Clarke's Estate. Her daughter Julia was baptised on 31 January 1851.⁹⁰⁹

667 Charlotte was black and born on Tuesday, 14 December 1813. She died on 15 April 1825, aged 11.

668 Jack was black and born on Wednesday, 2 March 1814. He may well have been John, a field labourer, who was baptised either on 16 August 1835, or on 25 October 1835.⁹¹⁰

⁹⁰² NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 Numbers 224 and 226

⁹⁰³ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965 No 1078

⁹⁰⁴ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Unnumbered Martha from Parris's was black and aged five in 1817 (UKNA, T 71/364).

⁹⁰⁵ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

⁹⁰⁶ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873

⁹⁰⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1847-1858 ff506-07

⁹⁰⁸ DHC, Pollard MSS, D87/2: Letter from Nevis to AH Limington, London, 26 March 1863

Edward Iles was documented as 'Edward I. ('say Iles')

⁹⁰⁹ NHCS, Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 No 867

⁹¹⁰ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

669 John Peroe was 'yellow' and born on Wednesday, 8 June 1814. He was alive on 1 August 1834.

670 Wellington, later Wellington Parris. He was black and born on Monday, 2 January 1815.

As an adult he worked on Peter Thomas Huggins's Parris's Estate where, as Wellington Paris, he married Fanny Scarborough. This was on 14 August 1838, shortly after Emancipation.⁹¹¹ She was also black and about his age.⁹¹²

Although born on Parris's estate, when the couple married in the church at St Thomas Lowland, Fanny had the surname Scarborough. Just a few days earlier, on 28 July 1838, she had been registered as Frances Paris when her illegitimate son Thomas Wellington had been baptised in the church in Charlestown.⁹¹³

In 1843 Wellington Parris witnessed, with William Browne, the marriage of Abraham Herbert and Ann Huggins.⁹¹⁴ Nothing is known about that couple.

Wellington Parris and his wife had at least six more children who were all baptised in the Methodist Chapel when they were just two or three months old: James (born on 18 March 1846, baptised on 17 May 1846); Joshua (born on 4 August 1848, baptised on 15 October 1848), Rebecca (born on 10 August 1850, baptised on 23 September 1850), William Henry (born on 31 August 1851, baptised on 12 October 1851), Samuel (born on 3 July 1853, baptised on 9 October 1853) and Alice Ann (born on 17 February 1858, baptised on 14 March 1858). Wellington Parris was in 1848 described as a 'Boatswain at the engine' – presumably he was a foreman overseeing the work at the steam engine – but he probably left his position. In the following years it was noted that he was a planter or a labourer. The couple's address was given as Lowland.⁹¹⁵ When Alice Ann, the last child, was born, the family lived at Haynes Land, a post-Emancipation village to the south of Mountravers.

Wellington Parris's wife died within months of giving birth to Alice Ann. Frances Paris (sic) was in her early forties when she was buried on 28 December 1858. Her age was estimated at 40 years.⁹¹⁶ Alice Ann, too, died young. She was only 19 when she died in August 1877. She had still been living at Haynes Land.⁹¹⁷ It is not known when Wellington Parris died.

671 Little Nelly was black and born on Monday, 10 April 1815. Her mother was Mary Fog (No 566) and her brother David Smith (b 1818), with whom she was baptised on 25 March 1828.⁹¹⁸

Little Nelly was alive on 1 August 1834. She was 19 years old.

Both these men called John were said to have lived on Pinney's Estate.

⁹¹¹ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

⁹¹² UKNA, T 71/364

⁹¹³ NHCS, St Paul's Baptismal Records, 1835-1873

⁹¹⁴ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965: 12 December 1843

⁹¹⁵ NHCS, Transcript of Nevis Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

⁹¹⁶ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 711

⁹¹⁷ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1954 No 1252

⁹¹⁸ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 Numbers 109 and 110

672 Susanna, later Susannah Pinney and Huggins. She was black, born on Saturday, 15 April 1815, and baptised on 23 March 1828.⁹¹⁹ Her mother probably was Polly Herbert (No 561), recorded as Polly Pinney, and her brother Samuel (b 1824). His father was a fieldhand called Jack but almost certainly the children had different fathers. If Susanna was indeed the daughter of Polly Herbert, then Susanna's grandmother would have been the field hand Pereen (No 407), who died when Susanna was not yet seven years old, while her maternal great-grandmother probably would have been another woman called Polly Herbert (No 404).

In the mid-1840s Susanna still lived on 'Pinney's'. She had a son called Thomas, who was baptised on 28 March 1845 in St Paul's church. She worked as a labourer.⁹²⁰ In 1839 Sally Pinney (No 635), who probably was her aunt, also had had a boy called Thomas. He would have been her cousin, as were Sally Pinney's sons David (b 1835) and John Burns (b 1846).

She was buried as Susanna Huggins on 18 April 1861. Aged 46, she was said to have been 48.⁹²¹

673 Billy Jones was black and born on Sunday, 25 August 1816. When he died between 1817 and 1822 he was no more than six years old.

674 and 675 Valentine and Orson were black and born on Thursday, 19 September 1816. Almost certainly they were twins although, unlike twins on other estates,⁹²² they were not identified as such.

These two boys were named after the main characters in a popular tale. According to this story, two brothers were abandoned in infancy, and while one, Valentine, was raised as a knight at court, the other, Orson, grew up with bears in the woods. Valentine rescued and tamed his twin brother, who became his faithful servant and gallant comrade.⁹²³ Given their background of abandonment, it is possible that in this case the boys' mother did not survive the multiple births and died giving birth, or shortly afterwards.

Valentine died when he was five years old, on 14 January 1822. Orson survived and was alive on 1 August 1834.

676 Josey was black and born in December 1816.⁹²⁴ He died between 1817 and 1822. He was five years old at the most.

677 Augustus was born before December 1816 and died between December 1816 and July 1817, still an infant.

The early deaths of these four very young boys – Billy Jones, Valentine, Josey and Augustus – are evidence of the difficult times which then existed in Nevis.

⁹¹⁹ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 107

⁹²⁰ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1838-1875 No 384

⁹²¹ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965 No 1177

⁹²² For instance, on Martha Williams Hamilton's list of her Low Grounds estate the twins Martha and Mary, born on 21 January 1820, were marked as 'twins' (UKNA, T 71/365).

⁹²³ Krappe, Alexander Haggerty 'Valentine and Orson' in *Modern Language Notes* Vol 47 No 8 (December 1932) p494

⁹²⁴ Josey must have been born after the list of 1 December 1816 was taken although on the 1817 list only '1816' is given as his birth date.

678 Josey was black and born on Sunday, 16 March 1817. Although in Nevis names generally were not changed at baptism, as was common, for instance, in Jamaica,⁹²⁵ it is likely that on 23 March 1828 this boy was baptised as Moses. His mother was Juba, or Jibba,⁹²⁶ a field hand (No 500). Josey's father may possibly have been Moses, a field hand on Clarke's Estate.

Around the time Josey was born, one of Juba's sons, Toby (No 633), died. She had two more boys: Joseph (b 1824) and Tommey (b 1830). Joseph's father was Azariah Pinney (No 591). Josey's name change may, possibly, have been practical, to prevent confusion between him and his half-brother Joseph, but it may also indicate that the parents exercised a degree of autonomy and were able to express their individuality - in this case a commitment to the Bible and Christian religion.

Aged 17, Josey/Moses was alive on 1 August 1834.

679 Little Prince, later Prince, was black and born on Saturday, 17 May 1817.

At the age of 18, he got baptised on 25 October 1835.⁹²⁷ It may be significant that he worked with horses because one of the other adults baptised that day, Quashee, also worked with horses while another man, George, was a carter. Tied together through their occupations, these three may have decided to undergo the ceremony on the same day.

680 Jane Brown, later Jane Huggins; married name Bridgwater? She was 'yellow cast' and born on Thursday, 3 July 1817, the great-grandchild of an entailed slave. She was Katey London's (No 565) oldest child. Her brother was Tom Brown (b 1823), and, most likely, James/Innis (b 1820) was another brother of hers. Before she was twelve years old, Jane had lost at least three members of her family: her uncle London died in 1823, a couple of years later her brother James/Innis and in 1829 her aunt Betsey. Her mother, her brother Tom and her uncle Adam were alive in 1834.

Whereas Jane Brown was baptised with her brother Tom in March 1828 in St Thomas Lowland church,⁹²⁸ when she had a child of her own she chose St Paul's church in Charlestown - although she was still living on 'Penny's'. Her son Thomas James, named after both her brothers, was baptised on 1 February 1839. The child was said to have been illegitimate.⁹²⁹

It is possible that, as Jane Huggins, she married Robert Bridgwater - a man who was considerably older than she was. On 19 March 1840 their wedding vows were witnessed by Thomas Newton,⁹³⁰ the sexton at St Thomas Lowland,⁹³¹ and by a man called Peter Lawrence. If he was, indeed, Jane's husband, she

⁹²⁵ Craton, M *Searching for the Invisible Man* p157

⁹²⁶ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 106

⁹²⁷ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

⁹²⁸ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 108 and 111

⁹²⁹ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1835-1873 No 162

Thomas James was a very unusual combination of names, and if Jane Brown's son took on his father's surname, he may well have been the Thomas James Weekes, who in August 1865 was charged with haven stolen some months earlier a ram and a sheep that belonged to John James Scarborough. The jurors were Thomas E Archbald, John Dore, Richard Huggins, Francis Sheriff, John Huggins, John J Wallace and James Huggins. Thomas James Weekes was sentenced to three months in prison (ECSCRN, Nevis Court Records 1859-1874 Unnumbered folio).

