

PART 3

The employed men

Chapter 3

Biographies of managers, 1734-1807

Father and son, James and Joseph Browne, 1734-1761

James Browne was the longest-serving manager on Mountravers but a lack of documents meant that relatively few details about his plantation management could be established.

Today, the Brownes are best known for their plantation in the parish of St James Windward which was later called Eden and then Eden Browne. As the setting of a tale about a death by duel, the old Browne's estate is now one of the tourist attractions in Nevis.



James Browne may well have come from an old, established Nevis family; in the 1670s there were eight Brownes on the island, including a 'free Negro' called John Brown.¹ By the early 1700s the number had increased to eleven, mostly through the arrival in 1685 of several Monmouth rebels transported for Governor Stapleton.

It appears that James was born in 1710 and the son of James Browne, a member of the Nevis Council.² James Browne junior studied at Trinity College, Oxford, and was said to have joined the Inner Temple at the age of 16.³ However, he did not follow a legal career but in 1734 was installed as manager on John Frederick Pinney's plantation. His appointment was a family affair: Jeremiah Browne, who almost certainly was an uncle of James's,⁴ was John Frederick Pinney's guardian, while

¹ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 Nevis Census 1677/8

² UKNA, CO 186/1

³ Oliver, VL *History of Antigua* Vol 1 p76; also <http://www.innertemple.org.uk/archive/>

⁴ The man Mary Pinney had appointed as her son's guardian, Jeremiah Browne, was a wealthy landowner. He had property in St Kitts, Nevis and in England. In Surrey he held the manor of Apps Court (near Molesey) which he passed on to his daughter Elizabeth. Apps Court was in 1802 sold by a descendant and the house later pulled down to make way for a reservoir (HE Malden (ed) 'Parishes: Walton On Thames' *A History of the County of Surrey* Vol 3).

Jeremiah Browne died between July 1754 and November 1755. In his will he left the bulk of his estate to his son Jackson Browne but also made bequests to his daughters Sophia and Elizabeth and his granddaughter, Frances Payne (Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 1 pp35-6 and Vol 2 p271).

According to one source, James, who managed Mountravers, was the son of Jeremiah Browne (PP, Misc Vols 36 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 1) but a Browne family tree in *Caribbeana* points towards it having been Jeremiah's nephew, his brother James's son (Vol 1 p35).

The family tree in *Caribbeana* appears to have been based on the wills made in 1754 by Jeremiah Browne and in 1777 by James Browne senior. According to Jeremiah Browne's will, he had another nephew called James, the son of John Browne of Nevis and the brother of Sarah, but a case that involved Jeremiah Browne's son Jackson concerning his St Kitts plantation suggests that James Browne (the son of John, brother of Sarah) had died between 1754 and February 1756; he was not mentioned while his sister Sarah was. In addition, the names of several of James Browne's children (James, William, Jeremiah, etc.) appear in John Frederick Pinney's correspondence in the early 1760s, and, based on this, the identity of James Browne and his family was established (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 6 pp117-18).

The Browne family tree does not include all of James Browne's children because some had died prior to him making his will. It also shows that there were four generations of men called James Browne but the ages of the children suggest that the manager on Mountravers was the James Browne born in 1710 and that there were only three generations.

one of the men who drew up James Browne's contract was none other than James's father, James Browne senior. One of the executors appointed by John Frederick Pinney's mother, John Spooner, oversaw the process.

James Browne's conditions of employment were laid down in an agreement dated 7 March. The 24-year-old was to get a basic salary of N£100⁵ a year, some imported goods, plantation produce, and resources and services in kind. The imported goods amounted to an annual allowance of six barrels each of salt beef and flour, four firkins of salt butter, a hogshead of Madeira wine, and a box each of soap and candles. Worth N£90, these supplies almost doubled his income. In addition, he was entitled to plantation produce - a barrel of strained sugar and twenty gallons of 'rum & syrup' - and he could hold 'all sorts of stock', use some of the surplus plantation sheep and was permitted to plant Indian corn or peas in every other row among twenty acres of young canes. He was also allowed a horse, a boy to tend to the horse and two of the plantation people as domestic servants. (Later John Pretor Pinney (JPP) granted his unmarried manager five people.) Richard Pares considered James Browne's contract 'exceptionally generous'⁶ and it certainly compared favourably with that of one of Browne's contemporaries, the manager on the Stapleton plantation in Nevis. To begin with, David Stalker's salary was N£40 a year less, N£60, and he was entitled to two fewer barrels of flour. He also got a hogshead of Madeira wine but had four more barrels of beef than Browne. Stalker, too, was allowed a box of candles and 24 pounds of soap but he missed out on the butter altogether. He could not keep any 'hogs or stock of any kind, 'except a reasonable number of turkeys, fowls and ducks for his own table', could not plant any cassava but was permitted to plant corn in up to ten acres. He did not have a horse, either, and was only given one woman and a boy 'to take care of his house'.⁷ Conditions of employment were individually negotiated and if a manager was offered better terms elsewhere, this surely provided an incentive to leave.

Some time after he began work on Mountravers James Browne got married. His wife's name is not known but it could have been Elizabeth – the name of their only daughter. The couple had five sons - James, Jeremiah, Joseph, John and William – who presumably were all born on Mountravers. As the family grew, the number of their personal staff increased to twelve. They would not all have been servants because eight of these were too young, too old or too infirm to carry out any work.⁸ That same year, 1746, Thomas Wenham first appeared in the Mountravers records. It is likely that he was sent out from England⁹ so that James Browne could tend to the family's plantation once his father left Nevis. James Browne senior was mentioned in various documents: a member of the Council since 1721,¹⁰ in 1735 he supplied enslaved people to work on the defences at Saddle Hill¹¹ and as late as June 1745 was known to have attended a Council meeting.¹² In the year that Thomas Wenham first

There was also another Joseph Browne with whom John Frederick Pinney had dealings: he, with an unnamed brother, was involved in shipping and with his father borrowed £100 from Pinney to build a vessel. As was often the case, the money was slow in being returned (PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Letters dated 16 June 1756, 20 August 1756 and 8 March 1761).

⁵ N£ means Nevis currency

⁶ PN p17, and R Pares *A West India Fortune* p346 fn8

The value of the imported goods was based on the costs as itemised by Walter Nisbet in his account of 1746. Walter Nisbet's basic pay (including 'travelling charges') was N£150 a year; an additional supply of imported goods amounted to N£76:10:0 (Stapleton Cotton MSS 13 (ii)).

⁷ Ryland Stapleton MSS 4.10: David Stalker's agreement dated 31 December 1733

⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1741-1749 f123

⁹ According to Pares, John Frederick Pinney sent Thomas Wenham out some time in the fifties (Pares, Richard *A West India Fortune* p58) but a reference to 'your serv't Thos. Wenham' in George Jones's account dated 15 August 1746 suggests that Wenham had come to the plantation much earlier (PP, WI 'Damaged or Fragile' Box). Pares appears to have based this on a letter from John Frederick Pinney in which he complained about the state of his sugars since Wilson left; he wanted his boilers told off (PP, LB 1: JF Pinney, Bath, to ?Browne, 27 October 1755). Wilson was either a boiler-slave, or a white boiling house watch. That Wenham was a manager rather than an overseer is based on a letter John Frederick Pinney wrote to Wenham about being advised on sugar shipments – the manager's not the overseer's job. Also, Wenham was allowed enslaved people as servants.

¹⁰ Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial) 1720-1745 p830

¹¹ Another seven people named Brown/e supplied enslaved people for the work on the Saddle Hill defences: Benjamin, Elizabeth, John, John of Hog Valley, John of Figtree, Ann of Figtree and Ann of Charlestown (UKNA, CO 186/2).

¹² UKNA, CO 186/3: 19 June 1745

appeared only one James Browne was recorded as paying tax on enslaved people, suggesting that James Browne senior was no longer in the island. In 1751 James Browne (junior) was appointed a member of the Council.¹³

At that time most members of the Browne families lived in the parishes of St John Figtree, St George's Gingerland and St James Windward,¹⁴ and St James was also the parish where Browne's plantation was situated. A property of about two hundred acres,¹⁵ it was smaller in size than Mountravers and was worked with proportionately fewer enslaved people. In 1746 James Browne paid tax on 133 people (of whom 69 were exempt) but nine years on, the figure dropped to 116.¹⁶ With such a decrease it is unsurprising that Browne would have wanted to augment his workforce, and according to Pares, one of the liberties he took was to employ labourers from Mountravers on the family's plantation. For the Pinney people this would have meant having to transfer right across to the other side of the island and, no doubt, they would have been given the hardest and most unpleasant tasks. Once people had been siphoned off to Browne's plantation, those left on Mountravers would have been stretched to the utmost to cover their work in addition to their own.

James Browne senior returned¹⁷ but died, probably in Nevis, and it was up to James Browne junior to oversee the running of the family's plantation. However, when Tom Wenham left Mountravers, James Browne would also have had to take over the reins again and put his mind to managing both estates, in addition to the two small plantations which he is known to have acquired.¹⁸ By then he probably was widowed already and in bad health. Having grown 'so sickly and infirm',¹⁹ the work became too much for him. The solution, of course, was to get one of his sons to run Mountravers and, although his son Joseph was physically disabled and inexperienced in plantation work, some time in 1760 James Browne appointed him as manager. Two other sons of his, John and Jeremiah, were in Nevis as well, but John was too young while Jeremiah (Jerry) had become a doctor. It is not known what medical credentials he acquired but he had gathered experience when, through a family connection, he had briefly worked as a surgeon at a hospital in England.²⁰ In charge of treating the Mountravers people, his father recompensed him in kind rather than in cash: he allowed him rent-free accommodation at the Mountain House and one of the plantation boys 'to run with him'.²¹ It seemed a good, honest arrangement. Meanwhile, Browne's other two sons, James and William, were in England. William had been, or still was, attending school. Living up to the image of the spoilt creole, he quietly engaged the services of his classmates to do some of his schoolwork for him. John Frederick Pinney, unimpressed by the child's mathematical talents, attributed this deception to 'his great attachment to play' but also criticised his father for giving him too much pocket money as this 'folly' enabled William 'to purchase other boys to do his sums for him'.²²

Over a period of almost three decades James Browne's employer visited Nevis only twice, briefly. John Frederick Pinney took a distant interest in his West Indian properties and, without doubt, failed to keep up investing in the plantation infrastructure and manpower and, as the years passed, Browne let things slip. Finally Pinney could no longer ignore what people said about his affairs in Nevis, and he dispatched William Coker, armed him with joint power of attorney and charged him with investigating the rumours. Coker found the estates and the properties in Charlestown in a sorry state: the buildings were in poor repair, the plantations short of healthy and skilled workers and production

¹³ 'Journal, April 1751 Vol 59' in *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations* Vol 9 (January 1750-December 1753), Order of Council 30 April 1751; also UKNA, CO 186/3: e.g. 21 March 1754 and 22 January 1755

¹⁴ PP, Dom Box P: General's Tax Notebook 1755

¹⁵ UKNA, CO 108/268

¹⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1741-1749 f123, and PP, Dom Box P: General's Tax Notebook 1755

¹⁷ UKNA, CO 186/2, CO 186/3, and VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 1 p36

¹⁸ James Browne left in his will two plantations he had purchased: one in St James Windward from William Hull for £1,000 and another from Dr William Mills for £250 (ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1763-1787 f477).

¹⁹ PP, Cat 3 Dom Box 1756-1762: James Browne, Dorchester, to JF Pinney, 18 February 1762

²⁰ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Robert Willis to JF Pinney, 26 August 1756

²¹ PP, LB 3: JF Pinney, London, to William Coker, 5 June 1762

²² PP, LB 1: JF Pinney, Handley, to James Browne, Nevis, 20 December 1754

down to a minimum; Joseph Browne had produced a mere six hogsheads of sugar during ten months of management.²³ When Coker investigated further, he noted that six people as well as several animals had died. Implying that this was through neglect or incompetence, Coker became outraged that an untrained 'cripple' should have been employed and relayed to John Frederick Pinney the Brownes' betrayal of trust:

Indeed I do not see how he could manage your estate as he ought, being a cripple, & not able to walk 500 yards; neither can I imagine how his father could in conscience, & consistent with that friendship that has so long subsisted between you and him, put a person in that unhappy condition over your affairs, & by what I can see but little skilled in plantation business, considering he is a native of the island. But as he has taken great liberties, such as are too glaring to have escaped publick (sic) observation, I do not wonder at his putting a cripple at the head of your affairs.²⁴

The Brownes were taken aback by Coker's swift response. Joseph was sacked as manager and Jerry, the doctor, received notice to leave the Mountain House immediately. One of Dr Browne's last tasks on Mountravers was to treat Tom Bossue, the cooper who had been accidentally stabbed, but, despite Dr Browne's 'utmost efforts to save him', the man died almost two weeks later.²⁵ This death did not cast any doubt on Dr Browne's medical abilities and he was offered the post of plantation doctor but, predictably, he declined.²⁶ He and Joseph appear to have remained in Nevis, at least for the time being,²⁷ but both men died some time before the mid-1770s.

Within a couple of weeks of Coker arriving James Browne left Nevis. He sailed in Capt Beach's ship and on the journey enjoyed the company of several people from Nevis: John Richardson Herbert and his wife and daughter, Mrs Lowman, Mathew Jones, Dr Smith, Edward Parris, Josiah Webbe and three or four children.²⁸ The travellers landed safely in England at the end of July 1761²⁹ but Browne, not being well and 'on account of his health', almost immediately went to see a doctor in London. This was John Frederick Pinney's friend, Dr Charles Feake.³⁰ He also treated other West Indians, among them Edward Jesup. Indeed, while James Browne was at Dr Feake's, he bumped into Edward Jesup, his old neighbour from Nevis. Browne had with him two of his sons,³¹ and no doubt they all complained about Pinney's ingratitude and Coker's heavy-handed intrusion. As it happened, a few months earlier one of the sons, James, had already exchanged strong words with Pinney in an encounter that just about fell short of being 'actionable'. According to Pinney, James Browne junior, 'the villain', had been careful not to use language that could have sparked off a duel, confining himself to words such as 'dirty scoundrel etc'.³²

This spat had probably arisen when James Browne junior had heard that Coker was being sent to Nevis but it may also have been linked to another quarrel that Pinney had with another Browne, George Browne of Frampton in Dorset. The Nevis Brownes appear to have been related to this man,³³ and possibly some of Pinney's increasing dissatisfaction with the Brownes may have been tied up with the dispute that was developing in England. Pinney was renting land from George Browne

²³ PP, LB 3: JF Pinney, London, to William Coker, 5 June 1762

²⁴ PP, WI Box 3: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 28 July 1761

According to Pares, Coker and Jesup went to Nevis but Jesup remained in England; he had appointed Eneas Shaw as his attorney (*A West India Fortune* p60).

²⁵ PP, Box D: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 23 July 1761

²⁶ PP, LB 3: JF Pinney, London, to William Coker, 5 June 1762

²⁷ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: James Browne to JF Pinney, 30 July 1761

²⁸ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: James Browne to JF Pinney, 11 August 1761, and Dom Cat 1755: William Withers to JF Pinney, 18 June 1761

²⁹ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: William Withers, London, to JF Pinney, 30 July 1761

³⁰ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Dr Feake, London, to JF Pinney, (no day) August 1761. See also VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 6 p115

³¹ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Edward Jesup, London, to JF Pinney, 1 August 1761

³² PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Robert Willis, London, to JF Pinney, (no day) March 1761

³³ PP, Dom Cat 1755: JF Pinney, Bettiscombe, to Robert Willis, Dorchester, 16 April 1761

and had been quarrelling with him over some timber that Pinney had kept after he had felled or coppiced a tree. George Browne had, in effect, accused him of theft. It had all begun in early 1759 and ended with Browne taking him to court three years later. Pinney lost the case. Not only was he behind with three years' rent for several tenements at Bettiscombe – which, pig-headedly, he might well have withheld on purpose - but he also had to pay George Browne over £80 in damages and cost.³⁴ Grudgingly, Pinney admitted defeat and when issuing the order for payment to George Browne he took this as an opportunity to vent his anger against the Nevis Brownes in general and James Browne in particular.

John Frederick Pinney decided to sever all links with James Browne and relieved him from his duties as attorney. Browne was hurt. He blamed his 'private enemies' for 'malicious representations' and asked for reasons while justifying himself: he had served Pinney's 'affairs nigh thirty years', had never overspent and had dutifully resumed the management of Mountravers after his father's return to Nevis when he could have remained on the family's plantation. Coker had been rash; Jerry, who 'never offended' Pinney, 'should have had a more generous warning' to leave the Mountain House, and as to appointing new attorneys, he stated that he was very happy to bow out on account of his ill health and only objected to the manner in which he was being sidestepped.³⁵

This falling out took place just months before John Frederick Pinney died and with his death the Brownes fade from the scene until, in November 1773, James Browne got married again.³⁶ Then in his early sixties, he married a widow, Ann Johnston. According to JPP, she came with her own private fortune of over £2,000 which he re-invested for her.³⁷ Not only well-bred and well-off, the new Mrs Browne probably was also a good twenty or thirty years younger than her husband but age gaps like that were not unusual. For an ailing and ageing man a much younger wife meant that she might not only bless him with more heirs but that he also had someone at hand to nurse him through illness and old age. For the young woman there was always the promise of an inheritance big enough to provide a life-long income for her and her children. Ann Johnston already had a young daughter from her previous marriage but nothing is known about her dead husband or his financial circumstances. Apart from Mary Ann (also Marianne) Nisbet Johnston, the daughter Ann Johnston brought into their marriage,³⁸ the couple had two children of their own, Jeremiah Nisbet Browne and Innes James Browne. The middle name of two of the children suggests that Browne's new wife might have been a Nisbet by birth but so far no evidence has been found to confirm this. The Nisbets were Scots and according to JPP, the new Mrs Browne was of an 'exceeding good family of Pembrokehire'.³⁹

It is very likely that James Browne had returned to Nevis and that he had brought his bride with him back to England - the wedding took place in London - but in 1774 he appears to have been back in Nevis. There he mortgaged his estate in the parish of St James Windward⁴⁰ and appointed as his joint attorneys Dr Josiah Nisbet and the planter Andrew Brand. This Mr Brand, said to have resided with him, may, in fact, have been his plantation manager. James Browne also mortgaged property that he had in London (three acres of pasture at Acton Southside),⁴¹ which suggests that he, like so many planters at the time, was in debt and that he needed to raise funds.

³⁴ PP, Cat 3 Dom Box 1756-1762: 13 March 1762 and 11 August 1762

³⁵ See PP, Cat 3 Dom Box 1756-1762: JF Pinney to James Browne, Dorchester, 20 February 1762; James Browne, Dorchester, to JF Pinney, 24 February 1762, and R Pares *A West India Fortune* p61

³⁶ ECSCRN, Wills 1763-1787 f472

³⁷ PP, LB 4: JPP to Mills & Swanston, 6 June 1776

³⁸ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 4 p334

Ann Johnston, as the daughter of Walter Nisbet the Elder, would therefore have been the sister of Walter, James, Josiah and Mary Amelia. This would have made Mrs Ann Browne a sister-in-law of Lady Frances Nelson but other than the fact that Mrs Ann Browne/Mrs Ann Hutton was sent letters care of 'Dr Nesbitt' in Charlestown, in the documents there is no further evidence of any contact between the families (*Caribbeana* Vol 2 p191, and UKNA, CO 108/268: 4 April and 9 October 1779).

³⁹ PP, LB 4: JPP to Mills & Swanston, 6 June 1776

⁴⁰ Oliver, VL *History of Antigua* Vol 1 p75, quoting Close Roll, 14 Geo III, pt. xxiv; also *Caribbeana* Vol 1 p36

⁴¹ UKNA, CO 108/268

In the mid-1770s Mr and Mrs Browne lived in London, in North End in the parish of Fulham⁴² but by 1777 had moved to Town Acton. Browne's daughter Elizabeth from his first marriage was then alive, as were his sons James, John and William. James was living in Weymouth on the south coast, while John was in Nevis and William, by then, probably as well. Being very ill indeed, James Browne was also set to return to Nevis and, as was common before embarking on a major voyage, he made his will. To his son John he left the entailed family plantation and the other properties in Nevis but, as John was under age, the Nevis property was therefore put in trust to an attorney in London, a man called James Baker. For his wife and his children from his two marriages (Elizabeth, James, Jeremiah Nisbet and Innes James) and also for Mary Anne, his step-daughter, James Browne provided generously, but to his son William (who had cheated at school) he left only one Guinea. The young man had been up to no good and Browne punished him for his 'misbehaviour'.⁴³ Begging the 'favour of secrecy', William Browne had once tried to induce the strait-laced JPP into lending him £20 in some shady sounding deal but it is highly unlikely that he ever got that money.⁴⁴

The Brownes went to Nevis in the summer of 1777. They left behind the two younger children and entrusted them to the care of the attorney, James Baker. Mary Anne and Jeremiah received an education that befitted their status as the children of gentlefolk: the girl went to school with a Mrs Elizabeth Terry, had a dancing master and a writing master while the boy attended, what appears to have been, a school run by Frenchman, Mr J Dupar's. Their youngest son, Innes, the Brownes took with them to Nevis. Elizabeth, the daughter from his first marriage, may have remained in the West Indies all along; certainly by the late 1770s she was married to a local man, Dr John Latoysonere Jefferys.⁴⁵ A man in his thirties, he was from a family that over a period of a century had risen from very lowly beginnings. His paternal grandfather had been among the early settlers in Nevis and, said to have been 'poor', that man had owned no enslaved people. Thirty years on, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, the next generation had acquired some and John's father possessed 28. Like so many families at the time, the Jefferys had had their share of children dying young: on the very day John Latoysonere Jefferys had been baptised, one brother had been buried and another had been buried 24 hours later.⁴⁶ With these two brothers dead, it is likely that John Latoysonere Jefferys had become the rightful heir to his father's people and land, which may, possibly, have been Spring Valley plantation in the parish of St James Windward.

James Browne's attorney James Baker lived with his family in Fenchurch Street in the Tower Hill area of London, home to at least two Nevis planters.⁴⁷ Baker was well-placed to attend to Browne's business – he received his sugars and dispatched plantation utensils and household goods, and Mrs Baker went shopping on Mrs Browne's behalf and sent out materials for dress-making. The Brownes lived well in Nevis, importing many non-essentials such as salmon, tripe and tobacco, and, unusually, as West Indians were not great readers, Mrs Ann Browne also had a box of books sent to her. All this cost money, and there was the children's education to pay for - three months board for Mary Anne alone came to nearly S£12 - but the family plantation was not doing well and Mr and Mrs Browne were in debt. They, too, were among the people who borrowed money from JPP.

Before leaving England, James Browne had been ill, and he was back in Nevis for just over a year when he died on 16 November 1778. He was in his late sixties.⁴⁸ His heir, his son John, then died shortly afterwards. Having made his will in January 1779, John Browne was buried some time before

⁴² UKNA, CO 108/268

⁴³ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 1 p36, and ECSCRN, Wills 1763-1787 f473

⁴⁴ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: William Browne, London, to John Pretor, 15 February 1763

⁴⁵ John Jefferies was among those to whom Pinney & Tobin wrote a circular letter, inviting them in October 1784 to use the ship *Tobin/Capt Crosse* for shipping (Minchinton, W *The Trade of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* p128).

⁴⁶ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 2 p32 and p177 and Vol 1 p234 and p235

⁴⁷ Andrew Hamilton and Richard Oliver were said to have been of Fenchurch Street (Titford, John 'Settlers of the Old Empire ...' in *Family Tree Magazine* (November 1999) p60, citing HR Moulton *Palaeography, Genealogy and Topography: 1930 Catalogue* and Sir Lewis Warriar (sic) and John Brooke *The House of Commons 1754-1790* Vol 3 HMSO 1964).

⁴⁸ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1763-1787 f460

the end of April. Revd William Jones undertook the ceremony and JPP advanced the payments for the 'surplice fee' and for 'breaking ground in the Church'.⁴⁹

John Browne, in his will, bequeathed N£500 to his brother William (to whom their father had left a token Guinea) and asked that his favourite horse, a mare that he usually rode, be given to Mrs Mary Fenton Webbe, the wife of George Webbe junior. The rest of his property he left to his brother-in-law John Latoysonere Jefferys and to George Webbe the Younger of Stoney Hill.⁵⁰ This suggests that he had mortgaged Browne's, the family estate, to these two men. In his will John did not mention his brother James in Weymouth because news had reached Nevis that the young man was no longer alive.

Soon after the Brownes had arrived in Nevis, Mrs Browne had instructed their correspondents in Bristol, the company of Bright, Baillie & Bright, to send a present of sugar and rum to James Browne junior in Weymouth but, after a spell of sickness, he died before his step-mother's gifts could reach him. Unlike his other siblings who had been left money in their father's will, James had been left no money, only furniture. This might point towards a fractured relationship between father and son, and the present sent by Mrs Browne could be seen as an attempt at mending it. Altogether the family relationships do not appear to have been very happy. James, for instance, in his will made no mention of any of his siblings. His clothes and linen and £60 he bequeathed to a shoemaker from Weymouth and his wife, while the servant maids who had nursed him during his illness were promised £10 each for their care and attendance. His solicitor and friend Robert Willis of Dorchester was to purchase a mourning ring with a Guinea that James left for him and even Robert Willis's grandson benefited: he got £10.⁵¹ The bulk of his possessions James left to his father, not knowing that his father would die two months later - James senior, James junior and John Browne all died within less than a year.

Shortly after James Browne senior died in Nevis, an inventory revealed that his possessions in the island were worth just over £9,300⁵² and that the total number of enslaved people on Browne's had sunk to 81.⁵³ So little sugar was being produced and sent to England that James Baker suspected it might have been sold in the island in order 'to discharge some contingencies on the estate'. Without sugar there was no income and a year after James Browne's death, Baker, acting as the sole executor, held a balance of just £56 and was no longer able to settle any of the debts. JPP, for instance, was owed close to £800.⁵⁴

Widowed after five years of marriage, within months of her husband's death Ann Browne got married again. Her third husband, Charles Hutton, the son of the late Charles Hutton of Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire, had lived in Nevis for around twenty years.⁵⁵ From 1777 onwards Hutton had managed an estate in the same parish, the Stapleton Russell's Rest plantation. They were near neighbours. For Charles Hutton, the marriage to the widow from one of the established planter families meant automatic advancement into the upper echelons of creole society; for the widow, whose annuity of £300 was in jeopardy if the estate did not generate enough money, having a husband in stable employment guaranteed a secure income of N£250 a year.⁵⁶

After getting married in the summer of 1779, Charles Hutton remained manager of Lady Stapleton's plantation but moved to Browne's. There he made a 'tolerable crop' when other estates were not, and, although regarded as a 'very good planter', it was later said that he had acquired this reputation from

⁴⁹ PP, AB 26 Revd Wm Jones' a/c and Estate of James Browne dec'd a/c

⁵⁰ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1763-1787 f464

⁵¹ UKNA, CO 108/268

⁵² Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 4 p335

⁵³ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1763-1787 f460

⁵⁴ UKNA, CO 108/268

⁵⁵ Charles Hutton's father also had West India property, an indebted plantation in Barbados, Baldericks (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 6 p117).

⁵⁶ Stapleton Cotton MSS 16 (i) and 15 (v)

the competent handling of the estate he lived on – Browne's – rather than from the impression he made on the Stapleton estate.⁵⁷ JPP knew Hutton and approved of him. He considered him a man of 'good character',⁵⁸ and JPP's friend and attorney, John Taylor, too, believed him to be 'a steady careful man'.⁵⁹ Their judgments are confirmed by Hutton's clear and well-formed handwriting.⁶⁰ But not all was well in the marriage. One source in London, a West India merchant, alluded to a separation by Mrs Hutton from her husband and stated that she accused him of mismanaging the Stapleton estate. Mrs Hutton ('a very curious Lady') remained in London for a while but returned to her husband some time in 1783. By then Mr Hutton may have been sacked already. Walter Nisbet came to Nevis in 1781 and although he had once held a good opinion of Hutton, Nisbet altered his view of the Stapleton manager so 'intensely' that, in the end, Hutton lost his job. One of Hutton's abuses had been the planting of provisions among the canes – 'to the detriment of the crops of sugar, though much of the private advantage of a manager.' In 1783, at Walter Nisbet's recommendation, a relative of Nisbet's was installed instead and Charles Hutton returned to England.⁶¹ He died in 1788 in Nottinghamshire.⁶² In his will, he left everything to his widow - apart from bequests to a servant and to Ann Hutton's daughter from her first marriage, Mary Anne Johnston. He also referred to two children who had died, Alexander Baillie Hutton and Eleanor Hutton, who may have been his and Ann's. The children Ann had with her second husband were not mentioned but they then were alive: Jeremiah Nisbet Browne was admitted to the Inn in London in October 1793,⁶³ suggesting that he, too, was intending to follow a legal career, while the other, 'Innes James otherwise James Innes Browne' lived in Bristol at College Green in the house of a Mr Pritchard – literally a stone's throw away from the Pinneys. By early 1804 both brothers had died; Jeremiah Nisbet Browne in Scotland and James Innes Browne in Madeira.⁶⁴

Only two of the six children from James Browne's first marriage survived into the 1780s and beyond, Elizabeth and William. Married to John Latoysonere Jefferys, Elizabeth had at least two sons and a daughter: Peter, George and Frances Mary. Her husband John Latoysonere Jefferys died in 1801, and her son George, as well as Elizabeth herself, then disappeared from the records. Her daughter Frances Mary Jefferys probably married the planter Richard Lythcot Hicks from Nevis, and while he died in 1811 in America,⁶⁵ Frances Mary Hicks survived at least into the early 1850s.⁶⁶

John Latoysonere Jefferys, too, had been in debt, and after his death his properties were levied on by the Deputy Provost Marshal: the 240-acre 'Spring' and the 80-acre Hope estates.⁶⁷ By 1817 Spring Valley was owned by his son Peter Jefferys of Nevis. A member of the Council since the early 1800s,⁶⁸ in September 1816 Peter Jefferys applied for a year's leave of absence,⁶⁹ took with him Patty, a woman from the Spring Valley estate,⁷⁰ and went to live in England. By the 1830s he still had not returned to Nevis.

⁵⁷ Stapleton Cotton MSS 9: Richard Neave, London, to Catherine Stapleton, 3 September 1783, and 22 October 1783

⁵⁸ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Baker & Parry, 14 June 1779

⁵⁹ Stapleton Cotton MSS 16: John Taylor to Catherine Stapleton, 15 June 1780

⁶⁰ Pers. comm., Brian Littlewood, 25 October 2005

⁶¹ Stapleton Cotton MSS 9: Richard Neave, London, to Catherine Stapleton, 3 September 1783; MSS 17 (ii): Instructions from Mr Nisbet to Mr Daniell, 1 September 1783, and Handlist of The Stapleton-Cotton Manuscripts, Box 2/16, particularly Box 2/16 viii (Bundle 18: Letters by Walter Nisbet, 10 July 1783, and James Nisbet, 28 August 1783).

The House, not aware of Hutton's return, wrote to him in October, advertising their vessel for shipping (Minchinton, W *The Trade of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* p128, quoting LB 17: Circular from Pinney & Tobin, 26 October 1784).

⁶² *Gentleman's Magazine* Vol LVIII (1788) p938, and VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 2 pp310-13

⁶³ <http://www.innertemple.org.uk/archive/>

⁶⁴ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff310-13 and ff429-34

⁶⁵ PP, LB 50: P & A to Peter Jefferys, Nevis, 1 January 1812

⁶⁶ In August 1851 Frances Mary Hicks leased Clay Hill and Spring plantations in Nevis to John Huggins and William Huggins (Ingram, K E *Manuscript Sources for the History of the West Indies*, citing National Library of Jamaica MS 1412).

⁶⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1810-1814 f9

⁶⁸ UKNA, CO 186/12: 31 December 1825

⁶⁹ UKNA, CO 186/11: 2 September 1816

⁷⁰ UKNA, T 71/365

James Browne's misbehaving son William was in Jamaica in early 1779 but returned to Nevis and married a woman called Mary and, by the time he made his will in November 1795, appears not to have had any children. He left £100 each to his nephew and niece (his sister's children George and Frances Mary Jefferys) who were then both still under age. Other beneficiaries were the daughter of a friend, Elizabeth Tyrell, who may have been a mulatto, and his 'loving friends' Frederick and John Huggins. To his wife Mary he left 'all his estate in Nevis'.⁷¹ It is not known whether this included, in fact, the Browne's family estate. Certainly after the death of the appointed heir, William's brother John, ownership of the estate appears to have been in contention. The property had been entailed but James Browne had cut off his son Jeremiah Nisbet Browne from the entail, and although James Browne senior had made a will, his widow and the then heir, John, had claimed that James Browne had died intestate.⁷² It is possible that the widow did not realise that her husband had made a will in London. It is also possible that this was a shrewd move to pre-empt a claim by James Baker, to whom James Browne had put the estate in trust. Accepting that he had died intestate, Letters of Administration, the legal power to administer the estate, were granted to several men, among them JPP and James Browne's son-in-law, Dr John Latoysonere Jefferys.⁷³ The estate was also still mortgaged, probably to Dr Jefferys and George Webbe in Nevis and to James Dobie in London. James Baker, as James Browne's executor and guardian of the two children left in his care, obtained counsel's opinion⁷⁴ so that succession of ownership could be clarified. Whatever the short-term outcome was, in the long term Mrs Ann Hutton ended up as the rightful owner.

During the next two decades the old Browne's enterprise was re-invigorated and in 1817 a total of 152 people lived on the plantation.⁷⁵ On her Eden Estate, as it was then called, Mrs Hutton would have employed a number of white managers and overseers, and one of these was known to have been Walter Lewis Bucke. Having worked on Bowrin's estate, at the end of April 1808 he 'went to Mrs Hutton to live'⁷⁶ and remained on Eden for nine and a half years. In November 1817 Bucke left, to take up employment on Colhoun's. Ann Hutton had returned to Nevis in April that year, but, having signed her estate's slave register's, left the island again at the end of the summer.⁷⁷ In December she was in Edinburgh.⁷⁸ She no longer was the proprietor of Eden. She had sold Eden to John Huggins.⁷⁹

When Ann Hutton sold the old Browne estate, she could not have foreseen that this transaction would, in due course, contribute to the debate in Britain about plantation slavery. Not long before he bought the estate, John Huggins's father, old Edward Huggins, had been once more tried in Court, again charged with brutality.⁸⁰ The incident exercised everyone in the island and, once back in Britain, Ann Hutton found herself writing a testimonial in defence of Edward Huggins's character. In her letter to the Colonial Agent she skilfully avoided supporting Huggins directly by claiming that it was the enslaved people on Eden who had pushed for her to sell the estate to him. This way she managed to sidestep having to address his personal qualities and at the same time made both of them appear

⁷¹ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 f478

⁷² Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 4 p335

⁷³ The five gentlemen granted Letters of Administration were John Pinney, George Webbe, John Symmonds, John Dasent, Dr John Latoysonere Jefferys, and Dr John Boddie (ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1763-1787 f460).

⁷⁴ UKNA, CO 108/268

⁷⁵ UKNA, T 71/364

⁷⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of Walter Lewis Bucke

⁷⁷ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

⁷⁸ On 6 July 1817 Ann Hutton had signed the slave register, and, according to Walter Lewis Bucke's diary, she left Nevis on 29 July. By December that year she wrote from Edinburgh. Ann Nisbet, the sister of Walter Nisbet the Elder, had also been in Edinburgh in the early 1760s (ECSCRN, CR 1757-1762 f445), and the fact that Ann Hutton chose to go to Edinburgh may suggest a link with the Nisbet family.

⁷⁹ According to Walter Lewis Bucke's diary entry, 'Mr Hutton sold his estate to John Huggins' but it is very likely that this had been mis-transcribed and that it should have read 'Mrs Hutton sold the estate ...' (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of Walter Lewis Bucke).

Bucke stated that the estate was sold 'for £15,500 paid down' but according to Mrs Hutton, the estate was sold for £16,500 (HoCPP 1818 Vol xvii 'Papers Relating to the Treatment of Slaves in the Colonies' Chadwyck-Healey mf 19.86 pp1-91: Enclosure 7 attached to a copy of a letter from James Colquhoun, Colonial Agent for Nevis, to Henry Goulburn, 28 April 1818).

⁸⁰ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b):

generous and benevolent planters who only had the interest of their workers at heart. According to Mrs Hutton, when she considered selling the estate, her people had approached her, telling her that they were keen to belong to Mr Huggins and assured her that they would willingly work for him and not cause any trouble. They told her that they wanted him as their master because “he will feed us well and we do no ugly; we will work well for him; do not fear us; we will never bring you to shame.” While old Huggins may well have been known for doling out generous allowances, it is hardly credible that the workers on Eden would have forgotten the public flogging of the Mountravers people seven years earlier, or, more recently, the excessive punishment of five people on his son-in-law’s Round Hill estate. This last incident led to Edward Huggins senior being, once more, tried for cruelty.

According to Mrs Hutton, Edward Huggins had no wish to purchase another property, but, as his son wished to purchase hers but could not afford it – and to meet her peoples’ ‘wishes’ - he was prepared to put up the money for his son to buy the estate. In Mrs Hutton’s words, on hearing this, her ‘negroes were elated to belong to old Huggins’. She, in turn, delighted to oblige her people, ‘did not think of any sum’ and was willing to put their happiness before her own needs. Just to please her people, she even sold Eden below its market value, ‘... it is true, I could have £20,000 for my estate.’ (She omitted to mention that Huggins paid her £16,500 in cash – a rarity when just about everyone else was drowning in debt and no small inducement for a woman in need of ready money.)⁸¹ She concluded her letter with something that was completely unrelated to Huggins but was meant to reflect on her responsible ownership over the past decades. She wrote that of the one hundred and fifty plus people on Eden none were diseased. She also pointed out that ten Africans had been on the estate for almost forty years and had, in fact, belonged to her long-dead husband. The family of one of these Africans, Placey’s, had grown to consist of thirty two people, spanning three generations: his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.⁸² The last statements concerning her own management were squarely aimed at a British audience increasingly disillusioned with the state of slavery in its colonies. Her assertions were meant to show those British sceptics that some planters were better than their reputation and that they cared for their people. These arguments did not convince the abolitionist lobby who pushed on with their efforts to end slavery.

Mrs Anne Hutton, the thrice-married widow of James Brown, the man who in 1734 had taken over the management of Mountravers, died some time before 1827.⁸³

According to Walter Lewis Bucke, in 1821 John Huggins, the new owner, built a house at Eden. Casting aside any notions of tact or Christian sensibility, he incorporated into the mounting steps of the house the tombstone of an early Browne, who, again according to Bucke, had once owned the mill house and the boiling house at the estate.⁸⁴ It was almost as if re-using John Browne’s tombstone in such an irreverent manner presaged John Huggins’s early death: a year later, in June 1822, he died in a duel.⁸⁵ His widow Elizabeth grieved briefly and remarried within three years. Eden fell to John Huggins’s father,⁸⁶ who bequeathed it to his oldest son, Edward.

In 1830, a year after old Edward Huggins’s death, Edward Huggins junior set up a school on the Eden estate. Edward junior had been present when his father had overseen the flogging of the Mountravers people two decades earlier and, because of his collusion in this episode, had been barred from holding the post of Justice of the Peace. In the early 1830s, soon after his father had died, Edward Huggins sought to re-establish himself as a magistrate and as evidence of his reformed character he

⁸¹ ‘The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 ... Vol XXXVIII’ p847

⁸² HoCPP 1818 Vol xvii ‘Papers Relating to the Treatment of Slaves in the Colonies’ Chadwyck-Healey mf 19.86 pp1-91: Enclosure 7 attached to a copy of a letter from James Colquhoun, Colonial Agent for Nevis, to Henry Goulburn, 28 April 1818

⁸³ UKNA, PROB 11/1770 Will of Edward Huggins

⁸⁴ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of Walter Lewis Bucke

Bucke only mentioned the ownership of the mill house and the boiling house, and it is possible that in 1700 Browne’s was split between John and James Browne.

⁸⁵ Memorial inscription on Edward Huggins’s tomb at St George’s Church, Gingerland

⁸⁶ UKNA, T 71/365 and T 71/366

produced a letter from his local parish which attested to his setting up of a school 'for the tuition' of his people.⁸⁷ The school was attended by about eighty enslaved children; 'they were all dressed, and they went through their sewing and reading and writing the same as children do in England.'⁸⁸ Elsewhere in Nevis schools were being established in an increasing numbers but they were still a relative novelty. A hundred years earlier, in 1734, when James Browne junior had started work on Mountravers, an educational provision specifically set up to cater for enslaved people would have been downright unthinkable, and he would have been shocked at the very thought of large numbers of enslaved people getting baptised, married and buried in church. Indeed, what had been considered unimaginable was happening: slavery itself was being abolished and slaveholders were compensated for their losses. For James Browne's family estate Edward Huggins junior claimed compensation for a total of 166 people⁸⁹ and, in a final twist that linked the Browne's old estate in Nevis with the Pinneys, the slave compensation money due on 99 of these people was assigned to John Frederick Pinney. Edward Huggins junior was in debt to him to the tune of £6,000.⁹⁰

In a document of 1841 (the marriage settlement of Edward Huggins junior's son George Juxon Huggins) the plantation was called 'Browns Eden'.⁹¹ Today it is known as Eden Browne and, uphill from the East Coast Road, between Lime Kiln and Mannings, the works are still visible: a much overgrown and tumbling-down windmill, an animal round, a boiling house with a large cistern and possibly a still house. While the mansion house lies further up the hill on the old Round Road, it is these ruins which can be seen from the main road that have become the setting of the legend of the duel and the ghost. Various versions exist. Most have it that a quarrel developed at a family gathering at the Eden estate in celebration of the forthcoming marriage between Julia Huggins and Walter Maynard. Julia's best man was her brother John Huggins, the owner of Eden, who ended up in a duel with the groom. Walter Maynard shot dead John Huggins, although another version tells that both men were killed, and one even asks whether George Juxon Huggins was 'the much-lamented bridegroom...?'⁹² Other accounts leave out Julia and have John Huggins as the bridegroom who was due to wed an un-named bride, or that the men quarrelled over a 'beautiful mulatto slave girl'. All stories, more or less, agree on one ingredient: grief-stricken, the bride-to-be Julia Huggins spent the rest of her life mourning her loss. It is her ghost which appears on nights of full moon, 'clad in a tattered wedding gown ... at Eden Browne's top step'.⁹³ Events such as the 'Moonlight Picnic' organised in 2010 by the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society perpetuate 'the legend of the tragic wedding of Julia Huggins'.⁹⁴

The facts are that, when the duel took place, John Huggins was married already while his sister Julia had not yet been born and George Juxon Huggins was not even two years old.⁹⁵ Much less glamorously and unromantically, a dispute over a plantation blacksmith led to two men trying to kill each other.⁹⁶ The man who caused the duel may well have been enslaved, his own life threatened by forces beyond his control. The duel occurred at a time of drought and economic depression when many enslaved people starved and died from diseases.

⁸⁷ UKNA, CO 239/29: Edward Huggins, Old Manor House, Nevis, to ?Governor Nicholay, 20 July 1832

⁸⁸ HoCPP 1831-1832 Vol xx 'Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Slavery' Chadwyck-Healey mf 35.167 p297 and pp304-07

⁸⁹ UKNA, T 71/1038

⁹⁰ PP, Dom Box T1: Agreement Edward Huggins and JF Pinney, 1 August 1839

⁹¹ BULSC, WI Collection DM 262, and Herefordshire RO, Miscellaneous Papers: D 96/64

⁹² Gordon, Joyce *Nevis* pp17-8

An extract from the parish register of St Thomas Lowland shows that George Juxon, the infant son of Edward Huggins junior Esq and his wife Jane, was baptised on 1 June 1821. This baptism was extracted on 26 July 1841 by John Armstrong, the minister, and attested to by PT Huggins who added that George Juxon Huggins was born on 2 October 1820 (BULSC, WI Collection DM 41/15/16).

⁹³ *St Kitts and Nevis Visitor* p72

⁹⁴ *Activities for the Year 2009-2010*: 28 March 2010

⁹⁵ Julia, Peter Thomas Huggins's daughter, was baptised together with her sister Jessy in August 1834 (NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 721).

⁹⁶ Eickelmann, Christine and David Small 'A Nevis "Legend" Revisited: the Huggins-Maynard Duel of 1822' in *NHCS Newsletter* No 71 (January-March 2004) pp8-10. The article is also online. See 'Eden Browne Estate, St James Windward' in 'Other Work on Nevis' <https://seis.bristol.ac.uk/~emceee/otherwork.html>

The rector's son, William Coker, 1761-1764 and 1786-1790

William Coker, the owner of a manor farm in England, served twice as manager on Mountravers. With a failed business venture in Nevis behind him, his life was blighted by debts. Through his marriage to an island-born woman he became related to JPP, and after the deaths of both men their children and grandchildren continued the family connections. William Coker's descendants include a grandson who also became a plantation manager and a Pinney employee.

By birth a social superior to the plantation owners he worked for, William Coker's children and grandchildren maintained their standing in society; indeed, several of his distant descendants made it into the upper echelons: a great-great-grandson rose to the rank of Vice-Admiral and a three-time great-grandson and a four-time great-grandson served as members of the British parliament. Their stories, however, will not be told; they firmly belong to the twentieth century.



The son of Revd John Coker and his wife Elizabeth, William Coker was baptised on 26 February 1729 in the parish of Langton Long near Blandford Forum in Dorset.⁹⁷ As a descendant of the Cokers of Ashbosam, whose heraldic arms consist of three cokers, or high-shafted shoes, his lineage can be traced back to the sixteenth century. Ever since William Coker's paternal great-great-grandfather Roger Coker had married the sister and heiress of Sir John Rogers, the family had its roots in Langton Long, but while his forebears were based in Dorset, the Coker pedigree shows that a number of marriage partners came from across southern England. Unusually for the time, the family appears to have enjoyed very wide social and possibly also commercial connections, which extended to Hampshire, London, the Isle of Wight and as far as Kent – William's paternal grandfather, also called Roger, had married the daughter of a Canterbury man, Dr Honeyfield. Frances Honeyfield's maiden name was to recur as a first name over successive generations of female Cokers and it made its way into the Mountravers plantation population.

Revd John Coker, William's father, was born in 1697, studied at Oxford⁹⁸ and is credited with building the first substantial mansion at Langton Long where he served as rector.⁹⁹ In 1725, in the year his father died, Revd John Coker married the 15-year-old Elizabeth Williams of the family of Williams of Herringston.¹⁰⁰ Both Revd Coker and his wife were heirs to uncles of theirs: he to the childless John Rogers Coker; she to William Young, from whom she inherited the Manor of Woodcutts in the parish of (Sixpenny) Handley.¹⁰¹ William was the couple's second child and their second son. John Rogers, the oldest, was baptised in 1727, also studied at Oxford¹⁰² and, like their father, entered the Church and later, briefly, succeeded him as rector at Langton Long. The two girls, Elizabeth (Betsey) and Honeyfield, were baptised in 1732 and 1733; the last child, Roger, died in infancy in 1736.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ DHC, PE/LAL:RE1/2 mf MIC/R/560 Langton Long Christenings and Burials 1725-1812

⁹⁸ Foster, Joseph (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses*

⁹⁹ 'An Ancient Parish Long-Langton Lost 1721' in *Dorset Life* March 1987 pp82-5

Revd John Coker was an important and wealthy enough man to engage an artist, probably Richard Phelps, to paint portraits of himself and of his wife, as well as of some of their children. In the latter part of the twentieth century the paintings were sold at auction.

After Revd Coker died, the mansion at Langton Long passed to James John Farquharson who purchased the 20,000-acre Langton Estate surrounding the house. Farquharson came off age in 1805 and celebrated for four days with over three hundred seated guests. In the 1820 the Coker house was demolished to be replaced by a grander building. This stood until 1950 (<http://www.artifact.com/catalog/viewLot.cfm?lotCode=k9CG9Y17>).

¹⁰⁰ Hutchins, John 3rd ed by W Shipp and JW Hudson *The History and Antiquities of Dorset* Vol 1 p310

Elizabeth Williams probably came from Winterborne Herringston, south of Dorchester.

¹⁰¹ DHC, D66/12 Copy of the Pedigree of ... Etchingham and GA, D1571/F844

Woodcutts was also spelt Woodcotts and Woodcots.