⁹³⁰ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

⁹³¹ UKNA, CO 187/10 Blue Book Nevis 1836

was widowed the following year: Aged 37, Robert Bridgwater was buried on 25 November 1841. He was said to have lived on Kades Bay Estate in St Thomas Lowland.⁹³²

681 **Toby** was 'yellow cast' and born on Thursday, 17 July 1817. Aged 17, he was alive on 1 August 1834.

682 **Mary** was black and born on Sunday, 3 August 1817. She was alive on 1 August 1834.

She may possibly have been the apprentice labourer Mary who on 3 September 1836 married Bunda, a field labourer ten years her senior.⁹³³

683 **Rosey, later Rose**, was 'yellow cast' and born on Tuesday, 26 August 1817. She, or the 53-year-old woman of the same name from Clarke's, was baptised as 'an adult' on 11 May 1834.⁹³⁴

684 **Isaac** was black and born on Tuesday, 23 September 1817. By the time he was baptised on 19 May 1833, his unnamed parents had both died.⁹³⁵

Aged 16, Isaac was alive on 1 August 1834.

685 **David Smith** was black, born on Sunday, 18 January 1818. He was baptised, aged ten, on 25 March 1828 with his older sister Little Nelly (b 1815). Their mother was Mary Fog (No 566).⁹³⁶ It is possible that his father was Jack Smith, the driver on Clarke's Estate, although aged around fifty, this would have been an unusual union: he was double his mother's age.

David Smith, his mother and sister were alive on 1 August 1834.

686 **Eleanor** was black and born on Tuesday, 10 February 1818.

Eleanor died between 1 January 1831 and 31 December 1833. She was at least 12, at the most 15 years old.

687 **Priscilla, later Priscilla Penny and possibly Priscilla Morgan**, was black and born on Sunday, 15 March 1818. Her parents were Diana (No 582) and Frank Colhoun, a carpenter. Priscilla's younger

⁹³² NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957

⁹³³ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

⁹³⁴ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Unnumbered

Rose from Clarke's was unusually old to have been baptised but her daughter ?Parsens (probably Pareen, who was 9 in 1828) had been baptised in January 1828 (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland 1827-1873 No 56). Rose would thereby have followed a pattern that was quite common: of a parent being baptised after their child.

⁹³⁵ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 959

⁹³⁶ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 109 and 110
The mother's name was mis-heard and given as Mary Forbes.

siblings were Angelica (b 1820) and Roswell (b 1826). The children were baptised together on 19 April 1829.⁹³⁷

Aged 18, Priscilla had a son, John. The child's father, Robert Parris, was a black man in his early twenties.⁹³⁸ He remained on Parris's while Priscilla lived on 'Penny's'. At the age of four months their son was baptised, on 11 September 1836. After Emancipation Robert Parris may have chosen to call himself Morgan because when Priscilla's next child was baptised, the father's name was given as Robert Morgan. The couple's daughter Elizabeth Magdalene was born on 27 June 1842 and baptised at the age of five months. They lived on Pinney's Estate where Robert Morgan worked as a labourer.⁹³⁹

Priscilla's son may possibly have been the John Parris who appeared in court on 3 December 1861, together with his alleged accomplices, Joseph Browne and John Lewis. They were charged with breaking into two women's houses: Jessey Kenney's in St Thomas Lowland in June and Amelia Parris's in November. Jessey Kenney was Peter Thomas Huggins's daughter,⁹⁴⁰ and the three men were said to have stolen from her a knife, a tureen, ten pounds of flour and ten of meal, while only John Parris and Joseph Browne were accused of having broken into Amelia Parris's house. They were charged with stealing a counterpane and an iron pot from her, as well as a table that belonged to another woman, Louisa Clarke. One of the men, John Lewis, was found not guilty of the first burglary but the other men were sentenced to ten and eight months' imprisonment with hard labour and another ten months confinement with hard labour for the second robbery.⁹⁴¹

688 Camberwell was black, born on Wednesday, 25 March 1818. He was alive on 1 August 1834.

Although naming people after geographical locations had generally gone out of fashion, Camberwell was named after a part of London with which several people in Nevis had some association.⁹⁴²

689 Peggy, described as 'yellow cast', was born on Saturday, 9 May 1818. Her mother was the field hand Catherine (No 448); her younger brother was William Springet (b 1823), whose father, Glasgow, almost certainly was not Peggy's.

At the age of almost ten years, she was baptised on 23 March 1828;⁹⁴³ her brother was twelve when he was baptised later, in 1835.

Peggy and her mother moved to Cotton Ground. She may have married a William Penny/Pinney with whom she had a daughter, Frances Anne, who was baptised on 9 March 1853.⁹⁴⁴ Peggy Pinney died

⁹³⁷ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Numbers ?582, ?583 and 584

⁹³⁸ UKNA, T 71/364

⁹³⁹ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

⁹⁴⁰ Peter Thomas Huggins's daughter Jessey was married for the second time. Her first husband, Henry Harding, had died, and in February 1851 she married a man from St John Figtree, Charles Kenney (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965 No 308).

⁹⁴¹ ECSCRN, Nevis Court Records 1859-1874 f162 and f164

Among the jurors was the principal of the Methodist Day School in Charlestown, John Podd Bridgwater. The other jurors were Thomas Huggins, Nicholas Steele, William Pemberton, Josiah Swanson, Thomas Sturgeon, Richard Clarke, Joseph Deane, John Webbe, James Thomas Edwards, John Bencroft and Moses O'Donnell.

⁹⁴² James Lytton was of Nevis and Camberwell (Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 4 p334/335) and Thomas Butler lived in that part of London in the late 1730s. He left money to the Camberwell Charity School (*Caribbeana* Vol 6 p114). In the early 1780s Eneas Shaw's housekeeper's son (his son?) attended Camberwell School (NHCS, Book of Wills 1805-1818 f227).

⁹⁴³ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 105

⁹⁴⁴ NHCS, Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 No 957

young, at the age of 41. Her age at death was recorded as 40 years. She was buried on 24 March 1860 in St Thomas Lowland.⁹⁴⁵ The man who may well have been her husband was buried in May 1877. He was said to have been aged sixty and living in Cotton Ground.⁹⁴⁶

690 Thomas, later Thomas More. He was a mulatto born between about 1789 and 1792 and bought for Mountravers on 2 June 1818.

The young man had last lived in Antigua. There he had worked together with two older men, Henry and Billy, for a man called John Simson (also Simpson). They lived in the parish of St Paul in the area around Falmouth and English Harbour in the south-western part of the island. However, Thomas had almost certainly come from Barbados where John Simson had a sizeable plantation in the parish of St George.⁹⁴⁷

Thomas remained on Mountravers for five years to the day. He was sold again on 2 June 1823. The timing of the sale might suggest that his stay on the plantation was subject to a particular deal, but it is more likely that it was a coincidence and that Huggins decided to remove him because he considered Thomas too troublesome. Having worked in Antigua in a small household, Thomas may not have settled into life on a busy plantation with a difficult, demanding resident proprietor. Indeed, the fact that he was not sold in Nevis but to Trinidad suggests that Huggins wanted him gone for good. Thomas was the third man Huggins sold there; a decade earlier a plantation-born man called Tom Penny (No 383) and the Nevis Creole George Vaughan (No 525) had already been exiled from Mountravers to that island. Thomas was among those 40 people from Nevis – the majority of them males – who between 1813 and 1825 were officially exported to Trinidad.⁹⁴⁸

In the Trinidad slave registers almost every person had a surname, and Thomas became known as Thomas More. He was almost 5' 4" (1.63m) tall and had a scar on his left temple. He worked as a domestic servant. His fellow domestics were Maria Wilson, a 29-year-old woman from Bermuda, and Caesar Cumming, a 28-year-old man from Barbados. Their owner, Nicholson Marache, appears to have been off island; his agent Henry Scott signed Marache's slave register and Thomas More, Caesar Cumming and Maria Wilson were in Scott's possession. Despite being well off, Scott and his wife Louisa owned only one person, a woman from Dominica.⁹⁴⁹ Scott was a merchant, lived in Port-of-Spain and served on the island's Legislative Council. He acted as attorney and 'town agent' for several absentee planters.

Having already changed employers and islands several times, before slavery was abolished Thomas More ended up in yet another household. It is possible that the sale came about because Nicholson Marache got married and went to live in Philadelphia.⁹⁵⁰ Marache's agent, Mr Scott, chose did not acquire any of Marache's people; instead, they were sold to different buyers: Caesar Cumming to a sugar plantation, and Maria Wilson and Thomas More to private buyers in Port-of-Spain.