¹⁰² Foster, Joseph (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses*

¹⁰³ DHC, PE/LAL:RE1/2 mf MIC/R/560 Langton Long Christenings and Burials 1725-1812

Nothing is known about William Coker's childhood and youth; he only entered the scene when John Frederick Pinney was casting around for someone to sort out his run-down plantation in Nevis. William Coker was a good choice: in his early thirties, he was mature and, being unmarried, free to take up a post abroad. The young man probably had commercial experience. Coker may have worked for Coleman & Lucas, a well-established company of London merchants with West India interests.¹⁰⁴

William Coker came from a respectable family although, it was said, they were 'on very uncomfortable terms'. His father, a difficult, 'foolish and extravagant ... Squire of high degree',¹⁰⁵ subjected William to his moods and at times just stopped talking to him. In fact, before he was due to leave England, the old man had not spoken to him for weeks and William accused him of 'cruel behaviour' and of keeping him so short of money that he was obliged to ask John Frederick Pinney to advance him some cash for the journey. He also had to borrow from his brother,¹⁰⁶ with whom he was not on a happy footing either.¹⁰⁷

In March 1761 William Coker was set to leave for the West Indies. He was living in London then and Mr Lucas booked his passage on the *Betty*. A planter from Nevis who had retired to East Anglia passed on to Coker Pinney's initial instructions regarding the plantation.¹⁰⁸ Coker's first action on Pinney's behalf was to issue a contract to Thomas Arthurton, a young man from East Anglia who was to accompany him to Nevis. The two travelled to Portsmouth, where they had to wait a few days until a fleet was assembled that would safeguard the *Betty's* passage across the Atlantic.¹⁰⁹ The men would not have been bored in Portsmouth. A lively harbour town, its many dock-side taverns provided entertainment, as did the boatloads of prostitutes who descended on the ships riding at anchor. But the pleasures came at a price. At one time almost a quarter of all the sick in Portsmouth's Haslar Hospital suffered from venereal disease,¹¹⁰ and while Coker and Arthurton were waiting to sail, in a single night seven people were robbed of their belongings.¹¹¹

It appears that this was Coker's first trip to the West Indies. According to Pares, he 'was both a Dorset and a Nevis man', and by Coker's 'own account, he was born in Nevis - there were Cokers in the island before there were Pinneys'.¹¹² There certainly were Cokers in Nevis before the first Pinney, Azariah, ever set foot on the island,¹¹³ but from the Coker family tree it is quite clear that an entirely different branch of the family had settled there. William Coker's supposed claim that he was born in Nevis is neither supported by the documents in the Pinney Papers nor by records found in other archives. Although Coleman & Lucas, the merchant firm that Coker may have worked for, was engaged in West India commerce and he may have picked up a fair amount of knowledge about the

¹⁰⁴ William Coker may have worked for Coleman & Lucas in the late 1750s. In a bundle of documents that contains a copy of the will dated April 1758 written by William Coker's sister-in-law Mary Coker nee Long is a letter addressed to William Coker at Messrs Coleman & Lucas, Mincing Lane, London (DHC, D66/5). The Lucases were an Antiguan planter family and also London agents. It is possible that they were related to the glassmakers of Bristol who originally came from the Bromsgrove area (Margaret Thomas *The Nailsea Glassworks* p2). Further research is needed to establish any links.

¹⁰⁵ PP, Misc Vols 48 Misc Notes

¹⁰⁶ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 12 March 1761

¹⁰⁷ PP, Misc Vols 48 Misc Notes

¹⁰⁸ PP, WI Box D: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 7 March 1761

¹⁰⁹ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Wm Coker, London, to JF Pinney, 7 March 1761

¹¹⁰ Cordingly, David *Heroines & Harlots* p262

As a drawing by Thomas Rowlandson reveals, among the prostitutes were black women.

¹¹¹ PP, Misc Vols 48 Misc Notes

¹¹² Pares, Richard A *West India Fortune* p59

¹¹³ Five Cokers were listed in the 1677/8 census: John senior and John junior, Francis, Owen and Richard Coker (VL Oliver *Caribbean* Vol 3 List of Nevis Inhabitants). John Coker, who may have been a blacksmith, worked for Mary Pinney in the 1720s (PP, WI Boxes B and C). There may have been some family connection with these West Indian Cokers; in the Dorchester History Centre is an undated, unexplained loose sheet of paper headed 'Antigua Coker papers to go with the plate' (D66/12).

sugar business through his London connections,¹¹⁴ his early correspondence suggests that this was his first stay in Nevis.

After sailing for 34 days the *Betty* reached Barbados and a few days later, on 13 May 1761, Nevis. While the ship was still anchored in the Nevis Road,¹¹⁵ Coker and Arthurton settled on the middle plantation (presumably at the Great House)¹¹⁶ but their abode lacked many 'necessities'. Someone had helped themselves to items of furniture and Coker had to wait for John Frederick Pinney to approve buying replacements.¹¹⁷

Coker got to work. He began by assessing the problems. Many of the workers were old, in bad health, or, as he saw it, troublesome, and the plantation suffered from a shortage of coopers and skilled men in general. The buildings on Mountravers and on the other estate at Gingerland, Choppin's, were run down, as were Pinney's properties in Charlestown. The whole enterprise had been poorly managed and so badly administered that one of the houses in town was even seized for unpaid taxes.¹¹⁸ But Coker had known what to expect. Word had reached him in London that the Brownes had abused Pinney's trust and that they had become neglectful. Having been given joint power of attorney with Mr Browne, Coker had felt uneasy;¹¹⁹ he had foreseen that sharing the decision-making would be difficult and confusing and that the only way to proceed was to sever all links with the Brownes. Events proved him right. Old Browne tried to sway his loyalty to John Frederick Pinney but Coker, not afraid to make enemies in Nevis, stood firm. A clean sweep was needed. Eagerly and with great industry he applied himself to Pinney's business. Having assessed the situation, he drew up a long list of suggestions for improvements. With Pinney's approval to these changes came the order to sack Browne junior, the manager,¹²⁰ and the news that Coker's old friend Aeneas Shaw from London was setting off for Nevis. Shaw stood to replace Browne senior as joint attorney¹²¹ but Shaw's role was a subordinate one; Coker was to be Pinney's 'main strength and stay'.¹²² This was just as well because Shaw did not remain in Nevis for long and then the sole responsibility for overseeing the running of the plantation business fell on Coker.

Over the years John Frederick Pinney had intended to make another trip to Nevis and in early 1762 made very loose plans¹²³ but by then he had become too ill to travel. He died at the end of the year, and his death proved the turning point for Coker because whatever long-term future he may have envisaged for himself on Mountravers, this ended when the estate passed to JPP. Guided only by his distant employer, so far Coker had been free to make all day-to-day decisions and he had enjoyed a relatively free hand, but now someone was going to be looking over his shoulder. His new master - a greenhorn more than ten years his junior - announced that he was going to sail to the West Indies to settle his affairs but, as it turned out, the young man's arrival was delayed for over a year and Coker was able to start regenerating the plantation: improve the buildings, adopt a new plan of planting and purchase some additional people.

After he had been in Nevis for two years and on a salary of N£100 a year,¹²⁴ Coker took, as he put it, to his side 'a female friend viz. a wife'.¹²⁵ The 29-year-old Frances Weekes was a creole whose family had originally hailed from Devon. Her father, William Weekes, was dead but her mother, old Mary

¹¹⁴ Mary Pinney had in the 1720s engaged in business with Coleman & Lucas of Mincing Lane (PP, Misc Vols 48 Misc Notes) and William Coleman and Thomas Lucas were also party to a business deal with William Burt Weekes and Charles Pym Burt (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 2 pp236-37).

¹¹⁵ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Edward Jesup to JF Pinney, 29 July 1761, and Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 1 June 1761

¹¹⁶ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Edward Jesup to JF Pinney, 29 July 1761

¹¹⁷ PP, LB 3: JF Pinney, Bettiscombe, to Wm Coker, 5 October 1761

¹¹⁸ Pares, Richard A *West India Fortune* p61

¹¹⁹ PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Wm Coker to JF Pinney, 12 March 1761

¹²⁰ PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 19 November 1761

¹²¹ ECSCRN, CR 1757-1762 ff377-78

¹²² PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 6 January 1762

¹²³ PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 6 January 1762

¹²⁴ PP, AB 15 William Coker's a/c

¹²⁵ PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker to JPP, June 1763

Weekes, was still alive. Frances Weekes was one of four unmarried sisters. Their brother, William Burt Weekes, held the posts of Gunner and Treasurer and owned a small plantation, and as a wedding present the Cokers received from him two females: the black woman Kate (also called Catherine) and her mulatto daughter Nancy.¹²⁶ On 6 June 1763 William Coker and Frances Weekes were married in the church at St Thomas Lowland.¹²⁷

The bride was pregnant already - their daughter Elizabeth Williams was baptised in December - but an expectant bride was not unusual in eighteenth century Nevis. Although the pregnancy may have hastened the wedding, it was not the sole reason for it; Coker clearly was delighted to have a companion by his side and imagined being married 'the happiest life in this world'.¹²⁸ The couple's joy was overshadowed when their daughter died before she was two years old but Mrs Coker was pregnant again, and on 27 April 1765 their son and heir was born.¹²⁹ The boy was named William Young, after Coker's great-uncle, and baptised in mid-May in St Thomas Lowland church.¹³⁰

Within three weeks of the christening William Coker was planning to leave for England, having learnt that his father, the rector, had died in December the previous year.¹³¹ Coker had tried to make his peace with his father. Soon after he had arrived in Nevis, he had written to him several times. Although his letters may not have been answered, from John Frederick Pinney he had learnt of Revd Coker's visits to Bettiscombe and that 'the old gentleman seemed very hearty pleasant and much pleased with the letters he received from you.'¹³² Father and son may have been reconciled.

When Coker heard of his father's death, his new employer, the 24-year-old JPP, had already settled down in Nevis. Before his arrival, Coker, no doubt, had made doubly sure that everything was in as good an order as he could muster. So far JPP had been very satisfied with his management and had, rather flatteringly, expressed his trust in him: 'I am happy at present in having a person over my estates whom my late worthy kinsman had a great regard for and whose integrity and unexceptionable character is well known...' ¹³³ Coker had been on friendly terms with John Frederick Pinney and he continued a genial relationship with his new employer, who, upon his arrival, at first stayed with the Cokers.¹³⁴ They made him godfather to their first-born - a gesture of friendship perhaps, but possibly also one calculated to strengthen their ties with the new plantation owner.

Following his son's baptism, William Coker left JPP in charge of his affairs and on 9 June 1765 embarked on the *Nevis Planter*. After 'a tedious passage' of six weeks and six days, he landed at Poole in Dorset¹³⁵ and tended to his own and also to JPP's business. JPP had charged him with an important mission: to travel to Chard to negotiate an advance of £1,000 from the lawyer George Warry so that JPP could pay his London factors, Coleman & Lucas.¹³⁶ When visiting Warry and also Harry Pouncy in Dorchester (where JPP and his servant Tom Peaden had stayed before leaving for Nevis), Coker found that the latest gossip from Nevis had already reached the West Country. According to some, JPP was courting a young lady and was on 'the verge of matrimony' while others had heard that JPP had died after being thrown from a horse.¹³⁷ Coker knew better and put the rumourmongers right but he was astonished how 'fast news flies from the West Indies to Britain'.¹³⁸

¹²⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1763-1764 f161

¹²⁷ GA, D1571/F835: Copy of Certificate of Marriage by Revd Edwin Thomas

¹²⁸ PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker to JPP

¹²⁹ DHC, D66/14 Pedigree of Coker - A continuation of the Pedigree...' by Wm Coker, 30 August 1789

¹³⁰ Revd John Bowen baptised William Young Coker on 18 May 1765 (DHC, D66/9 Copy of Register).

¹³¹ William Coker's father died on 27 December 1764 and was buried on 1 January 1765 in a vault that contains six members of the Coker family (DHC, D66/6 Undated 'List of persons buried in the vault at Langton Long Blandford', and memorial tablet in the church).

¹³² PP, LB 3: JF Pinney to Wm Coker, 19 November 1761

¹³³ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 8 September 1763

¹³⁴ PP, Misc Vols 48 Misc Notes

¹³⁵ PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker, Woodcutts, to JPP, 30 August 1765

¹³⁶ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 18 June 1765

¹³⁷ PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii - Summary: Samuel Nicholls, London, to JPP, 29 September 1765

¹³⁸ PP, WI Box D: Wm Coker, Woodcutts, to JPP, 30 August 1765

No doubt, he regaled his friends with the latest intelligence he had received from JPP. The constant exchange of news and gossip was important in meshing together the West India community at home and abroad, and soon anyone connected with Nevis would have known of Mr Walter Nisbet's death and that one of his sons, Walter junior, had taken over managing the Stapleton estates.¹³⁹ Friends and well-wishers would send their condolences and congratulations, and creditors would hastily contact Nisbet's executors. None of the old West India hands would have wondered how quickly people in Britain got to hear of the goings-on in Nevis; only newcomers like Coker were surprised.

Not long after Coker left for England, John Hay Richens, one of JPP's old friends from London whom Coker probably knew, arrived in Nevis and took on the running of JPP's estate in Gingerland parish. Originally JPP had earmarked Coker to take over its management but his stay in England had coincided with Richens's arrival. Coker was now redundant and, to assist him, JPP applied on his behalf for the managership of neighbouring Jesup's estate. It was a good estate on which to work. Soon after JPP's arrival in Nevis he and Coker had ridden over Edward Jesup's property to assess the state of the canes - they looked well -¹⁴⁰ and with its 143 plantation people it was of similar size to Mountravers. Having Coker nearby would have been handy; JPP would not only have 'the pleasure of residing near him' but could also ask his advice,¹⁴¹ because, after all, at this stage Coker was the more experienced of the two. Jesup, however, turned down the offer and instead retained the services of John Arthurton, a young man from Norfolk who had followed Thomas Arthurton out to Nevis.¹⁴² It also appears that Jesup was not forthcoming, or not successful, in advancing Coker's ambition to hold a public post. Coker had applied to John Frederick Pinney to seek Jesup's support in 'procuring him the place of Waiter in Lowland Division'.¹⁴³ Appointments to public posts depended on patronage but at this stage there is no evidence that Jesup was successful in championing his cause.

In the autumn of 1765 Coker was preparing to return to the West Indies, and while he was in a hurry to get everything aboard ship - Captain Beach was due to sail in mid-November -¹⁴⁴ his mother died. He had to change plans and, for the time being, remain in England. His brother John Rogers Coker had inherited the presentation and had succeeded their father as rector of Langton Long but his brother was very ill, too, and it was thought that he would soon follow their parents into their graves.¹⁴⁵

From their mother William Coker inherited properties in Dorset that had been left to her by her uncle. For one of them Coker had an offer from a buyer, but as yet he could not decide whether to sell because at this point in time he intended to reside in the West Indies for another six or seven years.¹⁴⁶ Instead, he took out a mortgage on the property and with the money raised bought S£1,200 worth of assorted merchandise. He planned to set himself up as a shopkeeper. Once he was back in Nevis at the end of 1766, he rented one of JPP's properties in Charlestown¹⁴⁷ and was open for business. He stocked anything anybody might need, from sealing wax to textiles, from mattresses to tobacco pipes and pudding pans.¹⁴⁸

¹³⁹ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 18 June 1765

¹⁴⁰ PP, LB 3: JPP, Nevis, to Edward Jessup, Writtle Park, 10 January 1765, and WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Edward Jesup to JPP, 2 April 1765

¹⁴¹ PP, LB 3: JPP to Edward Jessup, 2 May 1765

¹⁴² PP, WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: Edward Jesup to JPP, 7 July 1765

¹⁴³ PP, LB 3: JPP to Edward Jessup, 25 March 1763

¹⁴⁴ PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii - Summary: WB Weekes, Bristol, to JPP, Nevis, 25 October 1765

¹⁴⁵ PP, LB 3: JPP, Nevis, to Revd Hinton, 30 May 1766

¹⁴⁶ PP, LB 3: JPP to Edward Jessup, 29 May 1766

¹⁴⁷ PP, LB 20 and AB 18 William Coker's a/c

¹⁴⁸ The merchandise shipped at Bristol in November 1766 and consigned to the merchant William Coker in Nevis included linen, paper, sealing wax, tin ware (colanders, dripping pans, six large kettles, 1 dozen round pudding pans, 1 dozen round patty pans); earthenware (including 2 dozen fine Delph [Delft] plates, 2 best tureens, 3 dozen small fine water basins); pipes (eight boxes incl. 45 gro: long pipes, 81 gro: short pipes); 16 boxes tobacco; candles, soap, cheese, beer, cotton hose, 3 pair cart wheels, 13 casks nails, saddles, 500 ells ozenbrigs and other cloth, 50 gallon furnaces, 40 jugs linseed oil, 12 large thick hair mattresses, 1 hhd Poland starch. The total delivery came to S£1242 (PP, DM 1173/1 Nevis Journal).

In addition to running his general store Coker temporarily managed Mountravers again when in May 1767 JPP left for a brief business trip to England. As predicted, Revd John Rogers Coker succumbed to his illness and on 15 July - three days after JPP landed - he was buried. Widowed for some years and childless, the clergyman had died without having made a will.¹⁴⁹ William Coker and his sisters were left to divide his estate between them. JPP travelled to Woodcutts and then went on to Blandford Forum, where he visited Coker's sister Honeyfield and her husband John Ridout. They discussed what to do with the presentation, the vicar's post, which JPP advised to sell, and it is interesting to note how involved JPP had become with Coker's personal affairs. This is also apparent from what he wrote about the two sisters, Honeyfield and Betsey. The Ridouts had got married only recently, and although Honeyfield's husband was an attorney at law and therefore could provide some financial security, JPP thought that she had thrown herself away but believed that Betsey was about to 'throw herself away much worse'; she was intent on marrying 'young Dredge of Handley'. Considering hers an 'imprudent marriage', JPP sought to try and dissuade her, or at least try to get her to delay the decision until Coker returned to England in the following summer. Betsey was then at Langton Long, sorting out her dead brother's affairs.¹⁵⁰ It may well be that their parents and perhaps even William and his brother had vetoed their sisters' marriages and that the women had to wait until their parents and their oldest brother had died. As they were both in their mid-thirties, Honeyfield and Betsey were almost too old to find the perfect husband, and William Coker must have been relieved, at least, that as married women his sisters were no longer his responsibility. Betsey married John Seward Dredge in October 1767.¹⁵¹

Coker's shop in Charlestown was up and running, and from England JPP sent him more 'linen drapery – haberdashery etc'. He also offered to bring back with him 'a shopman' to assist in the store,¹⁵² but it appears that Coker instead engaged¹⁵² a local man, Butler Claxton, as a clerk and some other young men as assistants. Apparently John Kennedy, one of JPP's former tenants,¹⁵³ kept an eye on the employees when Coker was not around. Kennedy also took JPP's place in the Assembly¹⁵⁴ until he returned from England at the beginning of January 1768.

Not long after JPP was back in Nevis, Coker suddenly took passage with Captain Beach for a second trip to England.¹⁵⁵ He had probably received news that Honeyfield had applied for the administration of their dead brother's estate¹⁵⁶ and, with her husband being a lawyer, that he thought it prudent to lay claim to his inheritance. While Coker inherited from his brother the Manor of Woodcutts near Sixpenny Handley,¹⁵⁷ lawyer Ridout had succeeded John Rogers Coker as patron of Langton Long Church.¹⁵⁸ Apart from gaining influence in the community through appointing a vicar who was sympathetic to the religious, political and social ideas and values of the patron, the 'presentation' of the vicar's post¹⁵⁹ was worth £250 a year and the family had been undecided whether to sell or whether to retain the right to appoint vicars. JPP had previously advised selling the presentation but had changed his mind. Ever prudent and forward-thinking, he believed that one day it would prove 'a pretty thing' for his godson.¹⁶⁰

Before he sailed to England, Coker had instructed JPP to collect outstanding debts¹⁶¹ and John Kennedy to oversee the running of the store. However, in September Kennedy departed for St

¹⁴⁹ PP, LB 3: JPP, Dorchester, to Wm Coker, Nevis, 27 July 1767

¹⁵⁰ PP, LB 3: JPP, Dorchester, to Wm Coker, Nevis, 27 July 1767

¹⁵¹ DHC, Transcripts of Sixpenny Handley Marriages 1754-1837

¹⁵² PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 24 September 1767

¹⁵³ PP, AB 15 William Coker's a/c

¹⁵⁴ UKNA, CO 186/6: 2 July 1767

¹⁵⁵ PP, LB 3: JPP to John Hayne, 30 May 1768

¹⁵⁶ GA, D1571/F835

¹⁵⁷ PP, LB 3: JPP, Nevis, to Revd Hinton, 30 May 1766

¹⁵⁸ Hutchins, John *The History and Antiquities of Dorset* Vol 1 p287

¹⁵⁹ PP, LB 3: JPP, Dorchester, to Wm Coker, Nevis, 27 July 1767

¹⁶⁰ PP, LB 3: JPP, England, to William Coker, 19 August 1767

¹⁶¹ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 8 June 1768

Vincent ¹⁶² and JPP reluctantly took over. He was always willing to assist Coker - 'he is a gentleman for whom I entertain a particular esteem' - ¹⁶³ but on this occasion thought that Mrs Coker ought to be on the spot. According to him, 'without any one person to control them' Coker 'lay at the mercy' of the 'shop-boys', and so JPP came to town almost daily, applying himself on his friend's behalf. He sold the Irish provisions 'pretty well' but the dry goods were 'very indifferent' and remained unsold and there was little hope of getting rid of the Russia sheeting since it was of such 'remarkably bad' quality.¹⁶⁴

But what really concerned JPP was Coker's 'precarious' financial situation. In order to pay the setting-up costs for the shop, during his first trip to England Coker had taken out a mortgage and now owed a large sum to the Bristol firm of William Reeve. It appears that JPP was used as a character reference because the company sent him an up-to-date account of the money Coker owed. In his response to them JPP cautiously implied that they were harassing his friend ('You cannot mean to distress him') and blamed them for lending him money irresponsibly ('for his interest with your house seems to be built upon a very slender foundation') and that they had lent him too much money (there is 'scarce a man in the West Indies commenced merchant with so large a capital'). Nevertheless, he assured them that Coker would be keen to discharge his debt quickly but warned that, because of the poor crop, there would be no remittance this year but that he would, 'by some means or other', endeavour to discharge the whole account next year.¹⁶⁵ Whilst being supportive of Coker, JPP clearly thought that it was best to keep a safe distance from his friend's financial affairs. He told Reeve that 'if Mr Coker was to continue in business by paying his whole attention to it, he may ... in time become an advantageous and profitable correspondent' and politely declined Reeve's suggestion of a conjunction of his and Coker's interests. To JPP's mind, Coker was able but not sufficiently focussed.¹⁶⁶ He did not pay attention to detail; several times he irritably told Coker that he had failed to give him instructions: 'I am at a loss to know whether to bring out a shopman for you or not', ¹⁶⁷ and 'You left no direction with me about keeping or discharging Butler Claxton'.¹⁶⁸ JPP probably also had in mind the extra work Coker had taken on, in addition to running the shop. Shortly before he left for England, Coker had acquired from his brother-in-law the posts of Gunner and Treasurer; William Burt Weekes had given them as security for a loan of £1,340. By way of repayment Coker was to receive the salary of N£50 a year and any perks¹⁶⁹ but, as it turned out, Coker did not carry out his duties for long, and the arrangement was to herald the beginning of a lengthy dispute between the two men.

While Coker was in England, Nevis suffered a bad winter. A severe drought followed an 'excessively bad' crop,¹⁷⁰ and many a planter was 'totally ruined: you see nothing but distress and dejection...even people that look on themselves as Men of Consequence cut a poor figure this year'.¹⁷¹ In complete contrast, JPP was expecting to discharge all his debts within three years,¹⁷² and although he was able to collect about £700 on Coker's behalf, many bills remained outstanding: Edward Daniel had 'left the island and cheated all his creditors', Tom and Jack Smith were gone as well, Edward Herbert paid nothing, John Bridgwater's debt was bad and 'the widow Abbot's worse'. John Litton Coram had been 'distressed by almost all his creditors' and Vanderpool, too, was 'in a bad situation'. But at least JPP managed to take mules from him in lieu of payment.¹⁷³

¹⁶² PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 24 July 1769

¹⁶³ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Reeves, Bristol, 28 May 1768

¹⁶⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 24 July 1769

¹⁶⁵ PP, LB 3: JPP to Reeve, Son & Hill, 19 June 1769

¹⁶⁶ PP, LB 3: JPP to Reeve, Son & Hill, 15 September 1769

¹⁶⁷ PP, LB 3: JPP to Wm Coker, 24 September 1767

¹⁶⁸ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, c. August 1769

¹⁶⁹ PP, Dom Box S4 Loose bundle: Coker memo, undated

¹⁷⁰ PP, LB 3: JPP to Foot & Owen, 25 July 1769

¹⁷¹ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 24 July 1769

¹⁷² PP, LB 3: JPP to George Warry, 25 July 1769

¹⁷³ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 24 July 1769

During these depressed times the merchants had been obliged to grant planters credit, and on his return to Nevis in 1769 Coker found that he had 'at least £5,000 stlg on his books'.¹⁷⁴ Being confronted with such a fearsome bad debt may explain why Coker and his clerk Butler Claxton were among those who supported a petition for a Bill to 'regulate trade'. The petitioners claimed that 'mulattoes' were selling stolen goods, thereby undercutting white people, and their aim was to get the Legislature to control the sale of goods.¹⁷⁵ The petition suggests that the number of freed people had increased and that they were beginning to compete with white traders, thereby threatening their monopoly. But there may have been additional grounds why the petition came about at the time it did. Theft by enslaved people had been a recurring theme for almost a century, and the Legislature had repeatedly passed laws to prevent this from happening. Consequently, they could only sell produce and small domestic animals if their masters issued them with tickets, and it was alleged that, to get around this, thieves employed middlemen – mostly 'free coloureds' and men from St Kitts. The fact that white people were mounting yet another campaign against the trade in stolen goods during a period of economic depression suggests that there was an underlying need not only to find scapegoats but also to establish unity. It became a 'them' and 'us' situation; if planters could blame enslaved people for theft and traders could blame free people for handling stolen goods, then they were united in a common cause. Whites always felt beleaguered by the majority population and at difficult times they pressed for yet more punitive legislation.

Apart from tending to his shop, Coker was also carrying out his duties as Gunner at Fort Charles. As the fort served as the principal defence of Charlestown, several matrosses lived there permanently, and during Coker's stewardship the system of paying for their medical attendance changed. Just as doctors on Mountravers were now engaged on an annual sum and not paid per visit, so were they now at the Fort. Dr Jesse Foot was the first incumbent.¹⁷⁶ London-trained and a member of the Company of Surgeons, he also attended to the 'negroes and white servants' on Mountravers and was friends with Coker, his brother-in-law, William Burt Weekes, and with JPP, but something happened that led to Coker taking out five legal actions against Dr Foot. One of the root causes was a dispute about Weekes and Coker sharing the cost of schooling for someone called Bob who had served half his apprenticeship under Coker,¹⁷⁷ but Foot also quarrelled with JPP, and JPP with Foot. Among their disagreements was JPP's refusal to make his boiling house available for Dr Foot's inoculated people during the smallpox outbreak that began in early 1770. The conflicts culminated with the 25-year-old Foot wanting to challenge Coker to a duel (but, as Foot claimed, whenever Coker saw him, he 'skulked away in an instance and was afraid to meet him')¹⁷⁸ and with JPP claiming that he feared being assassinated by Foot.¹⁷⁹

Court cases, disputes, debts, the threat of a duel, his shop not doing well. Coker decided to retire from business in Nevis and to return to England for good.¹⁸⁰ He had been in Nevis for nine years - although he had spent about a year and a half of these in England – and his affairs in both places were 'all in a perplexed situation'.¹⁸¹ But now he had the prospect of making something of the estate in Dorset. It was time to go home. He was due to travel just ahead of the onset of the hurricane season.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to Reeve, Son & Hill, 15 September 1769

¹⁷⁵ UKNA, CO 186/6: 23 August 1769

¹⁷⁶ UKNA, CO 186/6: 9 June 1769

¹⁷⁷ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 12 August 1770

¹⁷⁸ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 12 August 1770

¹⁷⁹ PP, Dom Box S4 Loose bundle: JPP to Jesse Foot, 2 April 1770

¹⁸⁰ PP, LB 3: JPP to Reeve, Son & Hill, 24 July 1770

¹⁸¹ PP, LB 3: JPP to John Hayne, 7 June 1769

¹⁸² PP, LB 3: JPP to Reeve, Son & Hill, 24 July 1770

According to a letter JPP wrote in 1788, the hurricane season lasted from 1 August until 31 December (LB 37: JPP to Edward Huggins).

A month before Coker's departure, a mulatto girl called Fanny Coker was christened.¹⁸³ Now nearly three years old, this child almost certainly was the result of Coker having raped her mother, Black Polly, after his return from his first trip to England. Although JPP bore the cost of the baptism, it was, no doubt, Coker's decision to have Fanny baptised before his departure, and one wonders how his wife felt about the child and the fact that the girl had been given her name. What made the event even more poignant was that, at the time of the christening, Mrs Coker was heavily pregnant, and about three weeks after Coker's departure she was delivered of a son. The confinement was attended by a Mrs Powell.¹⁸⁴ Later in the year Revd Clarkson, the same clergyman who had baptised Black Polly's daughter, also baptised the Coker's new-born, John Frederick.¹⁸⁵ JPP considered him 'as fine a child as ever a father was blest with';¹⁸⁶ the older Coker boy, already destined for the Church, he rather touchingly called 'the Parson'.

During the bad winter of 1768/9 Mrs Coker had been forced to leave the accommodation at Fort Charles because conditions there had been 'so very sickly' that, according to JPP, her life was in danger. Had she stayed at the fort, 'she would not have been alive today'.¹⁸⁷ Since being appointed to the Standing Committee Inspecting Forts and Fortifications,¹⁸⁸ JPP was very familiar with the state of the fort and defended Mrs Coker when her husband questioned the additional expenditure of 'keeping house'. She probably stayed at Captain Browne's, where she had stayed during her pregnancy until after she was delivered.¹⁸⁹ This, presumably, was John Browne of Nevis, 'a particular friend' of JPP's, who intended to take over Coker's business.¹⁹⁰

It must have been a difficult time for Mrs Coker, with much to worry about. There was the scandal - Dr Foot, 'highly enraged', had let it be known that her husband had fled to England through guilt 'and fear of receiving a severe chastisement from his hands' -¹⁹¹ and there were the money problems. When her husband left Nevis, he was still owed a lot of money - 'upwards of' £4,000¹⁹² - and had instructed JPP to collect any outstanding debts. But the crop was poor again;¹⁹³ planters settled their bills slowly. Assisted by JPP, Mrs Coker had to dispose of the family's possessions before she could leave for England and, with people being short of money, this was not always easy. When JPP tried to sell the Cokers' horse, Hob, he could not find a buyer but, knowing of people's fondness for gambling, suggested opening a subscription for a raffle.¹⁹⁴ Mrs Coker, however, had her own ideas how best to reach potential buyers; she wanted Hob sold at auction during the horse races which were (and still are) a popular entertainment in the island.¹⁹⁵ She also had to sell the family's people. The Cokers were known to have had at least twelve, of whom five had originally come from JPP: Nanno and her two children, Little Mingo and Moll, and an African girl, Violet Wells alias Sally. JPP had also given her an old woman, Dung Belly Fibba. In addition to those acquired from JPP, the Cokers had seven others: Kate, or Catherine, who with her mulatto daughter Nancy had been a wedding present from Mrs Coker's brother; Catherine's black daughter Kate Coker; Pussey; Kitty and her child; and a male called Blandford. It is very likely that he was an African man whom they had bought and named, either after the small town in Dorset, or after a member of the Blandford family.¹⁹⁶ With Mrs Coker was also a woman called Amelia, who did not belong to them. Amelia's ownership was in dispute and although

¹⁸³ PP, AB 17: 30 June 1770

¹⁸⁴ PP, AB 20 William Coker's a/c

¹⁸⁵ PP, AB 18 f42 Wm Coker's a/c

¹⁸⁶ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 20 April 1771

¹⁸⁷ PP, LB 3: JPP to Wm Coker, 24 July 1769

¹⁸⁸ UKNA, CO 186/6

¹⁸⁹ PP, LB 3 JPP to William Coker, 28 April 1771

¹⁹⁰ PP, LB 3: JPP to Reeve, Son & Hill, c March 1770

¹⁹¹ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 12 August 1770

¹⁹² PP, LB 3: JPP to Reeve, Son & Hill, 24 July 1770

¹⁹³ PP, LB 3: JPP to Messrs Wm Reeve, 7 February 1771

¹⁹⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to Wm Coker, 28 August 1770

¹⁹⁵ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 29 September 1770

¹⁹⁶ William Coker's brother Revd John Rogers Coker had a servant called Silas Blandford (DHC, D66/10 John Ridout's abstracted account of John Rogers Coker's accounts, July 1767), and in April 1773 Wm Coker witnessed Joseph Blandford's marriage to Mary Cookman (Transcripts of Sixpenny Handley Marriages 1754-1837).

Mrs Coker would have preferred having her instead of Violet Wells alias Sally, she had to part with Amelia and return her to her rightful owners.¹⁹⁷

In preparation for her departure, on 1 January 1771 Mrs Coker sold Blandford and Sally to John Hay Richens. He paid N£70 and N£66 respectively.¹⁹⁸ But Sally remained with Mrs Coker until she left Nevis,¹⁹⁹ as did Kitty and her child. John Hay Richens bought these two for N£90.²⁰⁰ Pussey was not sold but later hired out.²⁰¹ It is not known what happened to Nanno Henderson and her children Little Mingo and Moll; the last mention of Nanno Henderson was an entry in JPP's account book when he recorded that just before Christmas 1769 she sold him four ducks.²⁰² Dung Belly Fibba was known to have died after January 1769 and it is very likely that she was dead by the time Mrs Coker was due to leave Nevis. Kate, or Catherine, was returned to William Burt Weekes but her daughters Kate Coker and Nancy²⁰³ almost certainly went to England as servants with Mrs Coker, to attend to her and the two little boys. William Young was six years old now; John Frederick still a baby. On 28 April 1771 Mrs Coker and her party sailed from St Kitts on Captain Beach's ship.²⁰⁴ JPP, who by now was engaged to Mrs Coker's niece Jane, had planned to see them off but a challenge to a duel kept him away.

When Mrs Coker left, she was in 'low spirits', and a few months after her departure JPP wrote that he hoped she was 'reconciled by this time to old England, where I should be happy to see her and talk over old stories in Woodcutts chimney corner.'²⁰⁵

At Woodcutts

Woodcutts Estate lies in the rolling hills of northern Dorset near the border with the county of Wiltshire, just west of the village of Sixpenny Handley and almost equidistant to the towns of Blandford Forum and Salisbury. Woodcutts consisted of just over 400 acres of mostly arable land which was 'enclosed and divided by five flourishing hedge rows'. Set in another 25 acres of 'very good land' with gardens and a sizeable orchard were two mansion houses. One was old, the other 'very good'.²⁰⁶ The Cokers almost certainly lived in the latter, which became known as the Manor Farm. Said to have been built in the middle of the eighteenth century, Coker probably added extensions and may have erected the rectangular rat-proof granary on saddle stones - built with brick walls and a tiled roof - that still stands in the yard. A barn with a thatched roof stood to the North-west of the Manor Farm,²⁰⁷ and surrounding it were the usual outhouses for brewing, keeping pigeons, storing fuel, and stabling horses. For his sheep he enjoyed Right of Pasture on two commons, one for 700 and another for 80 sheep. Coker rented out four nearby farm workers cottages at almost £7 a year,²⁰⁸ and on his sizeable estate, he settled down to the life of a gentleman farmer.

He may have briefly returned to Nevis; in mid-April 1773 he witnessed a marriage in Sixpenny Handley and at the beginning of July that year he witnessed a document, apparently in Nevis.²⁰⁹ He

¹⁹⁷ Amelia's owners appear to have been Captain and Mrs Maynard. Robert McGill was going to buy Amelia if her title was in order (PP, LB 3: JPP to Wm Coker, 28 August 1770).

¹⁹⁸ PP, AB 18 William Coker's a/c

¹⁹⁹ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 12 August 1770

²⁰⁰ PP, AB 20 Wm Coker's a/c

²⁰¹ PP, AB 20 Wm Coker's a/c

²⁰² PP, AB 17: 24 January 1769 and 18 December 1769

²⁰³ In 1776, Nancy was at Woodcutts. JPP wrote to William Coker that 'there is in the box a pot for Nancy sent by Kate who sends Nancy some other things by this opportunity' (NPP, LB 4: JPP to William Coker, 6 July 1776).

²⁰⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 20 April 1771

²⁰⁵ PP, LB 3: JPP to Wm Coker, 31 August 1771

²⁰⁶ GA, D1571/F844: Description of a Farm

²⁰⁷ RCHME *An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset* Vol 5, East Dorset

²⁰⁸ GA, D1571/F844: Description of a Farm

According to a 1795 'Map of an Estate', there were five farm cottages at Woodcutts (DHC, D/PIT/P15).

²⁰⁹ DHC, Transcripts of Sixpenny Handley Marriages 1754-1837, and ECSCRN, CR 1773-1774 f77

need not have feared any retribution from Dr Foot. Surrounded by salacious scandal, the doctor had left the island and, following a brief spell of working in Russia, had settled in London.²¹⁰

The Cokers maintained their contact with Nevis. They received many visitors. The first known guests were JPP and his servant Tom Peaden who came to stay for a few days at the beginning of October and again in December 1774, just before they were due to sail back to Nevis. John Frederick, the Cokers' baby, was now three years old and William Young, 'the Parson', went to school with their nephew, Thomas Pym Weekes. When JPP visited them, Mrs Coker sent for the boys so that he could see them, and it pleased him how Mr Coker treated 'Tommy as his own son - they were (sic) the same cloaths (sic), are at a very good school, with two of Mr Tobin's children, on an equal footing in every respect.' The school in Salisbury, which the Cokers had chosen for the boys, met with JPP's approval - 'I am convinced that it is not in my power to place Tommy in a better situation'. Tommy's 'rather obstinate' behaviour, however, was giving cause for concern.²¹¹

Kate Coker, the young woman who almost certainly had accompanied Mrs Coker on her journey from Nevis, may also have taken young Tommy to England, but she certainly was back in the West Indies by August 1773.²¹² The following winter she fell ill, and JPP called in Dr Archbald for a consultation.²¹³ Kate suffered from spells of sickness, which usually lasted for about three weeks, and Coker wanted her sold. Being a domestic rather than a field worker, JPP did not want her for his plantation and Coker agreed to keep her as long as she could be hired out and bring in N5s a week '(when in health)'.²¹⁴ During JPP's visit to Woodcutts, he and Coker may have discussed the possibility of letting Kate buy her freedom.

One subject of conversation that undoubtedly came up was the worrying state of Coker's finances. JPP would have updated him on the progress he had made in trying to recover outstanding money from debtors in Nevis - in particular, how, just days before he had left the island he had tried to secure S£215 from one of them, Edward Herbert. When Herbert's people were auctioned off, JPP had bought nine of them and, rather than pay Herbert, he had proposed to give the money to Coker directly. But Edward Herbert's brother had intervened. He had 'advised Herbert to stop payment to any creditors until compelled to do so' and had refused JPP's offer.²¹⁵ When JPP stayed at Woodcutts in October he did not yet know that Herbert had been taken to prison for debt²¹⁶ but by the time he returned in December, news of Herbert's dire situation had caught up with him and Coker had to accept that he would probably never get any money from this particular debtor. Yet he needed every penny; he was desperately short of funds. The year before he had asked JPP for a loan of £500 but had been turned down. Disingenuously, JPP had claimed that since Mr Coleman's death his credit with the company of Coleman & Lucas was not as good as it used to be²¹⁷ but in reality JPP had changed his mind. Having previously asked the company to advance Coker the money he had then requested them not to.²¹⁸

Although JPP had always applied himself on his friend's (now his uncle's) behalf, so far he had managed to stay away from any direct financial association. What he had told William Reeve some years earlier - that he and Coker had 'no connection in business' - ²¹⁹ had held true but now Reeve

²¹⁰ Bevan, Michael 'Jesse Foot (1744-1826)' in *Oxford DNB*

²¹¹ PP, LB 3: JPP, Woodcutts, to WB Weekes, Nevis, 4 October 1774

²¹² PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790

²¹³ PP, AB 20 Sholto Archbald's a/c

²¹⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to Wm Coker, 1 July 1773, and 20 July 1773

²¹⁵ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 23 July 1774

²¹⁶ UKNA, CO 186/6: 1 September 1774

²¹⁷ PP, LB 3: JPP to Thomas Lucas, 27 March 1772, and LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 7 May 1773

²¹⁸ PP, LB 3: JPP, Princeton, to Thomas Lucas, 17 October 1772

²¹⁹ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Reeve, Bristol, 28 May 1768

was close to bankruptcy²²⁰ and JPP, who accounted for Coker's 'peevishness' to his 'unhappy connection with Mr Reeve', relented. A loan of £2,200 was to be 'the means of rendering Mr and Mrs Coker's lives more comfortable'. JPP applied to his uncle Simon Pretor, the banker, to lend him the money and asked his lawyer friend George Warry to draw up an agreement. With Woodcuts as security, Coker was to repay the money at four per cent interest with an additional one per cent in case of non-payment, although, according to JPP, he had no intention of ever applying this penalty.²²¹ This was the beginning of JPP's involvement with Woodcuts and Coker's slide into ever increasing debt. Within three years he owed £3,600.²²² And as throughout the latter years of the 1770s conditions in Nevis worsened, so did the chances of recovering money from his debtors. One of them, James Brodbelt, had a case brought against him where Joseph Gill happened to serve as a member of the Grand Jury. As if overwhelmed by the trial, later in the year Brodbelt died, heavily in debt. He left 'his affairs in great confusion'.²²³ So many planters had such enormous liabilities²²⁴ that 'a man capable and willing to pay his debts is become almost a prodigy'.²²⁵

The Cokers knew what went on in Nevis through their correspondence with JPP and others, and they kept in touch with developments through a circle of friends and acquaintances. The strong social relations among West India absentees are well documented and the Cokers were members of this tight-knit fraternity. The Tobins and the Webbes, for instance, lived not far away, and two of the Tobin boys, James Webbe and George, went to the same school in Salisbury as the Coker's older son. James Tobin, a Nevis planter and JPP's business partner, had settled in Salisbury and was married to Elizabeth Webbe, the daughter of another Nevis planter, George Webbe. The Webbes lived near Salisbury in the village of Stratford-sub-Castra,²²⁶ and the Cokers were well acquainted with them, too.²²⁷ James Tobin and his family returned to Nevis, but almost as soon as they had gone, another couple related to the Webbes arrived from Nevis and settled in Salisbury: Dr Josiah Nisbet and his wife Frances. Coker had known the young couple's families in Nevis and, no doubt, at some stage the Cokers called on the Nisbets at their home in Cathedral Close. The Tobins had lived close by, in Endless Street.²²⁸

In addition to news received through the Dorset/Wiltshire network of West India absentees, visitors to Woodcuts updated the Cokers on events in Nevis. Another visitor known to have stopped off with them was JPP's cousin Joseph Gill. He had gone to Nevis in the late 1760s. During an extended visit to England that began in the autumn of 1778²²⁹ he called on the Cokers, and around that time another young man from Nevis also came to stay, Robert Robertson Jones. The brother of the clergyman Revd William Jones, he was charged with chaperoning JPP's eldest son on his way to school.²³⁰ After their arrival in London, Jones had some business to attend to and the five year old John Frederick had remained with the merchants Mills & Swanston until Jones was 'ready to go into the country'.²³¹

²²⁰ William Reeve, a Quaker copper-smelter, brass-founder and slave merchant, went bankrupt in 1775. He held extensive property in the city, among them a truly hideous Gothic Black Castle which he had built in the 1750s on the outskirts (Dresser, *M Slavery Obscured* p114 and p131).

²²¹ PP, LB 3: JPP, London, to George Warry, Chard, 17 November 1774

²²² PP, WI 'Damaged or Fragile Box'

²²³ UKNA, CO 186/6, and PP, LB 4: JPP to Mills & Swanston, 7 July 1776

²²⁴ PP, LB 4: JPP to Nathaniel Martin, 14 June 1777

²²⁵ PP, LB 4: JPP to William Coker, [no day] June 1778

²²⁶ Small, *David Notes on George Tobin*

²²⁷ PP, Dom Cat 2 Summary: George Webb, Stratford, to JPP, 25 August 1764

²²⁸ Dr Nisbet died at Salisbury on 5 October 1781 (Nangle, Benjamin *The Gentleman's Magazine Biographical and Obituary Notes 1781-1819, An Index*).

²²⁹ PP, LB 4: JPP to Simon Pretor, 30 July 1778, and JPP to William Coker, 17 August 1778

²³⁰ Joseph Gill certainly knew Robert Robertson Jones; he had witnessed the sale of three people from Jones's aunt, the widow Ann Sprowell, to Jones's brother, the Revd William Jones. The indenture for the sale of the black woman Moll and her two children Bessey Coleman and James Peter was made on 13 January 1776 and sworn on 21 December 1776 (ECSCRN, CR 1778-1783 f332).

²³⁰ PP, AB 17

²³¹ PP, LB 4: JPP, Nevis, to Mills & Swanston, 18 June 1778

Jones and young Pinney arrived at 'Uncle Coker's' some time before the beginning of September.²³² The boy went off to school and from then on Robert Robertson Jones just stayed put at Woodcutts. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century it was common for family members, but also friends, to pay extended visits and to make themselves at home for lengthy periods, but Robert Jones overstayed his welcome by a long way and shamelessly exploited Coker's hospitality. Suffering from 'a disorder that he ought cautiously to have secreted from the world' (presumably venereal disease), he remained at Woodcutts for over a year, and JPP who, after all, had asked him to accompany John Frederick to Dorset, was indignant at Jones's 'indecent conduct' of having made 'an hospital of a gentleman's house under the pretence of being a visitor'. Full of regret and resentment, JPP was 'truly sorry for his impudent behaviour', which convinced him that Jones was, in fact, what 'he suspected him to be, a cynick and ingrate'.²³³ When the next two Pinney children travelled to England for their schooling, the Pinneys forewent gentlemen companions and instead put Azariah and Betsey 'under the care' of Kate Coker. In 1781 she came to stay at Woodcutts once more.

Having remained a day or two in London at Mrs Maynard's - Azariah's travel-soiled linen needed to be washed - ²³⁴ Kate Coker had left Betsey, who was ill, with Mrs Grace Patterson and journeyed on to Dorset with Azariah.²³⁵ It is interesting to note that JPP did not only refer to Azariah but that he included Kate when he wrote that he hoped that *they* would find Coker and 'all the family enjoying the blessing of Old England, health and happiness'.²³⁶ It was, perhaps, a minor point that he referred to Azariah and Kate Coker as 'they' but it nevertheless is a small token that she was seen not as an object but as a person worthy of a mention. When he wrote 'all the family' he may well have included her sister Nancy - in the eighteenth century servants were still seen as part of the family - but the last mention of Kate's sister was in July 1776 when Kate had sent via JPP and Coker 'a pot for Nancy' and also 'some other things'.²³⁷

On her visit to Woodcutts Kate Coker would have brought presents for the Cokers, such as a parcel of dried ginger that Nancy Weekes had given her for JPP's uncle, Simon Pretor,²³⁸ or the sweetmeats and money (half a Guinea for each of the boys) that Mrs P had asked her to take the last time Kate had travelled to England.²³⁹ In fact Kate Coker had then, in 1777, also stayed at Woodcutts, and as the Pinneys clearly trusted her with their children, almost certainly they would have preferred her to have accompanied their son to Woodcutts, rather than Robert Jones. However, when John Frederick was due to leave Nevis, Kate had just returned from England and she had been ill again.²⁴⁰ The doctor had to be called and, most likely, she was too sick to embark on another lengthy voyage so soon.²⁴¹

²³² On 7 September 1778 William Coker was in England. With Henrietta Snow, Ann Morgan and Robert Robertson Jones he witnessed the marriage of George Brine of Marleybone, Middlesex, to Elizabeth Snow (DHC, Transcripts of Sixpenny Handley Marriages 1754-1837).

²³³ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 31 July 1780

²³⁴ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 26 April 1781

²³⁵ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Grace Patterson, Great Ormond Street, 26 April 1781

²³⁶ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 26 April 1781

²³⁷ PP, LB 4: JPP to William Coker, 6 July 1776

Bearing in mind that Nancy was a pet form for Ann/e, it is very likely that Kate Coker's sister Nancy got married in Woodcutts to a man called Scammel or Schamoll. In 1783 JPP paid a woman called Ann Scammel to do the washing (PP, LB 5: JPP to WB Weekes, Woodcotts, 8 February 1784), and in 1794 Pero was charged with carrying a keg of sugar and a small bundle to England, intended for 'N Scammel' at Woodcutts. William Burt Weekes wrote that it was a present from N Scammel's *mother* Kate but Catherine, the mother of Kate Coker and Nancy, had died, and it is very likely that he had got the family relationship wrong and that the present was from Kate Coker, Nancy's *sister*.

Pero thought that there might have been some money enclosed with the presents. This suggests that the Scammels may not have been well off but equally this could have been money Kate Coker sent so that her sister could purchase items for trading in the West Indies (PP, Dom Box S1: WB Weekes, Bristol, to Wm Coker, [no day] November 1794). Nancy's husband may well have been Thomas Schamoll, one of Coker's tenants and a farrier by trade (PP, AB 41 f71). Ann Scamel (sic) was buried on 7 July 1806 in Sixpenny Handley (<http://www.opcdorset.org/SixpennyHandleyFiles/6dHandleyBurs1769-1812.htm> Sixpenny Handley Burials, 1769-1812, transcribed by Kim Parker from the Parish Registers, website visited 26 November 2014).

²³⁸ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Simon Pretor, 26 April 1781

²³⁹ PP, LB 4: JPP to Wm Coker, 14 July 1777; also AB 20

²⁴⁰ PP, LB 4: JPP to Wm Coker, [no day] June 1778

²⁴¹ PP, AB 26 Archbald & Williamson's a/c

Her enslaved status did not present a problem because she had already travelled to England – she had been hired ‘to attend and wait upon Mrs Watt’, a captain’s wife – and she had returned independently, on her own. The only issue was that Captain Watt was obliged to insure Kate ‘against the enemy’ - as an enslaved person she was treated like any other valuable, insurable commodity.²⁴² In addition to insuring her and funding her expenses, Captain Watt paid over N£18 to hire Kate,²⁴³ who up until mid-1776 had been employed, more or less continuously, on a series of short-term assignments. Usually a prompt payer,²⁴⁴ the year before she accompanied the captain’s wife Kate Coker had, however, ‘not paid a shilling towards her hire’, and JPP presumed she intended to hand Coker the cash in person when she got to Woodcutts. This trust in her is in stark contrast to the way the majority of enslaved people were treated and illustrates that a minority enjoyed independent action as well as independent movement.