⁹⁴⁵ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 754

⁹⁴⁶ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 1245

⁹⁴⁷ UKNA, T 71/244 and T 71/557

⁹⁴⁸ Higman, *BW Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* p429 Table S1.19 Slaves Imported into Trinidad, 1813-25; see also p452 Table S3.3 Birthplaces, Trinidad, 1813

This register, however, is not complete because during the period 1 January 1821 and 1 January 1826 51 people (38 males and 13 females) were exported under licence from Nevis to Trinidad (Enclosure No 2, enclosed with Governor Maxwell's Dispatch No 7 in Slave Population: Papers and Returns presented pursuant to the House of Commons, 6 June 1825)

⁹⁴⁹ Oliver, *VL Memorial Inscriptions* p216, also UKNA, T 71/517, T 71/ 519 and T 71/893

⁹⁵⁰ http://www.archive.org/stream/provisincial_counci00keith/provincialcounci00keith_djvu.txt

Remaining in Port-of-Spain was Thomas More's only constant in his life. Working for James Lynch O'Connor, he had to adjust, once again, and find his place among several fellow workers from a variety of different backgrounds. The others included a young boy recently imported from Barbados and an African man who had been sold twice in the past 15 years.

The wife of Thomas More's new master, Mrs Sophie Ellena Euphrosine O'Connor, had previously owned two people whom she sold – one to a plantation, the other to a private buyer – and Thomas More would have lived with the knowledge that he could be sold again at any time. In 1828 he worked as one of the couple's four servants.⁹⁵¹ Then the African man died, the O'Connors purchased another three women and sold one of the women. By 1834 they had only three people left. Their claim for slave compensation, however, was for four people but because the O'Connors made inconsistent declarations to the Registrar or Slaves, it is not certain whether Thomas More was among them.⁹⁵²

691, 692 and 693 Nelson, Billy Keepe and John, also John Keep (sic). In June Peter Thomas Huggins had purchased a mulatto man who had last lived in Antigua and a month later, on 26 August 1818, he bought three black males: Nelson, a 23-year-old African, and Billy Keepe and John, two Creole boys aged 15 and 13.

Their previous owner was William Keepe. Then in his late forties, he was the son of John Keepe, the mason who had taught and hired Mountravers people in the 1780s and 90s. Keepe junior had risen to hold an important and lucrative post: he served as Deputy Provost Marshal⁹⁵³ and later was to become Nevis's first Director of Police.⁹⁵⁴ These appointments always depended on local political influence and patronage (the Marshal was a non-resident appointment),⁹⁵⁵ and the rise to these positions by a mason's son can partly be explained by the absence of young planters' sons who in the past would have filled such posts. The Deputy Provost Marshal was the only recognised person allowed to receive forfeited goods from people who were trying to market their wares without tickets from their masters, and he presided over the auction of individuals whose owners were unable to pay their debts. William Keepe himself was in debt to the Pinneys for renting one of their Charlestown premises.⁹⁵⁶

Before they came to Mountravers, Nelson, Billy and John had been part of a much smaller household. Apart from William Keepe, his wife Eleanor and their children, it included two elderly women: William's sister, Sarah Keepe, and Mary Keepe, who may have been a sister-in-law. Between them the family owned 17 people, among them four Africans. One was Nelson, another was a 24-year-old man called John who later absconded; the others were females aged 25 and 16, Patty and Sally. Apart from Billy and John, eight other black Creoles belonged to the Keepe family: Betty (aged 50 years), Jane (49), Frances (45), Jenny (28), Harriett (26), and Frankey (25). Among these women probably were the boys' mothers (or mother), while the children William (12) and Cubba (9) may, possibly, have been their siblings. In addition to the blacks, the Keepe family owned three mestees: Betsey (37), Ann (10) and Sophia (7). Some of these people had been with the family for a long time; when he died in 1793, William Keepe's father had left Frances in his will to William Keepe's mother, and the girl Harriett, now a woman in her twenties, to Williams's sister, Sarah. Williams's mother had inherited Betsey as a girl from another

⁹⁵¹ UKNA, T 71/514

⁹⁵² UKNA, T 71/516, T 71/518 and T 71/893; NDO 4/12 Claim No 893

⁹⁵³ Baptised in January 1769, William Keepe was said to have been 60 when he was buried in June 1827 (NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 187). The previous Deputy Provost Marshal probably was John Dasent Smith who had died in January 1814 (St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825).

⁹⁵⁴ UKNA, CO 186/12: 25 April 1825

⁹⁵⁵ Goveia, *EV Slave Society* p59

⁹⁵⁶ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to William Keepe, (nd) 1822

woman.⁹⁵⁷ The Keepe's household was made up of people from a variety of backgrounds, and they all had to find a way of co-existing.

Nelson, Billy and John had lived in Charlestown. There is no record of how urban enslaved people fared when they joined existing, well-established plantation communities, but whatever experiences these three young men went through, they were short-lived. Nelson and Billy Keepe died some time before February 1822. Nelson, the African, was 27 at the most and Billy 19. The youngest, John Keep, died soon after, on 2 November 1822. He was 17⁹⁵⁸ and had been on the plantation for only four years. He was among those who fell victim to the sickly conditions which prevailed that autumn.⁹⁵⁹

The stories of Thomas More, Nelson, Billy and John demonstrate how enslaved people were moved around between different employers and between urban and rural environments. Their stories show how enslaved people had to adapt to new surroundings, new employers and colleagues, and to new work regimes. To begin a new life several times over, to start afresh elsewhere in a place not of their choosing and to survive emotionally intact required inner strength and resourcefulness, and it is a testament to people's resilience that most were able to do so.

694 Elick was black and born on Tuesday, 13 October 1818. Aged 15, he was alive on 1 August 1834.

695, 696, 697 and 698 Nancy, Thomas (called Tom), John French and Lucy. On 17 October 1818 Peter Thomas Huggins bought from the planter Josiah Nicholson a woman, two boys and a girl. It is likely that this was a mother and her children: Nancy was 31, Thomas 11, John French 10 and Lucy two years.⁹⁶⁰ All of them were black. Ann (Nancy) and Thomas were names that commonly occurred in the Nicholson family.

John French, and perhaps also the other children, may have been the offspring of a man called French John, a black Nevis Creole. Then in his mid-fifties, he worked on Shaw's Estate, the plantation on which Nancy and the children had lived. It lay in the parish of St James Windward and was a relatively small property. By 1817 it was in possession of Josiah and Finlay Nicholson and then had a total slave population of 69. By May 1820, however, another man, James Laurence, had taken over; Josiah Nicholson probably sold Nancy and the children at the point when he and Finlay withdrew from Shaw's. At the same time Josiah Nicholson removed from the plantation another 13 people who belonged to him. Had Nancy and the children not been sold and had they remained on Shaw's, they would have gone through difficult and very unsettling times.

⁹⁵⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 f558

Confusingly, the woman who left Betsey in her will was also called Mary Keep but she was a spinster and the daughter of Rachel Coker. – William Keepe's mother, most likely, was the widow Mary Keepe who was buried in 1801, in St John Figtree.

In 1822, William Keepe registered three more people as deductions who had not appeared in the 1817 register: George had been sold to Horatio Iles, Lucy to Elizabeth Ober and Tom had 'absconded off the island' (UKNA, T 71/365).

⁹⁵⁸ In 1817, Nelson's, Billy's and John's ages were given as 22, 14 and 12. Huggins bought them about a year later. On the 1822 list their 'reputed ages' were 26, 18 and 16 – presumably these included the four years they had been on Mountravers. As their ages in 1817 appear more accurate, these have been used. In John's case his date of death was given in the 1825 list (UKNA, T 71/364 and 365).

⁹⁵⁹ PP, LB 56: Mills & Galpine, Nevis, to PA & Co, 29 January 1823

⁹⁶⁰ The ages at purchase were their 1817 ages as registered by Josiah Nicholson plus one year. They do not quite correspond to the ages when they were registered in 1822. Then their ages were as follows: Nancy was 34, Thomas 14, John French 12, and Lucy 5 (UKNA, T 71/364 and 365).

The man who acquired Shaw's, James Laurence, promptly mortgaged part of his land to a Bristol merchant, Butler Thompson Claxton, and then tried to work the estate with the people who were left. In the ten years after Nancy and the children had been sold, only four children were born but 22 people died and another three absconded. These reductions, and Nicholson's withdrawal of his own people, had decimated the workforce to an unsustainable level and Laurence was forced to hire additional people.⁹⁶¹ But during the dreadful 1820s he could not make a success of the plantation and he lost the whole of Shaw's. By the time slavery was abolished, Laurence was dead and the plantation in the hands of another Bristol merchant, William Weare. Claxton had borrowed money from Weare.⁹⁶² This chain of debt was typical for the way in which planters and merchants tried to steer plantations through lean times and keep them going but properties like Shaw's were too small to ever become profitable again.

Had Nancy and the children remained with Josiah Nicholson and his wife Margaret, their lives might not have been any easier. Josiah Nicholson died in 1820, and by 1822 his widow had lost five of their remaining 13 personal slaves. She bought some more, sold others - among them three to Trinidad, which suggests that she had found them too difficult and that she had banished them into exile. Margaret Nicholson died in April 1829.⁹⁶³ Her remaining people ended up with Dr William Thomas Nicholson who administered her will.⁹⁶⁴

On Mountravers, Nancy, Thomas, John French and Lucy survived until at least 1 August 1834. Nancy was then 47, Thomas 27, John French 26 and Lucy 18.