Not long after she had returned from her trip with Mrs Watt, Kate Coker had started buying herself. She paid her first instalment of S£25 towards her manumission,²⁴⁵ but then became very ill again and could not be hired out. Although Kate had not yet paid for her manumission in full, in September 1778 JPP, on Coker’s behalf, freed her, together with Coker’s mulatto daughter Fanny.²⁴⁶ JPP justified his action to Coker by saying that at the time everyone had been ‘under a continual apprehension of becoming subjects to France’ and he therefore ‘thought it advisable ... to grant Kate her freedom, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemies.’²⁴⁷ He might have added that now Coker was no longer responsible for her medical bills. The last treatment had come to almost N£6 - the equivalent of seven and a half per cent of her total purchase price.²⁴⁸

As soon as Kate had gained her freedom, she began buying rum from the plantation and JPP supported her in her efforts to raise the remaining money.²⁴⁹ In addition to selling the rum at profit she found other means of earning money because, within twenty months, she was able to hand over the remaining S£25.²⁵⁰ She had fulfilled JPP’s promise to Coker: ‘Be assured she is not only very industrious but grateful and I dare say, if ever in her power, she will pay the money’.²⁵¹ Among her sources of income was the selling of castor oil which she probably produced herself. One of her customers was JPP.²⁵²

When she had visited Woodcutts after travelling with Mrs Watt, Kate Coker had been enslaved; when she came to Woodcutts with Azariah, she was a free woman, and one wonders whether, and to what extent, the Cokers’ behaviour towards her changed. Did they still regard her as a slave, or had her manumission altered their perception? Indeed, since coming to England had their views on enslaved people changed - Mrs Coker’s in particular? Having grown up in the West Indies, could she treat a freed black woman as an equal, or at least a near equal because, after all, Kate was still a servant. And for Kate Coker, was staying in rural Dorset a joyful or a distressing experience? Did Coker ever try to dally with her and seduce or even rape her? Did she make friends with people in the area? One thing that becomes apparent later on is that she brought boxes back to Nevis and that she had goods from England shipped to her. Presumably these were articles that she could sell, and it is very likely that she managed to raise the money for purchasing her mother’s freedom from some sort of trading activities. Kate Coker returned to Nevis from her expedition with Azariah and Betsey towards the end

²⁴² PP, LB 4: JPP, Nevis, to Wm Coker, 14 July 1777

²⁴³ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778; also AB 26 Capt Alexander Watt’s a/c and Wm Coker’s a/c

²⁴⁴ PP, AB 17; also AB 34 and AB 20 William Coker’s a/c

²⁴⁵ PP, LB 4: JPP to Wm Coker, [no day] June 1778, and AB 34

²⁴⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1778-1783 f13

²⁴⁷ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Wm Coker, 14 June 1779

²⁴⁸ PP, AB 26 Archbald & Williamson’s a/c

²⁴⁹ PP, AB 17: e.g. 30 September 1778, October, November, and December 1778, several dates in 1779 and 1780 until December 1780

²⁵⁰ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 19 June 1780; also AB 26 f9 Wm Coker’s a/c

²⁵¹ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Wm Coker, 14 June 1779

²⁵² PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790

of 1781²⁵³ or in the first half of 1782. Thoughtfully and to the Pinneys' utter delight, she brought with her a memento from John Frederick: a leaf of his copybook.²⁵⁴

Soon after she returned to Nevis Kate Coker started to buy her mother, Catherine. Originally given as a wedding present, she had been returned by Coker to William Burt Weekes who had then mortgaged Catherine to JPP, who, in turn, had assigned her to Weekes's son, Tommy. JPP facilitated Kate Coker buying her mother and, as 'a compliment for her good care' of his daughter Betsey during her illness on the voyage to London, he willingly contributed 'at least 7 guineas' towards the purchase.²⁵⁵ At the beginning of October 1782 Kate made a down payment for her mother but, before the purchase could be completed, Catherine died in May the following year. Buying a sick person on instalments was risky because if that person died, the money paid so far was lost. Kate Coker was not refunded her first payment of N£22:16:0.

In 1782 Mrs Coker's brother, William Burt Weekes, came to live in England. Widowed for a third time and forever in debt, he had sold his offices of Treasurer and Captain Gunner and had retired from Nevis.²⁵⁶ The Cokers welcomed his arrival because now they could pass on the responsibility of looking after his son; Weekes would have to take charge of Tommy's education. They had cared for their nephew as if he was their own son but they had been unable to curb Tommy's 'badness of his temper and disposition'. The boy had caused the family great anguish²⁵⁷ to the point where they were 'at a loss what to do with Tommy'.²⁵⁸ His behaviour caused tension between Coker and JPP; JPP had expected Coker to write his 'full sentiment on the subject matter' and he had asked Coker's opinion as to the boy's 'ability and inclinations',²⁵⁹ but, once again, Coker appears to have been somewhat unfocussed and he did not respond to JPP's request for information. At that time JPP was living in Nevis and Coker may well have resented his demands from four thousand miles across the Atlantic and his instruction to Coker to do his utmost 'to check so violent and unruly a temper'.²⁶⁰ Coker's failure to do so could only have added to his irritation with both his nephews, Tommy and JPP.

In complete contrast, the Cokers' son William Young - then on a visit to Nevis - was a delight to JPP and others, and the Cokers must have been mightily pleased when JPP approvingly wrote that 'The conduct of your son Billy gives great joy to all your friends here'.²⁶¹ Billy Coker returned to England with his uncle, William Burt Weekes, and then began his studies at Trinity College, Oxford.²⁶² Their other son, John Frederick, presumably went to the same school in Salisbury that his brother, his cousin and the Tobin boys had attended. JPP's only criticism of John Frederick was that he, like his own son, left out his second name.²⁶³ Presumably JPP wanted it used to honour his long-dead benefactor. However, JPP himself also called the boy by his nickname, Jack.

A great family reunion took place at Woodcutts in the autumn of 1783. The Pinneys had finally left Nevis to live in England and while Mrs P and the newest arrival in the family, young Pretor, at first remained in London,²⁶⁴ JPP came to Woodcutts on his own. The Pinneys had brought with them from Nevis two of the Tobin children, Charles and Joe, and, having on his way dropped them off at their grandfather's in Stratford-sub-Castra,²⁶⁵ JPP arrived at Woodcutts at the end of August.²⁶⁶ He rested briefly, and then on 3 September he and Coker travelled in a hired post chaise to Salisbury to meet

²⁵³ PP, WI Box E, loose item: Simon Pretor, Sherborne to JPP, Nevis, 23 September 1781

²⁵⁴ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 12 June 1782

²⁵⁵ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f87 and AB 17

²⁵⁶ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Simon Pretor, 19 September 1782

²⁵⁷ PP, LB 4: JPP to Wm Coker, [no day] June 1778

²⁵⁸ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Wm Coker, 26 July 1781

²⁵⁹ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 21 June 1782

²⁶⁰ PP, LB 4: JPP, Nevis, to Wm Coker, 17 August 1778

²⁶¹ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 12 June 1782

²⁶² Foster, Joseph (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses*

²⁶³ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 12 June 1782

²⁶⁴ PP, LB 5: JPP to Thomas Arthurton, 2 September 1783

²⁶⁵ PP, AB 34 f1; see also f33

²⁶⁶ PP, LB 5: JPP, Woodcotts, to James Tobin, 31 August 1783

Sir Alex Powell on some unspecified business. Coker returned on the same day²⁶⁷ while JPP left Salisbury for Southampton²⁶⁸ and then returned to London.²⁶⁹ Three months later, in the evening of 7 November,²⁷⁰ he arrived back at Woodcutts with his wife, their son and their servants from Nevis, Pero Jones and Fanny Coker. The fresh Dorset country air must have been very welcome to them all. The two-year-old Pretor had been 'extremely ill' in London²⁷¹ and JPP blamed the boy's poor health, and his own headaches, on the 'thick atmosphere' in the city.²⁷²

The family spent Christmas at Woodcutts and the Cokers treated them most hospitably; JPP remarked how on one cold and foggy day he returned from a journey to find an 'excellent lunch of venison ready to be served'.²⁷³ As was customary for guests who did not have their own servants tending their laundry, he paid one of Coker's tenants, Ann Scamoll, to wash the family's and the servants' clothes.²⁷⁴ Having enjoyed their wholesome country visit, in early 1784 the Pinneys and their servants moved on to Salisbury, then to Bath²⁷⁵ and from there to Bristol.²⁷⁶ With 'warmest thanks' JPP had previously declined Coker's 'kind offer' of his house at Strickland,²⁷⁷ preferring, instead, to look for somewhere to live in an 'airy part' of Bristol.²⁷⁸ No doubt, business opportunities were better in the city but Strickland's close proximity to Woodcutts may have been an added deterrent.

When JPP had left Nevis, he had installed his cousin Joseph Gill as manager but within a short time it became clear that he was not equipped for such big a challenge and that someone had to replace him. To sort things out, JPP planned a brief trip to Nevis²⁷⁹ but, instead, preparations soon got under way for Coker to go. He was to manage Mountravers once more.

The reasons for William Coker accepting JPP's invitation to return to work on Mountravers are hard to fathom because all the negotiations took place during visits to Bristol and Woodcutts and are not documented. According to Pares, JPP was 'spared the necessity of returning to Nevis' because Coker offered to take Gill's place and implied that Coker's decision was based on his debt to JPP.²⁸⁰ There may have been other, or additional reasons: his wife may have been homesick, or they may have gone back for health reasons. A regular and guaranteed salary of N£200 a year could have been an inducement,²⁸¹ but while Coker worked on Mountravers, he had to put someone in charge to look after Woodcutts because, in effect, he became an absentee. Neither his older son nor his brother-in-law could carry out the task; William Young was studying at Oxford and William Burt Weekes was in Edinburgh with Tommy. It is not known whom Coker left in charge of his estate, nor what his farming activities on Woodcutts amounted to - except that they failed to bring in enough money to extinguish his debt with JPP. To the contrary, Coker had increased his mortgage.²⁸²

And so it happened that the Cokers returned to Nevis. Their younger son was left at school, with JPP acting as his guardian, but they took with them their niece Betsey Dredge who was staying with them at Woodcutts. Other travel companions were Mrs Hendrickson from Nevis, who, with her son and

²⁶⁷ PP, AB 30 Pinney & Tobin's a/c

²⁶⁸ PP, LB 5: JPP to Wm Coker, 4 September 1783

²⁶⁹ PP, LB 5: JPP, London, to Simon Pretor, Sherborne, 10 September 1783

²⁷⁰ PP, AB 33

²⁷¹ PP, LB 5: JPP, London, to Simon Pretor, Sherborne, 10 September 1783

²⁷² PP, LB 5: JPP, London, to Simon Pretor, Sherborne, 25 September 1783

²⁷³ PP, LB 5: JPP to Simon Pretor, 16 January 1784

²⁷⁴ PP, LB 5: JPP to WB Weekes, Woodcotts, 8 February 1784

²⁷⁵ PP, LB 5: JPP, Bath, to John Patterson, 12 February 1784

²⁷⁶ PP, LB 5: JPP, Bristol, to James Tobin, 21 February 1784

²⁷⁷ PP, LB 4: JPP to Wm Coker, [no day] June 1778

²⁷⁸ PP, LB 5: JPP, London, to Simon Pretor, Sherborne, 25 September 1783

²⁷⁹ PP, LB 6: JPP, Bristol, to Joseph Gill, Nevis, 9 February 1785

²⁸⁰ Pares, Richard *A West India Fortune* p143

According to Pares, Coker owed £3,300 but it appears that his first-born, who was studying at Oxford, had joined him in a loan and that by 31 December 1785 father and son owed JPP a total of £5,000 (PP, AB 33 f17).

²⁸¹ PP, AB 30 Plantation a/c

²⁸² PP, WI 'Damaged or Fragile' Box: Bond dated 5 October 1781

daughter, was on her way home,²⁸³ and Kate Coker, or, as she was now sometimes called, Catherine Emra.²⁸⁴ Once more she had come to England as a servant, this time accompanying Revd William Jones's wife and his daughter Sally. They had arrived in Bristol in mid-June²⁸⁵ and at first had stayed with the Pinneys while Sally Jones had been laid up with the small pox. By July Sally had recovered and JPP, after unsuccessfully trying to fix them up with a clergyman's family, had found lodgings for them with the widow of a sea captain, Mrs Webbe.²⁸⁶ Once Mrs Jones, Sally and Kate Coker had moved to Mrs Webbe's, John Arthurton and his wife came to stay with the Pinneys. He was the younger brother of Thomas, with whom Coker had gone to Nevis in the 1760s, and while the Arthurtons were in Bristol, JPP gave John Arthurton and Coker joint power of attorney.²⁸⁷ Mrs Arthurton remained in England but John Arthurton intended to return to Nevis at the same time the Cokers were due to sail, and JPP (who had been charged with finding Kate Coker 'a proper passage back' while Mrs Jones and her daughter remained in Bristol),²⁸⁸ made arrangements for her voyage home. Ever the organiser, JPP had it all worked out and proposed to Coker 'the following plan of expense - Mr Arthurton to be at the expense of his post-chaise to Woodcotts, and to take Kate with him back to Salisbury, - then one post-chaise will do for you, Mrs Coker and Miss Dredge to Salisbury - from which place, as you will be obliged to hire a coach to convey your family, he can have a place in your carriage, without putting you to additional expense.'²⁸⁹ All went to plan and the party sailed from Portsmouth with Captain Chivers on the *Resolution*.²⁹⁰

Back in Nevis

Now in his late fifties, on 18 January 1786 William Coker took up his post as manager of Mountravers.²⁹¹ The circumstances did not bode well. When he had left Nevis over fifteen years earlier, his prospects had been promising but he returned to England without having achieved anything – in fact, quite the reverse, because in the 1770s other people had owed him over S£4,000; now he owed JPP that amount and more. He no longer enjoyed the life of an independent, if impoverished, gentleman farmer but, once again, had become an employee of JPP's and he had to follow his employer's rules. In the 1760s he, Coker, had been the experienced planter and his friend JPP had learnt much of his plantership from him. Now the roles were reversed; JPP's eighteen years in Nevis far outweighed Coker's, and while JPP, now his nephew, had turned Mountravers into a successful business, Coker had struggled trying to make Woodcutts pay. Coker must have felt downhearted and resentful about his loss of status and power – in fact he probably was resentful about life in general. As to his wife, her homecoming was not so joyful, either; her 96-year-old mother had died the previous year.²⁹²

The Cokers would have needed servants and for the first few months they may have hired Kate Coker. Pussey, their last woman in Nevis, had probably died long ago.²⁹³ In September they acquired six people from Mrs Coker's sister Elizabeth Weekes: three black women – Polly, Patty and Louisa –

²⁸³ PP, LB 7: JPP to WB Weekes, 29 August 1785

²⁸⁴ When she was freed, her name was given as 'Catharine Emrey' - mis-spelt for Emra - (ECSCRN, CR 1771-1773 ff229-33) and from then on she was alternatively known under her old and her new name. At least three other women of that name had lived before her. The first known Catherine Emra in 1735 made people available for the work on Saddle Hill (UKNA, CO 186/2); the second was Catherine Burt, who married James Emra on 8 May 1741 (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 5 p315). She was probably dead by 1746 (VL Oliver *Monumental Inscriptions of the British West Indies* p75). The third was described as 'a free mulatto woman' in an agreement dated 15 May 1772 (ECSCRN, CR 1771-3 ff229-33).

²⁸⁵ PP, LB 37: P & T to George Webbe, Stratford, Salisbury, 17 June 1785

²⁸⁶ JPP wrote that Mrs Webbe lived in King square (sic) but this must have been King Street (PP, LB 6: JPP to Revd Wm Jones, 28 July 1785). In 1775 Henry Webbe was in 'King-street' (*Sketchley's Bristol Directory 1775*). Given that the Captain was at a house numbered 36, it seems more likely that it was King Street (King Square is too small to have such a high house number). Also, King Street is in the harbour area, where other sailors lived.

²⁸⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1785-1787 f156

²⁸⁸ PP, LB 37: P & T to Revd Wm Jones, 16 June 1785

²⁸⁹ PP, LB 7: JPP to Wm Coker, Woodcutts, 15 November 1785

²⁹⁰ PP, LB 6: JPP to Joseph Gill, 5 October 1785

²⁹¹ PP, AB 30 Plantation a/c

²⁹² PP, AB 27 f43

²⁹³ JPP had accounted for Pussey's last hire income in 1774 (PP, AB 20 Wm Coker's a/c).

and three mulatto boys; Patty's sons Tom Phillips and Jack Abbott, and Louisa's son Josiah. Jack Abbott's 'reputed father' was George Abbott, who later became the Deputy Naval Officer of Tonnage and Surveyor,²⁹⁴ while Tom Phillips's almost certainly was the mariner William Edward Philips (also Phillips). Described as a gentleman, he probably was a ship's captain rather than an ordinary seaman.²⁹⁵ It is very likely that he was also Josiah's father (Philips bought Josiah's mother Louisa in 1798). These six remained Elizabeth Weekes's property and so as to ensure their rightful ownership, their transfer was documented. The new overseer on Mountravers, James Williams, witnessed this contract.²⁹⁶

James Williams, who had started working on Mountravers just a few months before Coker's arrival, was getting to grips with the job, and presumably it took Coker a while to settle back into the plantation routines. It appears that during his first year he encountered no particular problems with discipline but that he then began to lose control over his workforce. The earliest reference which suggests trouble on the plantation was from February 1787 when Coker punished one man by fettering him with clogs, and from then on others were subjected to the same punishment. A contributing factor to him being unable to maintain discipline may have been his state of health; from 1787 onwards his hand shook and his writing became very unsteady.²⁹⁷ The trembling suggests that he may have had a stroke or was suffering from an ailment such as Parkinson's Disease. By 1788 the overseer James Williams kept the accounts and did the book-keeping on Coker's behalf.²⁹⁸

Apart from managing Mountravers, Coker got involved in other activities in the island. Not long after his arrival, he became one of the Assistant Justices of the Courts of Kings Bench and Common Bench,²⁹⁹ and, despite the setback experienced during his earlier shop-keeping venture, he traded in goods again. This time, however, his wife was actively involved. Once more, the stock consisted of a wide range of products. He bought rum from the plantation – almost 2,800 gallons during four years from 1787 - ³⁰⁰ and among the merchandise he had sent from England was a considerable amount of china tableware. He also imported dozens of chamber pots.³⁰¹ Mrs Coker, who had brought some supplies with her, then ordered more, and she, too, asked for a variety of goods. Her consignments from Bristol included a large quantity of stitching thread, soap and candles, as well as substantial quantities of spices: two pounds of pepper and a pound of allspice. In five years she imported close to £250 worth of goods through JPP.³⁰² He probably was the Cokers only supplier; they would have found it difficult to get credit elsewhere. It is very likely that to market the wares Mrs Coker employed Polly, Patty and Louisa, the women her sister had lent her. Altogether, this time the Cokers' trading activities were less ambitious, on a smaller scale and therefore more manageable.

In addition to buying and selling, William Coker became involved in another enterprise. Possibly as a means of lessening Coker's debt to him, JPP may have suggested a joint venture between himself, Coker, and another man, Webbe Hobson, and in 1787 these three briefly leased Garnett's plantation at Trinity Palmetto Point in St Kitts. In the same year JPP purchased the mortgage on this estate, and with regard to Garnett's, William Coker then took on an administrative role, standing in trust for JPP

²⁹⁴ UKNA, CO 186/10: 18 July 1814

²⁹⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1797-1799 f164

²⁹⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1785-1787 ff256-58, and PP, AB 36

²⁹⁷ UKNA, CO 184/1 f83; also ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 f108

²⁹⁸ PP, AB 35 Undated note

²⁹⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1785-1787 various pages, and UKNA, CO 184/1 f83

³⁰⁰ Coker bought just over 1,300 gallons in 1787; this dropped to 270 in 1788 and rose again to 428 in 1789 and 775 in 1790 (PP, AB 36 Rum a/c and Plantation a/c; AB 35 Rum a/c, AB 30 Rum a/c and AB 43 Wm Coker's a/c).

³⁰¹ PP, AB 37

³⁰² Mrs Coker's goods shipped from Bristol amounted to £24:18:2 (1785), £63:9:8 (1786), £55 (1787), £74 (1788), £7:6:7 and £23:5:9 (1789). In 1789 she owed close to S£95 (PP, AB 30 Frances Coker's a/c; also AB 37 and AB 41). While sending goods to Mrs Coker, JPP also dispatched items to Charles Ellery, the husband of Mrs Coker's niece Betsey (LB 9: JPP, Bristol, to Wm Coker, 15 October 1789).

and Webbe Hobson.³⁰³ Together with Webbe Hobson he also acted as joint attorney for a Nevis merchant, John Richardson,³⁰⁴ and on his own for Joseph Gill.³⁰⁵

Around the beginning of 1788 the Cokers' son John Frederick came to Nevis and joined them. Aged 17, he had finished his schooling in Bristol and had travelled to the West Indies with his cousin Thomas Pym Weekes. John Frederick appears to have been of weak constitution – JPP did not think he should live at such an unhealthy place as Sharloes – but his father considered him fit enough to be employed as a boiling house watch. Thomas Pym Weekes, who had undergone medical training in Scotland, had come to Nevis to set himself up as a doctor, and Coker provided employment for him also. For several years Doctors Archbald and Williamson had tended to the Mountravers people but Coker replaced them with his nephew. Dr Weekes not only needed the money – he got married and bought a house in Charlestown - but by allowing him to treat two of the patients with a new-fangled machine, an electrical apparatus, Coker demonstrated to others in the island that the newly-arrived doctor's medical skills could be trusted. For young Dr Weekes this was good, direct advertising.

On 1 January 1790 Mrs P arrived in Nevis with her maidservant Fanny, William Coker's reputed daughter. Mrs P had undertaken the arduous journey to recover her health and because she was homesick, but the joyful reunion was soon overshadowed by the death of her aunt Betsey - one of the Mrs Coker's three spinster sisters who lived at the Cedar Trees in Charlestown. 'Miss Elizabeth Weekes departed this life' towards the end of March³⁰⁶ and JPP's arrival a month later certainly did not lighten the mood.

Crop was underway and the returned absentee immediately took things in hand. He thought Coker was mistaken in employing only five people in the small gang and increased the number to 25. He was proven right: instead of the workers producing three hogsheads a week, they now turned out seven, sometimes even eight.³⁰⁷ JPP had suspected that Coker had not conducted the business in the manner he had laid down,³⁰⁸ and again JPP was proven right. Coker had changed the long-standing planting instructions, which had resulted in poorer crops, and instead of ordering supplies from England, he had bought them locally at greater expense.³⁰⁹ JPP found fault with other plantation matters. When he perused the books, he discovered that Coker had used over N£30 worth of cash from the drawer without accounting for it³¹⁰ and that he had employed his son as a boiling house watch – an unnecessary expense, as far as JPP was concerned. These accusations against Coker can be traced through the account books, but JPP would have levelled other charges at him, such as, for example, being slack in administering John Hay Richens's estate. Apart from complaining about abuses and neglect, JPP may have had a bigger picture in mind. He was aware that in London the House of Commons Enquiry into the Slave Trade was underway, and he knew that in Britain people took an increasing interest in the enslaved people's conditions in general.³¹¹ He may well have accused Coker of treating his workforce too harshly (in his days JPP appears not to have used fettering as a punishment) and he may have questioned him about the number of deaths, in particular the deaths of those six people who died after they had been treated by a doctor. He may have found fault with the way Coker administered 'kitchen physick' and with his judgment as to when to call in medical help. The fact that JPP had brought with him a bound copy of Foster's *Physical Observations*

³⁰³ The plantation at Trinity Palmetto Point consisted of 207 acres, over half of which was covered in cane; the rest consisted of slave housing, a fruit garden, ranges, wasteland, ghutsides and mountain land. With 42 males and 29 females it was a small property (PP, WI Box O-5). The plantation had previously belonged to John Bourryeau Garnett, who had mortgaged it to the Bristol merchants William Reeve, Andrew Reeve and Jeremiah Hill. After that one creditor had assigned the mortgage to another until JPP bought it in 1787 (Pares, *Richard A West India Fortune* pp307-08; also PP, DM 1173 Add Pinney Materials Dom Box 4).

³⁰⁴ ECSCRN, CR 1789-1790 Folio number illegible

³⁰⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 f247

³⁰⁶ PP, AB 39

³⁰⁷ PP, AB 42 Plantation a/c

³⁰⁸ PP, LB 8: JPP, Bristol, to John Hayne, 4 January 1789

³⁰⁹ Pares, *Richard A West India Fortune* p143

³¹⁰ PP, AB 30 Nevis Cash a/c and AB 39 Wm Coker's a/c

³¹¹ PP, LB 37: P & T to Ed Brazier, Nevis, 11 February 1788

intended for Coker³¹² may suggest that he was worried about the standard of healthcare his manager provided.

Whatever the accusations amounted to, they resulted in a quarrel and Coker's dismissal. Thomas Pym Weekes was to take over as manager. Coker was stunned. Not only had he lost his employment, but he had also lost it in a most unpleasant manner. He had been sacked by one ungrateful nephew to be replaced by another ungrateful nephew.³¹³ Coker must have known that Tommy had lobbied the Pinneys for the job, and he may have known that his niece had pressed her husband to employ her half-brother. He certainly knew how JPP felt about Tommy Weekes; not that long ago JPP had condemned the young man for his recklessness and his uncontrolled temper, his indiscretions, his extravagance, his irresponsible attitude, and for the time he spent in taverns when he should have followed his studies. JPP had railed against Tommy's improper behaviour, his unsatisfactory conduct, his lack of correspondence - how could JPP put the whole plantation into the hands of this pup, this rake for whom he had so little regard? And had he, Coker, not always served JPP to the best of his ability?

Hurt and confused, Coker handed JPP the money that belonged to Joseph Gill, and Mrs Coker sold JPP a billiard table³¹⁴ which got shipped to England.³¹⁵ On 1 August the Pinneys left Nevis, and Dr Weekes started work on the same day. With the loss of the job came the loss of their home and, making way for the new manager and his wife, the Cokers left the plantation. Fortunately Tommy Weekes lent them his furnished house in Charlestown but they had to find pasture for their sheep and horses. At least Coker could sell his store house to JPP³¹⁶ and he enjoyed a generous leaving package that tied him over until the end of the year. 'As a compliment', JPP paid his salary for another five months and gave him a barrel of rum, a barrel of sugar and the use of two Mountravers people, Jack Steward and Sheba Jones, free of charge until the end of December.³¹⁷ His well-to-do nephew also procured for him the place of Deputy Secretary and Registrar of the Island.³¹⁸ One of the documents he signed in that capacity - 'recorded and examined by William Coker' - shows just how very shaky his handwriting had become.³¹⁹ His signature was that of a sick old man.

While the Cokers were struggling to come to terms with the new state of affairs, the fortunes of their son William Young changed for the better. Having finished his studies at Oxford, he had been ordained in 1788³²⁰ - 'the Parson' had, indeed, become a fully-fledged clergyman - and having secured his first post as a curate in the village of Backwell near Bristol,³²¹ within months he had hopes 'of a matrimonial engagement with a young lady of considerable fortune'.³²² Elizabeth King lived near Wraxall, which is within walking distance of Backwell. A woman two years older than him, she came from a very respectable family and with an attractive marriage settlement of £6,000.³²³ As both her elder sister³²⁴ and her mother were dead,³²⁵ she was also heiress to her father, Walter King of Bristol.³²⁶ William Young Coker and Elizabeth King tied their 'happy knot'³²⁷ in the church in Wraxall in

³¹² PP, AB 41 Cash a/c: 7 November 1789

³¹³ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Coker, Nevis, to TP Weekes, Nevis, 7 March 1791

³¹⁴ PP, AB 39 Frances Coker's Sterling a/c

³¹⁵ PP, AB 40: 8 September 1790

³¹⁶ PP, AB 35: 19 August 1790

³¹⁷ PP, LB 9: JPP, Bristol, to TP Weekes, 12 November 1790

³¹⁸ PP, LB 10: JPP, Bristol, to Azariah Pinney at Messrs Bethman, Francfort (sic), 13 June 1791

³¹⁹ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1806 e.g. f119

³²⁰ PP, LB 8: JPP to WB Weekes, 14 July 1788

³²¹ PP, LB 7: JPP to Charles Andrew Chabert, 23 May 1790

³²² PP, LB 8: JPP to WB Weekes, 25 February 1789

³²³ PP, Cat 4 Misc Deeds 1764-1841; also SRO, Gordon Papers, DD/PN Bundle 2: No 20 Walter King to Sir John Smyth Bart and others - Settlement of Freehold Estate on the Marriage of Miss Elizabeth King ... with Revd William Young Coker, 25 November 1790

³²⁴ Elizabeth King's sister Mary was born at Naish House on 20 February 1761 (GA, D1571/F835).

³²⁵ Memorial plaque in All Saints church, Wraxall

³²⁶ BRO, 00744(2)a, dated 18 August 1806

³²⁷ PP, LB 9: JPP to Wm Coker, Nevis, 1 September 1789

December 1790. Their witness was a man said to have been a relative, Henry G Taylor,³²⁸ and among their guests may have been John Frederick, the younger Coker son. He had returned to England the previous summer.

After working on Mountravers, John Frederick had left Nevis, possibly because of his ill health, but returned to the island early in 1791. He was very ill and died shortly afterwards. The Cokers, distraught, buried him in St Paul's churchyard in Charlestown. Within the space of less than a year they had lost their livelihood in Nevis, their home, Mrs Coker had lost a sister and they had lost one of their sons. Tommy Weekes did not attend the funeral but he did send his condolences, and from Coker's thank-you letter to his nephew it is apparent how terribly hard the events over the last year had been for him and his wife, and how upset and wounded they were. Coker expressed his hurt at Tommy's ungrateful behaviour towards his wife - the woman 'who bar bearing him did everything expected of a mother' - and towards him, the man 'who acted the part of a father to you for ten years'. He reminded his nephew that he and his wife had always looked after him and that they had treated him like their own son. And although losing his job to his nephew and 'Mr Pinney's unfriendly and I will add ungenerous behaviour ... in a great degree oppressed' his mind, his son's death caused the greatest pain - indeed, 'the death of my dear deceased son has almost broken my heart.'³²⁹ Perhaps losing his son was the harder to bear because Thomas Pym Weekes had recently become a father himself. It must all have seemed very unfair to William Coker.

Grief-stricken, disillusioned and embittered, the Cokers were determined to return to England,³³⁰ and, once again, they packed up their belongings. They had to find homes for their dogs and buyers for their sheep and horses. One of them, their roan horse, they had already sold to the plantation for a good price, N£66.³³¹ They returned to Mrs Coker's sister her six people,³³² and returned Sheba Jones and Jack Steward to Mountravers. According to the terms agreed by JPP, the Cokers had hired these two from January onwards at the preferential rate of N£20 a year. They employed them until mid-August,³³³ when, 'straightened for money',³³⁴ the Cokers left Nevis. One wonders just how often they regretted having left Woodcutts.

Back in England

On 22 September 1791 Mr and Mrs Coker arrived in England. They went straight to the Pinneys' new house in Great George Street. They were family, after all. The death of their son probably softened JPP's attitude to them but when, that evening, they were dining on the turtle the Cokers had brought from Nevis,³³⁵ conversation around the dinner table probably was rather strained. As well as reporting on the latest news from the island, a lot of time would have been spent admiring the Pinneys' house and its furnishings, and Mrs P no doubt talked about her latest trip to Cheltenham.³³⁶ JPP would have kept to himself what, not long ago, he had scribbled in Coker's account. Regarding the payment of five months' additional salary, in an angry moment JPP had told his account book that this money was granted 'notwithstanding he merited no such favour - for his management was disgraceful to a Man of the meanest capacity, that deemed himself a Manager.'³³⁷ Elsewhere, he referred to the 'vile management of WC', and JPP finally heaved a big sigh of relief when he totted up his 'clear profit'

³²⁸ GA, D1571/F835; also SRO, Somerset: Register of Marriages, 1538-1815; Marriages at Wraxall, 1562-1812 Vol2 (Courtesy of Jennifer Wakefield); also IGI microfiche for Somerset

³²⁹ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Coker, Nevis, to TP Weekes, Nevis, 7 March 1791

³³⁰ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Coker, Nevis, to TP Weekes, Nevis, 7 March 1791

³³¹ PP, AB 43 Plantation a/c

³³² One of the three women who worked for the Cokers probably had had a child that had died very young; in July 1789 Coker had paid tax on seven people, in April the following year he had paid tax on six again (PP, AB 39). Elizabeth Weekes appears to have mortgaged the six people she had lent to the Cokers to John Taylor who in June 1791 gave up his claim to them (ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 ff266).

³³³ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 27 September 1790

³³⁴ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Coker to TP Weekes, 4 June 1791

³³⁵ PP, LB 19: Memo/Diary section

³³⁶ PP, LB 10: JPP, Bristol, to John Henry, Stockwell near London, 11 September 1791

³³⁷ PP, AB 39 Wm Coker's a/c

account for the year 1792: 'Thank God. This is the last crop put in by my late miserable Manager WC or rather, by my late Mis-manager.' For emphasis, he put 'Mis-manager' in bold letters.³³⁸ He certainly was in a tetchy mood. Piles had confined him to the house 'for upwards of three months' and their discomfort had added to his bad temper,³³⁹ as did a complaint from President John Richardson Herbert that Coker had written him a letter which Herbert considered disrespectful.³⁴⁰

JPP heard that Coker had become his 'bitter enemy',³⁴¹ and – apart from their visit straight after arriving back in England - at first Coker appears to have kept his distance from his nephew in Bristol. For a while the Cokers probably also stayed away from Racedown, JPP's inherited property in the country, where JPP had installed Mrs Coker's brother, William Burt Weekes. Coker was still arguing with Weekes over money owed and money owing. At the centre of the dispute was a loan made to Weekes, for which Weekes had given as securities his posts of Gunner and Treasurer. Coker claimed that, as agreed, he had carried out the work of Gunner and Treasurer but that, instead of him receiving the money for the Gunner's office, it had gone to Weekes.³⁴² After marrying Weekes's daughter, JPP had got involved by trying to reconcile the two men but Weekes had been unwilling to settle with Coker.³⁴³ The two old men carried on squabbling over the money and for years scribbled endless notes and calculations, and when he left Nevis, Coker believed that Weekes still owed him N£385.³⁴⁴ The case finally went to arbitration in Nevis and two arbitrators, Andrew Hamilton and John Richardson, decided that, instead of Weekes owing Coker money, Coker owed Weekes £70.³⁴⁵ There was little hope of Coker being able to pay this – after all, he was still deeply indebted to JPP.

William Coker may, however, have gone to Racedown to visit Joseph Gill, or he may have met up with him in Sherborne, at the house of JPP's and Gill's uncle, Simon Pretor. Coker had been Gill's attorney in Nevis and, although he had supplanted Gill as manager, the two men remained on friendly terms. There probably was outstanding business to discuss; Joseph Gill, together with James Nisbet - a man with whom he had been in partnership - had also lent money to William Burt Weekes and these two had laid claim to Weekes's 'effects' (meaning enslaved people?) that Coker had taken into his possession. As the document concerning this case was undated, it is unclear when this took place or how the case was settled³⁴⁶ but Coker and Gill certainly would have been united in their condemnation of Weekes and his chaotic financial affairs. Ironically, it was Gill who had replaced Weekes at Racedown when JPP had lost patience with his father-in-law's fondness for grand and expensive building projects.

Around the time Weekes had left Racedown to retire to a new life on the south coast, Coker sent JPP a present of game from Woodcutts, and in his thank-you letter JPP mentioned in passing, in a 'PS', that his father-in-law had gone to 'board with a Mr Pickett at Lyme'.³⁴⁷ Still smarting over the arbitration judgment against him, Coker queried why JPP had sent him this information and JPP replied that he thought it might 'be after a time for the mutual interest and comfort of both'.³⁴⁸ William Burt Weekes was ill, and JPP was smoothing the way to bring the two men together so that they could make their peace with each other. Coker, who in the early days had been entrusted with Weekes's power of attorney,³⁴⁹ had been 'a steady friend ... when others forsook him',³⁵⁰ and the two men, although quarrelling over money, appear to have been genuinely fond of each other. And so it

³³⁸ PP, AB 42 Plantation a/c

³³⁹ PP, LB 9: JPP, Bristol, to John Taylor, Nevis, 6 February 1792

³⁴⁰ PP, LB 9: JPP to JR Herbert, Nevis, 30 October 1791

³⁴¹ PP, LB 10: JPP, Bristol, to Azariah Pinney at Messrs Bethman, Francfort (sic), 13 June 1791

³⁴² PP, Dom Box S4: Coker memo, undated

³⁴³ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 7 May 1773

³⁴⁴ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Coker, Nevis, to TP Weekes, Nevis, 7 March 1791

³⁴⁵ PP, Dom Box S4: Arbitrations award (Andrew Hamilton and John Richardson), Nevis, 31 July 1791

³⁴⁶ PP, Dom Box S1: Brief of the Case of Wm Coker Esq, undated

³⁴⁷ PP, LB 10: JPP, Sherborne, to Wm Coker, Woodcutts, 5 October 1792

³⁴⁸ PP, LB 10: JPP, Bristol, to Wm Coker, Woodcutts, 26 October 1792

³⁴⁹ UKNA, CO 186/6: 9 December 1772 List of Books and Papers in the Secretary Ordinary's Office in Nevis

³⁵⁰ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Coker, Nevis, to TP Weekes, Nevis, 7 March 1791

happened that in August 1793 William Burt Weekes 'from Racedown' drew up proposed 'Terms of Agreement': He was to board at Woodcutts at £30 a year - the same he had paid in Lyme. Stable room for a horse was to be available and he was to engage a helper, 'As I require much attendance frequently as well as by night as by day, I will pay the wages of a maid servant.'³⁵¹ The arrangement suited everyone: JPP, who had engineered it, no longer had to worry about his father-in-law living beyond his means at Lyme, Mr Coker received a steady income of £30 a year, Mrs Coker had the company of her brother, and William Burt Weekes had a home and was cared for in his illness.

It is not known from what old Weekes suffered; towards the end of 1794 he certainly was well enough to travel to Bristol and for the next few months he alternated between staying at Woodcutts, or with his daughter in Bristol at Great George Street, or his nephew outside Bristol at Naish House. It was the family home of his nephew's wife; in fact Elizabeth King had been born in the house.³⁵² JPP liked her and spoke well of the couple. According to him, Revd William Young Coker had

become a domestic man – keeps his father-in-laws books and conducts himself with great judgment and propriety which I assure you affords me great pleasure, as I consider him a child of my own, being his godfather, and one that I love – his wife is a charming woman, with an excellent fortune – he has been fortunate in the extreme – I do not hear he is likely to have an increase to his family.³⁵³

JPP was wrong; when he wrote this letter Revd Coker's wife was in the early stages of pregnancy and on 6 January 1792 year she gave birth to her first child, Mary Frances,³⁵⁴ and almost exactly two years on it was announced that 'Mrs Coker has got a little boy'.³⁵⁵ While in their daughter's names the couple had combined their mothers' first names, they called their first son Walter King, after Elizabeth Coker's recently deceased father.³⁵⁶ Just a few days after he was born, Walter King was privately baptised in the chapel at Naish House³⁵⁷ and William Coker may, possibly, have attended the event but Mrs Coker would not have been present. She was said to have been in Nevis, apparently having travelled there without her husband.³⁵⁸ While this showed Mrs Coker's independence of spirit and the ability to make her own arrangements, it is also likely that her husband was too ill to endure the arduous journey.

Mrs Coker may have visited her younger son's grave in St Paul's churchyard in Charlestown. The tombstone, which her older son had financed, would then have been in its place. It is not known how long Mrs Coker remained in the island – JPP had heard the news of her being abroad while he was awaiting passage to Nevis in March 1794 – and she may have been there when her nephew left his job as manager. By then a widower with two young sons, Dr Thomas Pym Weekes set off to live in Martinique.

Mrs Coker would have made every effort to see her niece Betsey Dredge again. As a young girl, Betsey had travelled to Nevis with the Cokers, and some years later her brother William (Billy) had followed her in search of employment on a plantation. He probably worked on Jesup's but did not remain long³⁵⁹ and returned to England. Betsey Dredge, or Elizabeth Ellery, as she was then called, had stayed on after marrying an overseer or manager, Charles Ellery.³⁶⁰ Their son, William Young

³⁵¹ PP, Dom Box S4

³⁵² GA, D1571/F835

³⁵³ PP, LB 10: JPP, Bristol, to Azariah Pinney at Messrs Bethman, Francfort (sic), 13 June 1791

³⁵⁴ GA, 1571/F835 and <http://www.portbury-hundred.co.uk/wraxrecords.html>

³⁵⁵ PP, LB 39: P & T to Simon Pretor, 17 February 1794

³⁵⁶ Walter King died on 11 April 1792 (Memorial plaque in All Saints church, Wraxall, and LB 10: Azariah Pinney to WB Weekes, 9 April, with a PS dated 12 April 1792). Walter King Coker was baptised on 28 April 1794 (<http://www.portbury-hundred.co.uk/wraxrecords.html>).

³⁵⁷ GA, 1571/F835: Montserrat, to Rev Mr WY Coker, Naish House near Bristol, 30 July 1792

³⁵⁸ PP, Dom Box S2-5: JPP, Cove, to Jane Pinney, 10 March 1794

³⁵⁹ PP, LB 9: JPP to Wm Dredge, Nevis, 15 September 1789

³⁶⁰ PP, LB 38: P & T to Charles Ellery, Nevis, 30 January 1790

Coker Ellery, apparently was 'a fine, sprightly child' with an amazing memory, and as 'fond of a horse and dog and a whip as any part of his family.' Betsey Ellery's husband had been unemployed for a while and 'after a good deal of trouble' the Ellerys had left Nevis and moved to Montserrat. There her husband had found employment as plantation manager while she had busied herself with her own enterprise; trading mostly in dressmaking supplies but also in various other useful goods. She had ordered some merchandise from her cousin Revd Coker³⁶¹ and her aunt, Mrs Coker, had also sent her parcels which may well have contained wares for trading.³⁶² Elizabeth Ellery certainly was very fond of her Aunt Coker; she missed her 'very much', as did her son, little William. He always talked of 'Aunt Coker and cousin Billy' (Revd William Young Coker). In her one surviving letter to Revd Coker – Betsey Ellery had sent others that had remained unanswered – she told him that her son William was very sick with cold and fever and that she suffered from a recurring sore throat. She was worn out. Her last year had been 'very disagreeable', 'first Mr Ellery being out of business, moving from one island to another, and my being so sick'. And she was worried about money her husband owed JPP (this illustrates, once again, how far and wide JPP's money-lending extended); it made her 'more uneasy than anything' because she knew Mr Pinney to be 'a very particular man' and was afraid that it would 'not be in Mr Ellery's power to pay him off this year, but I'm sure he will if he possibly can.'³⁶³ She wrote this letter to her cousin in July 1792. She then gave birth to another child³⁶⁴ and may have died in childbed. She certainly was dead before the beginning of 1795. Mrs Coker's sisters in Charlestown, The Ladies at the Cedar Trees, took in the Ellery children,³⁶⁵ and a year later, following Thomas Pym Weekes's death, Ann and Jane Weekes also cared for his two orphaned sons until they were sent to live with relatives in Scotland.

Coker had not paid any interest on his loan for seven years and in 1795 JPP decided that Woodcuts was to be sold. Coker's son, already in debt himself, had joined his father in his the mortgage on the estate³⁶⁶ and some time during the next two years took it over completely.³⁶⁷ Originally JPP had planned not to activate the one per cent penalty on unpaid loans, but he had increased the interest rate to five per cent and, although over the years father and son had been able to clear some of their account, they were not only in arrears on the principal sum but also in arrears on the interest.³⁶⁸ Revd Coker agreed that the estate should be sold; William Coker refused.³⁶⁹ Nevertheless, preparations got under way for the sale and Revd Coker paid for its valuation and the assorted costs, such as making an extra plan and 'drawing the family arms on Mr Coker's plan (one day's work), two journeys to Woodcots in consequence of letters received from different gentlemen respecting the valuation.' It must have been deeply upsetting for Coker to have the surveyors bustling around, measuring and mapping every acre of land and every building on the estate. But at least he could remain in his home; during his lifetime Coker retained the use of the two mansion houses with their gardens and 25 acres of land around the houses. In addition he reserved for himself the income from ninety poor rates and two church rates that were payable to the Manor. These were deducted from the valuation.³⁷⁰

William Burt Weekes, who had been spending a lot of time in Bristol, officially ended his boarding arrangement at Woodcuts in August 1796. Coker invited him back; he would welcome him 'for a fortnight or three weeks or a month, as a friend, not a boarder' but warned that he would not be able to accommodate Weekes's horse; once the estate was sold, he would be 'much pinched in pasture'

³⁶¹ GA, D15171/F845: Montserrat, to Rev Mr WY Coker, Naish House near Bristol, 30 July 1792

³⁶² PP, LB 9: JPP to Ann Weekes, 30 October 1791

³⁶³ GA, D15171/F845: Elizabeth Ellery, Montserrat, to Revd Mr WY Coker, Naish House near Bristol, 30 July 1792

³⁶⁴ In 1796 the Ellerys had two children living (PP, Dom Box S1).

³⁶⁵ PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 6 April 1795

³⁶⁶ PP, LB 8: JPP to WB Weekes, 14 July 1788

In May 1789 William Coker and his son William Young Coker owed JPP S£4,473; by 1 May 1790 this had risen to £4,688 (PP, AB 41).

³⁶⁷ PP, WI 'Damaged or Fragile' Box: Note signed WY Coker of Naish House, 27 December 1797

³⁶⁸ PP, WI 'Damaged or Fragile' Box: William Coker and WY Coker Bond to JPP dated 12 April 1788, and document dated 29 September 1797 of payments made and arrears outstanding

³⁶⁹ PP, LB 12: JPP to Peter Batson, Attorney, Sherborne, 15 May 1795

³⁷⁰ GA, D15171/F844

and his staff reduced to one man.³⁷¹ William Burt Weekes did not take up this offer but remained in Bristol. Within months of Coker's invitation, Weekes died while staying with his nephew at Naish House. Following his funeral in All Saints church in Wraxall 'Old Mrs Coker' visited the Pinneys. It was Christmas. She came alone and bore the loss of her brother 'in tolerable spirits'.³⁷²

When Mrs Coker visited Bristol, her husband may already have left for Nevis; he certainly was there on 1 May 1797, the day he signed a document in his old post as Deputy Secretary³⁷³ and he was still in Nevis when, on 27 September 1797, Woodcutts was sold. It went for £5,000³⁷⁴ to the banker Richard Vaughan, a member of the Bristol Anti-Abolitionist Committee³⁷⁵ and 'a particular friend' of JPP's.³⁷⁶ Revd Coker may well have brokered the sale; the Vaughan family lived not far from Naish House at Wraxall Court, next to the churchyard where his wife's parents and his uncle lay buried. Coincidentally, in February 1796 JPP's son Pretor had been apprenticed to Richard Vaughan junior.³⁷⁷ Once again, the Pinneys and the Cokers were bound together in a tight network of business and social contacts.

William Coker may have escaped to Nevis to avoid the negotiations over the sale but it is also likely that his trip was connected to the deaths of both Weekeses, father and son. Coker may have been sent by the family or, maintaining that he was still owed money, he may have made a last-ditch attempt to lay claim to his dead brother-in-law's property in the island. He certainly had contact with Revd William Jones, William Burt Weekes's attorney, and may have stayed with him. Coker remained in Nevis until at least September 1798 when the then manager on Mountravers, James Williams, noted in the plantation diary that 'Mr Coker has borrowed for the Revd Jones one bottle of lamp oil'.³⁷⁸

Coker was back in England by the end of January 1799, and one of the first letters he received from JPP contained a caution against cutting any wood in the coppice that now belonged to Mr Vaughan. Whether this was something Coker had done or was going to do is not known but it is easy to imagine how, on receiving the letter, he would have muttered to himself something like 'Is a man no longer allowed to chop a little wood for himself?' Equally galling must have been JPP's reminder to send Mr Vaughan a share of the venison.³⁷⁹

Although Coker was still living at Woodcutts, he was not in control any more. He existed on an allowance paid by or through the agency of JPP, and almost by way of reply to his nephew's letter regarding the wood and the venison he asked JPP for a loan of £60. He was going to repay the money out of his quarterly allowance. JPP refused, saying that 'You are not in a position to bear such a reduction' but enclosed a bill for £40 'toward it as a compliment from my family.'³⁸⁰ However well-intentioned this gift was, it must hurt Coker's pride that now his finances were so dismal that he was forced to accept handouts from his nephew, and one wonders whether the Cokers ever took up JPP's invitation to visit his newly-acquired country residence at Somerton.³⁸¹ Would they have wanted to, and would they have had the means to pay for their travel? Their finances were such that Mrs Coker's sister Ann Weekes at one stage sent money from Nevis (an interesting reversal of the direction in which remittances normally flowed), and Mrs Coker received her sister's present of four guineas on a

³⁷¹ PP, Dom Box S4: William Coker to JPP, 4 October 1796

³⁷² PP, LB 13: Azariah Pinney to Miss Ann Floyd, undated but c December 1796

³⁷³ ECSCRN, CR 1797-1799 ff347-49

³⁷⁴ PP, C3, Family Account Book 'Estates in England' 1783-1797 (1769 marker)

The conveyance to Mr Vaughan was completed in early 1799 (LB 14).