Thomas had been baptised on 28 July 1833 in the Methodist Chapel⁹⁶⁵ and it is possible that John French may already have been baptised as a six-year-old in the church at St John Figtree.⁹⁶⁶

John French was a relatively common name in Nevis. One man of that name died on 3 September 1869 in jail. His age was not known.⁹⁶⁷

699 Clarah, also Clare and probably Clara Williams. She was yellow cast and born on Monday, 29 March 1819. She was baptised as a six-year-old on 16 December 1825 in St Paul's church in Charlestown.⁹⁶⁸ Aged 15, she was alive on 1 August 1834, as was her mother, Frances Neal (No 580).

Her mother remained on Mountravers. She died in 1863 and was buried on the day she would have turned 67.⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶¹ UKNA, T 71/365, 366 and 367

⁹⁶² The main slave compensation claim for Shaw's was made by William Weare of Bristol, who was in possession of the estate (UKNA, T 71/1038 Claim No 111). William Weare was granted S£523 for 28 people. Walter Lewis Bucke also claimed compensation as owner of 27 people and was paid £500. Another nine resident on Shaw's were rented from Mr or Mrs Frances Woodley and they were included in Frances Woodley's payment of S£299 for 14 people (T 71/1038: Claims Numbers 119 and 120).

As part of a post-1834 deal concerning Shaw's William Weare also took possession of an estate of William Laurence's in St John Figtree. It was described as 369 acres bounded East by lands of John Mills dec'd; West by the Round Path; North by lands of John Ward dec'd and the Common Path; South by lands of John Mills dec'd 'plus 83 slaves thereon' (BCRL, Papers concerning William Weare and Shaws Estate, Jefferies Collection, Vol 13). Papers regarding the mortgage of plantations in St James to Butler Thompson Claxton of Bristol and William Weare of Abbots Leigh, Somerset, can be found in BULSC, WI Cat 2, Ref 739.

⁹⁶³ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke

⁹⁶⁴ UKNA, T 71/368

⁹⁶⁵ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 979

⁹⁶⁶ NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825

⁹⁶⁷ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965

⁹⁶⁸ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 138

⁹⁶⁹ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 840

Clarah's name was most unusual, and it is almost certain that she married and also lived on Pinney's Estate until she died. On 13 August 1881 Clara Williams was buried. She was 62 and was laid to rest in the cemetery at St Thomas Lowland.⁹⁷⁰

It is interesting to note that in the parish register their ages were recorded correctly which suggests that Clarah's mother (and grandmother) had kept note of their birthdates. This was unusual, but it has to be remembered that Clarah's grandfather, most likely, was Mulatto Peter (No 357), a house servant, and that her grandmother and also her mother probably worked as domestics. They were more likely to have been aware of the importance white people attached to record-keeping and knowing their ages. If Clarah's mother and grandmother did, indeed, keep a note of their birthdates, they may have committed them to memory but if they wrote them down, this might suggest that they were literate even before enslaved children started attending schools.

700 John Tongue was black, born on Monday, 25 October 1819. She was orphaned by the time she was 15 years old. John Tongue's mother could have been one of several black women: Phoebe (No 502, died between 1831 and 1833), Dorinda (No 540, died December 1826), Nanny (No 573, died March 1830), Phoenia (No 579, died between 1828 and 1831), or Ritta Maillard (No 614, died some time between 1817 and 1822).⁹⁷¹

John Tongue was baptised on 25 December 1834,⁹⁷² one of four orphaned girls who then lived on Mountravers. They were all baptised in the Methodist Chapel but not together, so it can be assumed that they were not siblings. John Tongue was the only black child; the other girls were mixed-race.

701 Phido (also Fido) was black and born on Wednesday, 2 February 1820. She was the grandchild of an entailed woman who had originally belonged to the first John Frederick Pinney. Her mother was Phibba (No 564) and her father the mason Clarke Scarbro. She had at least four siblings: an unnamed brother, George Sanders (b 1824), Ritta Clarke (b 1830) and Nick Sanders (b 1833). Another unnamed brother or sister was baptised in 1838 when Phido would already have been 18.

Phido herself was baptised on 21 April 1833 with her brother George and her sister Ritta.⁹⁷³ In the parish register her name had the more common spelling of Fido, which usually was a male name.

Aged 14, Phido was alive on 1 August 1834.

702 Jackey was black, born on Wednesday, 19 April 1820. Aged 14 years, he was alive on 1 August 1834.

703 Innis (Innes), also James. He was 'yellow cast' and born on Saturday, 22 April 1820. He may have been Katey London's (No 565) son. In that case, Jane Brown (b 1817) and Thomas Brown (b 1823) were his older sister and younger brother.

⁹⁷⁰ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1954 No 1349

⁹⁷¹ Polly Herbert also died during 1831 and 1833 but she was baptised before she died. As children generally were baptised before their parents, this would have been unusual and it is, therefore, unlikely that she was the mother of any of the orphaned girls.

⁹⁷² NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 583

⁹⁷³ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Numbers 924, 925 and 926

The boy died on 18 May 1825. He was five years old.

Born as Innis, his name was registered as James when he died. Someone had decisively underlined his name, as if to emphasise that the boy had definitely been called this rather than Innis. Although long dead, there could have been some connection with a man called 'Innes James otherwise James Innes Browne'.⁹⁷⁴

704 Nancy Jackson was 'yellow cast', born on Sunday, 14 May 1820. She was the grandchild of an entailed slave. Her parents were Yanneky Pinney (No 436) and Peter Cooper (No 507), a field slave. Nancy had two elder brothers, Dinney and Billy, and an elder sister, Miah. They were 18, 13 and 21 when Nancy was born. A younger sister, Eliza, was born in 1824, and on 19 April 1829 Nancy and Eliza were baptised together. Nancy was then almost nine years old.⁹⁷⁵

The name Jackson does not appear to have had any connection with Mountravers and very rarely appeared in Nevis. Nancy's parents may have followed the trend of giving middle names to children.⁹⁷⁶ A few months after their baptism ceremony, the girls' father and their brother Billy died - within a week of each other. Their surviving brother, Dinney, married in 1833 and the following year had a daughter, their cousin Fitzlarenee.

Nancy Jackson, her sisters Eliza and Miah, her brother Dinney and their mother Yanneky were alive on 1 August 1834.

705 Angelica, later probably Angelica Henley and Angelique Henley. She was black and born on Tuesday, 16 May 1820. Her parents were Diana Pinney (No 582) and Frank Colhoun, a carpenter. Her maternal great-grandmother and grandmother were alive when she was born but one died in 1827 and the other a few months after Angelica's christening on 19 April 1829. At the age of almost nine years, Angelica was baptised together with her eleven-year-old sister Priscilla (b 1818) and her three-year-old brother Rasburn (b 1826).⁹⁷⁷

Angelica, her sister, brother and mother were alive on 1 August 1834.

Her name was very unusual and it is therefore likely that she got married and, as Angelica (Angelique) Henley had two children: James Alexander and Mary Anne Eliza. Her son was baptised on 1 June 1853, her daughter on 20 February 1856. At first she worked as a domestic but three years on she had become a labourer. She lived on Clarke's Estate.⁹⁷⁸

706 Susey was black and born on Tuesday, 21 November 1820.

⁹⁷⁴ In the early 1800s James Innes (also Innes James) Browne, one of James Browne's sons by his second wife, Ann (Johnston), lived in Bristol but he died some time before 1804 (ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 f430).

⁹⁷⁵ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Numbers 586 and 587

⁹⁷⁶ The child Nancy Jackson may have been named after a woman of that name who died in June 1827. Nothing is known about her or the Jackson family (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 19 June 1827).

⁹⁷⁷ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Numbers ?582, ?583 and 584

⁹⁷⁸ NHCS, Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 Numbers 984 and 1078

She certainly survived until 1 August 1834 and as Susanna Huggins may have been a jury member in 1863.⁹⁷⁹

707 Wiltshire, also Shire, later possibly Wiltshire Baret (also Barrett). He was black and born on Tuesday, 5 December 1820. His parents were Nanno Pinney (No 562) and Edward or Ned Pinney, a watchman from Clarke's Estate. Wiltshire's physical development must have been severely hampered; when he was baptised on 13 April 1834, he was said to have been aged nine although by then he was 13.⁹⁸⁰ He was among the many children who were small for their age.

As a first name Wiltshire was not very common among slave-born men and the family name Baret (or variants of that spelling) does not commonly occur in Nevis, and it is possible that Wiltshire took on the family name of a man called William Barratt. In 1843 William Barratt was introduced to Peter Thomas Huggins as someone seeking work as a resident steam engineer.⁹⁸¹ If Wiltshire did, indeed, use that man's surname, then he acquired an acre of land from Peter Thomas Huggins. This he bought for £12. The property lay to the south of Huggins's estate and to the south of the public road. In January 1857 Wiltshire Baret's immediate neighbours were two women, Sarah Parris and Louisa Phipps.

Wiltshire Baret appears to have had several children. His oldest son and heir-at-law was James Barrett of Craddock Road. In 1920 he sold the acre of land which his father had bought to a shopkeeper called George Benjamin Saunders.⁹⁸²

708 Bob was black and born on Monday, 25 December 1820. He died on 26 December 1827, a day after his seventh birthday.

709 Primus (b c 1772), a black Creole, was purchased in December 1821. His previous owner, Quashy Sholto of Montserrat, may well have been a freed slave.

Primus was on Mountravers for just over six years. He died on 6 February 1828, aged about 56.

710 Jimmy (also James) was black, born on Friday, 23 February 1821, and the eldest of Mussey Pinney's (No 574) children. He was small for his age; when he was baptised (as James), he was said to have been ten but was in fact 13. He was baptised on 11 May 1834 with his younger brother Ivanhoe aka Abram (b 1826). His younger sister Kitty (b 1833) had been baptised the previous month. His own father was dead by then,⁹⁸³ but his siblings had a different father, a man called Joe Scarbro. He was from Scarborough's Estate, where the family lived in 1834. Their aunt Jenny (No 528) was alive then.

It is likely that, aged 21, he had a son with Jane, who probably was a black woman from Scarborough's Estate and about seven years his senior. James and Jane Scarborough's son Joseph was born on 6

⁹⁷⁹ ECSCRN, Nevis Court Records 1859-1874 f222

⁹⁸⁰ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 1017

⁹⁸¹ PP, LB 68: P & C to PT Huggins, 27 December 1843

Either this steam engineer William Barratt or another man of the same name was in 1843 among 24 tenants who leased several plantations from Sir Thomas Neave: Town Plantation/Ramsbury, Rossington, Mountain Plantation and Bath Plantation. They had got together to work these as a sugar estate (ECSCRN, CR 1838-1847 f491).

⁹⁸² ECSCRN, CR 17 f322

⁹⁸³ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Numbers 1023 and 1024

November 1842 and baptised on 12 March 1843. He was said to have been a labourer on 'Mount Travers'.⁹⁸⁴ In 1834 Jane Scarborough already had had a child, Charles, with Quashee Nolan, a man in his mid-fifties and 'a cripple'. The disparity in ages of both her children's fathers was unusual and may possibly indicate that Jane Scarborough engaged in casual relationships, perhaps even worked as a prostitute. A further indication of her living on the margins of respectability may have been a theft that was supposed to have been committed in July 1840. Jane Scarbro was accused of stealing from Jane Huggins several items: a counterpane worth N£5, a chamberglass and a bowl worth N2s each and three mugs to the value of N3s. Jane Scarborough was then said to have been 'late of St Paul's'.⁹⁸⁵

James Scarborough may also have broken the law; a man of his name died in jail. The people who buried him on 4 March 1863 did not know his age. This could, however, have been another man, the illegitimate son of the washerwoman Mary Scarborough.⁹⁸⁶

711 Charles, also Charles Pinney, was yellow cast and born on Saturday, 1 September 1821. He was baptised on 21 January 1835.⁹⁸⁷ Although only 13 (his age was given as 'about 12 years old'), no parent's name was recorded; it is likely he was an orphan.

Charles Pinney got married when he was only 17, and his early wedding may be another indication that he had no parents who might have restrained him from settling down at so young an age. On 11 January 1839 he married Mary Anne More, almost certainly a black woman from Ward's Estate who was 14 or 15 years older than him.⁹⁸⁸ One of the witnesses was Kitty Clarke's husband John Wallace,⁹⁸⁹ the other was also a married man, Joseph Richins, a former apprentice labourer of Judy's (No 277) granddaughter Judith Levy.⁹⁹⁰

Until at least 1847 Charles Pinney and his wife remained on Ward's Estate, where he worked as a labourer. An unnamed child of theirs was baptised on 17 July 1842, their daughter Rosetta (b October 1844) on 18 January 1845, and their son Thomas (b January 1845) on 18 April 1847.⁹⁹¹

712 Emma was black and born on Wednesday, 3 October 1821. She died, aged three months, on 14 January 1822. Valentine was recorded as having died on the same day.

713 William John was black, born on Thursday, 6 December 1821. Aged 12, he was alive on 1 August 1834.

⁹⁸⁴ NHCS, Nevis Methodist Baptisms 1835-1873 No 83

⁹⁸⁵ ECSCRN, Nevis Court Records 1836-1843 f363

The woman accused of theft may possibly have been Jane who had previously belonged to Hester Scarborough. Jane was in 1819 sold to Elizabeth Scarborough who, however, did not register Jane in 1822. She may have been freed, or may have died.

⁹⁸⁶ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965 No 1306 and St Paul's Baptisms 1835-1873 No 120

⁹⁸⁷ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

⁹⁸⁸ UKNA, T 71/364

⁹⁸⁹ NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842

⁹⁹⁰ Joseph Richins married Diana Hinds, apprentice on Wards, in August 1834. Their witnesses were George Richins and Susanna Richins; both signed the register (NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842).

⁹⁹¹ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

714 Augustus was black and born on Monday, 7 October 1822. He died on 28 April 1825. He was two and a half years old. He may have 'replaced' the boy of the same name who had died between December 1816 and July 1817, also in infancy.

715 John Onion was black and born on Monday, 14 October 1822. His second name may somehow have been connected with William Onion Clarke. He had been sold by Mary Clarke to Capt Joseph Clarke who manumitted him in 1790.⁹⁹²

Aged 11, John Onion was alive on 1 August 1834.

716 Christiana was black and born on Wednesday, 21 May 1823. She died on 2 October 1823. She was four months old.

717 Thomas, also Tom Brown, possibly also Thomas Huggins. He was black and born on Friday, 30 May 1823. His mother was Katey London (No 565) and his sister Jane Brown (b 1817). James/Innis (b 1820) almost certainly was his brother. The boy died in 1825, aged five. Tom Brown was baptised, together with his sister, on 23 March 1828.⁹⁹³

It is likely that Jane's and Tom's father was a man called Francis or Frank Brown. In 1820 he and George Bucke executed the will of the former Mountravers manager Henry Williams⁹⁹⁴ and ten years later acted as a juror.⁹⁹⁵ It is likely that he was the Frank Brown who supervised the barrack-building project.⁹⁹⁶ He may have had a middle name that was not always used: Frank P Brown and his family in 1817 registered 14 people but, following the 1819 hurricane, fell on hard times and had to claim, and was granted, rate relief.⁹⁹⁷ Frank Brown was the father of a boy on Clarke's Estate, Simon,⁹⁹⁸ and, most likely, also of Betty Brown from Clarke's and Ann Browne from Mountravers. These children would have been Tom and Jane Brown's half-brother and half-sisters. Simon, Betty and Ann were black and born in 1826.

It is possible that Tom Brown was buried as Thomas Huggins on 1 July 1867. He had died in the asylum.⁹⁹⁹ His age was not given but if this was the same man, he was 44 years old.

718 William Springet was black and born on Monday, 16 June 1823. His surname may have been a middle name; his mother was the field hand Catherine Pinney (No 448), his father the watchman Glasgow Pinney from Scarborough's Estate. William had an older sister. Peggy was 'yellow cast' and born in 1818.

⁹⁹² ECSCRN, CR 1789-1790 f575; see also f600

⁹⁹³ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 108

⁹⁹⁴ ECSCRN, CR 1819-1823 ff194-95

⁹⁹⁵ NHCS, RG 12.10 Indictment of Manager on Stapleton p309

⁹⁹⁶ On 3 May 1833 the care of the barracks was transferred from Mr Sampson to Mr Browne who was allowed N18s a week (UKNA, CO 186/14). On 21 January 1836 the Assembly decided to discontinue Francis Browne's services 'of taking care of the barracks' (CO 186/15).

⁹⁹⁷ UKNA, T 71/364 and CO 186/12: 27 February 1820

⁹⁹⁸ The mother of Frank Brown's son Simon was Bella Clarke. Simon was listed as black, aged 2 in 1828. He was baptised in October 1834. They were on Pinney's. Shortly afterwards, in February 1835, Bella (Isabella) Clarke of Clarke's Estate married Felto, a man from Jessup's Estate (UKNA, T 71/367; NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 and St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965).

⁹⁹⁹ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965 No 1449

In August 1834 his father got married but not to William's mother. He married Nanno Pinney (No 562) in the church in St Thomas Lowland and, although he would have been baptised already, soon after their wedding Glasgow was baptised again – this time in the Methodist Chapel.¹⁰⁰⁰ In the following year, on 16 August 1835, William was also baptised in the same chapel and it is likely that this was his father's choice. Like so many children born in the 1820s, William Springet was small for his age; aged twelve he was estimated to have been ten years old.¹⁰⁰¹

His mother and sister moved to Cotton Ground. Peggy died in 1860 and his mother seven years later, aged 87, but nothing more is known about William Springet.

719 Billy Weekes was black, born on Friday, 5 September 1823, and alive on 1 August 1834. He probably was the (half?)-brother of James Weekes (b 1826).

720 George Sanders (also Saunders) was black, born on Wednesday, 24 March 1824, and the grandson of an entailed slave. His parents were Phibba (No 564) and the mason Clarke Scarbro from Scarborough's Estate. George Sanders had an elder, unnamed brother; two sisters, Phido (b 1820) and Ritta Clarke (b 1830); a younger brother, Nick Sanders (b 1833); and another sibling who was baptised in 1838.