³⁷⁵ Dresser, M *Slavery Obscured* p149 Table 9

³⁷⁶ PP, LB 7: JPP to John Patterson at Mr Bodicott's, Bath, 13 December 1785

³⁷⁷ PP, MSS in Numbered Folders (Folder 29): Copy of a note from the Merchants Hall Book of Proceedings, No 13 1797-1807 f16

³⁷⁸ PP, DM 1173/4 Plantation Diary

³⁷⁹ PP, LB 14: JPP to Wm Coker at Woodcutts, to be left at Cathmoor Inn Turnpike, nr Salisbury, 29 January 1799

³⁸⁰ PP, LB 14: JPP to Wm Coker to be left at Cathmoor Inn Turnpike, nr Salisbury, February 1799

³⁸¹ PP, LB 16: JPP to Wm Coker at Woodcutts, to be left at Cashmoor Inn, nr Salisbury turnpike, 18 July 1801

visit to Bristol. Again, the money went through JPP, who noted that his aunt Coker stood 'in much need of it'.³⁸²

What lay at the root of the Cokers' ongoing financial distress? Unlike the Weekeses, they did not appear to have lived extravagantly (JPP would certainly have remarked on that), but it seems that William Coker did not possess the ability to put his mind to business in the same resolute way that characterised his nephew's business dealings. And his timing had been unfortunate; he had invested heavily in his first major business venture when planters were short of finance, leaving him to absorb many bad debts. To collect the monies outstanding he had to depend on attorneys – first JPP and then the increasingly unreliable James Williams – but relying on others was not the same as being on the spot and being able to pursue and press debtors in person. His Nevis venture had turned into a costly failure. In addition, Coker may also have spent money on improving Woodcuts; the fact that the Manor Farm has an extension said to date from the later eighteenth century³⁸³ would suggest that he was prepared to invest in the estate. At least his family was small and, as the Cokers had no daughters, he did not have to provide dowries but sending his son to university at Oxford would have been a considerable financial burden. Coker may have kept William Young short of funds, or his son may have been profligate but after finishing his studies, he was also in debt.³⁸⁴ William Young had angered JPP by sending him a hotel bill from Weymouth, where he had stayed after his ordination,³⁸⁵ and, intriguingly, on another trip to the seaside the by then married Revd Coker had asked one of his uncles to lend him £5 '(unknown to any body)'.³⁸⁶

During his last visit to Nevis William Coker may possibly have succeeded in laying claim to property that had belonged to William Burt Weekes because Coker appears to have had a stake in two of the mulatto boys who, with their mothers, had been with the Cokers in the 1780s. Ann Weekes, Mrs Coker's sister who had died in 1800, had also left one of the boys in her will but then, before she died, had made him over to his father. It is very difficult to verify who actually owned the boys because of the internal dealings within the family: between William Burt Weekes and his son Thomas Pym, and between William Burt's sisters, Elizabeth, Ann and Jane Weekes - The Ladies at the Cedar Trees. Among family members many a deal would not necessarily have been officially recorded but would have been settled by verbal agreement or home-made contract, and the exact details of the transactions are lost. While the six individuals had originally belonged to Elizabeth Weekes, one of the women, Louisa, had been among a group of nine whom William Burt sold, together with land in Charlestown, to a partnership made up of his son Thomas Pym, of JPP's son Azariah Pinney and of JPP's business partner, James Tobin.³⁸⁷ Louisa's son Josiah, however, was not in this group, nor was the third woman, Polly. When in March 1802 Coker asked his attorney in Nevis, James Williams, about 'the two mulatto boys',³⁸⁸ he appears to have had the right to sell them because at the beginning of September Williams, in his role as Coker's attorney, sold one of them, Tom Phillips. He was sold to George Abbott for N£33 and freed by this man a few months later.³⁸⁹ The second mulatto boy Coker enquired about, Jack Abbott, had already been transferred by Ann Weekes to George Abbott, his father,³⁹⁰ and Ann Weekes had also previously freed the boys' mother, Patty. Patty had, in the meantime, come into Thomas Pym Weekes's possession but, before going to Martinique, he had

³⁸² PP, LB 16: JPP, Bristol, to Ann Weekes, Nevis, 26 November 1800

³⁸³ RCHME *An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset* Vol 5, East Dorset

³⁸⁴ PP, LB 8: JPP to WB Weekes, 14 July 1788

³⁸⁵ PP, LB 9: JPP to Wm Coker, Nevis, 28 August 1788

³⁸⁶ DHC, D66/12: WY Coker, Dawlish, to 'Uncle' [Ridout or Dredge], 3 October 1796

³⁸⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797

³⁸⁸ PP, LB 17: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 6 March 1802

³⁸⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1801-1803 ff516-17

³⁹⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1799-1801 ff112-14 (Courtesy of Michelle Terrelle)

Jack Abbott was included among the people left in Ann Weekes's will which was made before the transfer. His removal was not covered in the codicil.

sold her for N£125 back to his aunt Ann Weekes.³⁹¹ After Ann Weekes had freed Patty, she became known as Patty Weekes and lived in one of JPP's houses in Charlestown.³⁹²

This letter of Coker's enquiring about the two mulatto boys is the last written record of him that is known to exist. Written in March 1802, by then his trembling handwriting had become more feeble still, and he had probably suffered from ill health for some time. Aged 75, William Coker died on or just before 16 February 1804³⁹³ and was buried on 20 February at Langton Long in Dorset.³⁹⁴ Standing by his uncle's graveside, perhaps JPP remembered somewhat guiltily what he had written in the days following Coker's 'vile management': 'such ingratitude I never before experienced after I have done for him and his family, more than ever his father did, and may the Lord reward him, not according to his merits, but agreeable to His Divine Grace and Mercy.'³⁹⁵

After William Coker's death

Coker had died intestate and his widow renounced her right to inherit. There was nothing to gain but debts. Her husband had left no assets to speak of; the total value of his 'goods, chattels and credits' amounted to less than £100.³⁹⁶

Mrs Coker's income would have been small and any money that came to her from Nevis was a welcome addition. On her sister Ann's death, she and the only remaining Lady at the Cedar Trees, Jenny Weekes, had each inherited a half but most of Ann's enslaved people were to be held in trust until Thomas Pym Weekes's sons came of age. The most immediate benefit to Mrs Coker had been her share of the profits from the sale of furniture and a few of the people but, as often was the case in Nevis, the furniture did not amount to much: a bedstead and two beds, two bolsters, four pillows, and a mahogany dressing table. The humans were the valuable possessions but, once again, their transfer was not straightforward; Mrs Coker's nephew Charles Ellery, who had witnessed Ann Weekes's original will, in an unusual codicil to that will swore that two of the people were intended to be sold to William Slater for N£150. In fact Slater bought three: the black woman Moll for N£40,³⁹⁷ and the mulatto woman Fanny Chissers and her daughter Nancy for the supposedly agreed sum of N£150.³⁹⁸

Mrs Coker's home had only been secure as long as her husband lived. She had to leave Woodcutts, which was sold,³⁹⁹ and she moved in with her son and his family. Revd Coker, too, was indebted to the House of Pinney. He and his wife had taken out a mortgage for £3,700⁴⁰⁰ and, presumably connected with this, some time before 1799 Revd Coker and his family had left Naish House and had moved to Taunton, a market town south of Bristol. From there they had probably gone to nearby Allerford to rent a house owned by the Earl of Stafford.⁴⁰¹ Through Stafford's wife Revd Coker had previously solicited the Earl's support, and from her favourable reply it is apparent that the Staffords knew not only the young Cokers but also Coker senior and his wife.⁴⁰²

³⁹¹ ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 f173 and f175

³⁹² PP, AB 47 Patty Weekes a/c

³⁹³ PP, LB 18: JPP to JF Pinney, 16 February 1804

³⁹⁴ DHC, PE/LAL:RE1/2 mf MIC/R/560 Langton Long Christenings and Burials 1725-1812

William Coker's burial was six days short of 75 years from the day of his baptism.

³⁹⁵ PP, LB 10: JPP, Bristol, to Azariah Pinney at Messrs Bethman, Francfort (sic), 13 June 1791

³⁹⁶ DHC, R/276, 1804 No 12 Wm Coker's Administration, and Administration Notes

³⁹⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1801-1803 ff276-77

³⁹⁸ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff368-74 and CR 1794-1797 f495

Given her purchase price of N£40, the black woman Moll may well have been elderly. It is possible that she was the mother of the mulatto woman Fanny Chissers (also spelt Chizzers).

³⁹⁹ According to one source, Woodcutts was afterwards purchased by John Waddington, who was proprietor in 1810. By 1869 the property belonged to Lord Rivers (Hutchins, John *The History and Antiquities of Dorset* Vol 3 p545). The Coker family tree, however, states that Woodcutts was sold to Lord Rivers in 1805 (DHC, D66/14). Today the house and farm are part of the Pitt-Rivers Estate.

⁴⁰⁰ PP, Dom Box K1

⁴⁰¹ GA, D1571/F845: Earl of Stafford, 21 Portman Square, to Revd WY Coker, Taunton, 7 June 1799

⁴⁰² GA, D1571/F845: Lady Stafford, Barnsley, to Revd WY Coker, Naish House, 15 July 1793

The house Revd Coker sought to rent was typical of the sort of accommodation a well-to-do gentleman would have lived in – roomy and comfortable but not ostentatious. It consisted of a small dining parlour, a drawing room, a butler's pantry behind the drawing room, a small back sitting room and four bedrooms. There was a kitchen each at the front and at the back, cellars, a pantry on the ground floor, and sheds for wood and coal in the back yard, a small garden, a coach house and two small fields for pasture. A maid servant occupied a small bedroom over the pantry and other servants would have lived in the garrets above, but it is not known whom the Cokers employed. At Naish House they had at least two servants, James and Hook,⁴⁰³ but there would have been additional female staff to look after the growing number of children. When Revd Coker enquired about the house at Allerford, he had two children, Mary Frances and Walter King; in October 1802 another son was born, William Worthington, and in March 1804 another daughter, Elizabeth Sarah.⁴⁰⁴ The girl died, aged seven months and was buried in Taunton,⁴⁰⁵ to where Revd Coker had by then returned, and that was where his widowed mother came to live with him and his family.⁴⁰⁶ For the remaining years of her life Mrs Coker was to move several more times, starting with a brief stay at Blandford in 1807,⁴⁰⁷ but by 1808 her son and his family had returned to Taunton. There his son Worthington was publicly baptised,⁴⁰⁸ having been privately baptised on the day he was born (like all of Revd Coker's children). William Worthington Coker became known as 'Worthington' – unless the Pinneys mixed him up with his brother, in which case he became 'Walter' – and, for ease of reference, from now on his first name will be dropped and Revd Coker's youngest son will be called Worthington.

Widow Coker would not have been isolated in Taunton; there were others with Nevis connections although one of them, the widow Judith Butler Dunbar, had died in the same year Mrs Coker lost her husband. Mrs Dunbar mostly lived in London but was buried in Taunton; on her death, JPP arranged for her funeral in her vault in Bishops Hull in Taunton⁴⁰⁹ and invited Revd Coker to attend as a mourner.⁴¹⁰ A decade earlier another man from Nevis had been buried in the cemetery at the parish church in Bishops Hull, the planter John Williams. Both Mrs Dunbar and John Williams would have been in contact with William Mills, who also lived in Bishops Hull. In a hot house Mills grew pineapples sent as slips from Nevis,⁴¹¹ and no doubt, at some stage Widow Coker would have been invited to partake in these. Although, in a Nevis context, her marriage to a plantation manager - rather than an owner - placed her in a lower class than the plantation-owning Millses, her being from a respectable Nevis family would have outweighed this inferiority. Additionally, in a British context, her husband had been a land-owning gentleman, and she was therefore a social equal of people like the Dunbars and the Millses. If she did not know of their existence - Taunton was a fair-sized town with a population of nearly 6,000 - the Pinneys would have made the necessary introductions. A nephew of William Mills's, John Colhoun Mills, became JPP's attorney,⁴¹² replacing JPP's former attorney John Taylor.⁴¹³ Taylor was also an acquaintance of William Mills's. Through John Colhoun Mills's marriage to Anne Maynard⁴¹⁴ the Millses were also connected to the Maynards of Nevis so that news from the goings-on in Nevis would have reached Mrs Coker from a number of local social contacts and their visitors.

In 1812, Taunton inhabitants rioted over the high price of potatoes and a local vicar bought a large quantity of rice to sell to the poor at cost price.⁴¹⁵ In the same year the opening of a new hospital was

⁴⁰³ PP, AB 41 WY Coker's a/c

⁴⁰⁴ GA, 1571/F835

⁴⁰⁵ <http://www.wsom.org.uk/Registers/TNSJBur17951812.htm>

⁴⁰⁶ PP, LB 19: JPP to Revd WY Coker Taunton, 21 July 1805

⁴⁰⁷ <http://www.thedorsetpage.com/Genealogy/info/dorset1.txt>

⁴⁰⁸ SRO, St James Parish Baptisms 1769-1812

⁴⁰⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1777-1778 f138, and PP, LB 18: JPP, London, to James Tobin, 4 August 1804, and JPP to Badcock & Co, Taunton, 4 August 1804; also SRO, D/P/b.hl 2/1/6 Taunton Burials

⁴¹⁰ PP, LB 18: JPP, London, to WY Coker, 9 August 1804

⁴¹¹ SRO, DD\BR\bs/6: JC Mills to Wm Mills, Bishops Hull, 28 July 1801

⁴¹² PP, LB 18: JPP to JC Mills, Nevis, 5 June 1804

⁴¹³ SRO, DD\BR\bs/6: JC Mills, Nevis, to Wm Mills, 12 September 1798

⁴¹⁴ NHCS, GE/MI Maynard Family Tree

⁴¹⁵ Bush, Robin A *Taunton Diary 1787-1987* p22

celebrated with a dinner and ball,⁴¹⁶ to which Revd Coker contributed a pipe of Madeira wine he had ordered from the House of Pinney.⁴¹⁷ Revd Coker had already donated money to the project and he became a member of the Hospital Committee,⁴¹⁸ thereby adding to his other offices of Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant for the county of Somerset. He was a prominent man in the town⁴¹⁹ and just the sort of person to be called upon to join others in signing a letter of support. It was rumoured that Brickdale's Taunton Old Bank, one of the major local institutions, was on the verge of bankruptcy, and Revd Coker and several other local worthies publicly declared their confidence in the business. Brickdale's, however, did go bankrupt.⁴²⁰ Some years earlier Revd Coker's wife may have benefited from the sale of property in Bristol that had previously belonged to the King family⁴²¹ but if the couple received money and invested it in Brickdale's, they would have suffered severe losses.

1812 was also the year Mrs Coker's one remaining sister died. Jane Weekes, the last of The Ladies at the Cedar Trees, left her some items, family heirlooms perhaps: a table, tea spoons and a ladle, all made of silver. Other people got clothes, items of furniture, some money, and Mrs Coker shared the rest with her three great-nephews, Thomas Pym Weekes's two sons and the only surviving of Betsey and Charles Ellery's children, William Young Coker Ellery.⁴²² Any hire payments Mrs Coker may have received from the remaining Cedar Tree workers ceased because Thomas Pym Weekes's sons had come off age by the time Jane Weekes died. One of the great-nephews, William Burt Weeks, now served as a Lieutenant in the Navy, the other, Thomas Pym Weekes, had gone to work in India.

Of Mrs Coker's grandchildren, her oldest grandson, Walter King Coker, studied at Oxford, gained his Masters degree in 1818,⁴²³ and like his father, his uncle and his grandfather before him, entered into the services of the Church. His first, brief posting was as a curate at St George's church in Ruishton, just east of Taunton,⁴²⁴ but he soon was in charge of his own parish, Hemyock, a few kilometres south-east of Taunton. Situated in a pretty valley in the Blackdown Hills, Hemyock was a fair-sized village that until the early 1800s had derived much of its wealth from producing wool.⁴²⁵ However, by the time Walter King Coker took up his position, the parish appears to have become burdened with a number of poor people.⁴²⁶ Accommodation was provided for him, and his family moved with him into the Parsonage at Hemyock: his parents, his brother Worthington and his sister Mary Frances, his grandmother - Mrs Coker - and a woman whom Mrs Coker's grandchildren called 'cousin' but who actually appears to have been a cousin of Revd William Young Coker's wife Elizabeth King. One of the Gloucestershire Kings from Wickwar, this woman was also called Elizabeth King and had always lived with Revd William Young Coker's wife.

Mrs Coker's granddaughter Mary Frances soon got married and moved to her husband's village, North Curry, which lies ten kilometres north-east of Taunton. Her brother, Mrs Coker's youngest grandson, Worthington, was sent to school in Paris. With a very neat hand this boy wrote delightful letters to his family back home. He reported that he did well in arithmetic and algebra, learnt French but wanted to switch to German (mindful of the additional cost, he pointed out that the German master would charge the same) but when told to keep on studying French he proposed giving up his English

⁴¹⁶ <http://www.paulhyb.homecall.co.uk/news/TAUN1812.HTM>

⁴¹⁷ PP, LB 50: P & A to Revd WY Coker, Taunton, 23 November 1812

⁴¹⁸ <http://freespace.virgin.net/paul.mansfield1/taun11af.txt> and <http://freespace.virgin.net/paul.mansfield1/taun12af.txt>

⁴¹⁹ DHC, D/66/14

⁴²⁰ Bush, Robin A *Taunton Diary 1787-1987* p24

⁴²¹ BRO, 00744(1), 00744(2)a and (00744(2)f

⁴²² ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1805-1818 ff233-35

⁴²³ Foster, Joseph (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses*

⁴²⁴ SRO, D/D/BO Card Index of Persons

⁴²⁵ http://www.hemyock.org/About_Hemyock.htm

⁴²⁶ Not long after his appointment, the Minister for Hemyock, Walter King Coker, made representation concerning James Thomas, a parishioner who was about to sail to South Africa with the intention of settling there. Thomas had left a wife and five children whom the parish had to support '... but this parish is at present so burdened with poor that any addition is of course a matter of moment', and Coker asked whether steps could be taken to prevent James Thomas from leaving England (<http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/south-africa-eastern-cape/2006-06/1149878464> South African settler correspondence transcribed by Sue Mackay from National Archives, CO 48/42, quoting Walter King Coker, Hemyock Parsonage, 16 December 1819).

lessons instead. He enjoyed a cultured social life in Paris, saw plays, admired pictures, visited Versailles⁴²⁷ but was also confronted with the political upheavals of the day. Casually he reported back to Hemyock that 'Louvel the assassin of the Due de Berri was guillotined the other day and Mr Woodford was, as you may easily suppose, present at the ceremony.' Young Worthington delighted in understatement and commented that there was 'Nothing but a little rioting.'⁴²⁸

When Worthington was in Paris, JPP's son John Frederick visited the city with his family, and 'Colonel Pinney' not only offered to forward his letters free of postage, but also invited Worthington to call on them.⁴²⁹ He did, indeed, dine with the Pinneys but shortly afterwards they left for London to share in the excitement of the coronation of the new king, William IV.⁴³⁰ Worthington Coker was sociable and made friends with other English people, Mr Woodford, Mr Tucker, and Mrs Yea, who 'left invitation for breakfast', but when he wrote that Mr Tucker was tired of Paris and the food - 'longing for boiled neck of mutton and potatoes' - he appears to have expressed his own homesickness.⁴³¹ A warm-hearted, bright youngster, he always asked his correspondents to pass on his 'kindest love' to everyone - Granny, 'my cousin' and 'all at Hemyock', 'not forgetting Bidy and Smut and all the pets'.

While one grandson of Mrs Coker's was in Paris, finishing off his education as a gentleman, the other, Walter King, received a new appointment as vicar.⁴³² This meant Mrs Coker had to move one more time. The imposing parish church to which Mrs Coker's grandson was appointed is known as the 'Cathedral of the Moors' and can be seen from afar; the village of North Curry stands on a broad ridge above the Somerset Levels and the Sedgemoor plains. North Curry, too, had prospered from the wool trade and was also a centre of the willow industry. Used primarily for basket-making, withies (young willow stems) had begun to be grown commercially at the turn of the century. Revd Walter King Coker's ministry covered five parishes inhabited by about 3,800 people. Of those about 1,600 lived in North Curry (the previous village, Hemyock, had about 600 fewer).⁴³³ He joined a thriving community. In the past twenty years before his arrival in North Curry, the village had grown by about a third, with almost two thirds of the 323 families being employed in agriculture.⁴³⁴ Although both of Revd Coker's postings were to agricultural and rural communities, North Curry was a little grander and livelier than Hemyock and counted many wealthy people among its inhabitants: yeomen and professional people like surgeons and lawyers.⁴³⁵ With goods and services being transported along the nearby river Tone, it had long been a busy trading centre, and each September a big, two-day-long stock fair attracted crowds of farmers, traders and revellers from far and wide.

The vicar's post had fallen vacant on the premature death of the previous incumbent.⁴³⁶ The living was discharged by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and it is almost certain that the impropiator, the man who received the tithe from the parishioners, had lobbied the Bishop on Walter King Coker's behalf. This man, Charles Holcombe Dare of North Curry,⁴³⁷ had become his brother-in-law, having married Walter's sister Mary Frances.

Moving to North Curry meant that the family was united once more. By then Mrs Mary Frances Dare's first child (Mrs Coker's first great-grandchild) had been born. Charles William Dare had been baptised in April 1820 by the previous vicar, shortly before Revd Coker took up his post, but when Mrs Coker's

⁴²⁷ GA, D1571/F845: William Worthington Coker, Paris, to Mrs C H Dare, North Curry, 18 June 1820

⁴²⁸ DHC, D66/12: William W Coker, Paris, to Revd Walter King Coker, Hemyock Parsonage, 25 April 1820

⁴²⁹ GA, D1571/F845: William W Coker, Paris, to Mrs CH Dare, Parsonage House, North Curry, 10 February 1820

⁴³⁰ DHC, D66/12: William W Coker, Paris, to Revd Walter King Coker, Hemyock Parsonage, 25 April 1820

⁴³¹ GA, D1571/F845: William Worthington Coker, Paris, to Mrs C H Dare, North Curry, 18 June 1820

⁴³² SRO, D/D/B Bishops Register 1802-1824 No 33 f171

⁴³³ Until the Second World War, Hemyock's population had remained fairly constant but since then a number of housing estates have been built and the population has increased to over 2,000 (http://www.hemyock.org/About_Hemyock.htm); North Curry had in 1850 1,222 inhabitants (*White's Devonshire Directory*).

⁴³⁴ Dix, Angela *North Curry – a Place in History* p201

⁴³⁵ *General Directory of the County of Somerset* printed by William Bragg, Taunton 1840

⁴³⁶ SRO, D/D/B Bishops Register 1802-1824 No 33 f171

⁴³⁷ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=50911>

second great-grandchild, Walter, was due to be baptised the following year, Revd Coker could perform the ceremony.⁴³⁸ Mary Frances Dare and her growing family lived just round the corner from the vicarage at the Manor House, a substantial three-bayed dwelling that her husband had built not long before they got married. Charles Holcombe Dare's family had been in North Curry since at least the early 1700s and he had inherited the land on which the Manor House stood. He was a substantial landowner and also a farmer,⁴³⁹ and through him the Cokers had an easy entry into village life and immediate access to the gentlefolk in the area. Mrs Coker, who some years earlier had been ill,⁴⁴⁰ also enjoyed the company of 'cousin' Elizabeth King and of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and during the last few years of her life in North Curry all manner of family affairs would have kept her busy.

Frances Coker died on 15 January 1823 at the age of 88. Unusually for the time, she was cremated and her ashes deposited in the Lady's Chapel in the parish church of St Peter and St Paul. In her memory, her family erected a plain plaque but no mention was made of her West Indian origin.⁴⁴¹ A widow for nineteen years, Mrs Coker had lived in England exactly half her life and her creole origin was no longer of importance.

Mrs Coker had outlived her brother, her three sisters, and her husband. Throughout her married life, three generations of her family had been in debt to the Pinneys: first her husband, then her husband together with her son, and then her son together with her daughter-in-law and her grandson. Compared to old Coker, her son's and grandson's debts to the Pinneys had been small – hundreds rather than thousands of pounds – but, as had been the case with the loan to old Coker, the interest on unpaid sums soon added up,⁴⁴² and, again, as had been the case with old Coker, ultimately ended with the sale of an estate. The debt to the Pinneys was only part of the problem; William Young Coker, together with his wife and son, had also borrowed large sums of money against the Naish Estate from others, £7,500 in total.⁴⁴³ Unable to keep up payments, Revd William Young Coker informed the House that Mr James Adam Gordon had contracted to buy the estate that had come to him from his wife's family, and that he would settle his debts to the Pinneys from its sale.⁴⁴⁴

Revd Coker's debts to the House alone would not have warranted the sale; his problem were the other financial commitments. Not much is known about his West Indian business affairs except that he had interests in plantations in St Kitts, in Nevis and in Trinidad – the House assumed he would discharge his debt from monies due from Mr Span's estate in Trinidad. This reference to Mr Span's estate was the only one, and only a few sketchy records exist of his concern with the plantation in Nevis, the former Windmill and Parsons estates that became known as Colhoun's.⁴⁴⁵ It involved

⁴³⁸ SRO, D/P/cur.n.2/1/7 North Curry Baptisms 1813-1837

⁴³⁹ Charles Holcombe Dare was mentioned a various documents relating to landownership or the leasing of land, among them East Curry Manor in Curry Moor's Mead; North Curry Parish and Manor; Curry Moor's Close and Sunny Hill; land in Welsh Hatch; two cottages; land on Tindon Hill and Westhatch Parsonage (<http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/DARE/2002-04/1018155069>).

⁴⁴⁰ PP, Dom Box C1-2: Charles Pinney to Revd Coker, ?Granion Street, Taunton, 7 May 1816

⁴⁴¹ St Peter and St Paul Parish church, North Curry, memorial tablet in the Lady's Chapel; also SRO, D/P/curr.n 2/1/8 North Curry Burials 1813-1868

Cremation, although an ancient way of disposing of bodies, used to be seen by Christians as a way of denying the resurrection. In modern times it became popular when one of Queen Victoria's physicians advocated it as a hygienic, space-saving method of disposal of the dead. Sometimes cremation was linked to incurable diseases.

⁴⁴² PP, LB 57: PA & Co to Revd WY Coker, Hemyock, nr Wellington, several dates until 24 June 1822, and LB 57: PA & Co to Revd WK Coker, North Curry, 31 October 1823, and several dates

⁴⁴³ SRO, Gordon Papers, DD/PN Bundle 2 No 24: Appointment by way of a Mortgage of Naish House and Lands; DD/PN Bundle 2 No 25: Surcharge and Release and Conveyance by way of a Mortgage; DD/PN Bundle 2: No 27: Confirmation of a Mortgage in fee of Naish House and Lands

⁴⁴⁴ PP, LB 56: Revd WY Coker, North Curry, to PA & Co, 5 November 1823, and LB 59: PA & Co to WY Coker, North Curry, 31 July 1824

According to the Coker family tree, Naish was sold in 1823 (DHC, D66/12 Copy of Pedigree of ... Etchyngham) but the documents confirming its sale date from 1825 (SRO, Gordon Papers, DD/PN Bundle 3, Numbers 28-31).

⁴⁴⁵ In a document dated 8 March 1822, Mr Williams sought legal opinion from Robert Claxton regarding Windmill and Parsons estates then known as Colhoun's, which Williams's father John Williams had purchased in about 1769 (PP, WI Box 1820-1822). Sarah Williams of Taunton was also mentioned in a document indexed as 'WY Coker to Robert Claxton' (ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f276). Mr Span was either John or Samuel, a son of Samuel Span, a Bristol businessman who had owned a

Robert Claxton, Francis and Sarah Williams of Taunton and Sarah Williams's marriage to John Brown of Nevis,⁴⁴⁶ but it appears that Revd Coker's concern in Colhoun's was only peripheral. His involvement with the St Kitts plantation apparently went back to his father who had been a trustee in a mortgage. In addition, he may have held lands in Kentucky which he would have come to him through his wife from his father-in-law.⁴⁴⁷

His mother had died without making a will and perhaps reminded of his own mortality, within a few months of her death, Revd William Young Coker drew up a memorandum. People usually wrote their wills before they set off on long, hazardous journeys, or when they were about to die but, although he may have been ill, he was not close to death. The memorandum was meant to serve as a substitute for a will and put in place 'in case it should please God to deprive me of life before I may make over'. Recognising 'the very great sacrifices' his 'affectionate and beloved son Walter King Coker' had made and the money he had advanced him, William Young Coker left whatever he might possess at his death to his elder son while expressing his 'equal affection' for his 'other beloved children'. The memorandum was short; it appears he had nothing else to bequeath.⁴⁴⁸ Within two years of setting out his last wishes, Revd William Young Coker died, almost certainly after a brief illness.⁴⁴⁹ The *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* noted his passing: 'Died on the 26th June [1825], at North Curry, the Revd WY Coker, whose generous disposition and integrity as a magistrate obtained him universal respect.'⁴⁵⁰ In the Lady's Chapel a memorial tablet crowned with the Coker family arms was placed below his mother's.

After William Young Coker's death, there was still some old business outstanding.⁴⁵¹ One matter concerned the estate on St Kitts at Trinity Palmetto Point, which Walter King and Worthington's grandfather William Coker had briefly leased with JPP and Webbe Hobson. Previously called Garnett's and then West Farm, William Coker had been a trustee in a mortgage on that estate,⁴⁵² which in the intervening years had been occupied by a succession of five gentlemen.⁴⁵³ JPP had bought the mortgage and after his death in 1818, his sons had the right to receive the money due on the mortgaged property. So that they could foreclose and sell, John Frederick and Charles Pinney needed the consent of all the parties concerned. Walter King Coker did agree to the sale and duly appointed as his attorneys John Colhoun Mills and George Clarke Forbes.⁴⁵⁴ But others were involved as well and the case went to court in St Kitts until, eventually, the Pinneys managed to sell West Farm.⁴⁵⁵ One further item of business concerned William Young Coker's life insurance for which the House had advanced the money. By December 1826 all claims were finally settled and thereby ended five decades of the Cokers' financial dependency on the Pinneys.⁴⁵⁶

very large plantation on Union Island in the Grenadines (See also Kenneth Morgan 'Bristol West India Merchants in the Eighteenth Century' and UKNA, T 71/495 and T 71/496).

⁴⁴⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f329, f276 and ff709-15 Marriage Settlement

⁴⁴⁷ Two years after his death, William Young Coker's son Walter King Coker tried to get 'something for lands in Kentucky'. He contacted the descendant of the company to whom Walter King had given power of attorney. No further details are known (<http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/> 'Virginia Gazette' 4 March 1773 p3 and <http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaead/published/lva/vi00516.xml> 'A Guide to the Tazewell Family Papers, 1623-1930, Accession Number 24194, A Collection in the Library of Virginia' Box 6 Folder 2: Walter King Coker to Littleton Waller Tazewell, 20 June 1827. Website visited 18 May 2015).

⁴⁴⁸ UKNA, PROB 11/1721

⁴⁴⁹ SRO, D/P/curr.n 2/1/8 North Curry Burials 1813-1868

⁴⁵⁰ <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~dutilleu/ZOtherPapers/S&WJJul41825.html>

⁴⁵¹ PP, LB 28: JPP to George Clare Forbes, 44 Bath-wick Street, Bath, 22 October 1825

⁴⁵² PP, Dom Box Q: Webbe Hobson to William Coker, 20 August 1787

⁴⁵³ Pares, Richard A *West India Fortune* pp307-08; also PP, Dom Box C1-4: John Woodley, St Kitts, to JF Pinney and Charles Pinney, 4 July 1818, and Dom Box C1-4: James T Sharry, St Kitts, to JF Pinney and Charles Pinney, 5 September 1818

⁴⁵⁴ PP, WI Box 1823-1825: Unnumbered item

⁴⁵⁵ Pares, Richard A *West India Fortune* p299, p313, p315, and p317; also PP, LB 60: JC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 11 February 1826, LB 59: PA & Co to GC Forbes, 31 October 1826, LB 59: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis 4 November 1826, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, 6 February 1827, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 12 May 1827, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, Nevis, 18 July 1827 and PA & Co to Richard Hart Davis MP, 17 September 1827; AB 76 PA & Co a/c; Dom Box L1-6: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs John Frederick Pinney, 5 December 1829, AB 76: 11 October 1831 and Slave Compensation in Dom Box R-6: Compensation File; also DM 1705, Pares Notes mf pp1532-550, quoting UKNA, T 71/1237, 1039, 1295, 1301, 1261, 1266, 1225, 1227, 1340, 1369, 1038; HoCAaP 1837-1838, vol. xlviii

⁴⁵⁶ PP, LB 59: PA & Co to Richard Meade Solicitor, Taunton, 16 December 1826

In 1797, shortly before he and his family moved to Taunton, William Young Coker had written an angry letter to his godfather, most likely about the sale of Woodcutts. This had hurt JPP⁴⁵⁷ but the two men appear to have been reconciled although, at times, William Young Coker's relationship with the Pinneys was tense, formal and very business-like. Coker's children and JPP's children, however, generally were on warm, friendly terms. Charles Pinney, Mary Frances and Walter King Coker were of similar age and too young to remember anything of the quarrels between JPP and their grandfather while the other Pinney children, John Frederick, Betsey and Mary, were considerably older and already married with children of their own when the last Coker child, Worthington, was born. Regardless of differences in the generations, all the Coker children appear to have been well regarded by all members of the Pinney family. Revd Walter King Coker stayed with Charles on a visit to Bristol,⁴⁵⁸ and the two Coker brothers Walter King and Worthington attended the marriage at Somerton of John Frederick's daughter, Frances.⁴⁵⁹ Their sister Mary Frances Dare seems to have accompanied Mrs P on some of her travels,⁴⁶⁰ and Mrs John Frederick Pinney enquired most kindly after the young woman.⁴⁶¹ Mary Frances's relationship with Charles was such that she could lobby him for a position for 'cousin' Elizabeth King's brother John. An unemployed former prisoner in France, John King lived in Bristol and sought employment on one of the Pinney ships, and Mary Frances obliged him with an introduction to Charles Pinney.⁴⁶² Her father had already asked Charles to help another unemployed brother of 'cousin' Betsey King's, Walter.⁴⁶³

Mrs John Frederick Pinney took a particular interest in Worthington Coker. They had met in Paris (if not before and after) and when he sought a position in Mauritius, she used her contacts in political circles to solicit interest on his behalf. But his plans were dashed by a change in government and the appointment of a new Colonial Secretary – according to Mrs Pinney a Scot 'who won't promise anything'.⁴⁶⁴ 'Poor Coker', 'totally deprived of all hopes of getting a situation he was so long waiting for',⁴⁶⁵ 'could not live any longer at North Curry in total idleness'.⁴⁶⁶ Worthington Coker was bored at home and, above all, he wanted to be useful. After his time in Paris, North Curry must have seemed stifling and village life terribly parochial. The vicarage had become quiet; now there was only his mother, 'cousin' Betsey King, a spinster in her late fifties, and his brother, who was approaching middle age and whose ecclesiastical duties kept him occupied. Their sister Mary Frances led a busy life as the wife of farmer Dare and as the mother of four children. She had had two more in the intervening years: Frances Emma Coker Dare was baptised in December 1825 and the last, Edmund, in October 1828.⁴⁶⁷ While his siblings had their roles, Worthington remained idle. He went hunting but fell foul of the property qualifications and was summoned for illegally keeping a lurcher dog and a gun.⁴⁶⁸ It was Mrs John Frederick Pinney who suggested he went to the West Indies as an overseer of a plantation. It was the sort of place where 'a man of integrity would not be thrown away'.⁴⁶⁹

In the autumn of 1829 Worthington Coker left England. Charles Pinney had gone to Nevis the year before and was still out there, and Nevis was where Worthington was headed. He sailed on the *Earl of Liverpool*.⁴⁷⁰ Sea travel was still a dangerous undertaking, and to calm the fears of passengers

⁴⁵⁷ PP, LB 12: JPP to William Young Coker, Naish House, 5 November 1797

⁴⁵⁸ PP, LB 28: Charles Pinney to Revd K Coker, 24 December 1826

⁴⁵⁹ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mrs John Frederick Pinney to Charles Pinney, 22 November 1828

⁴⁶⁰ PP, Dom Box C1-3: JF Pinney to Charles Pinney, 22 May 1817

⁴⁶¹ GA, D1571/F845: William W Coker, Paris, to Mrs CH Dare, Parsonage House, North Curry, 10 February 1820

⁴⁶² PP, Dom Box C1-7: Mary Frances Dare, North Curry, to Charles Pinney, 19 July 1821

⁴⁶³ PP, Dom Box C1-2: Revd W Y Coker, Taunton, to Charles Pinney, 6 May 1816

⁴⁶⁴ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mrs John Frederick Pinney to Charles Pinney, 15 July 1828

⁴⁶⁵ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mrs John Frederick Pinney to Charles Pinney, 1 October 1828

⁴⁶⁶ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mrs (JF) Pinney to Mary Ames, 1 November 1829

⁴⁶⁷ SRO, D/P/cur.n.2/1/7 North Curry Baptisms 1813-1837

⁴⁶⁸ PP, MSS in Red Boxes, Box 35: Summons

At some stage Worthington Coker acquired six acres of land in the parish of North Curry, which was occupied by a man called William Bartlett (SRO, D/D/Rt/A/365 Summary in the 'Commutation of Tithes in North Curry', 16 May 1840).

⁴⁶⁹ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mrs John Frederick Pinney to Charles Pinney (Nevis), 1 October 1828

⁴⁷⁰ PP, Dom Box C2-13: RE Case to Charles Pinney, 23 October 1829

afraid of pirates, the ship had recently been fitted with four old guns from another Pinney ship.⁴⁷¹ Of course not all vessels would have had black seamen but one of the two 'sailor negroes' Charles Pinney had acquired earlier that year - ⁴⁷² either Pallas or Fame – worked aboard the *Earl of Liverpool* until both men were attached to Clarke's Estate.⁴⁷³ On 19 November the ship was off Lundy in company of two other Pinney vessels, enjoying a fine leading wind,⁴⁷⁴ and on New Year's Day 1830 Charles could report that 'poor Worthington Coker arrived safely'.⁴⁷⁵ When he got there, the hopeful young man found that in Nevis there was 'no prospect of his doing anything as a planter'.⁴⁷⁶

He probably stayed with Peter Thomas Huggins and his family on Mountravers, the place where his grandfather had been employed and dismissed, but the Nevis that Worthington Coker saw was not the Nevis his grandfather had known seventy, or even forty years earlier. Enslaved people were baptised and married in church; some children went to school. Several free mixed-race men worked in the merchant houses as writing clerks, others were employed as overseers, occasionally even as managers. And - unheard of in the eighteenth century - a manager, an Englishman, was to be tried for the murder and manslaughter of enslaved people who, in certain cases, could now testify in court against white people. Worthington Coker's month in Nevis must have opened his eyes to the reality of working in the West Indies.

The Pinneys had discussed where to employ 'poor Coker'. In Nevis, the only mortgaged estate where they could have given him a berth was on Tobin's troubled Stoney Grove estate.⁴⁷⁷ But the manager, Henry Ransford, already had a capable mixed-race overseer working for him. John Frederick Pinney had suggested placing Worthington as overseer on Parsons Estate in Montserrat⁴⁷⁸ and his wife had suggested St Croix,⁴⁷⁹ and although Charles also considered the Montserrat option,⁴⁸⁰ he agreed with Mrs John Frederick Pinney that Worthington should go to St Croix 'where he could learn a more improved system of agriculture'.⁴⁸¹ Charles had recently inspected the mortgaged estates there⁴⁸² and held out the prospect of promotion: 'If he does well he can manage one of the estates and perhaps also be an attorney.'⁴⁸³

Worthington Coker's arrival in St Croix and his first week there are well documented. He landed at the West End at daybreak on Friday, 29 January. The Pinneys' attorney Guysbert Behagen met him and introduced him to a Mr McCaul who invited him to Cane Valley estate for the night. The next morning Coker went on to Christiansted. Behagen received him 'very kindly, and he stayed with Behagen until Monday when he was taken to the plantation he was to work on, Peter's Rest. Coker was satisfied and felt 'very comfortable' in his new surroundings: he had a house to himself, 'a boy and a woman to wait, wash, etc', a mule to ride on the estate and a horse he could borrow for outings further afield. In addition to free board and washing he was paid £45 a year. His initial impressions were that Peter's Rest was quite a healthy place and Richard Pemberton a mild, well-mannered manager and best qualified to instruct him.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷¹ PP, Dom Box C2-13: RE Case to Charles Pinney, 21 January 1829

⁴⁷² PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney to RE Case?, 20 January 1829; ECSCRN 1823-1829 vol 2 ff674-75

⁴⁷³ PP, WI Box O-3: Charles Pinney to RE Case, 10 March 1829

⁴⁷⁴ PP, Dom Box C2-13: RE Case to Charles Pinney, 19 November 1829

⁴⁷⁵ PP, Dom Box I i-11: Charles Pinney to John Frederick Pinney, 1 January 1830

⁴⁷⁶ PP, Dom Box L1-6: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs John Frederick Pinney, 5 December 1829

⁴⁷⁷ PP, Dom Box I i-11: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs [JF] P, 3 November 1829

⁴⁷⁸ PP, Dom Box C2-13: RE Case to Charles Pinney, 12 November 1829

Parson's Montserrat estate, which in 1817 had 151 people, was mortgaged to the Pinneys (NA, T 71/447 and PP, Dom Box I i-12: Charles Pinney to JF Pinney, 6 July 1831).

⁴⁷⁹ PP, Dom Box C2-13: Mrs John Frederick Pinney to Charles Pinney (Nevis), 1 October 1828

⁴⁸⁰ PP, Dom Box I i-11: Charles Pinney to JF Pinney, 1 January 1830

⁴⁸¹ PP, Dom Box I i-11: Charles Pinney to JF Pinney, 1 January 1830

⁴⁸² PP, LB 60: PT Huggins, Nevis, to PA & Co, 5 October 1829

⁴⁸³ PP, Dom Box I i-11: Charles Pinney to JF Pinney, 1 January 1830

⁴⁸⁴ PP, Dom Box C3-15: WW Coker, Peter's Rest, St Croix, to Charles Pinney, 5 and 21 February 1830

During his first week, another overseer introduced Worthington Coker to the 225-acre plantation. On Peter's Rest lived 162 people, of whom about two thirds worked in the field. The estate had its share of invalids and watchmen, pregnant women and hospital patients but it also had a relatively large compliment of men with skilled jobs; on Peters' Rest were seven carpenters, five coopers, four masons and two blacksmiths. Worthington's grandfather would have been envious of the number of trained people on the estate but would have drawn the line at employing seven nurses.⁴⁸⁵

Through his being placed on Peter's Rest, the Cokers were, once again, indebted to the Pinneys, and Worthington, and also his mother, responded with polite letters of thanks. Mrs Elizabeth Coker expressed her gratitude for the interest Mrs John Frederick Pinney, her husband and Charles had taken 'in Worthington's welfare' and the kindness shown him during his stay at Nevis. She reassured her son's benefactors that Worthington was very busy and very happy in St Croix, 'delighted with the island and with the society', and she thanked the Pinneys for their efforts in interesting the Governor in her son. While she appreciated their past assistance, she also looked towards the future and hinted at a speedy advancement to the post of manager.⁴⁸⁶ Almost as if she had completed her motherly duties once her youngest child was set on his new career, very shortly after writing this letter Worthington's mother died. Aged 67, she was buried on 19 August 1830.⁴⁸⁷ As the years went by, Revd Walter King Coker's vicarage became very quiet. His company came to consist of three unmarried women: old 'cousin' Betsey King was joined by two other spinsters who lived off independent means: Caroline Pooles and a much younger woman, Charlotte Watson. Three servants worked in the clergyman's household: Elizabeth Norman, Mary Edwards and Charles Gould.⁴⁸⁸

Worthington Coker, meanwhile, was enjoying a busy social life in St Croix. It had started off slowly; by the end of his first week in the island he had been laid up with a boil. Covered in poultices, he had felt sorry for himself,⁴⁸⁹ and when he was able to go out, he did not have the necessary letters of introduction - particularly to Governor Peter van Scholten. He thought highly of the governor who did 'great deal of good out here' but noted that the man was not popular with the resident whites for trying to 'introduce the respectable coloured people into society'. In Nevis mixed-race people provided public entertainment on special occasions and whites attended their 'mulatto balls', but van Scholten was attempting to go one step further. He was trying to integrate these people into the social fabric. Worthington Coker approved.

Coker's early observations about white society in St Croix are those of an outsider, a newcomer, but presumably within a few years he would have accepted as normal and commonplace much of what had, at first, appeared strange. To give a flavour of the entertainment enjoyed by whites in the island and of the differences between British-held Nevis and Danish-held St Croix, it is worth quoting a long passage from one of his surviving letters. Almost breathless with excitement he told Mrs John Frederick Pinney

... about a month since I accidentally became acquainted with a Mr Weyle a Dane who lives at present on the next estate to this – he has some offices under Government and like all Danes has a great deal of company and spends as much as he can – good points in an acquaintance – as they have generally some of the belles of the island staying with them I find their house a very pleasant evening lounge and Mrs Weyle sometimes brings over a party to invade Pemberton and me and dance in the great hall of the house I am living in – I have thus become acquainted with some of the families in the neighbourhood and got an opportunity of seeing a little of the true Creole manners which are altogether new to me – my acquaintance at Nevis and St Kitts were all either English or educated in England and there

⁴⁸⁵ PP, Dom Box L1-8: Peter's Rest, St Croix, 31 December 1829

⁴⁸⁶ PP, Dom Box L3: E Coker, North Curry Vicarage, to Mrs John Frederick Pinney, 24 July (1830)

⁴⁸⁷ SRO, D/P/curr.n 2/1/8 North Curry Burials 1813-1868

⁴⁸⁸ <http://www.ancestry.com> 1841 Census

⁴⁸⁹ PP, Dom Box C3-15: WW Coker, Peter's Rest, St Croix, to Charles Pinney, 5 and 21 February 1830

was nothing out of the common – but this place appears to me to be the stronghold of Creolism – their dialect, way of living etc all different from what I had hitherto met with - the evening is the usual time for paying visits as the young ladies fancy they look better by candle light which by the way is a great mistake and you are expected to send and say you are coming that they may have time to pull their shoes up at heel and put themselves in company order – in arriving you generally find the ladies sitting in a row against the wall and if there is no dancing the gentlemen seat themselves in a row opposite and all sing by turns voice or no voice and most commonly through their noses – if dancing is the order of the night most of the gentlemen betake themselves to the galleries and drink rum and water and smoke cigars leaving the ladies to dance with each other – the rooms are often so badly lighted that a stranger is in great danger of stumbling over the negro servants who are lying about in the passages and doorways to be within call when they are wanted – as they hear all the conversation news is not long in spreading – as to the damsels they are some of them really very pretty ...⁴⁹⁰

Young Worthington had an eye for the ladies but clearly disliked the American-educated creole women, and although he generally preferred the ‘untravelling Creoles’, he also spotted their shortcomings. He thought that some of their customs ‘don’t entirely accord with our ideas of refinements – for instance – often dancing without gloves – wearing high heeled shoes – sitting on the floor round a dish of “collaloo and fungee” (vegetable soupe (sic) and cornmeal pudding) and eating it with their fingers etc’.⁴⁹¹

The Pinneys held mortgages on several estates in St Croix: Mount Pleasant, the most productive, which was worked with Solitude; Peter’s Rest, which was worked with Catharine’s Rest; Windsor Forest and Zion Hill. The ‘400 and odd’ enslaved people on these estates amounted to ‘quite a regiment’,⁴⁹² and in the first full year that Coker spent in St Croix they produced 570 hogsheads of sugar and 160 puncheons of rum on Mount Pleasant, Peter’s Rest and Windsor Forest. To finance the purchase of plantation supplies, the rum and some of the sugar was sold in the island, a small amount of sugar was shipped to New York and the bulk consigned to Copenhagen.⁴⁹³

After six months of having ‘had a pretty good initiation in sugar making’, Worthington Coker hoped to become head overseer on Zion Hill. He would earn ‘another 40 or 50 Pounds more’ but, ambitious and energetic, he mostly wanted to branch out and advance his ‘learning in field cultivation’.⁴⁹⁴ All along his sight was set at progressing to the post of manager. However, when he did become manager, shortly afterwards something happened that led the people on the Windsor Forest estate to lodge a formal complaint against him.