George went to the school on Mountravers. When he was six, he was mentioned in a letter the teachers John and Elizabeth Jones wrote to the woman who contributed money to the running of the school, JPP's daughter Mary Ames. The teachers reported that George Saunders, the class monitor and usually a well-behaved boy, had stolen two coins called 'black dogs'. First he had hidden the money but when the theft was discovered he had retrieved the coins and with the words 'see the dogs Joe?' put them in the hands of another boy who belonged to the estate. He had picked this child because Joe was already known as an 'erstwhile reformed wild boy'. Joe protested his innocence. George 'was kept behind' and confessed that he had taken and passed them on to Joe because he was afraid to own up to the theft. The Joneses called in his parents. They were upset. They could have understood it had his elder brother (who could not read) had acted like this but they were not expecting such conduct from George. He was told off and punished; for two weeks he was sent down to the 'alphabet class'. Mr Jones concluded that 'During the time he sat at the bottom of the school I hardly recollect seeing a smile on George's countenance.'¹⁰⁰² It is not known for how many years he attended school.

A month after his ninth birthday, on 21 April 1833, George was baptised with his sisters Phido and Ritta,¹⁰⁰³ and a few months later, in November, their baby brother Nick underwent baptism.

His father remained on Mountravers and died there in 1855, but almost certainly George moved and went to live in Barns Ghut. He worked as a blacksmith and was married by 1852 when he and his wife Adriana had a son, George Thomas (b 9 January 1852). The child was baptised on 9 May 1852. Like his father before him, he was baptised in the Methodist Chapel.¹⁰⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰⁰ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835

¹⁰⁰¹ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

¹⁰⁰² PP, Dom Box R-4: 'Memorandums reports etc respecting schools in Nevis', Item Letters: John and Elizabeth Jones to Mrs Ames, Bath, 11 May 1830 (On cover 'Mr Jones 17 Cherry Street, Birmingham')

¹⁰⁰³ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Numbers 924, 925 and 926

¹⁰⁰⁴ NHCS, Transcript of Nevis Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873

It is likely that he was the George Sanders involved in the 1863 Hastings Charles Huggins land scandal. 38 people had built houses on Pollards Land and had paid a total of \$3,100 for leases that were to be drawn up by John Fraser Arthurton, a descendent of a former Mountravers employee. The settlers' money had not been passed on to the English owner, Mr Pollard, and the people had to petition him in an effort to get justice. Cowardly, Hastings Charles Huggins refused to see them before departed from Nevis. The villagers threatened to resist any attempt to eject them from the land they had settled.¹⁰⁰⁵

721 Diana Vernon was black and born on Thursday, 10 June 1824. She died on 16 September 1824. She was less than three months old.

Other than Captain William Vernon, who sailed the St Kitts and Nevis route from Bristol,¹⁰⁰⁶ there is no known connection with that name in Nevis. In Diana's case, his surname may well have acted as a middle name.

722 Eliza was 'black of a yellow cast' and born on Wednesday, 16 June 1824. She was Nancy Jackson's (b 1820) younger sister, and they were the youngest daughters of Yanneky Pinney (No 436) and Peter Cooper (No 507). Their father was a field hand. When Eliza was born, three of her siblings were already 25, 22 and 17: Miah (b 1798), Dinney (b 1801) and Billy (b 1806).

Aged nearly five years, on 19 April 1829 Eliza was baptised, together with her nine-year-old sister Nancy.¹⁰⁰⁷ A few months later their father and their brother Billy died within a week of each other.

Their brother Dinney married Sukey Scarborough in 1833. The couple had a daughter, their niece Fitzlarenee.

Eliza, Nancy Jackson, their sister Miah, their brother Dinney and their mother Yanneky were alive on 1 August 1834.

It is possible that, as soon as she turned 16, she got married. On 25 June 1840 Elizabeth Pinney married Thomas Woodley. The witnesses were Thomas Newton and William Browne.¹⁰⁰⁸

723 William Birrell (Birrel, possibly also Burrel) was black and born on Thursday, 29 July 1824. His mother was Fanny Coker (No 518), a field hand, and he had an elder brother, Bunda, who already was 17 years old when he was born.

At the age of six years, on 27 August 1830 William Birrel was baptised.¹⁰⁰⁹ He was alive on 1 August 1834, as were his mother and his brother Bunda.

¹⁰⁰⁵ DHC, Pollard MSS, D87/2: Letter from Nevis to AH Limmington, London, 26 March 1863

There was also another George Sanders, whom Samuel Laurence had registered in 1817. Then said to have been an 18-year-old sambo (UKNA, T 71/364), he almost certainly died in November 1846 at the age of 48. He had lived on Clifton Estate in St Thomas Lowland (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1954 No 403).

¹⁰⁰⁶ BRO, Ships' Muster Rolls 1782-1783 and 1789-1793; Minchinton, Walter *The Trade of Bristol* p129 and ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 ff620-22

¹⁰⁰⁷ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Numbers 586 and 587

¹⁰⁰⁸ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

¹⁰⁰⁹ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 215

724 Elizabeth was 'black of a yellow cast' and born on Thursday, 9 September 1824. By the time she was baptised on 26 January 1834, she was an orphan.

Elizabeth was one of three mixed-race orphan girls. Their mother may have been one of several mixed-race women: Betsey Greathead (died March 1826), Betsey Sanders (died December 1826), Betsey Dredge (died April 1828), or Ritta (died between 1828 and 1831). However, it is also possible that their mother was one of these black women: Dorinda (died December 1826), Nanny (died March 1830), Phena (died between 1828 and 1831), or Phebe (died between 1831 and 1833).

Possibly having lost a parent when very young may explain why her growth was impaired; Elizabeth may have had to compete for food with the children of her adoptive parents. Her age was severely underestimated. She was said to have been aged 'about six', when she was actually nine years old.¹⁰¹⁰

Both Eliza (No 722) and Elizabeth were probably named after Peter Thomas Huggins's daughter Elizabeth, who was baptised in April of the year in which these girls were born.¹⁰¹¹

725 Samuel was black and born on Wednesday, 6 October 1824. His parents were Jack and Polly Pinney. This probably was Polly Herbert (No 561). His father was a field slave. Samuel probably had an elder sister, Susanna (b 1815), who was baptised in 1828, three years after he had undergone the ceremony on 8 May 1825.¹⁰¹² He was then only seven months old which was unusually young. He was the first child from Mountravers known to have been baptised into the Methodist faith.

Samuel's mother died some time before he was nine years old. Aged almost ten, he was alive on 1 August 1834.¹⁰¹³

726 Joseph (also Joseph Clarke?). He was black, born on Wednesday, 3 November 1824, and the son of Jibba (No 500) and Azariah Pinney (No 591). He had an elder brother, who, most likely, was Josey (b 1817), and a younger brother called Tommey (b 1830).

Like many children born in the 1820s, Joseph was small for his age. When he was baptised as a nine-year-old, he was judged to have been three years younger. His baptism took place shortly before slavery was abolished, on 13 July 1834.¹⁰¹⁴ Tommey, his younger brother, underwent the ceremony a couple of weeks later. Being below the age of six, Tommey was automatically free while Joseph still had to go through the apprenticeship period. The day Tommey was baptised, a half-brother of Joseph's was also baptised, his father's son with a woman from Parris's. His father married her three weeks later and had another eight children – Joseph's half-siblings.

¹⁰¹⁰ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 1006

¹⁰¹¹ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 17

¹⁰¹² NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 4

Given that there seemed to have been a pattern of children being baptised before the mothers, it is more likely that they were Polly Herbert's children, rather than Hannah's Polly's but it is possible that they were Hannah's Polly's, or, less likely, Polly Pussey (b 1808). Hannah's Polly died in 1829.

¹⁰¹³ It is possible that he may have been the Samuel Huggins who in 1863 signed the letter of thanks to Revd Walter F Maynard (SRO/I, Maynard Papers, HA 178-1/57). However, as Revd Walter Maynard had preached in St George's Gingerland, it is more likely that this was a former freed man or an enslaved man from one of the Huggins estates in that part of the island.

¹⁰¹⁴ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 1037

It is possible that as Joseph Clarke he married a woman called Elizabeth Arthurton on 10 July 1845. Their witnesses were William R Solis and John Thompson.¹⁰¹⁵

727 Ann Browne was black and born on Tuesday, 10 January 1826. Her father may well have been the overseer Frank Brown, who was the father of Simon, a child born on Clarke's in 1826,¹⁰¹⁶ and most likely also of several other children. Two of these, Jane Brown (b 1817) and Tom Brown (b 1823), were also black. They were baptised together in 1828 and may well have been Ann's siblings, or at least half-siblings. Jane and Tom were the children of Katey London (No 559).

Ann Browne was alive on 1 August 1834. She was eight years old.

728 Roswell, probably also Rasburn and Rasmus Bell. He was black and born on Wednesday, 11 January 1826. His parents were Diana Pinney (No 576) and Frank Colhoun, a carpenter. When he was born, his maternal grandmother Friday (No 414) and his maternal great-grandmother Molly (No 227) were still alive.

Aged three, he was baptised on 19 April 1829 with his older sisters Priscilla (b 1818) and Angelica (b 1820). His name was given as Rasburn.¹⁰¹⁷ When he was 15, his mother probably had another girl, Mary. Mary's father was Samuel Williams, a labourer. The family still lived on Mountravers.¹⁰¹⁸

Roswell may have moved off the estate and, given his very unusual name, it is likely that on 31 August 1853 he was buried as Rasmus Bell. He had last lived in the parish of St John Figtree. He died at the age of 27 years.¹⁰¹⁹

The name Bell was linked to the Huggins family: it was the middle name of Peter Thomas's third daughter and in the 1830s a woman called Nancy Bell lived on Mountravers.¹⁰²⁰

729 Ivanhoe was almost certainly also called Abram. He was black and born on Sunday, 28 January 1826. His name was that of the title character in a historical novel, a story of rivalry between the king and his wicked brother John. Written by the Scottish novelist and historian Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* had been published seven years before this boy was born. With twins having previously been named after the knightly Valentine and a noble savage Orson – two heroes from popular literature - it is likely that Ivanhoe was named by the same reader – Peter Thomas Huggins?

Almost certainly Ivanhoe's parents were Mussey (No 568) from Mountravers and Joe Scarbro from Scarborough's Estate. It appears that his parents rejected his plantation name and decided on a solidly biblical name, Abram, instead. A boy of that name, said to have been Mussey's and Joe Scarbro's son,

¹⁰¹⁵ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

¹⁰¹⁶ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 and UKNA, T 71/367

¹⁰¹⁷ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Numbers ?582, ?583 and 584

The details were taken from a hand-transcribed list, which contained many errors. Roswell's name may have been mis-transcribed, or at the time was mis-heard, or mis-recorded. His name was very unusual and there are no obvious explanations. Given the origin of Ivanhoe's (No 729) and Cinderella's (No 730) names, Roswell, too, might have been a literary character. Rasburn could have been mis-read for Raeburn, a noted Scottish portrait painter (1756-1823) while Rasmus is a Nordic first name. The original name in the slave list, Roswell, could perhaps have been mis-heard for Russell.

¹⁰¹⁸ NHCS, Transcript of Methodist Baptisms 1835-1873

¹⁰¹⁹ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965 No 918

¹⁰²⁰ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Unnumbered

was baptised on 11 May 1834, together with another son of Mussey's, James (b 1821). Although by then 13, James was judged 'about ten' and Abram was said to have been 'about eight years old'.¹⁰²¹ As there was no other child of that name and approximate age, it is almost certain that this was, in fact, Ivanhoe. Mussey had another child, a daughter called Catherine, who was born in May 1833.

Aged eight years, Ivanhoe (Abram) was alive on 1 August 1834, as were Mussey Pinney and her children James and Catherine. The children's aunt, Jenny (No 522), was also alive then.

730 Cinderella was 'yellow cast' and born on Wednesday, 22 February 1826. Ivanhoe, born the previous month, was named after a literary character and almost certainly her name, too, was borrowed from literature.

Throughout the world there are many versions of Cinderella's story but the basic narrative is the same: a young girl drudges in the house (is mistreated by her step-mother) while her sisters go to a ball. A fairy (or the girl's dead mother) intervenes, a prince falls in love with her, marries her and she becomes rich. The name Cinderella is synonymous with being put upon but winning in the end. In Europe the story of Cinderella appeared around 1700 in a collection of fairy stories compiled from oral tradition; in 1729 they were published in English as *Tales of Mother Goose*. More recently, in 1812 the brothers Grimm had printed their collection of old German folktales as *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. These were immediately popular and very widely circulated. Among the readers may well have been someone associated with Mountravers but, equally well, the inspiration for the name may have come from Gioacchino Rossini's musical adaptation of the tale, *La Cenerentola*, which had been performed in 1817.

The notion that Cinderella's name alluded to the literary character is possibly supported by the fact that as a young child she had lost her mother, probably even both her parents: on 9 December 1832 she was baptised as 'an orphan belonging to PT Huggins'. She was six years old.¹⁰²²

There were several mixed-race women who may have been the mother of Cinderella and of Elizabeth and Fanny Penny, two other mixed-race orphans: Betsey Greathead (died March 1826), Betsey Sanders (died December 1826), Betsey Dredge (died April 1828), or Ritta (died between 1831 and 1834). It is also possible, though, that their mother was one of these black women: Dorinda (died December 1826), Nanny (died March 1830), Phena (died between 1828 and 1831), or Phebe (died between 1831 and 1833).

Cinderella was alive on 1 August 1834.

731 Nancy Jones was black and born on Saturday, 1 April 1826. Her mother was the field worker Johanna, or Hannah Pinney (No 618), her father Ned or Edward Parris. Nancy's younger sister Sally (b 1833) – who had a different father – underwent baptism a few months before she herself was baptised on 13 April 1834. Like many other children born in the 1820s, Nancy was small for age. Then aged eight, she was said to have been six years old.¹⁰²³ Her parents married in 1835, in the following her brother Constant was born and in the year after that her father died. Nancy and her mother may then have lived in Charlestown.

¹⁰²¹ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Numbers 1023 and 1024

¹⁰²² NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 Unnumbered

¹⁰²³ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 1019

732 John Hobson was black and born on Thursday, 27 April 1826. His father may possibly have been Stephen Hobson from Parris's Estate who in 1835 married Flora Richards (No 632) from Mountravers.

John Hobson was alive on 1 August 1834.

733 Henry Williams was 'yellow', born on Thursday, 18 May 1826. He was the oldest of Kitsey Greathead's (No 651) sons. It is almost certain that his father was the mulatto Lewis Williams (No 557) and that he was named after his father's brother who absconded in 1823. Henry's paternal grandmother Jenetta (No 485) was alive, his paternal grandfather, the manager James Williams, long dead. Henry's aunt Nancy Williams lived as a free woman in Charlestown and then probably came to work for Peter Thomas Huggins.

On 27 August 1830, when he was four years old, Henry was baptised together with his younger brothers John Greathead (b 1828) and Eneas Smith (b 1830). They then were on Clarke's Estate.¹⁰²⁴ In 1833 another brother was born, Edwin George Smith (b 1833).

Henry Williams was alive on 1 August 1834.

734 Phibba Clarke was black, born on Monday, 29 May 1826. She was alive on 1 August 1834.

735 James Weekes (Weeks) was black and born on Friday, 29 December 1826. He probably was Billy Weekes's (b 1823) younger brother, or half-brother.

He remained on 'Pinney's Estate', got married and with his wife Lucretia had a daughter and two sons: Mary Anne was baptised on 15 December 1859, Ernest Alfred on 13 November 1861, and Hastings on 21 March 1864. James Weekes was a labourer.¹⁰²⁵

736 Fanny Penny, also Francis, was 'yellow' and born on Saturday, 26 May 1827. By the time she was baptised on 13 July 1834, her mother and possibly also her father had died. She was said to have been an orphan.¹⁰²⁶

There were another two mixed-race orphans on Mountravers, Cinderella and Elizabeth. Fanny Penny's mother may have been one of two mixed-race women - Betsey Dredge (died April 1828), or Ritta (died between 1828 and 1831) – or she may have been a black woman: Nanny (died March 1830), Phena (died between 1828 and 1831), or Phebe (died between 1831 and 1833).

Fanny Penny was alive on 1 August 1834.

737 and 738 John Greathead and Eneas Smith were Kitsey Greathead's (No 651) second and third sons. John was born on Wednesday, 5 March 1828, and Eneas on Wednesday, 2 June 1830. The boys

¹⁰²⁴ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 Numbers 214, 213 and 212

¹⁰²⁵ NHCS, Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 Numbers 1212, 1271 and 1386

¹⁰²⁶ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 1036

had an older brother, Henry Williams, whose father, most likely, was Lewis Williams (No 551). John may also have been Lewis Williams's son, while Eneas Smith certainly was George Smith's (No 577), as was their younger brother, Edwin George Smith, who was born in 1833.

It is interesting to note how in this one family the descriptions 'mulatto', 'black of a yellow cast', 'yellow' and 'sambo' were used almost interchangeably. Their elder brother Henry's father, Lewis Williams, was a mulatto, the son of a black mother, Jenetta (No 484), and a white father, the manager James Williams. George Smith was also described as a mulatto although his, and his brothers' mother, was identified as 'black of a yellow cast'. Unfortunately it is not known who their maternal grandparents were. The four children were described as 'yellow' (John and Henry Williams), mulatto (Eneas) and sambo (Edwin George Smith).

John Greathead and Eneas Smith were baptised with their older brother Henry Williams on 27 August 1830,¹⁰²⁷ a year before their mother married Eneas's and Edwin George's father, George Smith. He died a few months before emancipation. John Greathead, although born enslaved, was the oldest Mountravers child, who, by virtue of being six years old on 1 August 1834, was automatically free. Eneas and Edwin George Smith were also free while their older brother Henry Williams and their mother had to go through the apprentice period.

739 John was black and born around 1810. In 1829, when John was 19, Peter Thomas Huggins purchased him from William Browne.

In 1817 John had belonged to Ann(e) Maynard. He was then eight years old and registered together with three African women and two boys and two girls aged between eight months and 12 years.

The women and the children stayed with Ann(e) Maynard but in the late 1820s John changed owners several times. The details are inconsistent. In 1828 a man called William Browne registered him as having been purchased from Frances Maynard, 'a free woman of colour', but Ann(e) Maynard stated in her 1831 register that she had sold John in 1830 to John, not William, Browne while William Browne in 1831 recorded that he had sold John to Peter Thomas Huggins in 1829. Huggins, in turn, only recorded John's sale in 1831: he sold John to a man called Jacob James.