The details of the incident are not known but were said to have involved two groups of field workers: a ‘difficult’ and a ‘good’ gang. Whatever took place was so serious that a judge had to investigate. Coker blamed the lax discipline by Mr Laurin, the former manager, and by Billy Behagen, a son or relative of Guysbert Behagen, because when Coker, as the new manager, tried to reassert order, the people raised their objection.⁴⁹⁵ An underlying cause may have been what went on between Coker and Behagen, who was then living on Windsor Forest. Coker had sacked Mr Laurin, installed his friend Pemberton and had taken on the management himself. He appears to have done so against Behagen’s, and possibly also John Frederick Pinney’s, wishes.⁴⁹⁶ In fact Coker wanted to superintend all three estates – Mount Pleasant, Peter’s Rest and Windsor Forest – both as manager *and* as

⁴⁹⁰ PP, Dom Box I i-2: WW Coker, Peter’s Rest to [Mrs John Frederick Pinney], 11 August 1830

⁴⁹¹ PP, Dom Box I i-2: WW Coker, Peter’s Rest to [Mrs John Frederick Pinney], 11 August 1830

⁴⁹² PP, LB 60: Gysbert Behagen, St Croix, to JF Pinney, 31 July 1830

⁴⁹³ PP, Dom Box I i-12: RE Case to JF Pinney, 11 June 1831 Summary of production

⁴⁹⁴ PP, Dom Box I i-2: WW Coker, Peter’s Rest to [Mrs John Frederick Pinney], 11 August 1830

⁴⁹⁵ PP, Dom Box I i-14: WW Coker to Mrs Pinney, 3 October 1833

⁴⁹⁶ PP, Dom Box I i-14 :WW Coker to Mrs Pinney, 3 October 1833

attorney. In support of his plan he pointed out the financial benefit to John Frederick Pinney: he would be able to reduce the overall costs of the managership, the agency in town and the attorneyship.⁴⁹⁷ John Frederick Pinney had thought all along that Behagen was out to cheat him – which his brother Charles had disputed –⁴⁹⁸ and Coker was keen to confirm John Frederick's belief: 'the attorney system of this island is indeed most mischievous – each endeavours to get the business of the estates under his direction done cheaper than the others, that he may acquire a reputation for oeconomy – they make the visible expenditure as small as possible, regardless of the injury done to the property'. Behagen, 'although much more judiciously liberal than most others' was, according to Coker, 'far from being free from the system'. He informed the Pinneys at length about the way attorneys – by implication, this included Behagen – were mismanaging the estates and mistreating the men who worked on them:

... they do not of course take anything from their own salaries of 300 £ or 500 £ a year but beat down those of the managers and overseers until respectable men will not undertake the situation and they get a set of drunken brutes in their employ who may indeed flog out good crops from the unfortunate negroes for some years, which is all the attorney cares about, but the gang from overwork and inattention to their comforts become broken spirited and unhealthy, decrease rapidly in numbers and the estate is at length obliged to be dismantled for want of hands to cultivate it.⁴⁹⁹

Coker was, in effect, saying that only with him would the mortgaged estates be in safe hands and, in order to scupper Coker's plans, Behagen may well have backed the Windsor Forest protestors. Whatever led to their complaint, the judge attributed its cause to Coker's 'injudicious conduct' but he also blamed the 'difficult part of the gang'. The incident, and Coker's role in it, incurred Governor van Scholten's displeasure. Van Scholten was trying 'to alleviate the condition of the slaves' (which had brought 'all the attorneys upon his back') but, instead of moving forward, he had deal with yet another plantation conflict. Coker was actually very supportive of the governor's modernising moves, in particular his attempts at abolishing Sunday labour and giving people another day in the week to work for themselves. There is a certain irony then in the rather unconventional punishment van Scholten chose for people on Windsor Forest: the 'difficult part of the gang' was to cultivate a plot of land on Sundays, with the profits going to the 'good part of the gang'.⁵⁰⁰

Sunday work was not compulsory but it created two problems: generally planters paid the volunteers part of their wages in rum - 'the direct means of intoxication' was handed out 'by the very persons who ought to discourage it' -⁵⁰¹ and Sunday work prevented people from carrying out their own work. Instead of exerting themselves in the cane fields, people would be better left to do their own chores in their own gardens, selling their produce in the market. They would grow food and earn money that gave them an element of independence and, as one visitor to St Croix understood, going to the market would boost a person's psychological well-being because 'his mind would then have been refreshed by the sight of different objects, and by intercourse with his friends.'⁵⁰² The visitor published his thoughts in a pamphlet. Coker thought highly of this writer, Lieutenant Brady, who happened to be the brother of a friend of Coker's, the manager of Mannings Bay. Coker warmly recommended Brady's pamphlet ('lately published' by Longman & Co) to John Frederick Pinney. It would 'give him a much better idea of how matters are going here' than he could convey in his letter but Coker added 'that Mr B did not say quite as much as he thought about the attorneys for fear of injuring his brother's interests ...'.⁵⁰³ Despite this voluntary censorship, Brady did have a lot to say about the abuses to

⁴⁹⁷ PP, Dom Box I i-14: Wm Coker, Peter's Rest, to JF Pinney, 27 September 1833

⁴⁹⁸ PP, Dom Box L1-6: Charles Pinney, Nevis, to Mrs John Frederick Pinney, 5 December 1829

⁴⁹⁹ PP, Dom Box I i-2: WW Coker, Peter's Rest to [Mrs John Frederick Pinney], 11 August 1830

⁵⁰⁰ PP, Dom Box I i-14: WW Coker to JF Pinney, 2 November 1833

⁵⁰¹ Tyson, GF and AR Highfield (eds) *Kamina Folk* p171

⁵⁰² Tyson, GF and AR Highfield (eds) *Kamina Folk* p171

⁵⁰³ PP, Dom Box I i-2: WW Coker, Peter's Rest to [Mrs John Frederick Pinney], 11 August 1830

which attorneys subjected the owners and, as already mentioned, Coker added his own detailed and forceful accusations. All along he appeared to have been angling to oust Guysbert Behagen, and Worthington Coker did, indeed, manage to end up as John Frederick Pinney's sole representative in St Croix.

Worthington Coker's grandfather had married a woman from Nevis, and Worthington married a woman from St Croix: Matilda Augusta, the second daughter of Edward Dewhurst of St Croix and 'of the Dewhursts of Lancashire' and his wife Elizabeth.⁵⁰⁴ The letter introducing him to her family came from the ever helpful, ever well-connected Mrs John Frederick Pinney,⁵⁰⁵ and it was only fitting that the Cokers chose Anna Maria, Mrs John Frederick Pinney's unmarried daughter, as godmother to their daughter Elizabeth Frances. This girl was the couple's second daughter; their first was the St Croix-born Rosalie Honeyfield. During a visit to England – Worthington appears to have visited once before – Elizabeth Frances was baptised on 2 January 1842 in North Curry.⁵⁰⁶ Changes had taken place since his last time in North Curry.⁵⁰⁷ His sister Mary Frances Dare no longer lived at the Manor House but had moved and another member of the Dare family occupied the house.⁵⁰⁸ At the vicarage his brother still had living with him 'Cousin' Betsey King but another relative had also moved to North Curry: the widowed Honeyfield Butt nee Ridout. (She was the daughter of old William Coker's sister Honeyfield, whose marriage JPP had so criticised.) Of similar age – both women were then in their early seventies – Mrs Butt and Miss King would have been good company for each other.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁴ PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9

Worthington Coker and Matilda Augusta Dewhurst married in May 1836. She was the daughter of Edward Dewhurst (PP, WI Box 1823-1825: Unnumbered item), and his wife Elizabeth Mackoe Dewhurst nee Heyliger. Elizabeth Mackoe Dewhurst was widowed when she made her will in Sep 1835. There was, however, another E Dewhurst in St Croix in June 1843; he wrote to General Dyott and reported on the sugar production at Betty's Hope (<http://boards.ancestry.families.aol.com/localities/caribbean.usvi.stcroix/1855.1./mb.ashx>; <http://www.horlacher.org/usviris/1800viwl.htm> and Staffordshire County RO, D3388/74/3, Records of the Dyott family of Freeford).

⁵⁰⁵ PP, Dom Box I i-14: Wm Coker to Mrs Pinney, 3 October 1833

⁵⁰⁶ SRO, D/P/cur.n.2/1/10 North Curry Baptisms 1841-1877; also PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9

⁵⁰⁷ In 1832 Worthington Coker appears to have visited England; the subsequent correspondence suggests that he had discussed some issues in person.

⁵⁰⁸ According to the 1840 tithe map, Charles Holcombe Dare was the owner but James Holcombe Dare the occupier of the Manor House (Angela Dix *North Curry – a Place in History* p127).

⁵⁰⁹ Honeyfield Butt nee Ridout, widow of late William Butt of Wimborne Minster, had moved to North Curry where she died on 4 July 1851 at the age of 82. She was buried a week later; Elizabeth King 'of Wickwar' died on 21 April 1866, aged 96 (SRO, D/P/curr.n.2/1/8 North Curry Burials 1813-1868 and St Peter and St Paul Parish church, North Curry, memorial tablet in the Lady's Chapel).

Honeyfield Ridout's mother, who, according to JPP, had thrown herself away by marrying the lawyer John Ridout, had died young. She was 44 years old when she was buried in September 1778, leaving two children, John Honeyfield (born c 1767/8) and Honeyfield (born c 1768/9). Another daughter, Frances, had died young in 1775. Lawyer Ridout appears to have remarried; he had three more children: Jane, James Foster and John Baverstock. They were baptised in 1782, 1784 and 1786 (). The last son, John Baverstock Ridout, is not to be confused with John Baverstock Knight, who was born at the Rectory in Langton Long in 1785. By then Honeyfield and John Ridout's eldest son, John Honeyfield Ridout, presumably had married Jane Knight, and John Baverstock Knight was a son of Jane Knight's sister-in-law. John Baverstock Knight went on to become a land surveyor and watercolourist. He died at Broadway near Weymouth in 1859 (John Hutchins *The History and Antiquities of Dorset* Vol 1 p288 and Victor J Adam *One Hundred Blandford Worthies*, quoting *Gentleman's Magazine* and John Hutchins).

John Honeyfield Ridout, the eldest son of Honeyfield and John Ridout, went to Cambridge University before becoming rector of Langton Long (*The Parish Church of All Saints, Langton Long*). Because he and his wife Jane Knight did not have any children, they adopted a girl, Harriett Baskett (Memorial tablet). The family carried on living in the rectory. The Langton Long estate with its mansion house, which had been built in the 1720s by William Coker's father, had been sold to James J Farquaharson. Then still a minor, Farquaharson came of age in 1805, a year after William Coker's death, and at the mansion house threw an extravagant party at which, over a four-day-period, up to 3,000 guests enjoyed a seated meal ('An Ancient Parish Long-Langton Lost 1721' in *Dorset Life* March 1987 pp82-5). In the 1820s Farquaharson destroyed the old Coker mansion to make way for a new building. This was completed in 1833 (RCHME *An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset* Vol 4, North Dorset). The lawyer John Ridout did not see its completion; aged 89, he died in November 1827 (Memorial tablet in the church of All Saints, Langton Long).

By then Honeyfield Butt nee Ridout, William Coker's niece who had married William Butt of Wimborne Minster, had also lost her husband. A 'grocer and linen draper' with connections to Newfoundland, he had died shortly after being declared bankrupt in 1824 (<http://www.opcdorset.com/LangtonLongFiles/LangtonLongBaps1.htm> and [LangtonLongBurs1.htm](http://www.opcdorset.com/LangtonLongBurs1.htm); <http://ngb.chebucto.org/Wills/oth-symes-snelgrove.shtml>; <http://ca.geocities.com/colestips/Butt.htm>; *The London Gazette*, 15 May 1824 and 22 April 1826).

In the British colonies Apprentice Labourers had been freed; in the Danish colonies slave labour still persisted. But Governor van Scholten's amelioration programme was progressing apace: punishment had already been regulated and enslaved people were to be educated, with planters footing the bill for erecting and supporting schools.⁵¹⁰ It was a matter of time until the whole dreadful system would collapse. And so it did. In 1848 people in St Croix forced the abolition of slavery through a massive uprising.

Worthington Coker may have felt that change was in the air and that it was time to pull out of St Croix, particularly as the planting business was not as profitable as it had been. Since he had started directing operations at Windsor Forest, the estate had produced an average annual net income of \$400, the equivalent of 'about £85'. Rocky and hilly and therefore not suitable for ploughing, it had produced, on average, \$5,400 worth of produce (86 hogsheads of sugar and 55 casks of rum) but in 1842 and 1843 the income had nearly halved while the annual expenditure of \$5,000 had remained the same.⁵¹¹ Coker advised to sell the St Croix estates and in February 1844 Mrs John Frederick Pinney gave the go-ahead.⁵¹² He put the estates on the market,⁵¹³ completed the accounts, announced that he was going to America and with his family left St Croix.⁵¹⁴

The journey to New York took ten days and travelling must have been hard for Matilda Augusta. She had returned from England with a small child, their daughter Elizabeth Frances, and after they got back to St Croix she had not been well.⁵¹⁵ She had then given birth to their third child, Edmund Rogers, who was just six months old when the Cokers headed north.⁵¹⁶ In Bristol it was understood that the family went to America for a visit,⁵¹⁷ but they only stayed in New York for a few days and on 7 June 1744 left for Canada.⁵¹⁸ They headed for Ancaster in Wentworth County, Ontario State. There Worthington Coker's 'rather extravagant' brother-in-law, Matilda Augusta's eldest brother, already lived with his wife and children. Trained in Danish law, Ferdinand Dewhurst came to Canada to settle as a farmer,⁵¹⁹ and Worthington Coker followed his example. He went into animal husbandry and reared cattle and pigs.⁵²⁰

Within less than a year of arriving in Ancaster, in May 1845 Matilda Augusta was about to give birth again. To accommodate their growing family, the Cokers enlarged their kitchen and added rooms to their house. Recently Matilda Augusta's favourite brother William had died, and also another brother, Isaac,⁵²¹ and then the news of two more deaths reached the Cokers: John Frederick Pinney died on 19 September 1845⁵²² and Revd Walter King Coker very shortly afterwards. He had ministered his flock in North Curry for twenty five years, had cared for his church and energetically directed its

⁵¹⁰ Tyson, GF and AR Highfield (eds) *Kamina Folk* p212

⁵¹¹ PP, Dom Box I ii-27: WW Coker to Mrs Pinney, 25 December 1843

⁵¹² PP, Dom Box I ii-27: Mrs Pinney to WW Coker, 28 February 1844

⁵¹³ PP, Dom Box I ii-27: Undated summary

⁵¹⁴ PP, LB 68: P & C to WW Coker, St. Croix, 15 June 1844

⁵¹⁵ PP, Dom Box I ii-27: WW Coker, St Croix, to Mrs John Frederick Pinney, 18 August 1842

⁵¹⁶ PP, Dom Box I ii-27: Mrs Pinney to WW Coker, 28 February 1844

⁵¹⁷ PP, LB 68: P & C to WW Coker, St. Croix, 15 June 1844

⁵¹⁸ PP, LB 68: WW Coker, New York, to Mrs John Frederick Pinney, 6 June 1844

⁵¹⁹ PP, Dom Box I ii-29: Wm W Coker, Ancaster, to Mrs Pinney, 4 May 1845

⁵²⁰ PP, Dom Box I ii-20: WW Coker, Ancaster, Gore District (or Core), to P & C, 17 December 1844

Not long before the Cokers had arrived in Canada, rebellions in both provinces had resulted in the British government appointing Lord Durham, a liberal aristocrat, to investigate the causes and make recommendations. Durham advised to unite Lower, or French, and Upper Canada (inhabited mostly by English Loyalists from America and settlers from England, Scotland and Ireland) and to put in place a new system of governance. He also encouraged immigration from Britain to balance out the larger French Canadian population, and the Cokers' move to Canada may be seen as a direct result of these recent political events. At least two other settlers from Nevis had been attracted to seek a new life in Canada: Henry Ransford, who had managed Stoney Grove for some years, and Walter Maynard Mills and his wife, Grace Bell Cottle (Pers. comm., Clive Mitchell, December 2002).

⁵²¹ In his letter, Worthington Coker also mentioned that Mrs Dewhurst had lost a husband, as well as two sons, in a year (PP, Dom Box I ii-29: WW Coker, Ancaster, to Mrs Pinney, 4 May 1845).

Augusta's other brother who died was Isaac Heyliger Dewherst (sic) of St. Croix; his will was dated 8 Jun 1844 (<http://www.horlacher.org/usviris/1800viwl.htm>).

⁵²² PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii – Summary: Box W

maintenance and restoration. He had a new pulpit installed⁵²³ and, after a section of the tower parapet had fallen onto the roof, causing considerable damage, he had overseen major repairs with skill and energy. Committed to serving his congregation, he would, nevertheless, have lost some worshippers to the Baptists and the Methodists, who in the 1820s and the 1830s had built their own chapels in the village. During his ministry, which had lasted a quarter of a century, Revd Walter King Coker had performed hundreds of baptisms, marriages and burials. Among those he had baptised were his nieces and nephews, but he had not buried his father or his grandmother;⁵²⁴ for their funeral services he had called on a colleague. He had always looked after his family, giving a home to his parents and to his grandmother, and to his mother's cousin, Elizabeth King. She still lived in the vicarage⁵²⁵ when Revd Walter King Coker died at the age of 52. He was buried on 30 September 1845.⁵²⁶ One member of the family died but another had been born half-way round the world: in New Hamilton Worthington Coker's wife gave birth to their fourth child, a girl called Mary Dewhurst.

Worthington Coker declined the Pinneys' offer to return to St Croix. They wanted him to wrap up business on behalf of John Frederick's son William Pinney⁵²⁷ but the death of his brother prompted Worthington's decision to leave Canada and to return to England. For Matilda Augusta, the move would have been made easier because her brother John and his wife Elizabeth had recently gone to live in England; John Heyliger Dewhurst served as vicar in a village near Colchester in Essex.⁵²⁸ The Cokers, however, headed for Somerset. Worthington Coker's brother-in-law, Charles Holcombe Dare, provided their first of many homes in England.

The family lived at the rectory in Burnham-on-Sea. Along with many other Somerset properties, his brother-in-law held the lease on the parsonage, which Worthington Coker took over from the end of September 1846. His sister Mary Frances Dare joined him in the lease, and it is possible that she lived with him and his family.⁵²⁹ Certainly twelve months later, when Mary Frances's daughter Frances Emma Coker Dare got married in the church in Burnham, her place of residence was given as Burnham. Worthington's niece married a young man from the Isle of Wight, Charles Wyatt Estcourt.⁵³⁰

In February 1848 the Cokers were still at the rectory in Burnham⁵³¹ but some time within the next eighteen months they moved to Haydon near Taunton. There Worthington Coker began a new life as a farmer,⁵³² and it says something about his dynamism and his standing in the community that so soon after moving to Haydon, in 1850 he already was involved in the affairs in the area. As one of nine members, he served on the board of the Taunton Market Trust.⁵³³

⁵²³ Dix, Angela *North Curry – a Place in History* p185

⁵²⁴ SRO, D/P/curr.n 2/1/8 North Curry Burials 1813-1868

⁵²⁵ In the 1841 census Elizabeth King's age was given as 60 years. She was said to have had independent means (SRO, 1841 Surname Index S & DFHS).

⁵²⁶ SRO, D/P/curr.n 2/1/8 North Curry Burials 1813-1868

⁵²⁷ PP, LB 68: P & C to WY (sic) Coker Ancaster Gare/Gore, D.t Canada, West America, 30 October 1845

⁵²⁸ Revd John Heyliger Dewhurst, the fourth son of Edward Dewhurst of St Croix, matriculated Worcester College in October 1827, aged 18. He gained his BA in 1831, his MA in 1834 (Joseph Foster (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses*). In 1845 he was appointed as vicar at Layer de la Haye; he also served in nearby Berechurch or West Donyland (<http://www.stmargcol.org.uk/vicar.htm>).

An energetic, 'austere but very just man', he soon increased his congregation and is credited with enlarging and restoring the church at Layer de la Haye. After an active ministry of nearly 25 years, in 1869 Revd Dewhurst moved to Melbourne, Australia, where he held the living of St Philip's until 1883. The Dewhursts had five children, one of whom lies buried in the churchyard in Layer de la Haye. Their second son, John Frederick, was born about the same time as Worthington Coker and his family moved to England. John Frederick Dewhurst, too, went to Oxford (<http://www.nelmes.fsnet.co.uk/churches/mhopkirk.rtf> and Joseph Foster (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses*).

Apparently photographs existed of Revd John Dewhurst and his wife Elizabeth; the only known pictures of any of the Coker descendants.

⁵²⁹ <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/DARE/2002-04/1018155069>

⁵³⁰ <http://www.durnall.org.uk/Burnham/marriages%201837-1850.htm>

⁵³¹ PP, LB 68: Charles Pinney to WW Coker, Burnham Rectory, Somerset, 9 February 1848

⁵³² PP, Dom Box E3-19: Worthington Coker, Haydon, to Charles Pinney, 14 August 1849

⁵³³ Kite, G and HP Palmer *Taunton its History and Market Trust*

Compared to West Indian or Canadian properties, his farm of 103 acres was small. It was probably worked as a mixed arable and dairy farm. Coker employed eight labourers. In addition, the family had the help of six live-in servants: a farm servant, a cook who doubled up as dairy maid, a house servant, a seamstress and two nursemaids.⁵³⁴ The two nurse maids were necessary because the family had grown. The Cokers had four more children. When the couple lived at Burnham-on-Sea, Mrs Coker had given birth to a son, Walter William Ridout Coker, and while at Haydon, she had another three children: Jane Caroline, Augustus Heyliger and John Rogers Coker. The boy was their last child. Matilda was still only 35 years old; Worthington almost 15 years her senior.

At Haydon, the family received visits from their St Croix relatives and they kept up their connections with the Pinneys. At one time Worthington Coker brought a brother-in-law back with him to Haydon from the Pinney's country residence, Somerton Erleigh, where Coker stayed with John Frederick's son William.⁵³⁵ Relatives from St Croix came to live in Bristol,⁵³⁶ and Worthington Coker and his son Edmund stopped off with them for a while. Mrs Jane Dewhurst and her nieces lived in Clifton, close to Charles Pinney's grand residence, Camp House. Worthington Coker also stayed there, and through the Pinney firm he kept up some commercial links with the West Indies. At one time he imported merchandise from Montserrat.⁵³⁷

From his daughter Elizabeth Frances's godmother, Anna Maria Pinney, Worthington Coker received a book or a pamphlet on cider, and it is likely that he took up cider-making as a result.⁵³⁸ Apple orchards abound in the area around the Taunton and, until allowances were outlawed in the 1880s, it was tradition to pay part of the farm labourers' wages in cider. Typically, this amounted to three to four pints a day, with double the amount during haymaking in August. This would have been the strong, still and unprocessed cider called scrumpy. Made from locally grown apples, the process was simple and easier than distilling rum: the washed fruit was milled to a pulp, the pulp placed in a wooden cider press (interspersed with layers of straw) and the press turned by hand. The juice that ran out was left to ferment naturally in wooden casks or barrels.

By 1861, when he was in late fifties, Worthington Coker had given up farming and supported his family with income he received from property. The family had moved to Trull, south of Taunton. Almost certainly they lived in a comfortable, two-storey, double-gabled house with gardens, on the corner of the Honiton Road and a lane that leads to the parish church. At Wild Oak House they had only two live-in servants, a 23-year-old house maid and a 13-year-old kitchen maid.⁵³⁹

But the family did not remain in Trull for long. The next documents on record are two letters which Worthington Coker wrote in 1863 from Clevedon near Bristol, one from Albert House, the other from Belmont Villas. After leaving Haydon the family led a rather rootless existence, and he later admitted to losing some papers due to the frequent changes of lodgings.⁵⁴⁰ In 1863 the Cokers left the Somerset seaside and moved inland. They settled in the Bath area, first in Bathford, where they lived in the Manor Cottage, employing a new cook and another housemaid,⁵⁴¹ and then in St Catherine's.

⁵³⁴ Some of the Cokers' servants were local, others from further afield; most were female and their ages ranged from 15 to 62. The oldest was the cook and dairy maid, the 62-year-old widow Anne Brain who was born in North Curry, where Worthington Coker's relatives had lived. Also from North Curry was the 39-year-old house servant, Sarah Bucknell. Two young women from Hughindon in Buckinghamshire were related to each other: the 16-year-old seamstress Charlotte Boutifer and the 28-year-old nurse maid Eliza Boutifer. A second nurse maid was the 15-year-old Sarah Hawkins from Bradford in Somerset. Also from Somerset was the only male, John Harris, a 16-year-old farm hand.

⁵³⁵ PP, Dom Green Box 1: Charles Pinney's diary, entry for 29 August 1850

⁵³⁶ At the time of the 1861 census, Worthington Coker and his son Edmund were visiting Bristol and staying with Mrs Jane C Dewhurst at 4 Vyvyan Terrace in Clifton. Three nieces of Mrs Dewhurst's were also staying with her: Caroline D Tower (aged 25), Julia EC Tower (22) and Flora A Tower (20) (<http://www.ancestry.com> 1861 Census).

⁵³⁷ PP, LB 33: P & C to WW Coker, Haydon, nr Taunton, c 14 August 1849

⁵³⁸ PP, Dom Box B3-4: WW Coker, Haydon, to Marie [Anna Maria Pinney], 21 September 1854

⁵³⁹ <http://www.ancestry.com> 1861 Census

⁵⁴⁰ PP, Dom Box B7-1: Wm W Coker, the Hermitage, St Catherine's near Bath, to Wm Pinney, 15 September [no year but 1870s or 1880s]

⁵⁴¹ <http://www.ancestry.com> 1871 Census

Their oldest daughter Rosalie had died but their three daughters Elizabeth, Mary and Jane (all in their twenties and unmarried) still lived with them, as did their youngest son, John. He had become an underwriter's clerk but was unemployed when the family lived at Bathford. Their eldest son, Edmund, had gone abroad. After attending the Addiscombe Military College in Surrey,⁵⁴² he had started a career in the East India Company's Army⁵⁴³ (which later became the Indian Army). Having been commissioned as an Ensign in the Madras Army in 1861, he had then been transferred to the 106th Light Infantry as an officer. In 1871, after serving in various parts of India, Edmund came to England,⁵⁴⁴ and during his visit he may well have encouraged his unemployed brother to go abroad. Some time in the 1870s John left England for today's Malaysia and began his service for the Rajah of Sarawak.⁵⁴⁵

Edmund had been Worthington Coker's first son who had gone abroad, Walter was the first son who died abroad. He died in New Zealand. Nine years later another son died. Having served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, in 1879 Augustus Heyliger died in a terrible accident aboard ship off the Turkish coast. The Cokers also lost another daughter. Elizabeth died some time before 1882.⁵⁴⁶ By then Worthington Coker, with his wife Matilda Augusta and their two unmarried daughters Mary and Jane, had moved back to the seaside, this time to the south coast. There they lived first at 6 Waterloo Place in Melcombe Regis, Weymouth, and then moved to nearby St John's Terrace. At Number 5 they had living with them two servants, a cook and a house/parlour maid.

Coker was corresponding with John Frederick's son William Pinney who, following Anna Maria Pinney's death in 1861, appears to have taken over the role of family historian.⁵⁴⁷ Anna Maria had lived at Somerton Erleigh and, in addition to setting up a school in the village and involving herself with the fight to abolish slavery in the United States, she had busily tried to unravel the various ancestral families. As a young girl, she had interviewed her grandfather JPP about his family but, her work left incomplete, William Pinney enlisted the help of Worthington Coker. At William's expense, Coker travelled to Devon 'to rake up the ashes of the Weekes of Honeychurch and enquire about the estate of Black Torrington'.⁵⁴⁸ In 1882 a grandson of Thomas Pym Weekes, Alfred Weekes, entered their genealogy debate. Weekes was searching for information about the Burt side of his family⁵⁴⁹ and, incredibly, almost a hundred years after JPP had sacked his manager William Coker and had replaced him with Thomas Pym Weekes, the grandsons of all three men were united in their quest to find information about their forebears. As is often the case, they, too, were mostly interested in the great and the good in their families, the squires among the Weekeses, the governors among the Burts and the politicians among the Pyms.⁵⁵⁰ At least one of them, however, Worthington Coker, appears to have been aware of this when he put it to William Pinney that 'the only bit of pedigree lore your father cared about was the knowledge that he had a drop of the great patriot Pym's blood in his veins through an intermarriage between our common ancestors.'⁵⁵¹ One wonders, though, whether the three men, these upright Victorian citizens, ever considered the mixed-race offspring their worthy ancestors had created – these men's distant and unacknowledged relatives.

⁵⁴² <http://www.angloboerwar.com>

⁵⁴³ http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/A2A/records.aspx?cat=059-iormil_4-1_5&cid=-1&Gsm=2008-06-18#-1 Cadet Papers (1789-1860) and Cadet Registers (1775-1860) IOR/L/MIL/9/251/110-21 [nd]

⁵⁴⁴ http://www.lightinfantry.org.uk/Regiments/Durham%20LI/durham_commandofficers.htm

⁵⁴⁵ John Coker served under the second white Rajah of Sarawak. The first white Rajah of Sarawak died in 1868 in England and was buried in Sheepstor in Devon. The death of this successful, exotic, strong-minded adventurer cum businessman cum political leader was widely publicised and caught the public's imagination. The publicity may well have inspired John Rogers Coker to head east. Rajah James Brooke was succeeded by his nephew Charles Anthony Johnson Brooke who reigned until 1917 (Nigel Barley *White Rajah*).

⁵⁴⁶ In 1882, the Cokers had 'two daughters living' (DHC, D/66/14).

⁵⁴⁷ PP, Dom Green Box 5 and DM 1173 Add Pinney Materials Dom Box 3

⁵⁴⁸ PP, Dom Box B7-1: WW Coker, Albert House, Clevedon, Somerset, to Col Wm Pinney, 27 May 1863

⁵⁴⁹ PP, Dom Box B7-1: Alfred W P Weekes, 21 Rose St, Garnett Hill, Glasgow, to Wm Pinney, 6 February 1882

⁵⁵⁰ PP, Dom Box B7-1: WW Coker, 2 Belmont Villas, Clevedon, Somerset, to Col Wm Pinney, Pencil [no day] May 1863

⁵⁵¹ PP, Dom Box B7-1: WW Coker, 5 St John's Terrace, Weymouth, to Wm Pinney, 9 February 1892

Worthington Coker died at Weymouth in 1894. His wife, Matilda Augusta Coker, survived him and died in 1901, a year after their unmarried daughter Jane Caroline had died at the age of 50.⁵⁵² Supported by an independent income and able to employ a live-in cook and a gardener, their remaining daughter Mary Dewhurst Coker lived in Weymouth, close to the sea, until her death in 1908.⁵⁵³

Of Worthington Coker's two remaining sons, the last that was known of John Rogers is that he was alive in 1882 and in the service of the Rajah of Sarawak, and that the eldest, Edmund Rogers, followed a distinguished military career. During the Napoleonic period the Caribbean had been fought over relentlessly but Edmund Rogers Coker did not serve in the West Indies. European-grown sugar beet had replaced sugar cane, and so the Caribbean had lost the economic importance it had held during his great-grandfather William Coker's time. The focus had shifted; wars were fought elsewhere in the British Empire. After serving in India, Edmund Rogers Coker completed four years of garrison duty in Malta and in Gibraltar and then saw active service in Egypt. Promoted to Colonel in 1885, he served with the Frontier Field Force in the Sudan in 1885 and 1886. In a battle in which the Sudanese enemy lost hundreds of men in a matter of hours, Coker's men sustained hardly any losses. Coker was mentioned in Dispatches and awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Egypt Medal (1882-1889) and the Khedive's Egyptian Star. His regiment left for India in 1887. Two years later, at the age of 43, Edmund Rogers Coker was on retired pay.⁵⁵⁴ He married Agnes Gertrude Meade-King of Taunton,⁵⁵⁵ moved to Babbacombe in South Devon⁵⁵⁶ but returned to live in Taunton.⁵⁵⁷ He was very much an army man. This was reflected in his favourite pastimes: shooting and riding. Colonel Edmund Rogers Coker died just before the outbreak of the First World War.⁵⁵⁸

While Worthington Coker's four sons had gone abroad in search of adventure and fortunes, in contrast his sister Mary Frances Dare's children and grandchildren were firmly rooted in England.

Mary Frances Dare died in Bath in the summer of 1870 (the year in which Worthington Coker's son Walter lost his life in New Zealand). She was 78 years old.⁵⁵⁹ She had outlived at least two, if not three of her children. Her youngest child, Edmund Holcombe Dare, had died, aged 14, in 1843,⁵⁶⁰ and her second son, Walter John, may also have died before her. He certainly was dead by 1882. He had served as rector in the village of Chipstable in Somerset and left no children. Mary Frances Dare had also outlived her husband, Charles Holcombe Dare. At the advanced age of 75 he had become a lay rector,⁵⁶¹ and in that capacity had served for two years, until he died early in 1863 in the Isle of Wight.⁵⁶² Mary Frances Dare inherited the house in North Curry, together with a cottage, a garden and over two acres of land. The Manor Lodge was let to a tenant. On her death, the property went to her oldest son, Charles William Dare.⁵⁶³ He had married a woman from Newport in the Isle of Wight,

⁵⁵² <http://www.ancestry.com/community/researchers>

⁵⁵³ <http://www.ancestry.com> 1901 Census

⁵⁵⁴ <http://www.durham.gov.uk/dli/>; also DHC, D/66/14

⁵⁵⁵ <http://www.angloboerwar.com>

Agnes Gertrude Meade-King was the daughter of Charles Meade-King of Taunton, the son of Richard Meade-King of The Rectory, North Petherton, and Pyrland Hall near Taunton, and his wife Elizabeth Warren.

A member of the family, Richard Meade, had been involved in the legal affairs of the Coker family (PP, LB 59: PA & Co to Richard Meade, Taunton, 16 December 1826), as well as those of Charles Holcombe Dare (SRO, DD\CC\B/113863). A memorial tablet to several members of the Meade family is in the Lady's Chapel in the parish church in North Curry.

⁵⁵⁶ PP, Dom Box B7-1: E Rogers Coker, (?Malwa) House, Babbicombe (sic), South Devon, to Wm Pinney, 14 February 1898 (?1893)

⁵⁵⁷ <http://www.ancestry.com> 1911 Census

⁵⁵⁸ <http://www.angloboerwar.com>

An obituary in the 'Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser' of 18 March 1914 spoke of his 'impressive funeral'

⁵⁵⁹ <http://www.ancestry.com> BMD Death Index 1837-1893

⁵⁶⁰ Edmund Holcombe Dare, the youngest son of Charles Holcombe Dare, died on 9 February 1843 at the house of William Holcombe Esq at New-cross, Surrey. He was 14 years old (*Gentleman's Magazine* Vol XIX 1843 p551; also PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9).

⁵⁶¹ Dix, *Angela North Curry – a Place in History* p150

⁵⁶² <http://www.ancestry.com> BMD Death Index 1837-1983

⁵⁶³ Dix, *Angela North Curry – a Place in History* p150

Anne Agnes Mew, and, having been called to the Bar in 1847, had become a barrister-at-law.⁵⁶⁴ After living at Fosse Cottage in North Curry,⁵⁶⁵ he and his wife moved to swish Bayswater in central London where he was in legal practice. By then the Dares had one son, Walter Charles Dare, who was born in North Curry in 1853/4. Very quickly two more sons followed: Charles Holcombe Dare and Edmund Coker Dare. The family then moved to the Isle of Wight, his wife's home. In 1871, when he was in his early fifties, they occupied Clatterford House in Carisbrooke near Newport. They had living with them their sons Walter Charles Dare and Edmund Coker Dare, then 17 and 15 years old and still at school. Their middle son, the 16-year-old Charles Holcombe Dare, had already left home. Following in the footsteps of his father's cousin, he had joined the Royal Navy and was serving as a midshipman on HMS *Monarch*. The family could afford to have three female live-in servants: a housemaid, a cook and a sicknurse. The presence of a resident sicknurse suggests that someone in the family needed constant care.⁵⁶⁶

The Dares also had another two children, William and a daughter called Mary Anne Francis Coker Dare. William probably died some time after 1882; Mary married a man called Frederick Stenning.⁵⁶⁷ The oldest son, Walter Charles Dare, had followed his father's profession and had become a barrister, and the seafaring Charles Holcombe Dare had been promoted to Lieutenant.⁵⁶⁸ Unusually, his marriage was to a social inferior - his wife, Emily Agnes Harper, was the daughter of a railway guard – but, shockingly for the time, she brought into the marriage an illegitimate daughter, Maud.⁵⁶⁹ His marriage did not hinder his professional progress; Charles Holcombe Dare rose to the ranks of Captain, Rear-Admiral⁵⁷⁰ and then, in the First World War, Vice-Admiral.⁵⁷¹

Charles's brother, the Dares' third son, Edmund Coker Dare, probably lived in Cowes in the Isle of Wight⁵⁷² before he moved to India where he became a planter. After contracting malaria he returned to North Curry where he lived with his parents, and after his father's death in 1898, with his widowed mother. Living off independent means, at first they employed two female servants, then scaled down their household to just one.⁵⁷³ Edmund Coker Dare committed himself to his local community, became a parish councillor and served as secretary to both the North Curry Flower Show and the local Cricket Club. For many years he was a member of the School Management Committee, and from 1902 until his death in 1914,⁵⁷⁴ he acted as a churchwarden⁵⁷⁵ in the same church that held so many family connections: his grandmother's brother had been its vicar, and funeral services had been conducted there for his great-grandfather, Revd William Young Coker, and for his great-great-grandmother, Frances Coker, the Nevis-born wife of his great-great-grandfather William Coker.

Mary Frances Dare's daughter, Frances Emma Coker Dare (whose wedding took place in Burnham while Worthington Coker was staying at the rectory with his family), married a clergyman's son, Charles Wyatt Estcourt. Her marriage represented considerable social advancement. The Estcourts were an influential and wealthy family⁵⁷⁶ with a large estate near Tetbury in Gloucestershire that had

⁵⁶⁴ On 29 January 1847 Charles William Dare was called to the Bar (<http://www.ancestry.com>).

⁵⁶⁵ Dix, Angela *North Curry – a Place in History* p150

⁵⁶⁶ The Dare family's servants were the 22-year-old housemaid Mary Hannah Leal, the 47-year-old cook Amelia Ames and the 38-year-old sicknurse Sarah Snook (<http://www.ancestry.com> 1871 Census).

⁵⁶⁷ Pers. Comm., Patsy Stevens, 19 April 2012

⁵⁶⁸ <http://www.pbenyon1.plus.com/Nbd/exec/D/Index.html>

⁵⁶⁹ <http://www.ancestry.com> BMD Marriage Index and <http://www.rootschat.com/forum>

⁵⁷⁰ <http://www.admirals.org.uk>

⁵⁷¹ <http://navalhistory31.googlepages.com/history-432.html>

⁵⁷² <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~hantsfree/RG090653%20COWES%1.O.W.htm>

⁵⁷³ <http://www.ancestry.com> 1891, 1901 and 1911 Censuses

⁵⁷⁴ Having left Fosse Cottage and having moved to Hill Cottage, Charles William Dare's wife Anne Agnes Mew Dare died in December 1917. She was survived by her daughter Mary Anne Francis Coker Stenning, who, by then, was widowed, and her sons, the barrister Walter Charles Dare, and the Vice-Admiral Charles Holcombe Dare RN. Mrs Dare left a modest bequest of £1,545 (<http://www.ancestry.com>).

⁵⁷⁵ Dix, Angela *North Curry – a Place in History* p150

⁵⁷⁶ Frances Emma Coker Dare had to establish a lineage worthy to join the Estcourts, and as a result the pedigrees of the 'Coker family of Ashbosam' and of the 'Rogers of Brianstone' were gathered and filed with the Estcourt family papers (GA, D1571/F830 and F831).

been in the family since the fourteenth century. Several of her husband's family members had been, or were, Members of Parliament,⁵⁷⁷ although her husband, as the fourth son of Bertha Wyatt and Revd Edmund William Estcourt, was among a lesser branch of the family. Her father-in-law served as rector in the parish of Long Newnton near the Estcourt estate, while she and her husband lived in the Isle of Wight. Their place of residence was variously given as Newport⁵⁷⁸ and as Gatcombe House,⁵⁷⁹ but the family probably also lived in Castle Street in East Cowes.⁵⁸⁰

Frances Emma Coker Estcourt gave birth to two sons and five daughters: Edmund Walter, Birtha Mary, Alice Madeline, Arthur Sotherton, Edith Rose, Caroline Tuesley (or Triesley) and Ethel Catherine. Her last daughter was born in 1859 (the year one of her Estcourt relatives briefly served as Home Secretary) but only a few years later she lost her husband. Charles Wyatt Estcourt died in 1866. Frances Emma Coker Estcourt survived him by nine years and died in August 1875. They had both died relatively young. He was 45 years old; she about 50. Their seven children were all alive.⁵⁸¹

Frances Emma Coker Estcourt's son Edmund Walter Estcourt became, like his grandfather before him, rector of the church at Long Newnton near Tetbury and rector of nearby Shipton Moyne. He married a cousin, Eleanor Lucy Bucknall-Estcourt,⁵⁸² and had eight children with her, four sons and four daughters.⁵⁸³ In 1915 he inherited the family estates from a distant cousin. And so the Estcourt Manor with 1,440 acres of land went to the great-great-grandson of William Coker, the Mountravers plantation manager who, a century earlier, had lost his own estate, Woodcutts. The Estcourt Manor remained in the family until 1974.⁵⁸⁴



While it was relatively easy to follow William Coker's descendants through the records, it was more difficult to trace the people he owned. Their stories can be updated but cannot be completed.

Kate Coker, freed in 1778, lived in one of JPP's properties in Charlestown and many a time was behind with her rent of N£3:12:0 a year.⁵⁸⁵ To clear her account, she bought rum from the plantation for resale and also imported small quantities of goods from England.⁵⁸⁶ In this JPP treated her like any other business partner and charged her interest of almost N12s on some muslin that she had bought on one of her trips to England.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁷⁷ GA, Catalogue for D1571: Estcourt Pedigree

⁵⁷⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine* Vol XXVIII 1847 p631

⁵⁷⁹ <http://www.thepeerage.com/p23389.htm#i233887>

⁵⁸⁰ <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~hantsfree/RG090653%20COWES%I.O.W.htm>

⁵⁸¹ DHC, D/66/14

⁵⁸² <http://www.thepeerage.com/p23389.htm#i233887>

⁵⁸³ GA, Catalogue for D1571: Estcourt Pedigree. Papers of Edmund William Estcourt (1782-1856): D1571/F832-362; Papers of Thomas Edmund Estcourt MP (1881-1958): D1571/F592-600

⁵⁸⁴ The history of Estcourt manor goes back to the fourteenth century. In more recent times, before it came into Revd Edmund Walter Estcourt's possession, Thomas Grimston Estcourt had inherited it in 1818. He took on the additional name Bucknall. In 1853 he was succeeded by his son Thomas Henry Sutton who took on his mother's surname Sotherton and added his paternal name. Like his father before him, THS Sotherton Estcourt was MP for Devizes and Marlborough and, for a few months, Home Secretary. (A statue to him stands in Devizes on the fountain in the Market Place.) At his death in 1876 his younger brother, a clergyman, Edmund Hiley Bucknall Estcourt inherited the estate. At his death, it went to his son George Thomas John Sotherton-Estcourt (MP for North Wiltshire) who was created Baron Estcourt in 1903. In 1915 Lord Estcourt's estate went to his distant cousin, Revd Edmund Walter Estcourt - the son of Frances Emma Coker Estcourt nee Dare. On inheriting the estate, Edmund Walter Estcourt assumed the surname Sotherton, but four years later, in 1919, he made over the estate to his eldest son, Captain Thomas Edmund Sotherton Estcourt. He became a Member of Parliament, as did his son, Thomas Desmond George Sotherton-Estcourt (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19135>).

⁵⁸⁵ PP, AB 43 f24 and f13 Catherine Emra - a free negro of Charlestown' a/c; AB 39 f1; LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 27 September 1790; DM 1173 Nevis Ledger (Mt Zion) 1789-1794 f22 and AB 47 f114; AB 50 Cash a/c and AB 47 Catherine Emra's a/c

⁵⁸⁶ PP, AB 43 f24 Rum a/c; AB 35 Catherine Emra's a/c and AB 47 f114 Cash a/c

⁵⁸⁷ PP, AB 30 Interest a/c

In 1810 JPP wrote to Thomas Arthurton about having received a complaint from Kate Coker that she was 'obliged to pay rent for land occupied by another person'. JPP asked Thomas Arthurton to investigate who was squatting and, if there was someone else on her land, this person was to be made to pay rent.⁵⁸⁸ Other tenants, too, tried to avoid paying rent by shifting the responsibility onto others because a year later JPP wrote to JC Mills: 'There seems to be quite a jumble amongst the free people, my tenants. One wants to throw a larger proportion of rent on his neighbour, than he ought to pay. Kate Coker and Polly Scarborough can give you every necessary information.' It is likely that Mills did not solve the problems caused by the tenants and the squatters and that Kate Coker therefore withheld her rent - over three years her arrears increased dramatically from just over N£9 in 1811⁵⁸⁹ to more than N£20⁵⁹⁰ and then almost doubled to N£38.⁵⁹¹ The last reference to Kate Coker alias Catherine Emra was from May 1813. No record of her burial has been found.

When the Cokers had lived in Nevis they had borrowed from Mrs Coker's sisters three women. One of these, Polly, may possibly have lived in Charlestown until she was 98 years old. On 15 August 1831 she may have been buried as Mary Weekes.⁵⁹²

Another woman, Patty Weekes, who had been freed after the Cokers left Nevis, also rented one of JPP's properties in Charlestown.⁵⁹³ She appears to have paid ground rent for two lots of land⁵⁹⁴ and by 1812 was in arrears. She owed a substantial sum, nearly N£52,⁵⁹⁵ which rose to almost N£60 the following year.⁵⁹⁶ By 1817 Patty Weekes owned one female, Louisa, a 22-year-old African⁵⁹⁷ but following the 1819 hurricane she had to apply for rate relief owing to her 'state of lowest pauperism'.⁵⁹⁸ Patty Weekes died soon after and was buried on 24 November 1821.⁵⁹⁹

Her African woman, Louisa, she had sold even before the hurricane plunged her into deep poverty. The planter William Keenan had bought Louisa but Keenan died and in April 1819 the young African woman was sold again. She went to Frank P Browne, a free mixed-race man, his family and his people. Louisa soon gave birth to a little boy, Providence, but life would have been hard for both of them. In 1817 Browne had in his possession 14 people but during the next decade so many died, absconded, were sold or seized by custom, that by the time slavery was abolished he had only five left. And two of these, Louisa and her son, Browne sold to the planter Job Ede.⁶⁰⁰

It is not known what happened to the third woman the Cokers had borrowed, confusingly also called Louisa.

This Louisa disappeared from view after she had been sold to William Edward Philips.⁶⁰¹ Her mulatto son Josiah, who had been manumitted, may have been the Josiah Philips, who in April 1863 was among those inhabitants of the parish of St George's Gingerland who signed an address of thanks to Revd Walter F Maynard for his assistance to their rector.⁶⁰² Josiah Philips probably was illiterate; his name, with others, was added in one hand.

⁵⁸⁸ PP, LB 23: JPP to Thomas Arthurton, 12 December 1810

⁵⁸⁹ PP, LB 23: JPP to JC Mills, 11 October 1811

⁵⁹⁰ PP, WI Box 1801-1836

⁵⁹¹ PP, LB 23: JPP to Samuel Pemberton, 7 July 1813

⁵⁹² NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837

⁵⁹³ PP, AB 47 Patty Weekes a/c and AB 57

⁵⁹⁴ PN 340: JPP to JC Mills, 10 October 1811

⁵⁹⁵ PP, WI Box 1801-1836

⁵⁹⁶ PP, LB 23: JPP to Samuel Pemberton, 6 May 1813

⁵⁹⁷ UKNA, T 71/364

⁵⁹⁸ UKNA, CO 186/12: 27 February 1820

⁵⁹⁹ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

⁶⁰⁰ UKNA, T 71/1039

⁶⁰¹ ECSCRN, CR 1797-1799 f341

⁶⁰² SRO/I, Maynard Papers, HA 178-1/57

While Josiah Philips may have moved to the Gingerland parish, the other mulatto boy who was manumitted in the early 1800s, Patty Weekes's son, Jack Abbott, continued to live in Charlestown. As early as 1807 a James Parry had been interested in purchasing the property Jack Abbott's mother had occupied,⁶⁰³ and after her death a Mr Evans, whose land adjoined hers, renewed the request. In fact Parry and Evans were business partners; in 1817 they registered their people, according to island's requirements, as belonging to the 'firm of Evans & Parry'. In response to Mr Evan's appeal, Charles Pinney's attorney Francis John Galpine gave him the preference to purchase Patty Weekes's land for S£75⁶⁰⁴ but Galpine had not reckoned on her son also wanting to buy it. Jack Abbott had set himself up as a cooper and he asked Galpine about buying the land. Unsure how to handle this, Galpine referred the free mixed-race man to Charles Pinney and, accordingly, in July 1822 Jack Abbott sent him this letter:

'I now inform you that my Mother Patty Weekes is dead and I now address you conserning (sic) the spot of land that her house stands on I would be very happy to come forwards to purchase it, but its not in my power at present to do so but if you will give me a little time to pay you for it I will then be able to do so, Mr Galpine wants me to put down the amount for it, I told him it was not in my power to put down the amount and he said it only rested with you and if you will be so kind as to let me have the land I will make it my study to pay Mr Galpine by your orders which I hope will not be too hard. Times are very hard with me just now, Mr Galpine says if I can make any interest with you he will have no objections. Your kind answer will greatly oblige Wishing you and family health and happiness I am Dear Sir your obedient serv't John Abbott'.⁶⁰⁵

The punctuation in this letter suggests that it was written by someone who was literate and reasonably practised and it is very possible that John Abbott had put pen to paper himself.

It is not known how Charles Pinney decided but from Abbott's letter it is apparent that he was struggling financially. In July 1818 he had bought a man to facilitate his manumission⁶⁰⁶ and some years later money would have come to him by way of an apprenticeship fee because Francis John Galpine, who was a merchant, asked him to pass on his skills to an African man known as George (his real name was Errauno). As a child this African had been taken from a slaving vessel that had been intercepted according to British legislation after the British withdrew from the transatlantic slave trade and had been apprenticed to Galpine for a period of 14 years.

George was a stout, healthy young man aged about 22. Abbott allowed him to do some small pieces of work on his own account from which the man was to purchase his own food and clothing, thereby allowing his apprentice some independence. How the slave-born Jack Abbott related to his young African is not known but Abbott praised his progress. He thought George/Errauno could 'work pretty well as a cooper' whereas Lockhart Gordon junior, the Acting Collector of Customs, gave a different account: he thought the African could only work 'tolerably well as a cooper' and criticised what he called his 'doubtful moral conduct'.⁶⁰⁷

This was in 1826 and the last known mention of Jack Abbott. Of Patty Weekes's other son, Tom Phillips, who had also been freed,⁶⁰⁸ there was no further information.

⁶⁰³ PP, LB 20: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 7 August 1807

⁶⁰⁴ PP, Dom Box C2-8: FJ Galpine to Charles Pinney, 22 May 1822

⁶⁰⁵ PP, Dom Box C2-8: John Abbott, Nevis, to Charles Pinney, 21 July 1822

⁶⁰⁶ PRO, T 71/365 Ann Brodbell's register

⁶⁰⁷ HoCPCP 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 p13: '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'

⁶⁰⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1801-1803 ff516-17

The cousin, Joseph Gill, 1783-1785

Joseph Gill was the first of JPP's relatives to manage Mountravers. He started work in Nevis as overseer and, after becoming manager on another plantation, set out on a career as a merchant. His life ran along successfully enough until he began working on Mountravers. His brittle mental state, combined with alcoholism, made him retreat to England. He spent the rest of his life in the West Country.



Joseph Gill, the eldest son of Abraham Gill and his wife Martha Pretor, was baptised on 24 June 1748 in Chard, Somerset.⁶⁰⁹ Nothing is known about the origin of his father but most likely he was also a Chard man.⁶¹⁰

On his mother's side, Joseph Gill's grandparents Michael Pretor and his wife Martha both hailed from Okehampton in Devon but after 1710 had moved to Somerset, to Dulverton, then to 'Culloton' (probably Collaton St Mary near Paignton in Devon).⁶¹¹ There Gill's mother, also called Martha, was born in April 1718 - one of nine children.⁶¹²

Joseph was one of six children. Next in age was his brother Michael, who was baptised a year after Joseph. The boys were followed by three girls: Mary (baptised in 1752), Betty (1754) and Sarah (1756). His brother, however, died some time before 1762 and was 'replaced' by another boy called Michael.⁶¹³ Except for Sarah, all the children's names are those of their maternal aunts and uncles, among them Michael Pretor – JPP's father. Joseph Gill and his siblings were JPP's cousins, and their uncle Simon Pretor later became Gill's emotional support and financial mainstay.

Only two details can be established about Gill's childhood: his family was 'not well off' and in his youth he suffered from a bout of jaundice.⁶¹⁴ He appeared on the scene when, aged 21 at the most, he accepted his cousin's offer to become one of his overseers on Mountravers plantation. Having been warned by JPP not to expect too much,⁶¹⁵ Joseph Gill sailed to Nevis with one of the Bristol captains, Henry Forrest,⁶¹⁶ and arrived before the end of February 1769. For a year he worked for JPP on Mountravers. His cousin paid him S£40/N£66:0:0 – roughly the wages of a boiling house watch.⁶¹⁷ But Gill became surplus to requirements because, despite earlier plans to leave the island, JPP was, after all, staying put in Nevis. There were also sufficient white men on the plantation - Thomas Arthurton and Tom Peaden - and, anyway, the original agreement had been that Gill would remain only until he had acquainted himself with the 'plantation industry'.⁶¹⁸

⁶⁰⁹ SRO, Dr Campbell's Index No 157 and D/P Chard 2/1/2 Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1729-1812

One source claims that Joseph Gill was born in Seavington St Mary but this is not correct (Anne Kinch, letter in *The Seavingtons News* Vol 28 Issue 1 (April 2007)).

⁶¹⁰ The name Gill appears repeatedly in the parish records of Chard, and in Michael Pretor's Account Book it was noted that in 1744 a man called Joseph Gill was paid his 'expense at Sherborne' and that Michael Pretor lent him a small sum of money (PP, AB 10). This was either Abraham Gill's brother or a cousin and probably the same Joseph Gill of Old Town, Chard, who died in April 1770 (SRO, D/P Chard 2/1/2 Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1729-1812).

⁶¹¹ PP, Dom Box Q: R Pew to Wm Pinney, December 1833

⁶¹² PP, Dom Green Box 4, Frances Pinney Box 1819-1860

⁶¹³ SRO, Dr Campbell's Index No 157 and D/P Chard 2/1/2 Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1729-1812

⁶¹⁴ PP, WI Box D: Simon Pretor, Sherborne, to JPP, Nevis, 21 August 1765

⁶¹⁵ PP, WI Box D: JPP, Nevis, to Simon Pretor, 26 July 1768

⁶¹⁶ PP, AB 20 Henry Forrest's a/c

In 1763 Henry Forrest was captain of the *Minehead* but it is not known on which ship Gill sailed (WI Cat 3 Index III.ii Domestic: James Laroche to John Pinney, 13 September 1763).

⁶¹⁷ PP, AB 20 Joseph Gill's a/c

⁶¹⁸ PP, WI Box D: JPP, Nevis, to Simon Pretor, 26 July 1768

JPP sought to procure him alternative employment. An opportunity presented itself when, acting as one of the executors of the planter Robert Morgan, JPP was in charge of Morgan's estate and he could place Gill there as manager. A small property of altogether 74 acres, it lay in a healthy position high up in the mountain and was well suited for a beginner. Gill managed Morgan's for about a year until it was sold. On the estate were forty enslaved people,⁶¹⁹ and during his short residence he fathered two children. To assist with their births, he called in Old Rose, one of the nurses from Mountravers, and paid her for delivering his children.⁶²⁰ Not long after they were born, in April 1771 Joseph Gill bought an enslaved woman who, no doubt, was his mistress; he purchased Lissey, together with her son John at a cost of N£111. The boy may have been the son of their former owner, Dr John Boddie.⁶²¹

The businessman

When Morgan's plantation was sold, the buyer chose not to retain Gill as manager, and so he went to work in St Kitts. Gill found employment with William Reeve Son & Hill, the West Indian arm of the Bristol firm that had advanced a large sum of money to William Coker. It is likely that JPP had arranged the job; he certainly laid out the stipend for a clerkship.

For nine months Joseph Gill worked at the company's store⁶²² as a merchants' clerk, honing his commercial skills, and on leaving the company was ready to go into business himself. According to Pares, Joseph Gill turned to shop-keeping⁶²³ but that rather understates the scope of his enterprise and dismisses Gill's ambitions as low-level and parochial. Instead, around May 1771 he set himself up in partnership with another young man, Robert McGill, who had also worked as a merchants' clerk, and became a merchant. The company of Gill & McGill traded in general commodities as well as sugar and people. To launch their enterprise, JPP helped them with introductions, recommending them for instance to a well-known Glasgow firm, Messrs Houston. Since it was one of the foremost colonial merchant houses, securing a contract for a shipment of goods from this company would have immediately put Gill & McGill ahead of their competition. Introducing the partners as 'honest, sober and industrious' and recommending them as 'very capable of the undertaking', JPP signalled his confidence by standing security for the cargo but, ever the cautious businessman, lessened the risk by sharing it with James Brodbelt.⁶²⁴ Brodbelt was also doing business with William Reeve,⁶²⁵ owed money to Coker and was renting JPP's Mountain estate – once again, several people's commercial interests overlapped and their paths crisscrossed.

While his cousin visited Philadelphia in 1772 a hurricane devastated Nevis, and when JPP heard about it, he grasped the opportunity and consigned a crucial delivery of goods to Gill & McGill. The island was desperately short of food and this schooner-load of bread and flour was very well-received. The supplies, predictably, sold 'to an excellent market'.⁶²⁶ But not all their cargoes were successful; one consignment of sugar was of such inferior quality that JPP felt obliged to apologise on their

⁶¹⁹ One of Robert Morgan's men, Oroonoko, had been executed for burglary a couple of years before Joseph Gill started working there; Robert Morgan received N£70 in compensation (UKNA, CO 186/6: 22 December 1767). As executors, JPP and Charles and John Morgan sold land and 40 enslaved people belonging to the late Morgan to Charles and John Morgan's nephew, Edmund Seymour (ECSCRN, CR 1769-1771 f418, and PP, LB 3: JPP to Messrs John and Charles Morgan, 24 July 1771). At the time of the sale, the people on Robert Morgan's estate were the men London, Marlborough, Philip, Fairplay, David, Goliah, Paul, Moses, Alexander, Cromwell, Solomon, Kilkenny, Simon, Franswa, John, Cambridge, Ned, Samson, Wally; the boys Jacob, Frank, Halliday, Jingo, Scipio, Joy; the women Fanny Cox, Netta, Moll, Betty Cudjoe, Cubba, Nancy, Susannah, Chloe, Beck, Gilliant; and the girls Santagne, Mimba, Catherine, Madam, and Hago (CR 1771-1773 ff1-3; also BULSC, DM 792).

⁶²⁰ PP, AB 20 Joseph Gill's a/c

⁶²¹ PP, AB 20 John Boddie's a/c and Joseph Gill's a/c

⁶²² PP, AB 20 Joseph Gills's a/c

⁶²³ Pares, R *A West India Fortune* p142

⁶²⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to Messrs Houston, 22 May 1771

⁶²⁵ BRO, 39654 (2)

⁶²⁶ PP, LB 3: JPP to Simon Pretor, 29 March 1773

behalf. By 1773 Gill & McGill were in debt to at least one company⁶²⁷ and joined the many businesses that owed money to the Bristol owners of the ship *Nevis Planter* although, compared to some others, their debt was very minor.⁶²⁸ In the hope of clearing their accounts Gill & McGill turned to cotton. They purchased it 'daily' and consigned it to one of their creditors,⁶²⁹ but these would have been small amounts, grown mostly in the low-lying areas by enslaved or freed people.

Despite their precarious finances, Gill & McGill had faith in their undertaking, and they diversified from buying and selling goods into other activities. They sought to invest in a 120-acre plantation which Richard Stanley was trying to purchase in St John Figtree⁶³⁰ and they acquired a brig intended for the Virginia traffic. This meant that they could avoid the inconvenience and expense of getting provisions shipped through St Kitts and engage directly with North American companies.⁶³¹ In addition to receiving supplies from America, they also received goods from England. Some of these JPP organised during his trip in 1774.⁶³²

During JPP's absence abroad, Joseph Gill acted as his attorney and oversaw his plantation affairs. This was an opportunity for Gill to repay his cousin's trust, support and backing. Ever since he came to Nevis Gill had been in debt to him: his cousin had paid his passage and travelling expenses⁶³³ and not only employed him on Mountravers and at Morgan's but had then put up the money for the clerkship in St Kitts. His kinsman had also tried, unsuccessfully, to procure him his first public appointment as a customs waiter.⁶³⁴ In 1774, during JPP's stay in England, Gill repeated his appeal for JPP to use his connections to secure a situation for him or, failing that, to lend him the money so that he could purchase a post,⁶³⁵ but as yet nothing had come of his ambition.

Gill & McGill are known to have bought two men from JPP; Billey Coker, who may have served on their brig, and Prince from the Gold Coast. This purchase on 22 March 1775 turned out to be the last business the company conducted before the partnership was dissolved. Gill & McGill had failed. The two young men owed money on Richard Stanley's plantation venture, they owed JPP money from a cargo he had underwritten and they owed money to at least two companies. These debts were substantial and involved convoluted transactions: Gill & McGill had arrears of £2,700 with the company of Alexander Johnson & Son who had called on JPP to pay part of it, which he did. As a result, Gill & McGill then owed JPP this amount (£1,594) and, as part-payment, consigned 57 hogsheads of sugar on JPP's behalf to another company, Kilby & Syme in London. Kilby & Syme, however, refused to pay JPP for these 57 hogsheads on the grounds that they themselves were owed a large sum by Gill & McGill. The partners denied this and the whole affair ended with JPP having to seek legal redress from Kilby & Syme.⁶³⁶

But Gill & McGill not only owed money to others, they also suffered from their customers' bad debts. McGill sought legal redress, took over thirty people to court.⁶³⁷ As long as they had no money coming in from their debtors, then they could not honour their bills and it was difficult to keep afloat, particularly as everyone wanted immediate payment. This, as JPP observed, led to 'a general distress throughout the island'.⁶³⁸ Merchants and planters in Nevis were struggling but in other islands, too, many faced financial ruin. In an attempt to dodge his creditors, one man on Antigua, a Mr Warner, even went so far as trying to flee to Danish St Croix. His story was making the rounds: he had packed

⁶²⁷ PP, LB 3: JPP to John Willcocks, 25 August 1773

⁶²⁸ BRO, 39654 (2)

⁶²⁹ PP, LB 3: JPP to John Willcocks, 25 August 1773

⁶³⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1776-1777 f378

⁶³¹ PP, LB 3: JPP to Joshua Fisher & Sons, 29 July 1773

⁶³² PP, LB 3: JPP to Joseph McGill (sic), Nevis, 4 October 1774

⁶³³ PP, AB 20 Henry Forrest's a/c

⁶³⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to Thomas Lucas, 20 April 1771

⁶³⁵ PP, MSS in Numbered Folders (Folder 6): Unsigned letter [but from Joseph Gill] to JPP, 24 September 1774

⁶³⁶ BULSC, DM792: Indenture Gill and Robert McGill of Nevis, Merchants, and JPP, 18 February 1775

⁶³⁷ ECSCRN, King's Bench and Common Pleas Cause List 1776-1779, Book of Wills 1763-1787 ff414-15

⁶³⁸ PP, LB 3: JPP to Simon Pretor, 1 June 1775

up all his plate, linen and other valuables, hid them at his still house in 'a most obscure and secret place on the bay', and then sent a vessel in the night to pick up everything, including all his enslaved people. He almost got away but – and now came the punchline - contrary winds had foiled Warner's escape.⁶³⁹

For Joseph Gill escape was not an option; undeterred by his business failure and supported by his well-to-do cousin (JPP: 'I shall assist him...as he is a young man on whom we can depend'),⁶⁴⁰ he intended to continue as a merchant and was going to embark for England 'to endeavour to get a cargo of goods'.⁶⁴¹ But he changed his mind and instead set off to North America. First he went to Norfolk in Virginia⁶⁴² and travelled from there to Philadelphia. Although he had with him a letter of introduction to JPP's old friends Joshua Fisher and his sons Samuel, Thomas and Miers,⁶⁴³ he travelled as a businessman in his own right, to make his own contacts. However, his efforts to strengthen his connections with North America were ill-timed; the American War of Independence was only months away. While in America, he saw at first hand the ardour with which the colonies were trying to free themselves from Britain: the streets of Philadelphia were filled with the sounds of 'drums & fifes, with the words Liberty & Death echoing from every corner.'⁶⁴⁴ Among all this passion Joseph Gill felt intimidated: it was 'dangerous for a man to speak his sentiments, if he leans towards Government and utters a word in favour of it, tarring and feathering is his lot.'⁶⁴⁵

Unscathed, he returned to Nevis and some time after this trip embarked on another business partnership, this time with James Nisbet. A son of the Nevis planter Walter Nisbet senior, James was in December 1775 appointed as Deputy Waiter,⁶⁴⁶ a post to which Gill still aspired although at some stage, certainly before the end of 1781, he finally received his first public appointment as Deputy Collector of Customs.⁶⁴⁷ His standing in the community was such that he served as a member of a Grand Jury⁶⁴⁸ and was among those called upon to value an estate, nearby Richard Oliver's. As was customary, three men were charged with carrying out the appraisal and Gill worked with his neighbours Edward Parris and John Ward.⁶⁴⁹

While engaged with his new joint venture, old business from his time with Robert McGill caught up with him: judgment was made against the partners for the money they had promised Richard Stanley. They were among several investors who had pledged varying sums so that Stanley could purchase a plantation but without their money, Stanley, unable to pay, also had judgment made against him and lost the property to Daniel Ross, who acquired it in August 1776.⁶⁵⁰

Two years later, in August 1778, Joseph Gill got involved in another plantation venture although only peripherally and only in a legal capacity. It involved the estate that lay to the east of Mountravers and later became known as Woodland. JPP held a mortgage on it and when the then owner, Samuel Woodley, was in arrears, JPP initiated a lawsuit that resulted in Woodley putting up for sale his only remaining stake in Woodland. Woodley still had the right to redeem his property as long as he repaid his arrears within a reasonable amount of time after the due date set by JPP, and it was this 'equity of redemption' that was up for sale. Encouraged by JPP, Gill successfully bid for it at the public auction in Charlestown. It was in JPP's interest for his cousin to acquire it rather than a hostile planter who could force foreclosure because that could result in money owed to JPP going to other creditors who

⁶³⁹ PP, LB 4: JPP to William Coker, 10 July 1775

⁶⁴⁰ PP, LB 3: JPP to Simon Pretor, 10 April 1775

⁶⁴¹ PP, LB 3: JPP to Simon Pretor, 10 April 1775

⁶⁴² PP, LB 4: JPP to Simon Pretor, 10 July 1775

⁶⁴³ PP, LB 3: JPP to Joshua Fisher, Philadelphia, 6 May 1775

⁶⁴⁴ PP, LB 4: JPP to Simon Pretor, 26 July 1775

⁶⁴⁵ PP, LB 4: JPP to John Hayne, [July 1775]

⁶⁴⁶ UKNA, CO 186/7

⁶⁴⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1778-1783 f592

⁶⁴⁸ UKNA, CO 186/6

⁶⁴⁹ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1763-1787 ff618-29; see also ff613-14

⁶⁵⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1776-1777 f378

also had demands against Woodley. Buying Woodley's 'equity of redemption' gave Gill the right to occupy and work the estate until the mortgage was paid off but because JPP thought that Gill was unable to finance the upkeep, JPP, as mortgagee, took possession of Woodland. For Gill's part, JPP speculated that his cousin would make money on the deal at a later point, when, with luck, he would be able to sell the equity of redemption at a profit.⁶⁵¹ In fact, in 1783 Joseph Gill sold it to JPP.⁶⁵²

Within days of the auction, Gill went to England - unusually, he set off from St Eustatia and travelled via Holland.⁶⁵³ He found his family much reduced. Since he first left Britain he had lost two of his sisters and his mother. His sister Mary had died, not quite 17 years old, in 1769, within months of Gill arriving in Nevis, and Sarah had died in 1775 at the age of 18. When JPP was staying in England in 1774, he had predicted that she was 'not long for this world',⁶⁵⁴ and Sarah did indeed die within a few months of JPP's visit to Chard. The family had then living with them Mrs Gill's sister, Mrs Cook – Joseph Gill's and JPP's maternal aunt. Her husband had 'turned out a very idle and worthless fellow' and when her son, Gill's and JPP's cousin, had been apprenticed as a seafarer to Captain Henry Forrest,⁶⁵⁵ JPP had fitted him out with a coat and Mrs Pinney contributed half a dozen shirts she had made for him.⁶⁵⁶ After a year JPP then arranged for young Cook to work on the *London Merchant*.⁶⁵⁷ Although he appears not to have contributed financially, the Cooks were among the many relatives for whom JPP felt responsible. He took an interest in their welfare and used his influence wherever he could.

Less than a year after his sister Sarah had been buried Joseph Gill's mother had also died. She was in her late fifties.⁶⁵⁸ His father was still alive, and probably also his sister Elizabeth. His brother Michael, then in his mid-teens, was a candidate for a career in the West Indies, and in June 1777 JPP had asked him to come out to Nevis. Thomas Arthurton had left the plantation a few months earlier and JPP may have had in mind to replace him with Gill's brother. Michael was supposed to come to Nevis for twelve months, and JPP offered to provide his board and lodging: 'I have large house and keep a regular table'. Joseph Gill supported JPP but had bigger ambitions for his brother. He considered placing him under the tutelage of a lawyer or a doctor, and by introducing Michael to the 'best company' in the island, a trip to Nevis could indeed have started the young man's career. While Joseph Gill had thought that 'an excursion of this kind cannot fail being of infinite service to him',⁶⁵⁹ Michael had remained in England and, if during his visit to England, Gill repeated the appeal to come to the West Indies, his brother still refused. Instead, as requested by JPP, Gill recruited a new overseer for Mountravers, John Andrews, and returned with him in the spring of 1780. Just as travellers took produce from Nevis to England, he brought for JPP a present of English produce: a cask of butter, sent by farmer Sam Hitchcock from the Pillmarsh Estate.⁶⁶⁰ Because his partnership with James Nisbet was still ongoing, Gill would also have brought back with him goods for trading. Like Gill & McGill, the company of Gill & Nisbet dealt in a variety of merchandise.⁶⁶¹ Soon after his return, the partners bought from the merchant James Begg a black woman, Lucy, and her daughter Abba and sold to JPP a seasoned camel. Both 'commodities' were worth about the same: mother and daughter cost N£110, the camel N£120. Although their business had failed, there was no animosity between Joseph Gill and Robert McGill, and Gill called on his former partner to witness the transaction with Begg.⁶⁶²

⁶⁵¹ PP, LB 4: JPP to Simon Pretor, 19 August 1778

⁶⁵² PP, Misc Vols 7 1783-1794 List of Deeds and Papers at Nevis p18

⁶⁵³ PP, LB 4: JPP to Simon Pretor, 30 July 1778

⁶⁵⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to Joseph McGill (sic), Nevis, 4 October 1774

⁶⁵⁵ PP, LB 4: JPP to Simon Pretor, 26 July 1775

⁶⁵⁶ PP, LB 4: JPP to Simon Pretor, 10 July 1775

⁶⁵⁷ PP, LB 4: JPP to Simon Pretor, 6 July 1776

⁶⁵⁸ SRO, D/P Chard 2/1/2 Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1729-1812

⁶⁵⁹ PP, LB 4: JPP, Nevis, to Simon Pretor, 12 June 1777

⁶⁶⁰ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Simon Pretor, 30 March 1780

⁶⁶¹ Stapleton Cotton MSS 16 I: Stapleton Account for 1777/78 (Pers. comm., Brian Littlewood, 1 September 2003)

⁶⁶² PP, AB 26 Gill & Nisbet's a/c, and ECSCRN, CR 1778-1783 f390

The woman whom Joseph Gill had bought ten years earlier, Lissey, had died some time before 1781 and probably also her son John. But Lissey had given birth to two more children, Sally and Patty. They were mulattoes and almost certainly Gill's daughters. He manumitted the girls on 2 December 1781 and chose as witnesses John Chapel and John Menzies⁶⁶³ (he later became Comptroller of Customs and, with Francis Galpine, acted as Gill's attorney).⁶⁶⁴ Apart from Sally and Patty, undoubtedly Joseph Gill had another child, a mestizo son called Joseph. The boy's mother, Penny Markham, was a mulatto about twenty years Gill's junior and belonged to one of the Ladies at the Cedar Trees, Elizabeth Weekes, and it was Elizabeth Weekes, who on 13 February 1783 manumitted Joseph.⁶⁶⁵ Penny Markham was then still enslaved but Gill bought her for N£100 with the intention of freeing her.⁶⁶⁶

Managing Mountravers

Around the time the boy Joseph was manumitted, Gill sold the equity of redemption on Woodland to JPP,⁶⁶⁷ and on 6 July 1783, the day after his cousin with his family and their servants had left for England, Gill took over the management of Mountravers. If they had not already done so, it is very likely that at this point Penny Markham and her son Joseph moved in with him. His business partner James Nisbet, meanwhile, on the recommendation of his brother, briefly acted as attorney to the Stapleton plantations in Nevis⁶⁶⁸ but wrote only one letter and then moved to St Kitts.⁶⁶⁹ The suggestion is that he might not have been suited for, or been interested in, plantation business, and perhaps this was also the case with Joseph Gill. Pares wrote that 'The moment his employer's back was turned, Gill went to pieces'⁶⁷⁰ and although, in essence, this was true, it did not happen until the following year. Joseph Gill did the work that was required of him - hired out surplus people, apprenticed others, oversaw building projects – and kept his cousin informed of plantation affairs. Otherwise, however, he went quiet on him. Gill did not send his cousin any news or gossip from the island, which made JPP jittery, and because of Gill's 'disinclination to communicate the occurrences (sic) that happen on the island', JPP had to turn to his friend John Patterson for information. Patterson, however, was not always as forthcoming a correspondent as JPP wished, either, and JPP charged him with 'tantalising us, by saying there are a number of deaths and marriages etc etc without mentioning the names.'⁶⁷¹ But JPP also admitted that, even when he was in Nevis, Gill had always been the last person to be informed of anything that took place.⁶⁷² This may indicate that Gill was perhaps a very private man who kept himself to himself and away from small-island-gossip, and that he preferred to remain ignorant as to what went on around him. Knowing this, choosing his cousin as informant and supplier of news was a miscalculation on JPP's part.

Almost as soon as JPP had left Nevis, he had felt an 'inclination' to send out a new overseer. This man was to succeed Samuel Bennett in case he left Mountravers,⁶⁷³ but JPP had not followed this up and Bennett had remained in post until Gill sacked him in 1784. Gill employed John Keep as a temporary boiling house watch but after Bennett left Gill remained short-staffed. He was manager and overseer rolled into one until he began to be assisted by James Williams, a young Welshman who, by chance, had ended up on Mountravers.

Perhaps it was the sheer amount of work, combined with a lack of commitment to the job and a frail mental constitution, which caused or, at least, contributed to Joseph Gill's failure as a manager. Right

⁶⁶³ ECSCRN, CR 1778-1783 f592

⁶⁶⁴ ECSCRN, CR 1785-1787 f422

⁶⁶⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1783-1785 f13

⁶⁶⁶ PP, LB 8: JPP to Michael Pretor Gill, 5 February 1787

⁶⁶⁷ PP, Misc Vols 7 1783-1794 List of Deeds and Papers at Nevis p18

⁶⁶⁸ Stapleton Cotton MSS 9: James Nisbet to Richard Neave (forwarded to Catherine Stapleton)

⁶⁶⁹ Stapleton Cotton MSS 18: James Nisbet, St Kitts, to Catherine Stapleton 28 August 1784

⁶⁷⁰ Pares, R *A West India Fortune* p142

⁶⁷¹ PP, LB 5: JPP, Bristol, to John Patterson, 31 March 1784

⁶⁷² PP, LB 5: JPP, Bath, to John Patterson, 12 February 1784

⁶⁷³ PP, LB 6: JPP to Joseph Gill, Nevis, 27 August 1783

from the beginning, the sugars he sent to England were of such poor quality that they gave cause for concern,⁶⁷⁴ and then he failed to send his cousin the account books. Evidence of his increasing confusion and uncertainty can be found in his accounts: lines are crossed out, elsewhere entries are corrected, and his handwriting becomes more scrawled.⁶⁷⁵ When he continued to fail to keep his cousin informed about plantation matters, JPP's irritation turned to exasperation.⁶⁷⁶ A year after leaving Nevis intelligence from various sources reached Bristol that not everything was well at Mountravers (one of the informants may have been James Tobin; hotfoot from Nevis he and his family had visited the Pinneys).⁶⁷⁷ The reports so worried JPP that he wanted to leave for the West Indies immediately, but, as yet, was unable to do so and Gill was asked to continue until JPP arrived. Still without an overseer, Gill was promised a replacement but in the meantime JPP thought it would be sufficient if Gill worked under John Patterson's direction.⁶⁷⁸ However, Patterson (Grace Patterson's son with whom JPP's daughter Betsey was staying in London) returned to England,⁶⁷⁹ and JPP's attorney John Taylor had to step in, and it was he who arranged for an old Mountravers hand, Thomas Arthurton, to instruct James Williams as the replacement overseer.⁶⁸⁰

That was in 1785. Gill then owned six people; the year earlier he had paid tax on five and the year before that on four, unnamed people.⁶⁸¹ One of the six was Penny Markham. As yet, he had not manumitted her. He was unable to do so because he did not legally own her; he still owed Elizabeth Weeks the purchase money. No doubt his mistress was disappointed that the promised manumission had not happened and this would have been a source of conflict in their relationship – an added pressure for Gill.

In August 1785 James Williams officially started work as overseer. Gill had been providing board for him at N£40 a year (not gratis, as he later claimed), but Gill now 'declined feeding him any longer'. He stocked up on rum (he bought 110 gallons) and probably abandoned his work altogether, leaving Williams in charge. And then, 'a day or two before 31st December 1785 Mr Joseph Gill left the estate ... to reside in Town'.⁶⁸² The letter telling him William Coker was on his way to relieve him of the plantation management would have reached him just about the time he went to live in Charlestown. On 18 January 1786 William Coker took up his post.

That was the end of Joseph Gill's career as plantation manager. It seems that he had become unbalanced and had disintegrated under the burden of responsibility. In fact 'for many months' his 'too free use of rum' ⁶⁸³ had rendered him incapable of managing the estate and now everything was gone: his job, his home and his future. If he had so desired, he could have enjoyed employment for life - there was no chance of his cousin returning to Nevis to manage his property, and little chance of any of the young Pinneys wanting to get involved.

Joseph Gill had let himself down, and his cousin. JPP had placed so much confidence in him. To their uncle he had written that Gill's conduct deserved 'every encouragement',⁶⁸⁴ but it had all gone so very wrong. JPP wrote about his 'unhappy state of mind' and his 'strange behaviour',⁶⁸⁵ suggesting that Gill may have suffered from depression, perhaps even had a breakdown. From what his cousin wrote about him it is certain that his mind was fragile and that he already was a strong drinker when he started work. Alcohol, according to JPP, aggravated the situation and tipped him over the edge: 'My

⁶⁷⁴ PP, LB 5: JPP, Stratford, to Joseph Gill, 5 January 1784

⁶⁷⁵ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790

⁶⁷⁶ PP, LB 6: JPP to Joseph Gill, Nevis, 25 September 1784

⁶⁷⁷ PP, LB 6: JPP to John Patterson, Nevis, 25 September 1784

⁶⁷⁸ PP, LB 6: JPP to John Patterson, Nevis, 9 February 1785

⁶⁷⁹ PP, LB 7: JPP to John Patterson at Mr Bodicott's, Bath, 1785

⁶⁸⁰ PP, AB 35 and AB 30 Joseph Gill's a/c and Thomas Arthurton's a/c

⁶⁸¹ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790

⁶⁸² PP, AB 35 Joseph Gill's a/c and AB 31 Joseph Gill's a/c

⁶⁸³ PP, LB 6: JPP to John Taylor, 29 December 1785

⁶⁸⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to Simon Pretor, 18 February 1775

⁶⁸⁵ PP, LB 6: JPP to William Coker, Nevis, 29 December 1785

affairs were too weighty for his mind – the want of method brought him into so perplexed a situation, that he was induced to put an additional quantity to his already strong grog, which quite upset him.’⁶⁸⁶

A serious offence in JPP’s view was the mess Gill had made of the carefully constructed system of book-keeping, and although it seems that the accounts had overwrought him, more generally, the sheer amount of work that was required of him had oppressed him. In particular, he had struggled with discipline on the plantation. He had already shown a certain weakness when he had allowed Mulatto Polly to hire another woman for her own benefit, and this yielding to an enslaved person’s wishes may have been indicative of his style of plantation management – allowing people some slack, not keeping too tight a reign, bending the rules. And as long as the overseer was there to maintain discipline, as long as Samuel Bennett did the flogging, he could detach himself from the brutality of the plantation regime. However, after he had fired Bennett, Joseph Gill alone was responsible for controlling and chastising the people. When things went wrong he had to sort them out himself and his work became, literally, ‘hands-on’. Tellingly, soon after Bennett’s departure and, no doubt, in an effort to reassert his authority, he resorted to uncompromising, brutal punishment, and perhaps it was this conflict between, on the one hand, wanting to be an easy-going manager and, on the other hand, believing that he had to dole out harsh measures, that caused, or at least contributed to, his failure.

Joseph Gill, ‘intoxicated and outrageous’,⁶⁸⁷ had lost his grip on life and he would have needed much help and support from his friends and from his mistress, Penny Markham. JPP inferred that Gill had colluded with her in doing him out of plantation supplies which Gill had sold to her: ‘Seeing the credit for flour sold his Mulatto W--- Penny Markham from the Estate, it is possible she might have made free with articles not her Masters ...’⁶⁸⁸ This carefully worded accusation was in stark contrast to JPP’s reactions when he later claimed to have uncovered the abuses carried out by James Williams’s mistress, and although he did moan to Coker about Gill’s book-keeping (‘Such confusion in accounts never before met with’),⁶⁸⁹ his attitude to Gill was altogether more tolerant and gentle. JPP blamed Gill’s state of mind for ‘his strange conduct in the management of my affairs’ - ⁶⁹⁰ another way of saying, perhaps, that mental illness of some kind lay at the root of Gill’s inability to function as a plantation manager. These inner conflicts may have added to his drinking, which, in turn, clouded his judgment.

Back in England

Gill packed up, gave Penny Markham’s owner, Elizabeth Weekes, a bond for N£100 so that she could manumit his mistress,⁶⁹¹ and then left Nevis.

Following up JPP’s invitation to visit him, he went to Bristol and took lodgings in the White Hart Inn. On Tuesday, 11 July 1786, he turned up at JPP’s rented house in Park Street - dressed scruffily, with the swollen face of an alcoholic. JPP’s black manservant Pero gave him a cool welcome and bid him to step into the parlour. He declined, promising, instead, to call again later in the day. He appeared uncomfortable. He told Pero that soon he intended to go to London. He did not call back.⁶⁹²

Gill may well have gone to London but by February 1787 he had returned to Chard. His aunt, Mrs Cook, who had lived there with the family,⁶⁹³ had died in the meantime; Gill had read JPP’s letter

⁶⁸⁶ JPP wrote this to an unknown correspondent in early 1786 (Pares, *R A West India Fortune* p143).

⁶⁸⁷ PP, LB 6: JPP to William Coker, 16 January 1787

⁶⁸⁸ PP, LB 6: JPP to Wm Coker, Nevis, 28 June 1786

⁶⁸⁹ PP, LB 6: JPP to William Coker, 16 January 1787

⁶⁹⁰ PP, LB 6: JPP to Ann Weekes, Nevis, 6 March 1786

⁶⁹¹ PP, LB 8: JPP to Simon Pretor, 24 August 1787

⁶⁹² PP, LB 7: JPP to Simon Pretor, 17 July 1786

⁶⁹³ PP, LB 4: JPP to Simon Pretor, 10 July 1775

announcing her death in an alcoholic haze. In the spring of 1785, while he was still working on Mountravers, Aunt Cook had departed this life with the 'tranquillity of a good Christian'.⁶⁹⁴

While he was in Chard, Gill gave William Coker power of attorney so that he could sell the people he still owned in Nevis. He believed that one of them was Penny Markham because news that Elizabeth Weekes had, indeed, freed her, had not yet reached England. Dated 31 May 1786, Penny Markham's manumission document had been witnessed by William Coker,⁶⁹⁵ and this time Gill was at the receiving end of other people's slack communication. Neither Elizabeth Weekes nor Coker had informed him that the manumission had been completed. Believing Penny Markham still enslaved, Gill did not yet want to sell her; instead she was to be hired out for as much as Coker saw fit.⁶⁹⁶ It took more than a year for news to reach him that she had been freed already.⁶⁹⁷

In April, when he saw JPP, Gill 'was quite collected and in good health'⁶⁹⁸ but a month later he was an inmate in the Halstock Lunatic Asylum.⁶⁹⁹ Undoubtedly JPP had arranged his admittance. He was familiar with the area: his mother's family had come from Halstock and he owned farms in the village. A Lunatic Asylum of sorts had been in existence in Halstock for over half a century and was run by several members of the Mercer family, one of whom was Dr Justinian Mercer, a former ship's surgeon.⁷⁰⁰ A private institution, it was subject to regulations and inspections,⁷⁰¹ and the reports on the Halstock Lunatic Asylum generally suggest that the inmates lived in reasonable conditions and that the institution was well run. One report spoke of inmates being 'clean and decent in apparel and well accommodated with all the necessities of life',⁷⁰² but the care of mentally ill patients was still very much in the early stages and Gill's treatment probably amounted to no more than secure containment, complete abstinence and a few weeks of rest.

After a brief spell in the lunatic asylum he went to stay at JPP's country house and farm Pillmarsh (Racedown Lodge)⁷⁰³ but by early August it was rumoured that he had set off for Nevis.⁷⁰⁴ But this was not the case and two months later he was still in England. For a while no one knew where he was but as soon as Coker had been instructed to 'suspend sale of his negroes',⁷⁰⁵ Joseph Gill turned up in Bristol. Again he 'talked of returning soon to Nevis' and then disappeared once more.⁷⁰⁶ Presumably with a view to get passage to the West Indies, he went to London but was robbed of his money and at some stage ended up in a Round House,⁷⁰⁷ a small prison used for the temporary detention mostly of drunks or vagrants. Three months later, in January 1788, he was back in Bristol, 'in a most ragged condition', and this time he was sent to board with one of JPP's tenants at Halstock. To provide money for Gill, JPP instructed Coker to sell the people, after all, but when JPP went to Nevis in 1790, 'the whole of the effects' turned out to be a mere £12:7:2.⁷⁰⁸ It appears that Gill's creditors had staked their claims as soon as the people had been sold. Gill was in debt to at least one individual, the St Kitts merchant Samuel Lynch,⁷⁰⁹ owed tax on his people to the island's treasury⁷¹⁰ and may

⁶⁹⁴ PP, LB 6: JPP to Joseph Gill, Nevis, 7 April 1785

⁶⁹⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1785-1787 f224

⁶⁹⁶ PP, LB 6: JPP to William Coker, 26 April 1787

⁶⁹⁷ PP, LB 8: JPP to Michael Pretor Gill, 5 February 1787, LB 6: JPP to Wm Coker, Nevis, 6 March 1787, and LB 8: JPP to Simon Pretor, 24 August 1787

⁶⁹⁸ PP, LB 6: JPP to William Coker, 26 April 1787

⁶⁹⁹ Pers. comm., Pam Lemmey, 20 November 2000, citing DHC, Quarter Sessions Records

⁷⁰⁰ Lemmey, Pam *A History of Halstock* p41 and p43

⁷⁰¹ Since Parliament had in 1774 introduced legislation for 'Regulating Mad Houses' private institutions had been subject to inspections. In London the College of Physicians issued licences, outside London this was done by Justices of the Peace (Bartlett, Peter *The Poor Law of Lunacy* p37).

⁷⁰² Lemmey, Pam *A History of Halstock* p43

⁷⁰³ JPP changed the name from Pylemarsh or Pillmarsh to Racedown Lodge in 1790 (Evans, Bergen and Hester Pinney 'Racedown and the Wordsworths' in *The Review of English Studies* Vol 3 No 29 (January 1932) p3).

⁷⁰⁴ PP, LB 8: JPP, Bristol, to Michael Pretor Gill, 9 August 1787

⁷⁰⁵ PP, LB 6: JPP to Wm Coker, Nevis, 10 October 1787

⁷⁰⁶ PP, LB 37: P & T to Alexander Houston & Co, Glasgow, 17 October 1787

⁷⁰⁷ Evans, Bergen and Hester Pinney 'Racedown and the Wordsworths' p14, quoting *Letters of the Wordsworth Family*, Letter XLVII, Vol 1 p106

⁷⁰⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 f247

⁷⁰⁹ PP, AB 30 and AB 35 Samuel Lynch's a/c

also have had unsettled bills with the Glasgow merchant house Alexander Houston & Co. They certainly were keen to get in touch with him.⁷¹¹ As his attorney Coker would have dealt with all his business but he was leaving Nevis and renounced Gill's power of attorney.⁷¹² The ever-obliging Captain Charles Maies stepped in and was appointed in his place.⁷¹³

When his father died in May 1791,⁷¹⁴ Joseph Gill had no money to pay for a tombstone. Instead, his uncle Simon Pretor had to step in and settle the bill.⁷¹⁵ Gill was then boarding with the farmer John Wakeley in Halstock but he left in the summer of 1792 and moved to Crewkerne (about eight miles east of Chard). There he was 'in the care of Mr Wills'. JPP sent him some money⁷¹⁶ and paid for him to be kitted out with new clothes, linen and 'sundry articles', which were supplied to him from Samuel Whitty's shop in Sherborne.⁷¹⁷ This kept JPP's money in the wider family because Gill and Whitty were related: Whitty had married Simon Pretor's daughter Mary, while Gill's brother Michael had married another daughter of Simon Pretor's, Martha.⁷¹⁸

Joseph Gill did not remain in Crewkerne for long. An opportunity arose for him to make himself useful and at JPP's invitation he moved to Racedown Lodge to oversee the brick-making business that was attached to JPP's country house. For about two years JPP's father-in-law William Burt Weekes had lived at Racedown, freely spending JPP's money on a whole array of necessary and unnecessary improvements, but Weekes had retired to Lyme Regis, and in October 1792 JPP put Gill in his place. At the same time as Gill moved in, Mrs and Mrs Hicks started work at Racedown. Sarah Hicks was to supervise the household, wash and mend Gill's clothes and provide him with board.⁷¹⁹ In addition to running the brickyard and looking after the house, Gill was to oversee the servants and, following JPP's accounting principles, he was 'to open an account for each person in this book'. The Pinneys' coachman David Williams brought sundry items from Bristol, such as coarse servants' sheets and servants' towels,⁷²⁰ and Gill settled into a quiet, but not necessarily dull, life in the country. If he needed help, John Perkins of Henley Farm was at hand,⁷²¹ about five miles away (eight km) towards Crewkerne, and if he wanted company, easy walks of less than two miles would lead him to Sadorow, where the Bragg family occupied a lovely big house (one of their family members had apprenticed Tom Peaden to John Frederick Pinney), and to Thorncombe, Thomas Peaden's home village. And just up the road was Blackdown, the residence of another John Pinney - known as the 'Blackdown Pinney'.⁷²²

⁷¹⁰ PP, AB 36 Joseph Gill's a/c

⁷¹¹ PP, LB 37: P & T to Alexander Houston & Co, Glasgow, 17 October 1787

⁷¹² ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 f247

⁷¹³ ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 Folio number missing

It appears that Maies started plying the Nevis route only after Gill had left the island and the two men may not have known each other. It is possible that the link between Gill and Maies was the farmer whom Gill was lodging with, John Wakeley: he and Maies may have been related through a Charles Maies Walkly who served as Second Mate on Maies's ship, the *Nevis* (PP, AB 40).

⁷¹⁴ SRO, D/P Chard 2/1/2 Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1729-1812

⁷¹⁵ PP, AB 41 Simon Pretor & Sons a/c

⁷¹⁶ PP, LB 38: JPP to Joseph Gill, Crewkerne, 30 July 1792

⁷¹⁷ PP, AB 40

⁷¹⁸ Simon Pretor's third daughter, Elizabeth, married a surgeon, Dr Richard Pew, who also became a partner in the Pretor enterprises (PP, LB 19: JPP to Dr Pews at Messrs Pretor Pews (sic) & Whitty, Sherborne, 28 January 1805; Misc Vols 48 Misc Notes and <http://www.dorset-opc.com/SherborneFiles/SherborneDir1823.htm>).

⁷¹⁹ PP, AB 2 Joseph Gill's a/c of Racedown Lodge; also AB 40: 5 March 1793, and AB 46 William and Sarah Hicks's a/c

⁷²⁰ PP, AB 2: A List of Articles Brought from Bristol August 1792

⁷²¹ PP, AB 2: JPP to Gill, undated

⁷²² Anna Maria Pinney wrote that, according to JPP, between him and John Pinney of Blackdown 'There was no relationship, but that the name had been taken. He was a manufacturer at Thorncombe, and not always on terms with his wealthy connection' (PP, Misc Vols 36 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 1).

According to William A Pinney, John Pinney of Blackdown was the son of John Pinney of Hewood. He had inherited Blackdown which Azariah Pinney of Bettiscombe had purchased in 1746 from Revd Joseph Paull and his sister-in-law Sarah Paull. They had inherited it from their father, Mathew Paull. Azariah Pinney was married to Mathew Paull's other daughter, Jane Paull (AB 4 and William A Pinney *The Pinneys*).

Gill enjoyed other distractions: he subscribed to the *Town & Country Magazine*,⁷²³ had access to nearly a thousand books in the library and received a good number of visitors who came to stay. This included the disgraced William Burt Weekes who by then was living with the Cokers at Woodcutts. (In the meantime Coker, too, had been dismissed from his post at Mountravers and had returned to live in the West Country.) Weekes had stored his old Montserrat rum in the cellar at Racedown and came to pick up a dozen and a half bottles and some sacks of oats before leaving for Woodcutts.⁷²⁴

When Weekes had lived in Lyme Regis, Gill had stayed there for a week over the Christmas period⁷²⁵ but just before the following Christmas Gill set off to visit his recently-widowed uncle in Sherborne.⁷²⁶ Gill remained with Simon Pretor for the next three months.⁷²⁷ His stay caused great unease in the family. JPP thought that Gill's residence with Uncle Pretor must have been 'highly displeasing to both of his daughters',⁷²⁸ Elizabeth and Mary. The reason for their displeasure may simply have been Gill's personality, his excessive drinking or his mental state, but it is also possible that somehow he was implicated in, or held responsible for, his brother's separation from his wife Martha, their sister. His brother Michael Gill had married Martha Pretor in May 1789⁷²⁹ but after just three years they had separated. In quick succession Martha had given birth to two boys, Pretor and Samuel, and within weeks of their separation in August 1792 Martha had died.⁷³⁰ Shortly afterwards, Michael Gill also lost one of his sons, Pretor.⁷³¹ On the day young Pretor was buried, Samuel was baptised,⁷³² and with JPP and Mary Pretor's husband, Samuel Whitty, acting as the child's guardians, the boy was brought up by his mother's family in Sherborne.

By 1794, when Gill was firmly ensconced for three months at Uncle Pretor's, his brother Michael had gone to North America. There he conducted business with the Philadelphia firm of Samuel & Miers Fisher and the bank in Sherborne that Simon Pretor owned in partnership with his sons-in-law Samuel Whitty and Richard Pew.⁷³³ Like his older brother before him, Michael Gill appears to have opted for a commercial career. After refusing the offer of a post on Mountravers, Michael had begged JPP for a position as a clerk in the Bristol counting house. JPP had been somewhat evasive,⁷³⁴ which was surprising, given how accommodating and generous he usually behaved towards his relatives. This may suggest that Michael was considered neither a safe pair of hands nor worthy of support. In 1797 Michael Pretor Gill was still in North America,⁷³⁵ where, presumably, he had started a new life. There was no further mention of him.

Gill had learnt from his experiences on Mountravers that maintaining records and keeping track of everything was important, and so he asked Mr Hicks 'to keep a journal of anything that should occur' during his absence. Later in the year, when Gill went back to Sherborne to amuse himself at the races, William Hicks was again called upon to deputise.⁷³⁶ Thomas Arthurton's sister-in-law had just visited Racedown with a lady friend from Lyme Regis,⁷³⁷ and in the autumn more visitors arrived: in September Fanny Coker stayed for a while with a woman called Nancy (this probably was another servant from Bristol, Ann Seymour),⁷³⁸ and in late October John Frederick and Charles Tobin 'came

⁷²³ PP, AB 3

⁷²⁴ PP, AB 2: 22 October 1793

⁷²⁵ PP, AB 2: 24 to 31 December 1792

⁷²⁶ PP, Dom Box B6-2: Unsigned and undated note

⁷²⁷ PP, AB 2

⁷²⁸ PP, Dom Box S2-5: JPP, Cove, to Jane Pinney, 10 March 1794

⁷²⁹ <http://www.opcdorset.org/SherborneFiles/SherborneMars1780-1799.htm>

⁷³⁰ PP, Dom Box B6-2

⁷³¹ <http://www.dorset-opc.com/SherborneFiles/SherborneBaps1790-1799.htm>

⁷³² PP, Cat 4 Misc Deeds 1764-1841

⁷³³ PP, AB 41 Expense a/c and Pretor, Pew & Whitty's a/c

⁷³⁴ PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii – Summary: Michael Pretor Gill, Sherborne, to JPP, Bristol, 12 January 1786

⁷³⁵ PP, Dom Box S1

⁷³⁶ PP, AB 2: 23 July 1794

⁷³⁷ PP, AB 2: 12 July 1794

⁷³⁸ PP, AB 2: 1 September 1794 and 20 September 1794

from Bristol and Sherborne in the gig with the coachman'.⁷³⁹ John Frederick had recently visited Nevis and, no doubt, Joseph Gill was eager to hear all the news from the island, including the details surrounding the dismissal of the manager who had succeeded Coker, Dr Thomas Pym Weekes.

But Gill would have listened with his mind befuddled by drink and drugs. During the week John Frederick and his friend stayed at Racedown, Charles Tobin made it his sport to get 'poor Joseph drunk every day' - ⁷⁴⁰ at least that was John Frederick's version. Gill suspected that *both* young men had laced his 'tea or drink' with laudanum,⁷⁴¹ a mixture of alcohol, opium and spices which, if taken in sufficient quantity, was hallucinogenic. Originally intended as a sedative and painkiller to combat symptoms of illnesses such as cholera and tuberculosis, laudanum and other opiates were widely available and extensively used, and misused. Drug-taking was not confined to Britain: while serving in Martinique, the physician Dr Leonard Gillespie noticed the abuse of opium and recorded how in the General Hospital a 'great many dysentery patients' took nightly draughts even when there was no medical necessity.⁷⁴² Sliding from therapeutic use to addiction was not uncommon; among the famous addicts of the day were the abolitionist William Wilberforce and the author Sir Water Scott. Wilberforce became hooked on opium in the late 1780s and turned into a lifelong user, and Scott ended up taking a potent mixture of laudanum and opium.⁷⁴³ Alcohol misuse was widespread, too, but while heavy drinking among the rich was considered dashing and urbane, the poor were censured for it.⁷⁴⁴

To earn his keep, Gill sold bricks and maintained the brickyard accounts,⁷⁴⁵ and did odd jobs around the house, such as forwarding an old parlour carpet to Mrs Hayne at Dorchester and the perambulator to Samuel Whitty in Sherborne.⁷⁴⁶ He oversaw the work of a few servants, including a gardener, John Guppy, who, with outside contractors, worked on improving and landscaping Racedown. Relations between Gill and the other staff were strained at times; they quarrelled over money and he accused them of being unreliable.⁷⁴⁷ Relations with the Pretors in Sherborne had also become strained and, not having been invited back to Sherborne, he spent Christmas 1794 at Racedown. The housekeeper had been ill for a while and Gill noted in his journal: 'Nothing remarkable happened. Sarah Hicks still very ill. – The Ground all covered w. snow the gardner does little indeed – tis what one may call dismal Xmas holidays.' Sarah Hicks died early in January⁷⁴⁸ and, following her death, another woman, Betty Dally, was employed in her place. She, however, did not live in the house. Her duties were to air it and keep it clean⁷⁴⁹ but did not extend to providing board for Gill. At this point he moved out of Racedown Lodge and went to stay with one of JPP's tenants. John Hitchcock junior leased Harlescombe farm,⁷⁵⁰ which lies a few hundred yards down the valley. Tom Peaden had worked there in the early 1760s.