The surname James was not a common one in Nevis but Jacob James was known to have been in the island from at least 1817. He then had in his 'lawful possession' an African woman, Betsey,¹⁰²⁸ and later sold a woman to Willett's Estate. He was a witness at the wedding of a recently freed man; the other witness was a man whose wife was a free mixed-race woman,¹⁰²⁹ and James may have been a freedman himself. He was illiterate but probably had a trade; in 1828 he was paid nearly N£10 from the public accounts for unspecified services.¹⁰³⁰

By August 1834 John had absconded from his new owner. He did not return; Jacob James only received slave compensation for a woman he had purchased not long before he had acquired John.¹⁰³¹

¹⁰²⁷ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 Numbers 214, 213 and 212

¹⁰²⁸ Jacob James may have come from Antigua. The African woman Betsey actually belonged to Ann Boarraston (also Boraston) of Antigua who in 1817 registered in Antigua a 13-year-old black girl, Betsey – perhaps the African woman's daughter? 'Betsy alias Eliza' was in 1824 registered by Ann Boraston's agent, William Scotland, together with William Jeffrey, a 2-year-old boy who was subsequently manumitted. Betsey alias Eliza was alive in 1831 (UKNA, T71/245, T71/248-250).

¹⁰²⁹ NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1824-1842 No 66

¹⁰³⁰ UKNA, CO 186/13 Account 1828

¹⁰³¹ HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlvi: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08 Claim No 151

740 Tommey was black and born on Thursday, 16 September 1830. His mother was Jibba (No 500) and, as she was then aged 53, he presumably was her last child. Tommey's living brothers were, most likely, Josey (b 1817) and Joseph (b 1824).

On 3 August 1834, two days after slavery was abolished, Tommy was baptised.¹⁰³² As he was under the age of six years, he was automatically free. Tommy was the first free child from Mountravers who underwent baptism after slavery was abolished.

It is possible that in 1873 he emigrated to St Croix and lived there until at least 1880. In a census held in October that year a Nevis-born Thomas Huggins was registered at Glynn estate in the island's Queen Quarter. This man was aged 51, unmarried and employed as a labourer.¹⁰³³ He was among the early arrivals from Nevis; many more people from Nevis went to St Croix in the 1890s - among them members of the Pemberton family, the Stapletons, and the Maynards.

741 Ritta Clarke was black and born on Sunday, 19 December 1830. Her mother was Phibba Pinney (No 564), her father the mason Clarke Scarbro. Most likely, she carried her father's first name as her middle name.

Ritta was small for her age. When she was baptised on 21 April 1833, she was said to have been one year old although she was over two. She underwent baptism together with her older siblings, her sister Phido (b 1820) and her brother George (b 1824).¹⁰³⁴ Later in the year another brother, Nick, was born. She also had another older brother whose name is not known.

Ritta Clarke was alive on 1 August 1834 and so were at least three of her siblings. Her parents and some of their wider family had survived this far, too: at least one uncle and several cousins – among them Nancy Jackson (No 704) and Eliza (No 722).

742 Edward was the last person purchased for Mountravers. Peter Thomas Huggins acquired him in 1830.

Edward, whose age is not known, was described as 'yellowish'. Although described in the Mountravers register as having been born in Nevis, it is more likely that he was born in one of the French colonies. He was in fact 'a fugitive from Guadeloupe' who probably came to Nevis some time in 1829. Apprehended, he was not returned to Guadeloupe but auctioned off at a Marshals Sale. In May 1829 he went to the highest bidder, a free man called Robert Prescott Browne.

Browne did not own any one else and he did not keep Edward for long. Within a few weeks, on 22 June, Browne sold him to another free person, Ann Huggins. These two were already somehow connected; Browne, a writing clerk,¹⁰³⁵ signed her slave registers and witnessed a document in which she transferred ownership of one of her people to settle a debt.

¹⁰³² NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 433

¹⁰³³ <http://stx.visharoots.org/dwiform.html>, quoting Rigsarkivet, St. Croix Census 1880, Record Number 11971, Image Number F10140/00483

¹⁰³⁴ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 924

¹⁰³⁵ Robert Prescott Browne was sacked from his post as gaol keeper (UKNA, CO/12: 12 Oct 1824) and by 1830 had become a writing clerk (ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 2 f278).

Over the years Ann Huggins had bought and sold several individuals and, at the time she owned Edward, she had in her possession a young boy and two women. But Edward remained with Ann Huggins only for about five months. In November 1829 she sold him to Jacob James¹⁰³⁶ - the man from whom Peter Thomas Huggins had in 1829 bought a young man called John (No 739). John was then in his late teens. It is likely that John and Edward were exchanged.¹⁰³⁷ John absconded from his new owner and did not return but Edward remained on Mountravers until at least 1 August 1834.

743 Leah was black and born on Monday, 20 January 1832. Her mother was Rebecca (No 655). Aged about a year and a half, the girl was baptised on 29 September 1833.¹⁰³⁸

Leah was alive on 1 August 1834.

744 Bridget was black and born on Monday, 26 March 1832. On her mother's side she was descended from Mountravers-born Creoles. Her parents were Lucy (No 637) and Andrew Pinney (No 577). Her mother's aunt Bridget (No 434), after whom she was named, was alive when she was born, as were her maternal grandmother, Cuba (No 248), and her uncles Goliah (No 536) and Felix (No 608). Her great-grandmother, Lucy (No 123), had died only about ten years before Bridget was born.

Bridget was baptised as a four-year-old on 22 June 1836.¹⁰³⁹

She may well have been alive when her sister Catherine was born in October 1838.¹⁰⁴⁰ Their father later had a child with another woman from Mountravers, Sarah Pinney (No 635). Their son was baptised a few weeks after Catherine.¹⁰⁴¹

745 Edwin, also Edwin George Smith. A 'sambo', he was born on Thursday, 21 March 1833. He was Kitsey Greathead's (No 651) fourth son and, like his brother Eneas, baptised at an unusually young age, on 8 September 1833.¹⁰⁴² Edwin's father was George Smith. His is another example of a father's first name becoming a middle name.

When he was one year old, his father died, but Edwin, his mother and his older brothers Henry Williams, John Greathead and Eneas Smith were alive on 1 August 1834. Eneas's and Edwin's paternal grandmother, Nanny Nolan (No 400), was also alive and the man believed to have been their paternal grandfather, Francis Smith, was living in Australia in 1842.

746 Betsey was black, born on Wednesday, 8 May 1833 and alive on 1 August 1834.

¹⁰³⁶ Not long after Ann Huggins had sold Edward, she bought a woman called Phillis from Dr William Thomas Nicholson, and soon after that then let go of Caroline. In a transaction that was typical of the time, she used Caroline to settle a debt of N£75 with the mariner Edward John Power. Robert Prescott Browne witnessed the deal (ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 2 f278).

Some time before August 1834 Ann Huggins freed Phillis and also the boy Walter (UKNA, T 71/369).

¹⁰³⁷ Edward may, possibly, have been buried as Edward Gardner (having been the gardener?). Said to have lived at 'Pinney's', he was buried on 3 November 1857. His age, 40 years, appears estimated (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 671). If this was him, he would have been about twelve years old when he was purchased.

¹⁰³⁸ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 391

¹⁰³⁹ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

¹⁰⁴⁰ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

¹⁰⁴¹ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

¹⁰⁴² NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 No 388

747 Kitty (also Catherine) was black and born on Thursday, 23 May 1833. She was the daughter of Mussey Pinney (No 574) and Joe Scarbro, a field slave. Her elder brothers were James (b 1821) and Abram aka Ivanhoe (b 1826).

Aged almost eleven months, she was baptised on 13 April 1834¹⁰⁴³ and her brothers a month later. This suggests that they probably had different fathers.

Catherine was alive on 1 August 1834.

748 Sally, later probably Sarah Pinney, was black and born on Wednesday, 31 July 1833. Her mother was Johanna, or Hannah Pinney (No 618), and her father Jud Huggins. Both were field workers. Sally's had an elder half-sister, Nancy Jones (b 1826), whose father was Edward Parris.

On 10 November 1833 Sally was baptised ¹⁰⁴⁴ and her sister Nancy in April the following year. In January 1835 Sally's mother married Nancy's father, a driver, and in 1836 her mother and stepfather had a son, Constant. A year later her stepfather died. At that time the family may have lived in Charlestown.

It is likely that she moved back to Clarke's Estate and that on 15 June 1875 she was buried as Sarah Pinney. Aged 41, she was said to have been 39d.¹⁰⁴⁵

749 Nick Sanders (Saunders) was black and born on Wednesday, 25 September 1833. His parents were Phibba (No 564) and the mason Clarke Scarbro from Scarborough's Estate. Nick had two older sisters and a brother: Phido (b 1820) and Ritta (b 1830) and George Sanders (b 1824). They had undergone baptism together a few months before he was born, and Nick was baptised on 10 November 1833. He was just six and a half weeks old.¹⁰⁴⁶ The children also had an elder brother whose name is not known and a younger sibling who was baptised in 1838.

Nick Sanders was alive on 1 August 1834. He and one of his sisters, Ritta, were automatically free but the rest of the family remained apprenticed until 1 August 1838.

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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¹⁰⁴³ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 1021

¹⁰⁴⁴ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 995

¹⁰⁴⁵ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 1208

¹⁰⁴⁶ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1825-1835 No 998

On Taylor's Estate lived a level maker called Nicholas Saunders after whom Nick Sanders may have been named (NHCS, Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 No 569).

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