For Gill's board and lodging JPP gave farmer Hitchcock eight shillings a week, the same he had paid Sarah Hicks.⁷⁵¹ Gill received free food and accommodation but he had no regular wages and

⁷³⁹ PP, AB 2: 20 October 1794

⁷⁴⁰ PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii – Summary: John Frederick Pinney, Oxford, to Azariah Pinney, 3 November 1794

⁷⁴¹ PP, AB 3

⁷⁴² UKNA, ADM 101/102/9

⁷⁴³ By 1818, Wilberforce took a four-grain pill of opium three times a day; Scott was on a daily dose of six grains of opium and 200 drops of laudanum (Hiney, Tom *On the Missionary Trail* p189, quoting opium statistics in Paul Johnson *The Birth of the Modern: World Society, 1815-1830* Weidenfeld & Nicholson 1991).

⁷⁴⁴ Murray, Venetia *High Society* p198

In the 1820s, addiction to alcohol among the urban poor led to the forming of temperance societies. With standardised working practices, factory owners did not tolerate absenteeism and required their workers to be on time and sober, while factory workers sought relief from the grind of their work in alcohol.

⁷⁴⁵ PP, AB 3

⁷⁴⁶ PP, AB 2: 2 March 1795

⁷⁴⁷ The gardener and Robert Buckham, in particular, appear to have upset Gill (PP, AB 2).

⁷⁴⁸ PP, AB 2

⁷⁴⁹ Evans, Bergen and Hester Pinney 'Racedown and the Wordsworths' p8

⁷⁵⁰ PP, AB 46 William and Sarah Hicks's a/c

According to Bergen Evans and Hester Pinney, Gill lived at Harlescombe all along but this is not borne out in the documents.

⁷⁵¹ PP, AB 46 Hitchcock jr's a/c

depended on whatever spending money he occasionally received from his uncle or his cousin.⁷⁵² He was always short of cash. In the first of several thinly disguised begging letters he elegantly solicited payment of whatever sum JPP saw fit to send and promised his cousin that it would be the last request: 'Do then my Dear Sir enclose me a Bill of whatever donation you may please and in that case you shall no more have any other application but an enquiry after the health of yourself and family ...'⁷⁵³ Another time, to curry favour, he made an inventory of the library at Racedown. This not only made him look busy but it gave him an excuse to make contact and, along with sending a complete list of books, he mentioned in passing that he 'stood in need of some cash'.⁷⁵⁴ This particular request was successful and he was rewarded with a Guinea.⁷⁵⁵

By then Gill was busy with preparations to receive lodgers at Racedown. John Frederick had been dispatched by his father to make a detailed inventory of the contents of the house - 'Mr Gill will aid you' –⁷⁵⁶ and JPP had anxiously enquired whether the new housekeeper, Betty Dally, had 'washed all the linen in time and cleaned the whole house properly, before the arrival of Mr Wordsworth', and whether the gardener had weeded all the hedges.⁷⁵⁷ Expected were the young poet William Wordsworth, his sister Dorothy and Basil Montagu, the illegitimate son of the Earl of Sandwich. Wordsworth had been invited to Bristol by the young Pinneys. Aza and John Frederick were moving on the fringes of radical circles in London and had arranged for the 25-year-old poet to live at Racedown.⁷⁵⁸ The lodgers arrived at midnight on 26 September 1795.⁷⁵⁹

For Wordsworth the previous two years had been very difficult. As yet not much of his work had been published and apart from being poor, homeless and having suffered several personal tragedies, he had grappled with his political beliefs. Like many others who sought fundamental social and political reforms he was attracted to the ideals of the French Revolution but was appalled by the subsequent bloody excesses.⁷⁶⁰ At Racedown many discussions must have taken place over the issues that exercised young radicals in the 1790s, including the rights and wrongs of the slave trade and the owning of people - and not only between the Wordsworths and Gill but also between the Wordsworths and the young Pinneys who occasionally came to stay. While their parents mostly kept out of the way, from January 1796 onwards the young Pinneys visited several times,⁷⁶¹ and, through Azariah, Wordsworth issued a heartfelt invitation to James Webbe Tobin (the son of JPP's business partner James Tobin) to visit him at Racedown. The poet forewarned him 'not to expect anything more than democratic fair (sic)'.⁷⁶² With the ironic use of 'democratic' Wordsworth was not only alluding to the simple life they were leading but also to the 'carrots cabbages turnips and other esculent vegetables' he and his sister had taken to growing in order to make ends meet.⁷⁶³ It is not known whether James Webbe Tobin followed up the invitation, but there certainly were other visitors to Racedown. They included the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who repaid an earlier visit of Wordsworth's, and John Pinney of Blackdown. The Blackdown Pinneys reciprocated with a meal at their house to which Gill was also invited.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁵² Joseph Gill once stated that he received a small army pension (PP, AB 3 Joseph Gill to Simon Pretor, undated) but so far it has not been possible to substantiate his claim.

⁷⁵³ PP, AB 2: Gill to JPP [Date cut from page]

⁷⁵⁴ PP, AB 2: Gill to JPP, 19 May? 1795? [Date cut from page]

⁷⁵⁵ PP, MSS in Numbered Folders (Folder 6)

⁷⁵⁶ PP, Dom Box S3-4: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, 15 August 1795

⁷⁵⁷ PP, LB 12: JPP, Sherborne, to Gill, 10 September 1795

⁷⁵⁸ PP, Dom Box S3-4: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, 15 August 1795

It has been suggested that the reason for Wordsworth living rent-free at Racedown may have been as a result of the young Pinneys' connection to Basil Montagu. He had earlier tutored Azariah. In his diary or letters to Bristol Gill did not mention Basil Montagu staying at Racedown (Evans, Bergen and Hester Pinney 'Racedown and the Wordsworths' p8 and p9).

⁷⁵⁹ PP, AB 3

⁷⁶⁰ Gill, Stephen 'William Wordsworth (1770-1850)' in *Oxford DNB*

⁷⁶¹ Johnston, Kenneth *The Hidden Wordsworth* pp487-88 and p491, quoting from Ernest de Selincourt (ed) *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years 1787-1805* Oxford Clarendon Press 1967 p169

⁷⁶² PP, LB 13: Azariah Pinney to James [Webbe] Tobin, Temple, London, 12 April 1796

⁷⁶³ Stephen Gill 'William Wordsworth'

⁷⁶⁴ Evans, Bergen and Hester Pinney 'Racedown and the Wordsworths' pp15-6

Joseph Gill and his lodgers appear to have got along amicably. He obliged Mr Wordsworth by lending him some (of his employer's) gilt edge paper and 'a Guinea of the Brick Money'⁷⁶⁵ but he seems to have been particularly fond of Miss Wordsworth. While her brother was away in London, three times Gill accompanied her to Crewkerne – each walk a roundtrip of 14 miles (22.5 km). Although he enjoyed the young people's company, it was only a matter of time before the Wordsworths would leave JPP's house. Once Azariah and John Frederick had confessed to their father that they had allowed the poet to stay rent-free,⁷⁶⁶ after nearly a year and half the arrangement came to an end. In July 1797 the Wordsworths left Racedown and went to stay with their friend Coleridge.⁷⁶⁷ The following year Coleridge delivered an anti-slave trade lecture at the Unitarian Chapel in Taunton;⁷⁶⁸ an event that would have made Gill and the Pinneys severely uncomfortable.

Gill, by then, was already depressed and at times lost touch with reality. He had suffered a very cold winter and the entries in his journal speak of great unhappiness at farmer Hitchcock's:

December 12th 1796 Truly most dismal weather.
 24th Very rough snowy weather –
 Hitch's Cow
 I cannot eat the beef – must therefore go away somewhere.
 26th Treatment at Harlescombe dam'd bad.
 Cruel hard to be starve'd to death in a Christian Country.⁷⁶⁹

He wrote long, incoherent letters, jotting down random thoughts. His mind appears to have been in disarray although it is also likely that drink and drugs caused, or contributed to, his ramblings. He had to hand a hearty supply of cider, the local beverage (the day John Frederick and Charles Tobin arrived, Gill had expectantly recorded that the gardener had begun making it), and laudanum would have been freely available for medicinal use. Some of his writings suggest a drugged mind. A lot of his scribbles are illegible; he not only re-used a one hundred-year-old account book but also wrote in a mixture of pencil and ink, sometimes over old text, squeezing his scrawled messages into the margins. The handwriting changed, he missed out words and crossed out some of the entries. All this reveals a lack of concentration, haste and inner turmoil. To give a flavour of his state of mind, this is an undated draft of a letter to 'J.W.ms' (James Williams):

General idea of my leaving the W.I. wrong it was a choice of my own. - Old acquaintances there I suppose are all dead. Recapitulation of former Lts [Letters] to Dr Weekes accuses the latter of never writing. - Books and Papers now left desired to be got possession of the result to write. Remembered everyone (Laudanum) – how our youngsters Give them a trifle - Mr W. Death uncertain. I have since found Porter was the Liquid it was exhibited or given in – This letter is all written in Confidence [inserted: of a friend], therefore I must depend on your Honour, not to let it out of your possession, [deleted: think your] [replaced by: the] better way [deleted: would] [replaced by: will] be to minute down, what I have requested you to do for me and then destroy it to fire - ?event accidents of laying about by which means it will meet no Eyes but your own.⁷⁷⁰

Another time he was afraid someone was interfering with the door locks and he asked JPP to come to Racedown quickly. Six weeks later – his mind clear now – he penned another note to Bristol: 'I am apprehensive on looking on the copy of the Ltr I forwarded you on November 10th that it would appear

⁷⁶⁵ PP, AB 3

⁷⁶⁶ PP, LB 13: Azariah Pinney to William Wordsworth, 25 March 1796

⁷⁶⁷ Stephen Gill 'William Wordsworth'

⁷⁶⁸ Bush, Robin A *Taunton Diary 1787-1987*

⁷⁶⁹ Evans, Bergen and Hester Pinney 'Racedown and the Wordsworths' p14

⁷⁷⁰ In the margins of this was noted by someone who, apparently, was searching for clues regarding William Wordsworth: 'Three times a W (first time W.ms then 2 more just W)'. It appears that the researcher mis-interpreted 'West Indies' and 'Mr W[eeke]' (PP, AB 3).

to you that something v wrong had happened, I assure you Sir tis nothing of that kind ...' People who lived in two nearby cottages he accused of being 'plunderers of no use at all – worse than any negroes [of JPP's] in Nevis'.⁷⁷¹ From his writing he comes across as tortured, haunted, sad, lonely and weepy but seldom angry. In Nevis, when William Coker first arrived on the plantation, Gill had directed some anger at JPP, showing 'ingratitude and disrespectful behaviour',⁷⁷² but now he just felt sorry for himself. On hearing that Mrs P and her daughter were holidaying in Cheltenham, he signed off a letter to JPP with 'may health and happiness among the gay and polite attend them' which conveyed both his self-pity and his longing to be elsewhere.

All along Gill compared himself to his cousin. He clearly felt himself inferior and implied that JPP exploited him. To his uncle he sniffled 'I told Mr Pinney I would confine myself to a Livery Servants wages' and told him that he had become 'What you may call almost reduced to nothing at all, at all'. His successful cousin had turned an ailing plantation into a flourishing business, and for Gill it was important to have recognised that whatever he had achieved, he had done so himself – without the advantage of an inheritance, albeit a debt-ridden one. He wanted to prove himself to his uncle and to command his respect, and alluding to his mental state and a reluctance to mix with people, he wrote to Simon Pretor: 'If I had not forced myself into company in the West Indies I never would have been Collector of the Customs but have died unnoticed like a crab in a hole.' Whether he actually achieved the appointment to the post entirely due to his own efforts is open to question but he clearly felt it necessary to right a wrong and to boost his self-image. He felt under-valued by his cousin - 'I think he [JPP] should have pride enough to commend me' – and was proud of his entry into the upper reaches of Nevis society, even though this had come at a price. Again, referring to JPP, he wrote: 'He cannot nor will deny but that I kept the best company the island afforded and this my dear uncle cannot be done without expense ...' In a roundabout way he was actually asking Uncle Pretor for money, having spent his 'in Nevis for the Honor of all the family'.

In an effort to get level with his cousin, or to surpass him with distinguished ancestry, Joseph Gill followed up some family lore and endeavoured to find noble lineage to the Cunningham family of Scotland - 'Motto of Cunningham is Hope' - ⁷⁷³ and living in close proximity with Wordsworth may have inspired him to compose a little rhyme in which JPP played a central role:

I love my country dear –
says worthy Pinney here –
and for to make a stand –
an anchor is my hand –
shouts sandy Cunningham.

His efforts at trying to find more eminent ancestors than JPP's was a sad attempt at out-doing his cousin, but some of the notes in his 'Almanack for the year 1797', scribbled at the back of the old account book, were more disturbing:

Subjects wicked were
Savage murder threatening
Sad tumults forbear
Swords war and fighting –

To him, the world was 'troublesome', and the deaths of Thomas Pym Weekes and his father William Burt Weekes added to his gloom. And Gill suffered at Harlescombe. Living there had become intolerable. The farm lay in a very pretty valley in beautiful countryside but it was isolated and Gill was

⁷⁷¹ PP, AB 2

⁷⁷² PP, LB 6: JPP to Wm Coker, Nevis, 28 June 1786

⁷⁷³ PP, Misc Vols 48 Misc Notes

lonely and bored, and he felt ill-treated by farmer Hitchcock. He complained to JPP about Hitchcock's 'cruel and oppressive' behaviour and the mean rations: tea without sugar and no other drink, and bread without butter or meat. When he did have meat, it was 'carrion beef of a cow that dyed in calving'.⁷⁷⁴ He convinced JPP that Harlescombe Farm was not the place for him, and in the autumn of 1797⁷⁷⁵ Joseph Gill uprooted once more and moved back to the village of Halstock.

At a cost of £20 a year,⁷⁷⁶ Gill went to board with Christopher Guppy, a tenant of JPP's at Portland Farm.⁷⁷⁷ The Guppys paid a relatively low rent⁷⁷⁸ and they had little choice but to accept their landlord's kinsman as a lodger. According to Gill, Mrs Guppy, a 'good woman, fitted up a pretty little room' and gladly accommodated him, and Dr Justinian Mercer also welcomed his return to Halstock. A local man a few years older than Gill and married with two daughters,⁷⁷⁹ Dr Mercer rented from JPP a property not far from Guppy's farm, Portland House.⁷⁸⁰ When Gill had briefly stayed in the Halstock Lunatic Asylum ten years earlier, he appears to have made friends with Mercer and the two men, always happy to swap 'sea adventures with anyone who has been a little at sea',⁷⁸¹ no doubt, spent many an hour reminiscing about their glory days abroad.

For Christmas, Gill retreated to his uncle's house in Sherborne,⁷⁸² but after 1804 that was no longer an option. "After having borne a very excruciating sickness with becoming fortitude",⁷⁸³ Simon Pretor died. The grocer-turned-banker left considerable assets. The bulk of his estate went to Gill's nephew Samuel Gill, who at the age of 21 was to change his name from Gill to Pretor. On condition that he allowed Samuel to remain under the guardianship of JPP and Samuel Whitty, Gill's brother Michael inherited a lump sum of £500 and Gill benefited from an annuity of £20 a year.⁷⁸⁴ This made him less dependent on his cousin but it also let off JPP from having to bear the bulk of the financial responsibility for his upkeep; earlier JPP and Simon Pretor had agreed that while he would pay £20 a year for Gill's basic support and maintenance, Simon Pretor would 'furnish him with all necessities'.⁷⁸⁵ Although JPP had felt himself 'cruelly treated' by Gill for his failure to manage his affairs in Nevis,⁷⁸⁶ JPP behaved towards him with kindness and patience – after all, his own mother had taken to drink or drugs, and he was forgiving of his cousin's failings. He also treated his son Pretor gently and with much consideration, and in September 1807⁷⁸⁷ Gill was joined in Halstock by Pretor. The 26-year-old Pretor had suffered from mental illness and possibly also epilepsy for at least ten years. He moved to Halstock with a servant, Edmund Phillips, into a house JPP had built and furnished for him on Portland Farm.⁷⁸⁸ It appears that first Dr Mercer provided his board⁷⁸⁹ and then, after Mercer's death in about 1809, relatives of the doctor.

Pretor's childhood seems to have been untroubled; he first went to school near Bristol and then attended Dr Valpy's at Reading.⁷⁹⁰ The school was popular with people who had West India connections and at Dr Valpy's he had the company of at least one other Nevis creole, his friend

⁷⁷⁴ PP, AB 3 and LB 12: JPP to John Perkins, Henley Farm, 30 April 1797

⁷⁷⁵ PP, AB 41 Expense a/c

⁷⁷⁶ PP, AB 41 Pretor, Pew & Whitty's a/c

⁷⁷⁷ PP, WI 'Damaged or Fragile Box'

The Guppys lived in Halstock from the C14th to the mid-C19th (Lemmey, Pam *A History of Halstock* p26), and at Racedown a John Guppy had been employed ('absolutely useless', according to Gill). However, there is no evidence that he was related to Christopher Guppy and his family; there were also Guppys in Chard and in Taunton.

⁷⁷⁸ PP, AB 42 Pretor Pinney's a/c

⁷⁷⁹ Pers. comm., Pam Lemmey, 15 December 2000

⁷⁸⁰ PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii – Summary

⁷⁸¹ PP, AB 3: 4 September 1796

⁷⁸² PP, LB 15: JPP to Joseph Gill at Simon Pretor's, 4 January 1800

⁷⁸³ Pers. comm., Steve West, quoting the *Sherborne Mercury*, August 1804

⁷⁸⁴ PP, Dom Box S1

⁷⁸⁵ PP, AB 58 Christopher Guppy's a/c

⁷⁸⁶ PP, LB 6: JPP to Joseph Gill, 5 October 1785

⁷⁸⁷ PP, AB 58 Justinian Mercer's a/c

⁷⁸⁸ PP, AB 42 Pretor Pinney's a/c

⁷⁸⁹ PP, AB 58 Justinian Mercer's a/c

⁷⁹⁰ PP, LB 10: JPP, Bristol, to Revd Dr Valpy, Reading, 21 October 1793

Edward Brazier. All seemed to be well but, on leaving school, when he expressed his wish to study law,⁷⁹¹ his parents already knew that his mental health was not robust enough to follow this profession and instead, his father first apprenticed him to a Bristol businessman⁷⁹² and then employed him as a clerk in his counting house. Bored and frustrated, Pretor wanted to go to Cambridge. His father gave in, and in October 1799 Pretor began his studies at the same college his brother John Frederick had attended. It was shortly afterwards that his mind became 'excessively disordered'⁷⁹³ but at that point he was still able to pursue his studies. A year later he was admitted to the Middle Temple, intent on following a legal career,⁷⁹⁴ but by 1802 he was under the care of a doctor⁷⁹⁵ and it became apparent that Pretor was not equipped to work as a lawyer. At this stage, though, his family still thought that he could enter another profession. He did not like the church and wanted to follow his brother Azariah into business - ⁷⁹⁶ Azariah had become a partner in the company of Pinney & Tobin - and there was room for Pretor in the firm. But then Azariah died, early in 1803. His death was felt deeply by all the family and apparently threw Pretor off balance again. During the following year he improved and felt 'much better', but when the Pinneys were expecting a visit from Lady Nelson and her son Josiah, JPP was apprehensive that their presence would 'decompose him' and he forewent meeting his old friends from Nevis and, instead, agreed to retreat with Pretor to their country house, Somerton Erleigh. Father and son travelled from there to Sherborne and Dorchester,⁷⁹⁷ possibly calling in at Halstock to see Joseph Gill along the way. By the summer of 1804 it was thought that Pretor ought to 'decline business altogether',⁷⁹⁸ and the decision to withdraw from work may have brought about an immediate improvement because soon JPP could report:

Pretor gets on famously well, he used the shower bath this morning and he says that his feelings are quite altered - it appears as if he had woken from a sleep of seven years - he is now on his bed, with maps before him which he has not been able to look at for some years past.⁷⁹⁹

With his health improved, Pretor then went to London⁸⁰⁰ but returned to Bristol in April 1805. He was well enough to go for walks and sit regularly with the family although, if he so chose, he could retreat to his own room.⁸⁰¹

Sea air was considered curative and from August 1806 JPP rented a house for Pretor near the south coast at Burton Bradstock, southeast of Bridport. He was attended by a physician from London and three servants: Abraham and Mary Turner and another man.⁸⁰² This may already have been Edmund Phillips. Before they moved with Pretor to Burton Bradstock, the Turners had previously been employed by Mrs Judith Butler Dunbar, the widow of the Nevis planter Stapleton Dunbar,⁸⁰³ and after her death had worked in Norfolk.⁸⁰⁴ For some reason the arrangement at Burton Bradstock did not work out and Pretor ended up in Halstock, and although listed among the inmates at Halstock Lunatic Asylum from 1810 onwards until his death,⁸⁰⁵ it is not clear whether Pretor actually was incarcerated

⁷⁹¹ PP, LB 14: JPP to Revd Dr Valpy, Reading, 9 August 1798

⁷⁹² PP, MSS in Numbered Folders (Folder 29): Copy of a note from the Merchants Hall Book of Proceedings, No 13 1797-1807 f16

⁷⁹³ PP, Dom Box S4-2: Pretor Pinney to JPP, February 1802

⁷⁹⁴ Venn, John and JA Venn (comp) *Alumni Cantabrigienses*

⁷⁹⁵ PP, Dom Box S4-2: Pretor Pinney to JPP, February 1802

⁷⁹⁶ PP, Dom Box P: JPP to John Frederick and Azariah Pinney, 16 June 1802, and 18 October 1802

⁷⁹⁷ PP, LB 18: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, 21 February 1804

⁷⁹⁸ PP, LB 18: JPP, Bristol, to John Frederick Pinney, London, 3 June 1804

⁷⁹⁹ PP, LB 18: JPP to JF Pinney, 9 July 1804

⁸⁰⁰ PP, LB 19: JPP to Mr ?Deluheydis, Surgeon, Guildford Street, Russell Square, London, 7 December 1804

⁸⁰¹ PP, LB 19: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, Nevis, 4 April 1805

⁸⁰² PP, AB 42 Pretor Pinney's a/c

⁸⁰³ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 f440

⁸⁰⁴ PP, LB 20: JPP to John Lens, London, 28 February 1806

Abraham and Mary Turner rented a 'cottage, barn, etc.' at Greater and Little Hockham in Norfolk which belonged to William McDowall Colhoun. The property was under mortgage to JPP (Cat 1 Box 1820-1822).

⁸⁰⁵ Pers. comm., Pam Lemmey, 20 November 2000, citing DHC, Quarter Sessions Records

all along in the institution, or whether he lived in Portland Cottage. He certainly had a room which in 1812 was being papered and painted. JPP's tenants, the Mercers, provided his board.⁸⁰⁶

Gill had the company of Pretor Pinney and he would have had the company of anyone who came to visit Pretor, but the only record of a visit is that of Mrs P who intended to call on her son after staying with her daughters in Swanage.⁸⁰⁷ This was in 1820, when Charles Pinney was visiting Nevis to sort out plantation business following JPP's death two years earlier. According to JPP's will, Gill was to be furnished with mourning clothes⁸⁰⁸ but, as many of the bequests were arranged informally, it is not known whether his wealthy cousin left him anything else.

Gill outlived JPP by ten years and died in April 1828. He is remembered in a plaque above the main entrance door to St Mary's church at Halstock:

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF MR JOSEPH GILL
FORMERLY OF THE ISLAND OF NEVIS
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE
18TH DAY OF APRIL 1828
AGED 80 YEARS

He had lived in England for the past 42 years and although he had only spent about a fifth of his entire life in the island, the description as having been 'of Nevis' suggests that this is how he was seen, how he was defined as a person. His residence abroad was something he had cherished throughout his life. Although Gill was living tucked away in a village in the rural West Country, there were constant reminders of the connections with Nevis. One of these was the request for ponies. When the House enquired from Gill's landlord how many ponies he could procure for shipment to Nevis,⁸⁰⁹ one imagines that Gill would have taken this as a cue to prattle on about his adventures in the West Indies - whether or not anyone wanted to hear them.

It is likely that after Uncle Simon Pretor's death Joseph Gill had kept in touch with his nephew Samuel and that it was he who paid for the plaque to be erected. After all, he had inherited the bulk of Simon Pretor's wealth and, living with his family in Sherborne House, a splendid three-storey Georgian residence, he enjoyed a lifestyle far superior to Gill's. If it was Samuel Pretor who chose the commemorative inscription he wanted to ensure that Gill was remembered in a dignified manner. In England Joseph Gill had always been the poor, dependent relative, but in the West Indies he had been Somebody: a man who had fathered several children, a merchant who had run his own business, a master over a great many plantation people, a manager in charge of a thriving estate (albeit his cousin's), and a Deputy Collector of Customs (he might well have dropped the 'Deputy' from the title, as he had done in a letter to his uncle). It is likely that Gill and others around him had often wondered what would have happened had he remained in the West Indies and had he not succumbed to rum and other intoxicating substances.

The memorial could also have been ordered by Pretor Pinney. He would have had just enough time to organise the plaque being made, because, as if shaken by Joseph Gill's death, Pretor Pinney died a year later, in May 1829, not long after his 48th birthday. After a very modest funeral he was buried near the pulpit in St Mary's church in Halstock but, unusually, no memorial marks Pretor's death.⁸¹⁰ Many wealthy families commemorated their dead relatives with prominently sighted marble tablets and, given that there is nothing in the church that remembers Pretor's death, the plaque erected in

⁸⁰⁶ PP, AB 58 John and Betsey Mercer's a/c

⁸⁰⁷ PP, Dom Box C1-6: Jane Pinney, Swanage, to Charles Pinney, 25 October 1820

⁸⁰⁸ PP, WI Box G: JPP's will dated 29 October 1817

⁸⁰⁹ PP, LB 57: PA & Co to Christopher Guppy, 3 October 1821

⁸¹⁰ PP, Dom Box L2-28: Mrs Ames, Cavendish Place, to Mrs (J F) Pinney, 23 May 1829

Gill's honour may have been a snub to the Pinneys for failing to honour their brother in a fitting fashion. Pretor's siblings certainly were uncomfortable about his funeral, if not also his illness: his sister Mary 'thought if he were taken to Somerton that it would occasion much conversation in the county.'⁸¹¹ Sadly but understandably, given the stigma that surrounded, and to this date still surrounds, mental illness, Pretor Pinney has largely been written out of the family's history.

When Gill was at Racedown, losing touch with reality, he had remembered his 'coloured wife and baby'. Although, by then, he had left Nevis a decade ago, he still thought of this child as a baby. It is not known what happened to any of Joseph Gill's children in Nevis. In England, his nephew Samuel Pretor was by 1833 'the only branch of the family remaining'. Presumably Gill's brother Michael, Samuel's father, had died in America. Samuel Pretor, who had married his niece Fanny Dowding, was alive in 1841, when, aged 48, he lived at Sherborne House with his then 29-year-old wife and their four young children Elizabeth, Frances Theresa, Samuel and Alfred.⁸¹²



Joseph Gill's mulatto mistress Penny Markham lived in the early nineteenth century as a free woman in one of JPP's properties in Charlestown.⁸¹³ It is likely that she was alive at the time of Emancipation – she would have been aged around seventy - and that she was the woman recorded as having offended against recently passed legislation, the Vagrant Act.⁸¹⁴ This new law had been designed to discourage freed people from moving between plantations in search of better wages, or in search of land on which they could squat. It also discouraged free assembly and the possibility of workers getting together to plot against the employers. Except for the plantations and some small plots owned by freed people, all other areas of land in Nevis - the mountains, woodlands and pastures – were considered as annexed to established estates, and access to this land was severely restricted. Rights of way were laid down in written contracts and offenders could be fined and imprisoned, and a woman called Penny Markham stood accused of having illegally crossed a ratoon piece on Walk estate. It probably was a route she had taken many times and, although warned that there was no public path through the cane field, she continued using it. A member of the Council informed the authorities and she was convicted under the Vagrant Act. Just after Emancipation, on 29 August 1838, Penny Markham was sentenced to 14 days labour in the penal gang.⁸¹⁵ Control of land lay still in the hands of the planter class.

⁸¹¹ PP, Dom Box L2-28: Mrs Ames, Cavendish Place, to Mrs (J F) Pinney, 23 May 1829

⁸¹² <http://www.dorset-opc.com/SherborneFiles/1841SherborneD2.htm>

⁸¹³ ECSCRN, CR 1799-1801 and CR 1802-1803; also PP, AB 47 and AB 57

⁸¹⁴ UKNA, CO 186/15

⁸¹⁵ Richardson, BC *Caribbean Migrants* p84, quoting from Parliamentary Papers 1839 XXXVII Papers Relating to the West Indies, 224

The brother-in-law, Dr Thomas Pym Weekes, 1790-1794

JPP's third and final relative to serve on Mountravers was the only manager who during JPP's ownership departed on his own account. Bright and able, foolishly extravagant and a physician by profession, Thomas Pym Weekes left Mountravers to establish a medical career in Martinique. He died young, leaving two sons, one of whom went to the East Indies and there rose to a similar position Dr Weekes had sought in Martinique. His other son joined the Royal Navy through one Nevis connection and achieved his only rank through the patronage of another – who was none other than Lady Nelson. This son's relationship with JPP's children continued, mostly because he sought their financial assistance and their support in furthering his career. His character was much like his father's and, because there are documentary records, his life can be examined in some detail. His story, like his father's, is one of wasted opportunities. Both were talented men whose passions got the better of them.

Many of the enslaved people who had belonged to three generations of the Weekes family were mortgaged to JPP and for that reason could be identified, and their stories will be told at the end of this section.



Born in Nevis as the youngest of William Burt Weekes's five children, Thomas Pym Weekes was a second, if not third-generation creole on his father's side. Originally from 'a very ancient and important Devonshire family',⁸¹⁶ the first Weekes appeared in the Nevis records in 1677/8.⁸¹⁷ William Weekes served as Ensign in Colonel Russell's company. Thirty years later a man of the same name – most likely, his son - held the post of 'Gunner in Nevis'⁸¹⁸ and lived in a household with two white females, presumably his wife and a daughter, as well as eight enslaved people.⁸¹⁹ William Weekes, Thomas Pym Weekes's grandfather, re-appeared in the records in the early 1730s, again as Gunner at the Forts.⁸²⁰ His duties included setting off the canons to warn of approaching enemy ships or to challenge interlopers but at one point Gunner Weekes got himself into trouble for shelling several vessels without good cause. Censured and fined a sum of money, he managed to retain his post⁸²¹ but these wantonly fired shots foretold of behaviour that was mirrored in later generations of male Weekeses: rash, bold actions lacking in forethought.

As Gunner, William Weekes and his family lived in Fort Charles on the southern edge of Charlestown. It was said to measure 'near six acres'. The fort was strategically well-placed. Two of the sides are to seaward, thereby protecting the road for the shipping, while two sides are landward, with Charlestown lying at the end of the bay. In Weekes's days the landward sides were surrounded by 'an old ruinous rampart and ditch', and the defences then consisted of 19 well-mounted guns and 66 arms. (Of these 49 had 'spoilt for want of care' which may say something about Weekes's lack of supervision.) For the guns a supply of cannon shot and cross bar shot was kept, for the arms gunpowder and musket balls.

⁸¹⁶ According to Anna Maria Pinney, the pedigree of Weekes includes several William Weekes, descended from Sir Richard Weekes of Honeychurch (north-east of Okehampton), ending with William Weekes, son of William Weekes, third son of William Weekes and Elizabeth Mortimer. The last William Weekes may have been William Burt Weekes's father, or grandfather (PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9, and Misc Vols 41 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 6). This man may, possibly, have been the William Weekes who in 1693 was a tenant at Portland Farm in Halstock (AB 3).

⁸¹⁷ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3

A relative of William Weekes may have been Thomas Week who in 1677/8 listed in his household seven white men, three white women, two white children, eight 'Negro men', 12 'Negro women', and five 'Negro children'. In 1681 Thomas Week was mentioned in connection with a cross path below his 'pasture wall above St John's Church' (PP, WI 'Damaged or Fragile' Box, paper picked out by Prof Pares).

⁸¹⁸ The memorial inscription on Mary Weekes's grave states that 'Her husband was gunner in Nevis 1707-8 and gunner at Fort Charles 1748' (VL Oliver *Monumental Inscriptions* p76).

⁸¹⁹ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 1707/8 Census

⁸²⁰ UKNA, CO 186/2: 24 November 1731

⁸²¹ UKNA, CO 186/2: 3 March 1731/2

The Master Gunner had 12 matrosses under his command, and a small detachment of Brigadier Jones's regiment, which was stationed in the island, kept guard at Fort Charles.⁸²²

Weekes lived at the fort and during a major smallpox outbreak he was therefore able to rent out his family home in Charlestown. Complete with a doctor and nurses, it was turned into a hospital for 'the infected Negroes of the Town', and for this unpopular service the Legislature reimbursed him generously.⁸²³ The ever-present threat of smallpox and other infectious diseases demanded tight controls, and another of the Gunner's duties was to fire guns to warn off vessels from landing once a surgeon had informed him that there were diseased crew or passengers on board.⁸²⁴ Guns were also fired when the President or other worthies left the island or returned, or, during war, to celebrate military victories.⁸²⁵

The post of Gunner was William Weekes's main employment but he also appears to have jointly run a tavern (together with Robert Thompson, the Deputy Provost Marshall, he applied for a reduced-cost tavern licence),⁸²⁶ and he may possibly also have doubled up as a blacksmith. Alternatively he may have provided one of his skilled workers for a public building project: in the mid-1730s the Legislature paid him N£20 for 'smiths work'.⁸²⁷ He certainly owned people and, along with other slaveholders, made a number of his people available to work on the Saddle Hill defences. In total they contributed 38 'negro work days'.⁸²⁸ This represented a relatively small share and would indicate that, if he had land, he would have worked no more than a minor plantation.

William Weekes probably was married by 1707/8, the year in which he appeared in the second island-wide census. He then lived in a household with two females – presumably his wife and their first daughter. William Weekes's wife would then have been in her late teens. Mary Burt was one of nine children of Colonel William Burt II and his wife Elizabeth Pym,⁸²⁹ and both her parents' families, the Burts and the Pym, were long-established in the island and occupied prominent positions. William and Mary Weekes therefore enjoyed excellent connections; one of Mary Burt's four brothers, Colonel William Pym Burt, in the 1720s moved to St Kitts and became Chief Justice, and through her nephews and nieces – Colonel William Pym Burt's 14 children from his second marriage - she became related to the *crème de la crème* of St Kitts society. Her nieces Penelope, Catherine and Ann married members of the St Kitts Council - James Verchild, James Emra and Colonel John Gunthorpe – while her nieces Louisa and Daniel married the merchant and slave trader Alexander Fraser and the medically trained poet Dr James Grainger. One of her nephews, William Mathew Burt, rose to the highest rank: a member of the St Kitts Council, he went to England, was elected as Member of Parliament and returned to the West Indies as Governor of the Leeward Islands.⁸³⁰ Later the names of

⁸²² CSP 1734-1735 No 314

These details are from Governor Mathews' report of September 1734 but an earlier observer had seen almost double the number of guns 'scarce fit for use' at Fort Charles (UKNA, CO 186/2: 25 February 1731/2).

⁸²³ UKNA, CO 186/3: 22 June to 22 December 1739 in 1739 a/c

⁸²⁴ The Nevis Legislature discussed further measures to contain contagious diseases but it appears that they did not become law. It was suggested that the Gunner should be required to hinder anyone going on board; the only people allowed to board incoming ships were to be a surgeon and an accompanying sailor. If the sailor refused to do go aboard, he was to be imprisoned; if a surgeon refused to board a ship, he was to be debarred from practicing and fined N£50 (UKNA, CO 185/4: 20 June 1737).

⁸²⁵ When President Brown, his wife and daughter embarked in Nevis Road, Charles Fort saluted him with ten guns and Nelson's victory at Rosetta warranted the firing of 17 guns (*Aaron Thomas's Journal* p20, p178 and p179).

⁸²⁶ UKNA, CO 186/3: 20 February 1739 and 2 August 1739

⁸²⁷ UKNA, CO 186/2 Account 1736/7

⁸²⁸ UKNA, CO 186/2: 28 August to 11 November 1735

⁸²⁹ Birch, Chris *The Generations* p83

Mary Burt's father, Colonel William Burt II, who died in 1707, may have been born about 1640 in Jamaica, while her maternal grandparents, probably Charles and Elizabeth Pym, were in Nevis in 1677/8. The exact date when Colonel William Burt moved to Nevis is not known although he had married Elizabeth Pym by about 1674 when their first child, Colonel William Pym Burt, was born (Birch, Chris *The Generations* p83, and VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 3).

Colonel William Pym Burt, Mary Weekes's eldest brother, was married twice, first to Mary Hill and then to Louisa Mathew, the youngest daughter of the Captain General of the Leeward Islands, Sir William Mathew. They had 14 children – Mary Weekes's nieces and nephews and William Burt Weekes's cousins.

⁸³⁰ Birch, Chris *The Generations* p83

some members of the wider Burt family, such as Emra and Verchild, were to crop up in the names of enslaved people associated with the Weekeses.

William and Mary Weekes had four daughters and one son. The girls were all named after Mary's sisters: Anne, Elizabeth, Jane and Frances. Born in 1734, Frances, most likely, was their youngest; she later married the Mountravers manager William Coker while the other three daughters remained single and as The Ladies at the Cedar Trees played an important part in Thomas Pym Weekes's family. They were always known by their pet names Nancy, Betsey and Jenny. William and Mary Weekes's only son, William Burt Weekes, was Thomas Pym Weekes's father.

William Weekes held the post of Gunner until at least 1748⁸³¹ but almost certainly he had died before 1755, the year in which Mary Weekes registered 14 enslaved people for tax purposes. All of these 14 were written off by the Collector of Taxes, who was none other than her son William Burt Weekes. Since at least the early 1750s William Burt Weekes had been Treasurer of the island⁸³² and, having married the creole Elizabeth Gardner in 1745, had started his own family.⁸³³ Elizabeth Weekes gave birth to three girls and a boy: Purletta, Elizabeth, Jane and Charles. The first child, Purletta, was baptised in 1750, Elizabeth ten years later but when the last two children, Jane and Charles, were baptised in 1763, William Burt Weekes probably was widowed already because shortly afterwards, in August 1764, he entered into his second marriage. His new wife, Anne Walwin, was also widowed; her previous husband, Thomas Walwin, had died a few years earlier.⁸³⁴ A member of the Legislature,⁸³⁵ Anne Walwin's former husband had owned a small, 46-acre estate in St Thomas Lowland which was worked with fewer than fifty enslaved people.⁸³⁶ Thomas Walwin's plantation

Dr Grainger published *An Essay on the More Common West-India Diseases, and the Remedies which that Country itself Produces: To which are added, Some Hints on the Management, & of Negroes* (London 1764 and Edinburgh 1802) and *The Sugar Cane – a Poem in Four Books* (London, 1764).

⁸³¹ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 5 p91

⁸³² Stapleton Cotton MSS 13 (vii): September 1751

⁸³³ PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9

William Burt Weekes's wife Elizabeth Gardner was a creole from a well-established family; Gardeners have been in Nevis as long as the Weekeses (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 3 pp27-35 and pp70-81). The name was also variously spelt Gardyner, Gardiner or Gardner; the spelling even varied within documents.

In a document that referred to 40 acres of land in St James, Elizabeth was mentioned as the 'only surviving child and heiress of ---- Gardiner' (ECSCRN, CR 1810-1814 f485). It is not known who her father was but it appears that the family's activities centred mostly around the parish of St James Windward.

⁸³⁴ PP, Family Tree in Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9

According to Anna Maria Pinney, the nineteenth century Pinney family historian, Anne Walwyn's husband, like her parents, was 'of Antigua' but a more convincing scenario is that several generations of the family had lived in Nevis since the seventeenth century: Thomas Wallwyn (the spelling varied) appeared in the 1677/8 census and Captain Thomas Wallwin in the 1707/8 census (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 3 pp173-79). Thomas Wallwin junior, probably a son, served in 1716 as a member of the Assembly (UKNA, CO 155/5: 12 April 1716) and by February 1733 had married. He and Peneleope had a son called John (*Caribbeana* Vol 1 p233) but while Thomas Wallwin provided workers for building the defences at Saddle Hill, it probably was another son or a nephew of his who was employed, together with James Lytton, to oversee this work at Saddle Hill (UKNA, CO 186/2). It was also Captain Thomas Wallwin who in the 1740s owned or occupied land in St Thomas Lowland which adjoined Daniel's Smith's and Thomas Budgeon's properties (SCRO, Moberley and Wharton Collection, D/MW 35/3/1 and 35/5/1). In the late 1740s he represented the parish of St Thomas Lowland in the Legislature (UKNA, CO 155/8).

⁸³⁵ UKNA, CO 155/8

⁸³⁶ In April 1746 Thomas Walwin had 36 enslaved people, half of whom were dutyable and half were non-dutyable (ECSCRN, CR 1741-1749 f123). In 1755 he paid tax on 49, but when four years later he and his wife mortgaged their estate of 46 acres with its people to Edward Jesup, they mortgaged only 39 enslaved people, together with a 'boiling house with one copper and three furnaces hung therein one cattle mill one mansion house and other buildings thereon'. The mortgaged people were: ?Jarkey, Great Cudjoe, Pompey, Quoto, Little Will, Little Cudjoe, Quashe, Peter, Frank, Dover, Ebo Will, Gore or Fore, Phibba, Nanny Calia, Catto, Judggy, Clarissa, Belinda, Murtilla, Ritta, Leah, Bridget, Kate, Bessey, Penny, Sally, Mary, Besse, Jenney, Sinah, ?Frantes, Billy, Quomino, Perro, Jemy, Nisbet, Murtilla, and Rositta (SCRO, Moberley and Wharton Collection, D/MW 35/13, as 35/11/2: 20 and 22 June 1759).

One of Thomas Walwin's people, the mulatto man Roger, was manumitted for 'dutiful service'. Most likely as a result of a clause in Thomas Walwin's will, Roger was freed in August 1763 and, unusually, a friend of Walwin's was charged with helping to 'keep him free' (ECSCRN, CR 1763-1764 f349). Roger then called himself Roger Wallwin and by June 1771 occupied land in St Thomas Lowland which abutted Edmund Seymour's (CR 1771-1773 f13; also PP, DM 792). In 1774 he acknowledged that the property he occupied belonged to a woman from St Kitts and by way of confirming her ownership and denouncing all rights to the property he agreed to pay an annual nominal rent of S5s. (ECSCRN, CR 1775-1776 ff299-300). JPP sold 3 barrels of sugar to Roger Wallwin (DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f61), and in 1796 Roger Wallwin was paid a sexton's fee for Dr Weekes's funeral (AB 47 TP Weekes's a/c).

directly bordered that of Anne Walwin's father's, Dr Thomas Stewart, who, although said to have been 'of Antigua',⁸³⁷ had worked as a surgeon in Nevis since the early 1730s.⁸³⁸ As the only surviving child of Dr Stewart and his wife Anne, William Burt Weekes's new wife was not only heiress to her father's property in St Thomas Lowland⁸³⁹ but also to the family's estate near Aberdeen in Scotland, Fortree, or Ffortrie. Anne Walwin nee Stewart did not have any surviving children from her previous marriage.

It is not easy to unravel what land and how many people William Burt Weekes owned at the time he married Anne Walwin. In 1755 he had twenty,⁸⁴⁰ and with his first wife, Elizabeth Gardner, had mortgaged a 110-acre property, which straddled the parishes of St Thomas Lowland and St James Windward. In 1760 he had bought Fountain, a 120-acre plantation in St Thomas Lowland,⁸⁴¹ and in 1763 had acquired 17 people from a man called Joshua Snook. They came into his possession as a result of a loan for £1,000 falling due,⁸⁴² and some of these 17, as well as William Burt Weekes's other people and their descendants, later were to end up in JPP's possession.

A member of the Assembly for St Thomas Lowland and the island's Treasurer, William Burt Weekes, like his father before him, held the post of Captain Gunner of Fort Charles and Black Rock Fort. Known as the Fort-Major,⁸⁴³ or just as Major, he and his family lived at Fort Charles, and it is very likely that this is where, on 16 June 1765,⁸⁴⁴ his wife Anne gave birth to their son Thomas Pym Weekes. Shortly after Thomas Pym Weekes was born, William Burt Weekes left for England,⁸⁴⁵ where he briefly met up with his brother-in-law, the Mountravers manager William Coker.⁸⁴⁶ Coker was busily

Of the 46 acres of land, Thomas Wallwin and his wife leased 20 acres to Edward Jesup for a year, together with three people (Artherton, Sukey and Lukey). The land bordered the White Ghutt, JF Pinney's and Thomas Wansey's land, as well as that of the Anne Wallwin's father, Dr Thomas Stewart. He died some time before June 1759 (SCRO, Moberley and Wharton Collection, D/MW 35/11/1: 21 June 1759).

⁸³⁷ PP, Misc Vols 44 Maria Pinney's Notebook Vol 9

⁸³⁸ UKNA, CO 186/2: 18 February 1731/2

⁸³⁹ William Burt Weekes probably did not live at Stewart's; when he was in Bristol he instructed his manager to deliver to Pinney molasses made at Stewart's estate, to be distilled at Mountravers (PP, Dom Cat III ii Summary Wm Burt Weekes, Bristol, to JPP, 25 October 1765).

A plantation in St Thomas Lowland called 'Stuart's' was in James Smith's will of 1778 left to his grandson James Smith Baillie but it is not known whether it came into James Smith's possession; it may just have been mortgaged (VL Oliver *Monumental Inscriptions of the West Indies* p109).

⁸⁴⁰ PP, Dom Box P

⁸⁴¹ William Burt Weekes and his wife mortgaged the 110-acre property in St Thomas Lowland and St James Windward to George Webbe jr, Josiah Webbe of New River, Joseph Webbe of Stoney Hill and John Dasent (ECSCRN, CR 1757-1762 f75). George Webbe assigned his mortgage to JPP who in September 1775 sold his part, '50 acres (more or less)', of the mortgaged premises to James Smith. These 50 acres were said to have been part of Mrs Pinney's estate. With the land four people were sold: Cato Weekes, Moll Fountain, Old Judy, and Old Jack. Land and people cost a total of £2,100' (PP, Misc Vols 6 List of Deeds and Papers, 1783; AB 20 James Smith's a/c and CR 1775-1776 f287).

Fountain had been mortgaged by William Smith of Nevis to Lucas & Maitland in December 1757, together with two other plantations (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 4 pp289-96 Smith pedigree quoting ?Close Rolls or Nevis Deeds Vols L and J p394; for a fuller extract of the Close Roll deed see *Antigua* Vol 3 p92).

⁸⁴² ECSCRN, CR 1763-1764 f107

⁸⁴³ UKNA, CO 186/4: 4 May 1764; CO 186/3: 24 April 1753; and CO 186/6: 16 September 1772; also PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9

⁸⁴⁴ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 18 June 1765

⁸⁴⁵ PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii – Summary: William Burt Weekes, Bristol, to JPP, Nevis, 25 October 1765

⁸⁴⁶ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 18 June 1765

Thomas Pym Weekes's middle name originated either from his paternal great-grandmother Elizabeth Pym (Mary Weekes's mother), or, more likely, because his mother was heiress under the marriage settlement of a Colonel Pym (PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9). This claim by Anna Maria Pinney that Anne Walwin was heiress to Colonel Pym cannot be verified; the early Pym's were merchants of Bristol (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 2 p355) and there is no apparent connection between Anne Walwin and that family. The matter appears, though, to have involved Colonel Thomas Butler's daughter Elizabeth, who before 1739 had married Colonel Thomas Pym (*Caribbeana* Vol 6 p114). Colonel Thomas Pym, the son of Thomas and grandson of Colonel Charles Pym of Nevis, mortgaged the Pott Works and Paradise estates in St Thomas Lowland. After Thomas Pym's death in 1743, his widow Elizabeth married John Dasent and died childless in 1754 (*Caribbeana* Vol 2 p355). She probably was the Mrs Dasent who was mentioned in a reply sent by the lawyer Robert Pemberton in response to an enquiry by William Burt Weekes: 'All that I know of the matter you mention of the marriage settlement made by Coll Pym is this, some few years ago Mrs Dasent wrote to me to know if any of Doctor Stewart's children were living and which of them, I wrote how they were all dead except your Lady, I have always understood that in case Mr Pym died without issue, it was to go to his heirs who undoubtedly is yr Lady. Doctor William Jones (as I have heard) was one of the trustees...' (PP, WI Box D: Robert Pemberton to William Burt Weekes, 8 July 1765).

getting ready to return to the West Indies although, as it turned out, family affairs were to detain him longer than anticipated. The reason for Weekes's trip to England is not known but he was still abroad when, less than two years into his marriage, he lost his wife and one of his daughters. Anne Weekes and Purletta both died in January 1766.⁸⁴⁷ The oldest of his children, Purletta, who was known as Letty, was then about 16 years old,⁸⁴⁸ and although it is not certain, it is very likely that his sister, Mrs Frances Coker, took on the immediate care of his remaining children - in particular the youngest, his son Thomas. Mrs Coker had given birth to a son, William Young, who was two months older than Tommy and the boys may have been nursed together.

William Burt Weekes returned to Nevis some time before October 1767⁸⁴⁹ and in the following year sold the posts of Treasurer and Gunner to his brother-in-law, William Coker. Weekes had borrowed money from Coker and had given the posts as security; the loan was repayable by way of an annual salary. In addition Coker was allowed to keep any additional perks that came with the posts.⁸⁵⁰ These would have been authorised payments, as well as semi-official and downright fraudulent extras. The Captain Gunner appointed the matrosses and, as was customary, he could sell the posts to the highest bidder. In addition gunners tended to help themselves to, for instance, the gunpowder supplies. Embezzlement was a real concern. Some decades earlier the Fort Major, accused of stealing stores, had been relieved of his post,⁸⁵¹ and during the days when William Burt Weekes's father was gunner the Legislature had found it necessary to pass a Bill for 'Gunnery of Forts not to Imbizzle (sic) the King's Stores'.⁸⁵² Later suspicions were raised that Coker, too, had benefited from underhand dealings.⁸⁵³

Tommy Weekes was just six months old when he lost his mother and his step-sister, and it appears that his step-brother Charles and his step-sister Elizabeth also died young. His only surviving sibling was his much older sister Jane, an 'interesting ... tall island beauty'.⁸⁵⁴ Although his father no longer held the post of Gunner, the family remained at Fort Charles and among Tommy's companions were the family's domestics, their children and the matrosses stationed at the fort.⁸⁵⁵ No doubt, one of his playmates was William Davis, a white boy roughly Tommy's age. Born at Fort Charles, he was the son of a matrosse, also called William Davis, who lived at the fort with his wife. They had moved there from Gingerland parish.⁸⁵⁶ Predominantly Fort Charles was, of course, a military stronghold and therefore very much a male environment, but it was also a place where ordinary, everyday domestic life continued. Several families lived at the fort, including the Cokers. Neither was it a closed world. Visitors came and went. Although JPP had access as one of the Inspectors of the Forts and Fortifications Committee, by the spring of 1770 he was visiting in a personal capacity. He regularly called on William Burt Weekes and his children and spent his evenings with them.⁸⁵⁷ JPP's principal interest in the family was not father or son but Tommy's sister Jane. A few months earlier JPP had seen her riding by, elegantly 'mounted on a white poney'⁸⁵⁸ and, intent on marriage, he had begun courting her. Jane was then about 19 years old⁸⁵⁹ and Tommy five, and the little boy must have been fascinated and greatly excited by the pistols his big sister's suitor took to carrying. JPP had quarrelled and fallen out with Jesse Foot, the doctor who treated the matrosses at the Fort as well as patients on

According to one source, William Burt Weekes owned land previously owned by Charles Pym Burt (*Caribbeana* Vol 2 pp26-7).

⁸⁴⁷ PP, MSS in Numbered Folders (Folder 29)

⁸⁴⁸ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 6 April 1766

⁸⁴⁹ UKNA, CO 186/6: 15 October 1767

⁸⁵⁰ PP, Dom Box S4: Coker memo, undated; see also UKNA, CO 186/4: 9 July 1768 and 17 October 1768

⁸⁵¹ CSP 1711-1712 No 194: Governor Douglas, St Kitts, to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 28 November 1711

⁸⁵² UKNA, CO 186/2: 27 May 1734

⁸⁵³ PP, Dom Box S4: Coker memo, undated

⁸⁵⁴ In this description noted by Anna Maria Pinney, which, no doubt, was based on her grandfather's recollections, the word 'elegant' was crossed out before the word 'beauty' (PP, Misc Vols 48 Misc Notes).

⁸⁵⁵ UKNA, CO 186/4

⁸⁵⁶ UKNA, CO 186/7: 12 November 1778

⁸⁵⁷ PP, Dom Box S4 loose bundle: JPP, Charles Fort, to Dr Foot, 3 April 1770

⁸⁵⁸ PP, Misc Vols 48 Misc Notes

⁸⁵⁹ PP, LB 3: JPP to George Warry, 4 November 1769

Mountravers,⁸⁶⁰ and, feeling threatened and afraid to be way-laid by his adversary on his way home from Fort Charles to Mountravers, JPP had armed himself.⁸⁶¹

As if prompted by his sister's marriage to JPP, on 11 June 1772 - six days before his seventh birthday and three days before the wedding - Tommy Weekes was baptised in the church at St John Figtree.⁸⁶²

His sister's marriage put the family on a more secure financial footing. Jane, independent of their father, was worth in land and people 'upwards of £3000' - ⁸⁶³ some of her land in Charlestown had been rented out - ⁸⁶⁴ but their father had been struggling financially, and one of the first things JPP did after the wedding was to get a mortgage assigned to him. It had been taken out by William Burt Weekes and his first wife, Jane's mother, and by taking over the mortgage JPP paid off money Weekes owed to a Nevis planter, George Webbe.⁸⁶⁵ Weekes's complex financial affairs had by 1767 'taken an unexpected and unhappy turn', and his estates had ended up in the hands of the receiver.⁸⁶⁶ A year later the authorities had been on his back again: he owed money to the island's colonial agent and had incurred the Legislature's displeasure by not attending a meeting (for which he was fined N£2) and, embarrassingly, the Legislature had instructed the 'Sergeant at Arms' to call on William Burt Weekes and demand the full arrears he was due to pay the agent.⁸⁶⁷ Sugars that had been produced on his land had been claimed by creditors,⁸⁶⁸ and to free up some money, Weekes sold five people to JPP, but not long after that he had to give up some of his land in St Thomas Lowland.⁸⁶⁹ At least Coker had returned to live in England which meant that William Burt Weekes was back in his old job of Fort-Major⁸⁷⁰ and with it received a regular income of N£50 a year. He may, possibly, also have had an annuity of the same amount, left to him in the early 1760s by a James Masheen (probably McSheen) in some deal that involved another man, Thomas Wharton, but it is quite likely that this money never actually materialised.⁸⁷¹

While his sister and her husband set off on their honeymoon, Tommy got sent to England for his education.⁸⁷² At his school in Salisbury he had the company of at least three other boys from Nevis: his cousin William Young Coker and the Tobin brothers, James Webbe and George. The school was the Cokers' choice. It lay within easy travelling distance from their family home, Woodcutts, where Tommy would have spent his holidays.

However, right from the beginning Tommy was troublesome at school. Brought up without a mother by a weak father and undoubtedly spoilt by all his female relatives - his elder sister, four doting aunts and his aged grandmother - he had turned into an obstinate, somewhat wild child. His schoolmaster thought he would improve and 'become a good boy',⁸⁷³ and although by the age of 13 he was making progress in his learning, he was still difficult and tried everyone's patience.⁸⁷⁴ JPP heard worrying accounts of his behaviour at school and passed these on to Coker. The language in which JPP couched the accusations against Tommy is typical of him when he got excited or indignant about something but exactly what he was hinting at cannot be extracted from his correspondence. About

⁸⁶⁰ UKNA, CO 186/6: 9 June 1769

⁸⁶¹ PP, Dom Box S4 loose bundle: JPP, Fort Charles, to Jesse Foot, 3 April 1770

⁸⁶² NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825; see also VL Oliver *Caribbean* Vol 2 p166 where Thomas Pym Weekes's date of baptism is given as 14 June 1772, the date his sister got married.

⁸⁶³ PP, LB 3: JPP to George Warry, 4 November 1769

⁸⁶⁴ PP, AB 20 John Scarborough's a/c and AB 20 James Carroll's a/c

⁸⁶⁵ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 30 June 1772, and ECSCRN, CR 1773-1774 f77

⁸⁶⁶ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 24 September 1767

⁸⁶⁷ UKNA, CO 186/6: 26 January 1768 and 4 April 1768

⁸⁶⁸ PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 8 June 1768

⁸⁶⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1769-1771 Book damaged, folio number missing

⁸⁷⁰ UKNA, CO 186/6: 16 September 1772

⁸⁷¹ ECSCRN, CR 1757-1762 f356 Indexed as 'Discharge William Burt Weekes to Thomas Wharton'

⁸⁷² PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 30 June 1772, and AB 17: 2 July 1772

⁸⁷³ PP, LB 3: JPP, Woodcutts, to William Burt Weekes, Nevis, 4 October 1774

⁸⁷⁴ PP, LB 4: JPP to Wm Coker, [no day] June 1778

Tommy he wrote that the family was 'greatly alarmed at the violence of his passions, lest they should lead him to acts more heinous than those already committed' and JPP accused him of carrying out 'practices' which he described as 'so obnoxious and disgusting'. Although JPP did not spell out what heinous acts and obnoxious practises the boy was supposed to have performed,⁸⁷⁵ his wording intimates that Tommy may have indulged in some form of sexual pursuits – either with other boys, the school servants or just himself. It was said at the time that at boarding schools youths acquired the 'deplorable practice' of masturbation; indeed, with so many boys in one place, 'a single impure is sufficient to infect a whole flock' and 'capable of contaminating a whole school'.⁸⁷⁶ Boarding schools were also seen as a breeding ground for homosexual activity and the boy may have indulged in what was then called sodomy. This was still a capital offence but JPP's phrasing does not suggest that Tommy might have had to face legal consequences. That some form of sexual activity was to blame is perhaps suggested in a letter to another correspondent, Robert Robertson Jones. Just then this man was accompanying JPP's oldest son to school in England, and JPP complained to 'Dear Jones!' about the 'violence of Tommy's passion', saying that these often led him 'into very offensive acts'. On the other hand, a letter to Coker JPP implied that Tommy may simply have been a disruptive and violent teenager who got himself involved in fights and other mischief, because, as JPP wrote, 'to check so violent and unruly a temper' his father wanted to send him to the Army 'for which his peculiar genius seems adapted'. William Burt Weekes had even gone so far as to get from his cousin Governor Burt a letter of introduction to Lord Townsend to expedite Tommy's admittance as a cadet to the military establishment at Woolwich.

Although the family considered removing the boy from school, in the meantime JPP hoped that Coker would continue showing him his errors, care for him and look after him. Whatever Tommy had been up to, JPP, for one, was willing to give him another chance if he changed his behaviour:

... for my own part, whenever his conduct becomes less exceptionable, he may expect every service and assistance from me that is within my power, but, on the contrary, should he continue in the same course of life and not subdue his present turbulent disposition, he must not expect countenance from any branch of his family.⁸⁷⁷

Around the time Tommy worried and upset his family with his antics, his father married again. His third wife was the spinster Mary (Polly) Browne, also a Nevis creole. William Burt Weekes had recently purchased some land with 13 people and even before the couple had said their wedding vows, they took out mortgages with JPP.⁸⁷⁸ They gave the 13 newly acquired people as security,⁸⁷⁹ but they did not mortgage the nine Polly Browne brought into the marriage.⁸⁸⁰ 50 acres of Weekes's mortgaged 110-acre estate JPP sold to James Smith⁸⁸¹ (with whom Tommy's father had been in dispute until that was settled by arbitration)⁸⁸² but the sale of the estate in Scotland was progressing only slowly. Thomas Pym Weekes had inherited the rights to the lands of Fortree from his mother and his father had tried to sell these ever since Tommy's mother had died. Situated north of Aberdeen on the outskirts of Ellon, the land was mortgaged to Lord Aberdeen⁸⁸³ and Weekes offered to sell it to him for £2,000.⁸⁸⁴ JPP alleged that the Lord was receiving rents and other income that amounted to more

⁸⁷⁵ PP, LB 4: JPP, Nevis, to Wm Coker, 17 August 1778

⁸⁷⁶ Harvey, AD *Sex in Georgian England* p117, quoting Henry Thomas Kitchener (fl. 1812)

⁸⁷⁷ PP, LB 4: JPP to Wm Coker, 17 August 1778, and LB 4: JPP to Robert Robertson Jones, 17 August 1778

⁸⁷⁸ Mary Brown(e) was the daughter of Mrs Henrietta Alvarez nee White from a previous marriage to a Mr Browne. In August 1754 Henrietta Brown married Jacob Alvarez. Apparently on her death in 1780 Mrs Mary Weekes left 'her money to Browns and Alvarez' (Family Tree in Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9). Mary Browne married William Burt Weekes on 21 August 1777 (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 6 p149, Vol 1 p326 and Vol 2 p325).

⁸⁷⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1776-1778 f184; also PP, WI Box E: Bill of Sale, 16 August 1781

⁸⁸⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1776-1778 f219

⁸⁸¹ ECSCRN, CR 1775-1776 f287

⁸⁸² PP, LB 3: JPP to William Coker, 1 July 1773

⁸⁸³ PP, LB 3: JPP to John McArthur in Edinburgh, 19 September 1774

⁸⁸⁴ PP, MSS in Numbered Folders (Folder 29)

than the mortgage⁸⁸⁵ and, while in England in 1774, he had tried to advance the sale but had been unable to resolve anything.⁸⁸⁶ Money was needed to finance Tommy's education and at least JPP had managed to secure for him from James Smith an annuity of S£125⁸⁸⁷ but, as ever, William Burt Weekes suffered from an acute shortage of money. There were always 'some other engagements', and on at least one occasion when Weekes was unable to settle a bill JPP had to plead his father-in-law's case with a creditor. Cotton which Weekes had promised his London merchants was needed elsewhere to pay off other debts.⁸⁸⁸

When his father married again, Tommy's aunts Ann, Elizabeth and Jane were living in the house at the Cedar Trees. It belonged to William Burt Weekes but he had already sold another house.⁸⁸⁹ Weekes was still living at Fort Charles and continued carrying out his duties as Gunner. Although some years earlier the Legislature had decided to purchase land for barracks, building work had as yet not begun and the matrosses were still stationed at the fort.⁸⁹⁰ The father of Tommy's childhood playmate William, the matrosse William Davis, had in the intervening time lost his fingers and toes and, unable to perform his duties, had been dismissed from service. Totally destitute, the man petitioned the Legislature and was allowed a pension of N£20 a year.⁸⁹¹ His son took over his job as matrosse.⁸⁹² William Davis junior would have been no more than a teenager when he began working at the fort and it is unlikely that he ever attended school. Educational provisions in Nevis appear to have been intermittent and at that time there may not even have been a school that William Davis could have attended. When the merchant Daniel Ross died in the mid-1780s, he left money 'for the support and encouragement of a schoolmaster in Charlestown', suggesting that at that time there was none for the poorer whites. Tommy, meanwhile, was to continue his education at 'Southampton School',⁸⁹³ which probably was the same institution the Tobin boys attended, King Edward VI School in Southampton.

Tommy may never have met his stepmother. After less than three years of marriage William Burt Weekes's third wife died in January 1780.⁸⁹⁴ She left nothing in her will to her step-son or her step-daughter; indeed, in her will she left nothing to her husband, either.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁸⁵ PP, LB 3: JPP to John McArthur in Edinburgh, 19 September 1774

⁸⁸⁶ PP, LB 3: JPP, London, to William Burt Weekes, Nevis, 12 September 1774

⁸⁸⁷ PP, LB 4: JPP to William Coker, c mid-July 1776

⁸⁸⁸ PP, LB 4: JPP to Mills & Swanston, 18 June 1778

⁸⁸⁹ PP, AB 26

⁸⁹⁰ UKNA, CO 186/7: 29 May 1770

⁸⁹¹ UKNA, CO 186/7: 12 November 1778

⁸⁹² Between them, father and son William Davis served at Fort Charles for nearly seventy years. The father had been employed at Fort Charles since about 1762 (UKNA, CO 186/7: 12 November 1778) and his son was to serve until the late 1820s. Just before the end of the Napoleonic Wars, between 1812 and 1815, William Davis (also Davies) was one of three white Matrosses stationed at Fort Charles - there were also three free mixed-race men - and was paid a monthly wage of N£6 (CO 186/10). Some years later John Peterson, then Gunner at Fort Charles, petitioned the Legislature on his behalf because Davis was ill and needed medical attention. Peterson stated that William Davis had been born in the Fort and had been serving in it for 40 years. It was decided to fund his doctor's fees from the public purse (CO 186/12: 15 July 1821) but when in 1828 he had a dislocated shoulder which Dr Cassin had set, the cost of this, N£4:6:0, was disallowed (CO 186/13). Presumably on account of his injury, William Davis left Fort Charles and two years on, then destitute, he was granted a dollar a week poor relief (CO 186/14: 8 July 1830). His allowance continued for several years (CO 186/14: 2 July 1832) until the Legislature decided on 16 February 1836 to discontinue his payments, which by then amounted to N6s a week (CO 186/15). This was the last reference to William Davis.

⁸⁹³ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Wm Coker, 14 June 1779

⁸⁹⁴ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Simon Pretor, 25 February 1780

⁸⁹⁵ It is striking that in her will Mary Weekes nee Browne left nothing to her husband or any member of his family. She asked that one woman, Gilliante, be manumitted for her 'faithful service', and left three of her people to her mother (the mulattoes Charles, Jemmy and Tom) and another two to her 'good friend Anne Le Park Vincent' for life (Michael and Polly). Her niece Jane Henrietta Browne and her nephew John Frederick Browne also inherited a person each (Bess Nowel and the mulatto boy George), while another niece, Ann Browne, together with Jane Henrietta and John Frederick, were to share the people once her mother and Ann Le Park Vincent had died. A legacy of N£500 left for Mary Weekes by her aunt Pemberton was to be shared by her mother, her nephew John Frederick Browne, her niece Jane Henrietta Browne and her friend Anne Le Park Vincent. The will was made on 13 December 1779 and witnessed by Joseph Browne and Revd William Scott (ECSCRN, Wills 1763-1787 f501).

For Tommy's half-sister, Mrs Jane Pinney, the new decade had started terribly. A week before their stepmother died, Mrs P had buried her daughter Alicia,⁸⁹⁶ Tommy's niece. She had been the youngest of the Pinney children until, a year later, Tommy's nephew Pretor was born. The other three Pinney children were, by then, in England and at school: Tommy's nephew John Frederick had been sent abroad when he was five years old, while his other nephew, Azariah, came to England in 1781 as a six-year-old, together with Tommy's niece, Betsey, who was seven.

For the 16-year-old Tommy the time had come for his future career to be decided. While his cousin William Young Coker, 'the Parson', pleased his family with his studies and dutifully set off to study at Oxford, Tommy's family was undecided what to do with him. His ongoing uncommunicativeness did not help, either, and Coker, under whose guardianship he had been, kept quiet on the matter and gave no guidance.⁸⁹⁷ JPP thought Tommy ought to go to Salisbury 'under the direction of a gentleman'⁸⁹⁸ – his eldest son was there with a Mr Butt - ⁸⁹⁹ but a year on, no decision had been reached and Tommy's father delayed making one. William Burt Weekes thought it best if, in the meantime, Tommy could be placed in 'a shop or counting house in Salisbury'⁹⁰⁰ but he did not reach a final decision on his son's long-term future; he was in fact preparing to retire to England and planned to discuss the options with him on the spot.

William Burt Weekes sold his posts of Treasurer and Gunner and resigned his commission to the 'Doctor of Physick',⁹⁰¹ Bates Williams Peterson. Out of the sale he reserved for himself an annuity of £50⁹⁰² but had to put on hold his plans to retire to England. Britain was at war with France and the French, once more, invaded Nevis. The island surrendered; at the time of the surrender the Council used Weekes's home, Fort Charles, for its meetings.⁹⁰³

Some years earlier JPP had sent William Burt Weekes to Martinique to recover two enslaved men who had been stolen from Nevis, and it appears that Weekes had then taken the opportunity to spend his son-in-law's money on providing ample comforts for this journey. His expenses alone amounted to N£66.⁹⁰⁴ William Burt Weekes knew how to have a good time, and it would seem fitting that he was among those chosen to form a committee that made preparations to receive an important visitor, the Captain General and Governor-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands, William Woodley.⁹⁰⁵ Such a committee, appointed by the Council, customarily secured accommodation for official guests and also coordinated public entertainment, and Weekes seemed well-suited for the role of Master of Ceremonies.

In the autumn of 1782 William Burt Weekes could finally leave Nevis. He appointed Joseph Gill his sole attorney ⁹⁰⁶ and, leaving his ageing mother and his three sisters behind, he sailed to England. To attend to him during the voyage he took with him Tom Walker, one of the Weekes's family enslaved people.⁹⁰⁷

A few months later the Pinneys left Nevis and soon after they arrived in England Weekes arranged a surprise welcome-home reception for them. This, too, was so typical of his behaviour. First of all he acted contrary to his son-in-law's express instructions and then had made a party of it by bringing with him to London not only the two Pinney boys, John Frederick and Azariah, but also by taking along his nephew, Billey Coker, and his son, Tommy. It probably was he who had also invited the widow Mrs

⁸⁹⁶ VL Oliver, *Caribbeana*, Vol 3 , 1914; also St John Figtree Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825 f31

⁸⁹⁷ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 12 June 1782

⁸⁹⁸ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Wm Coker, 26 July 1781

⁸⁹⁹ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Wm Coker, 14 June 1779

⁹⁰⁰ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 12 June 1782

⁹⁰¹ BULSC, WI Cat DM41/108/2 1786

⁹⁰² PP, Dom Box S1: William Burt Weekes to Revd Wm Jones, 1 May 1795

⁹⁰³ Watts, Arthur P *Nevis and St. Christopher's 1782-1784* p32, citing Nevis Council Minutes, 10 January 1782

⁹⁰⁴ PP, AB 17; also AB 20 and AB 21 Plantation a/c

⁹⁰⁵ UKNA, CO 186/6: 4 April 1768

⁹⁰⁶ Later Coker replaced Gill as William Burt Weekes's attorney, and Thomas Pym Weekes replaced Coker (PP, Dom Box S1).

⁹⁰⁷ PP, AB 27 List of slaves mortgaged ... to JPP, 8 April 1777

Frances Nisbet. She would have known the Weekeses well. Her father, William Woolward, had, for instance, served with William Burt Weekes on Governor Woodley's entertainment committee, and the man, who had brought her up, President John Richardson Herbert, had a house in Charlestown opposite one of William Burt Weekes's properties.⁹⁰⁸ No doubt Mrs Nisbet would have been pleased to accept an invitation to meet up with old friends from Nevis and, as it turned out, she managed to diffuse the situation just at the point when it all seemed to go wrong. What had been intended as a big surprise and a jolly reunion between the Pinneys and their children got muddled by William Burt Weekes's thoughtlessness but, due to Mrs Nisbet's timely intervention and Mrs P setting her nightcap on fire, it all came good in the end. JPP described how it all happened:

I have been much provoked at the conduct of Mr Weekes, he, on the very day of Mrs Pinney's arrival at our lodgings in London, brought up my sons from Salisbury, contrary to my desire and direction – between ten and eleven o'clock at night he reached our lodgings – was imprudent enough to send up my boys without any previous notice or appearance himself. As we had not the least idea of their being in town, and not conceiving it possible for him to act so opposite my wishes, after receiving my letter, we received them as strangers – we did not know them, nor they us: until Mrs Josiah Nisbet, was who present, exclaimed Good God! Don't you know them, they are your children? Upon hearing that exclamation I was stupefied, and should have remained so some time, had I not been roused by the situation of Mrs P – it affected her so much that she knew not what she did – she set her headdress in a blaze by the candle – happily the boys perceived it and cried out, which enabled me to extinguish it, before it had done any material injury – such a scene of distress and joy I never before experienced – we did not recover ourselves for the whole night.⁹⁰⁹

With the Pinneys had travelled 'another young gentleman', Jack Peterson,⁹¹⁰ the son of the new Gunner, Dr Bates Williams Peterson, and the nephew of Mrs Grace Patterson. Mrs Patterson lived in London, and the Pinneys' daughter, Tommy's cousin Betsey, went to school near Mrs Patterson's home and visited her on Sundays. This, once more, shows how well the Nevis connections functioned: the Pinneys took care of Dr Bates Williams Peterson's son while Peterson's sister-in-law, Mrs Grace Patterson, looked after their daughter, Betsey.⁹¹¹

At one point the family had considered a legal career for Tommy,⁹¹² but towards the end of 1783 he took his first steps towards training in the medical profession. In the eighteenth century, medicine could not be studied at English universities and if young men wanted to qualify as a proper doctor, an MD, they had to go to continental Europe – fashionable Paris or the top-ranking Leiden University in the Netherlands - or study at one of the Scottish universities. Other medical training involved learning on the job in the great hospitals in London, or serving an apprenticeship with an apothecary or a surgeon.⁹¹³ The plan had been for Tommy to further his training at hospitals in London but he started by attending the County Hospital in Winton⁹¹⁴ (now part of Bournemouth in Dorset). He did not remain long. It seems that he had misbehaved again. His brother-in-law complained that 'His indiscretions at Winton have imperceptibly led me into an advance of £120.'⁹¹⁵

⁹⁰⁸ PP, Dom Box S1: William Burt Weekes to ?Miss Weekes, 16 November 1794

Mrs Nisbet, of course, also knew JPP. Her father, William Woolward, had appointed JPP as one of his executors but JPP and another executor, Daniel Ross, had declined to execute the will. Woolward had left N£100 to his brother Thomas Woolward and the rest to his daughter but possessed 'small real estate' and was indebted to several people (ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1763-1787 f465, f466 and f467). Shortly before for leaving for England, JPP had also declined a joint attorneyship of the Stapleton estates with one of Mrs Nisbet's brothers-in-law, James Nisbet (Stapleton Cotton MSS 9: James Nisbet to Richard Neave, 24 March 1783).

⁹⁰⁹ Pares, R A *West India Fortune* p102

⁹¹⁰ PP, LB 5: JPP to Simon Pretor, 13 August 1783

⁹¹¹ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Simon Pretor, 26 April 1781

⁹¹² PP, LB 4: JPP to William Coker, c mid-July 1776

⁹¹³ Rule, John *Albion's People: English Society 1714-1815* p64

⁹¹⁴ PP, Dom Box S1: TP Weekes, County Hospital, Winton, to Mrs P, 14 December 1783

⁹¹⁵ PP, LB 7: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 21 December 1786

The next stage in his training took young Weekes to Winchester, where a Dr Barker tutored him. JPP paid the apprentice fee of S£84⁹¹⁶ and, to set him up, gave him a two years' allowance. His brother-in-law took the opportunity to remind him to be frugal and to save some money. He also warned him that, instead of spending his evenings 'at taverns or places of diversion' he should employ his time 'usefully in reading professional books'.⁹¹⁷ Possibly by way of acting as the family representative, one of Tommy's nephews, John Frederick, called on him at Winchester,⁹¹⁸ and no doubt this boy, too, dispensed good, solid advice which Tommy ignored. His behaviour did not improve which meant that he lost out on receiving a coming-of-age present from his brother-in-law. JPP had earmarked a debt that was to be written off 'if he deserves it',⁹¹⁹ and, so JPP noted, 'as the conduct and behaviour of Mr Thomas Pym Weekes hath not been to me, or any of his friends, satisfactory, and I do not see any likelihood of amendment', he carried on charging interest – a penalty with which JPP was familiar and comfortable.

Although his uncle's finances were in a precarious situation, too, it did not stop William Coker from having ambitions for Tommy. Coker intended him to become a properly qualified doctor and when JPP visited Woodcutts, he told him so. JPP confided to his journal: 'His affairs, I am afraid, are perplexed. Determined to send TP Weekes to Edinburgh to study Physic etc. etc.'⁹²⁰ While JPP thought that on-the-job training at a hospital or with a doctor would be sufficient, Coker knew that qualifying at the Scottish university would be to his nephew's advantage. Established in 1726, the Edinburgh Medical School was home to a succession of innovative teachers and on its way to becoming one of the most renowned institutions in Europe. Since its inception student numbers had grown so much that in 1764 a new 200-seater anatomy theatre had to be added to accommodate the increased demand.

Medicine and surgery were taught in a university setting, with the purpose-built Royal Infirmary providing the clinical base. Training at Edinburgh brought together previously separate disciplines and included not only surgery (which had its roots in the medieval guilds of barber-surgeons who served apprenticeships in blood-letting, limb-setting, etc) but also midwifery - a domain formerly exclusively occupied by women. In the 1770s clinical lectures were added to the curriculum but admission to these was by ticket, which students had to buy, and one can understand why JPP would have balked at the added expense.

Some old practises such as blood-letting and administering mercury did continue at Edinburgh but students were introduced to scientific methods. They were taught to observe patients' symptoms and to take notes, and they were taught to treat the sick kindly; for instance to lessen patients' anxiety medical staff spoke Latin at their bedside. It was clear that in the infirmary Tom would have found more patients with more diverse diseases than he could ever have encountered at the County Hospital in Winton, and lectures would have given him a much wider scope for learning than accompanying Dr Barker on his rounds. Eventually the family agreed with Coker that it was best to send Tom to Edinburgh University which was fast becoming the centre for cutting edge medical training. In his profession, his studies would place him among the elite.

His father drew out the last £200 he possessed and accompanied Tom to Edinburgh. JPP sent them on their way with the warning that 'The last die is now cast, and every thing (sic) will depend on the conduct of yourself and son at Edinburgh - if he should persevere in his late line of extravagance and improper behaviour he must abide by the consequences.'⁹²¹ JPP may have envisaged all sorts of

⁹¹⁶ PP, AB 26 TP Weekes's a/c

⁹¹⁷ PP, LB 5: JPP to TP Weekes, Winchester, 8 February 1784

⁹¹⁸ PP, Misc Vols 8 Diary of JPP

⁹¹⁹ PP, AB 27 William Burt Weekes's a/c

⁹²⁰ PP, Misc Vols 8 Diary of JPP

⁹²¹ PP, LB 8: JPP to TP Weekes, 19 February 1787, and LB 7: JPP to WB Weekes, Woodcutts, 12 August 1785

improprieties but he did not foresee that Tom would fall in love with a young Scotswoman from Aberdeen.

The eighth of Dr Thomas Livingston and Mally Robertson's nine children, Isabella (also Isobel) Livingston was a good five years younger than Tom, and when he let it to be known that, on completing his studies in May 1787, he wanted to marry her, JPP was not alone in opposing this. Her family, too, were very much against such a match. She was too young but the prospect of her going to the West Indies appears to have been an added consideration although, ironically, her father, Dr Livingston, who had practised medicine in the city, was known to have proposed several graduates from the University & King's College for service in the West Indies and in North America. He recommended the last student in 1773.⁹²²

Marriage was as much an economic as an emotional contract but, being impetuous (just like his father), Thomas Pym Weekes did not consider that, in order to get married, a man had to be able to provide for his wife and children and that, as yet, he had neither a job nor independent income. A posting abroad had been planned for him as soon as he started studying at Edinburgh and, eager to secure a position for him, JPP had recommended him to a planter in Jamaica - in effect as cheap labour.⁹²³ Two years on, when Tom had completed his studies, JPP still considered Jamaica as a good starting point for his career. The young doctor was to go there after a spell of practical work at a hospital in London,⁹²⁴ but once JPP learnt that 'medical gentlemen at this time [were] too numerous at Jamaica',⁹²⁵ Jamaica was not an option any more, and in a ratty letter to Tom's father JPP suggested the young doctor went to St Kitts instead.

Isabella's family feared that she would elope with him. Her elder sister, Liliias, promised her a substantial reward if she did not do so and drew up a formal agreement for her to sign:

Aberdeen 17 September 1787 ... I Liliias Livingston do hereby promise to Isabella Livingston the sum of four hundred pounds sterling, providing she keep her promise to me, which is, not to marry Thomas Pym Weekes till the first of October 1788.⁹²⁶

To allay any fears Tom's father might have had, Isabella wrote to him and, while confessing her continued attachment to Tom, she promised to refrain from any rash steps until they could be 'married with propriety'. This, it appears, was quite unnecessary because William Burt Weekes was less hostile to the idea than others and even tried to enlist JPP's 'cooperation in expediting Miss L's departure from Great Britain'.⁹²⁷ Tom was 22 years old and old enough to marry, but Isabella's family held firm and wanted her to wait at least until she reached her 18th birthday⁹²⁸ and, true to her promise, Tom set off without her to the West Indies.

On 13 November 1787 he sailed with the younger of his Coker cousins, John Frederick, to Nevis.⁹²⁹ While John Frederick joined his parents on Mountravers, Tom had nowhere to stay because it

⁹²² Thomas Livingston of Old Deer married Mally Robertson on 15 February 1753 (IGI Microfiche for Aberdeen). The recommendation for James Clark to be appointed surgeon in Dominica was made by doctors Livingston and Robertson; most likely a relative of his wife's, and the recommendation for Moore Fountleroy to practice in Virginia was by Dr Thomas Livingston and Dr Alexander Rose (Whitfield J Bell jr *North American and West Indian Medical Graduates of Glasgow and Aberdeen to 1800* in 'Journal of the History of Medicine' (October 1965) pp411-15, quoting Peter J Anderson *Officers and graduates of University & King's College Aberdeen MVD-MDCCCLX and Fasti Academiae Mariscallanae Aberdonensis ...MDXCIII-MDCCCLX* Aberdeen 1893 and 1898). Dr Thomas Livingston died in March 1785 (Pers. comm, Richard Moffat-Kenndy, 1 January 2018).

⁹²³ PP, LB 6: JPP to Charles Blagrove, Dovehall, St Thomas in the Vale, Jamaica, 1 October 1785

⁹²⁴ PP, LB 6: JPP to Wm Coker, Nevis, 4 May 1787

⁹²⁵ PP, LB 8: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 3 September 1787

⁹²⁶ PP, Dom Box S1: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 2 June 1796

⁹²⁷ PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii – Summary: Isabella Livingston/WB Weekes to Jane Weekes, 17 September 1787

⁹²⁸ Isabella Livingston was christened on 10 June 1771 in St Nicholas, Aberdeen (IGI Microfiche for Aberdeen) and her promise not to marry before October 1788 suggests that she would then have turned 18.

⁹²⁹ PP, LB 6: JPP to Edward Brazier, Nevis, 24 October 1787

appears that, apart from the Cedar Trees in Charlestown, where his aunts lived, the Weekeses no longer owned any property which he could occupy, and upon his arrival in Nevis, Thomas Pym Weekes first stayed at 'Woollward'. This presumably was Thomas Woolward, Mrs Frances Nisbet's uncle.⁹³⁰ The widow had re-married and had become Mrs Horatio Nelson, and JPP had introduced Thomas Pym Weekes to her uncle, the President of Nevis, and the young man also carried a letter of introduction to her brother-in-law, the planter Walter Nisbet.⁹³¹ In his youth Nisbet was said to have been 'of a very unsteady and impetuous temper' which led him to beat 'all persons, without any regard to age of year',⁹³² but he had matured and joined the Nevis establishment. Following his father's death, he had managed the Stapleton plantation, served on the Council and had left Nevis in the late 1760s with the intention never to return.⁹³³ But by the time Thomas Pym Weekes came to Nevis, Walter Nisbet resided in the island once more. Having endured a very public divorce as a consequence of his first wife's affair with a naval captain,⁹³⁴ he had re-married and through his second wife - the daughter of the Governor of Barbados - had become exceedingly well-connected. For Dr Weekes, a planter like Nisbet could prove a useful contact in the island.

At this stage it was not at all certain whether Thomas Pym Weekes would remain in Nevis⁹³⁵ but he realised that, by using his commercial contacts in Bristol, there was an opening for him as a supplier of medical goods. Practitioners such as doctors Archbald and Williamson but also plantation managers needed to buy their medicines and instruments from someone and, in preparation for setting himself up as a doctor and for 'fitting up a shop in the medical line', he ordered a substantial consignment of medicines, surgeon's instruments and midwifery equipment. The initial outlay came to nearly S£60. The House of Pinney & Tobin did not pass on to him a discount of ten per cent that they deducted when they paid the suppliers but claimed this as their 'commission'.⁹³⁶ The House's directions for the packaging were detailed; amputation instruments, for instance, were to be fitted into a mahogany box and knives and needles into a fish skin case. The shipping instructions give a sense of what the doctor's medicine cabinet would have looked like:

The bottles have to have painted labels, and such as require it, groundglass stoppers – the pots for salves, ointments etc the same – with a small nest of painted drawers for the drugs – The whole on a small snug scale. Part of the medicines may be put in the bottles, pots etc they are meant to stand in and the remainder of the quantities packed in the ordinary way.⁹³⁷

The medicines were supplied by the Apothecary's Hall in Black Friars in London, who, according to JPP, provided 'medicines of the best kind'. Thomas Pym Weekes was assured that all his orders would be handled by that company.⁹³⁸ By the spring of 1788 Dr Weekes was set up to practice medicine and on Mountravers he treated his first patient, Cooper Glasgow, with the newly arrived flux powders.⁹³⁹

After his arrival he did not remain long at 'Woollward's' and, instead, leased 'Crosse's house'. At £60 a year, JPP considered this 'too expensive for a young beginner'.⁹⁴⁰ To save money, he should have stayed with his aunts at the Cedar Trees⁹⁴¹ and, had his situation been otherwise, he may, indeed, have done so but he planned on getting married. Leasing the house was in preparation for Isabella

⁹³⁰ PP, LB 8: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 31 May 1788

⁹³¹ PP, LB 8: JPP to JR Herbert, 10 Great Marlborough Street, London, 7 August 1787

⁹³² Stapleton Cotton MSS 18.i: Richard Coker to William Young, 15 July 1765

⁹³³ Bangor Bodrhyddan MSS 3240; UKNA, CO 186/6 and Aberystwyth Bodrhyddan MSS 2 Walter Nisbet, St James's Street, London, to Ellis Yonge, 5 October 1772

⁹³⁴ PP, LB 5: JPP to John Patterson, 12 February 1784

⁹³⁵ PP, LB 6: JPP to Walter Nisbet, Nevis, 27 October 1787

⁹³⁶ PP, LB 37: P & T to TP Weekes, Nevis, 9 January 1788, and P & T to Backelr (sic), 29 February 1788

⁹³⁷ PP, LB 37: P & T to Mr Backler, Apothecary's Hall, Black Friars, 17 November 1787

⁹³⁸ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, ?26 January 1788

⁹³⁹ PP, AB 35 and AB 30 TP Weekes's a/c

⁹⁴⁰ PP, LB 9: JPP to Wm Coker, 5 April 1788

⁹⁴¹ PP, LB 8: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 31 May 1788

Livingston coming out to Nevis and for them to start a family, but when Thomas Pym Weekes raised the issue again – her 18th birthday was drawing closer – this infuriated JPP: marriage at this stage was nothing but ‘a species of madness’.⁹⁴² Indeed, if his brother-in-law was in England, JPP threatened that he ‘should instantly apply for a Statute of Lunacy’.⁹⁴³ JPP believed strongly that Tom was not ready to get married; he should establish himself first so that he could provide for a family.⁹⁴⁴ JPP had seen how quickly money slipped through the hands of Tom’s father and how quickly his debts had mounted up. In complete contrast, JPP was so meticulous in keeping track on his family’s expenditure. For the year 1788 he had allowed £100 a month and had noted at the end of December that the expenses, he was ‘truly sorry to find’, had exceeded ‘his allowance by £25:9:7’.⁹⁴⁵ A man who was so frugal and so careful with money would not understand Thomas Pym Weekes’s haste, and Thomas Pym Weekes did not appreciate the need for laying secure financial foundations before entering into marriage. Nevertheless, despite the differences in opinion Tom was promised ‘the sofa’ from England,⁹⁴⁶ and JPP let him have his mahogany round table that had gathered dust up at Woodland.⁹⁴⁷ The furniture was not needed at more; John Hay Richens, who had last lived at Woodland, had died just before Thomas Pym Weekes arrived in Nevis.

Young Dr Weekes impressed JPP’s friend John Taylor as ‘a young man of abilities’⁹⁴⁸ and Coker, too, spoke ‘in very handsome terms’ of him.⁹⁴⁹ But Dr Weekes was a controversial figure in Nevis. His old problems, the obnoxious and disgusting practices, may have been at the root of this but a political element also came into play. Soon after his arrival JPP had encouraged him to ‘attend steadily’ to his profession and had cautioned him not to take sides ‘in favour of any political measures’, warning him that he would ‘tread on tender ground’.⁹⁵⁰ A year later he felt compelled to repeat his warning:

Do not let any little occurrence or disappointment ruffle your temper! It is the interest of some and possibly the inclination of others, to degrade you in the eyes of the community where you dwell; so for God’s sake continue to act with great circumspection in every department of life – avoid all political disputes and do not interfere in any public matters.⁹⁵¹

JPP similarly cautioned one of his sons to stay away from politics during a visit to Nevis - ⁹⁵² in England Azariah was known to have had friends in radical circles - but his warning to Thomas Pym Weekes was more urgent and more far-reaching. Exposed during his studies at Edinburgh to the most modern thinking of the time, it is very likely that young Weekes had turned to radical politics and that JPP feared being compromised by his brother-in-law. Edinburgh was at the centre of the movement known as the Scottish Enlightenment, and although the thinkers at the time did not promote a particular position on slavery,⁹⁵³ the underlying drift was, however, towards equality and respect for all humankind.

It is likely that during his university days Thomas Pym Weekes had become a Freemason. Freemasonry had flourished in Scotland since the mid-1730s when the Grand Lodge of Scotland came into existence. The origins of freemasonry lie in the medieval stonemasons’ guilds, which, over time, admitted men of rank and wealth until their meetings were no longer just for conducting stonemasons’ business but became social occasions. In 1717 four London guilds, or lodges, united to form a grand lodge for London and Westminster, and this, in due course, became the Grand Lodge of

⁹⁴² PP, LB 8: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 26 July 1788

⁹⁴³ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 28 August 1788

⁹⁴⁴ PP, LB 8: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 26 July 1788

⁹⁴⁵ PP, AB 33 f37 Cash a/c

⁹⁴⁶ PP, LB 37: P & T to TP Weekes, 13 October 1788

⁹⁴⁷ PP, LB 9: JPP to Wm Coker, 5 April 1788

⁹⁴⁸ PP, LB 8: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 31 May 1788

⁹⁴⁹ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 16 February 1789

⁹⁵⁰ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, ?26 January 1788

⁹⁵¹ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 16 February 1789

⁹⁵² PP, LB 11: JPP to Azariah Pinney, 18 February 1793

⁹⁵³ Porter, Roy *Enlightenment* p345

England, in effect the 'mother' lodge. It had, and still has, the power to grant warrants for lodges to establish themselves. The order is not a religious organisation but a fraternity that subscribes to ideals such as the equality of all people and religious toleration - reflecting the liberal principles of progressive eighteenth century thinking – and from its beginnings in 1717, Freemasonry quickly spread from England around the world. Lodges were established in the colonial outposts – in North America, Canada, and India - and there were lodges in the Navy.⁹⁵⁴ In North America, lodges existed not only for white but also for free black and mixed-race men; they came into existence after the free black artisan and abolitionist Prince Hall and over a dozen of his fellow freedmen had set up their first lodge in 1775. Hall and his Brothers faced opposition from the Massachusetts Masons and despite its principle of equality for all men, for years white American lodges repeatedly turned down their requests for a warrant. Eventually the more liberally-minded Grand Lodge of England granted them a charter, and their Provisional African Lodge No 1 was re-named and re-numbered and became the African Lodge No 459. Over time free men established a number of lodges.⁹⁵⁵

In the Caribbean freemasonry was practised in several of the islands, among them Antigua, St Kitts and Nevis, but its members would then have been exclusively white. In St Kitts the first lodge had been established relatively early, in 1739, and was followed by several more until there were three English and three Scottish lodges in the island. Judge John Baker mentioned the Masonic Lodge in Antigua and noted that in 1755 he watched the Freemason's procession in St Kitts - he 'Stood at Dr Canvene's to see it go by'.⁹⁵⁶ Nevis had two English lodges; one was established in 1767 and also served members on Montserrat, and another was established in 1776. Unfortunately, during the eighteenth century none of these lodges sent membership returns to the English mother lodge, the Grand Lodge, and the names of the members are, therefore, not known. However, Thomas Pym Weekes undoubtedly was a practising Mason.⁹⁵⁷

If his association with freemasonry suggests that Dr Weekes was a progressive, enlightened thinker, evidence of his medical practice supports the view that he was also in the forefront of what was then modern medicine. With equipment sent from England, he applied himself as a practising doctor and also carried out experiments. Part of the modern, enlightened world view was a desire to tread new ground in fields such as medicine, to make new discoveries, and to find new cures, but part of this

⁹⁵⁴ For instance, there were Masonic Lodges on board His Majesty's ships, the *Prince* and the *Guadeloupe*, and in the Army, such as in the Fourth Regiment of Foot, the King's Own Royal Regiment (Lane, John with an introduction by William James Hughan *Masonic Records 1717-1894* and George S Draffen (Comp) *Scottish Masonic Records 1736-1950*).

⁹⁵⁵ Wallace, Maurice "Are We Men?": Prince Hall, Martin Delany, and the Masculine Ideal in Black Freemasonry, 1775-1865" in *American Literary History* Vol 9 Issue 3 (Autumn 1997) pp397-98 and p419 Note 2s and 3
See also <http://www.shaf.ac.uk/~crf/news/black.htm> 'Black Freemasonry' (16 January 2004)

⁹⁵⁶ Yorke, Philip Chesney (ed) *The Diary of John Baker* p65 and p79

⁹⁵⁷ The original Grand Lodge of English was also known as the Premier or Moderns Grand Lodge. In 1751 a rival called the Antients Grand Lodge was established, and both the Moderns and the Antients joined in 1813 to form The United Grand Lodge of England.

Freemasonry came to St Kitts on 21 March 1739 when the Grand Lodge of England warranted a lodge at Basseterre (Lodge No 174). This was followed in 1742 by Lodge No 123 meeting at Old Road, in 1750 by Clarence Lodge No 206 meeting at Sandy Point, and in 1768 by Union Lodge No 428. The Grand Lodge of Scotland established three lodges on St Kitts: in 1769 St Andrew Lodge No 151, in 1786 Union Lodge No 217, and in 1791 Mount of Olives No 241. The English Union Lodge was erased in 1769, a year after it had been warranted, St Andrew Lodge in 1809, Old Road Lodge in 1813, the Scottish Union Lodge and Mount of Olives in 1816, and Sandy Point Lodge in 1822. The Basseterre lodge, which in 1755 changed its name to The Mother Lodge, was erased in 1862. The only meeting place known is for this lodge; members met at the 'Scotch Arms' in Basseterre.

The Montserrat and Nevis Lodge (the Provincial Grand Lodge) made no returns and there are no records after it was warranted in 1767 by The Antients Grand Lodge. Various listed as 'Montserrat', 'Provincial Grand Lodge, Mountserratt' (sic) and 'Island of Nevis, West Indies', after 1814 it was not listed. The second lodge (No 507) which was established in Nevis in 1776 and warranted by the Premier Grand Lodge, was erased in 1813 (John Lane *Masonic Records 1717-1894* and George S Draffen *Scottish Masonic Records 1736-1950*).

The Mount Olive Lodge (No 336) at Taylor's Range was resurrected in 1835; on its 150th anniversary a rededication ceremony was held in November 1985. Representatives attended a one-day seminar on masonry in the Caribbean, which was held in November 1996 at The Temple, Mount Zion, in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad (<http://www.freemasonry.london.museum/catalogue.htm>).

quest for improvement was also the need for new theories to stand up to scientific scrutiny. They had to be tested, quantified and tabulated.⁹⁵⁸ As a student at Edinburgh Medical School, Thomas Pym Weekes had been exposed to innovative ideas in medicine, such as the therapeutic applications of chemical compounds; one of his contemporaries at Edinburgh, Dr Thomas Beddoes, made it his life's work to seek appropriate uses for gases in the treatment of illnesses. Years later, in 1799 Dr Beddoes was to establish the 'Pneumatic Institute' in Bristol where he worked with his assistant, the chemist Humphrey Davy. During his brief spell with Beddoes, Davy became famous for his work on nitrous oxide, commonly called laughing gas; Davy discovered its anaesthetic properties and thereby greatly advanced medical knowledge.⁹⁵⁹ In 1801 Davy became a lecturer at the newly founded Royal Institution and began experiments on the effects of electricity on chemical compounds. The study of chemicals, metals, gases and electricity were the areas that interested these modern medical men, and it was no coincidence that among the contraptions Dr Weekes ordered from England was 'a set of glasses for making fixed air' and 'a compleat electrical apparatus'.⁹⁶⁰ It is possible that Thomas Pym Weekes was the first doctor in the West Indies to use electrical stimulation and that two people from Mountravers, Frank and Little Frank, were the first enslaved individuals - indeed, the first patients - to receive such treatment. Of course, their enslaved status meant that they could not object to this, or any other form of treatment, which, in effect, amounted to plantation doctors being able to perform experiments without any hindrances - as long as they had the consent of the plantation owner or manager.

But while he may have wanted to be seen as a modern practitioner, all was not well. Within a year of arriving in Nevis Dr Weekes stood accused of having been 'neglectful' of Mr Cassin's people.⁹⁶¹ His new methods may have failed or he had just acted carelessly, but there could also have been some professional jealousy at work: Michael Cassin's youngest son, Henry Richards Cassin, was then apprenticed to a surgeon in Bristol⁹⁶² and on his way to qualifying as a doctor. His family may, simply, have tried to smear Dr Weekes's name in an effort to reduce the competition for when Dr Cassin returned to Nevis. After all, having lived abroad for the past 15 years and having spent his formative years in Britain, Dr Weekes was almost a newcomer to the island, and in small communities old residents tend to close ranks on outsiders. JPP, always ready to criticise his brother-in-law, even to the point of correcting his spelling, in this instance, regarding Mr Cassin's people, he was prepared to give Thomas Pym Weekes the benefit of the doubt.⁹⁶³

Apart from enslaved people and local residents, Thomas Pym Weekes also treated members of the crew of at least one of the Bristol ships; an invoice for over N£20 attests to this.⁹⁶⁴ Money was coming in but John Taylor was among those who believed that Dr Weekes would have difficulty in 'making the first thousand',⁹⁶⁵ and as it turned out, his financial situation proved far from secure. In London he still owed money to Mr Cottle, his tailor who refused to send out any more goods, and to Peggy Douglas, his former servant.⁹⁶⁶ The House settled Mr Cottle's bill of just over £20⁹⁶⁷ and paid the Scotswoman's expenses to London, which, conveniently, had slipped Thomas Pym Weekes's mind.⁹⁶⁸ His father also stood in need of cash and Dr Weekes asked JPP to advance his father £50 but, not believing that Tom could afford the repayments, JPP turned down this request.⁹⁶⁹ Coker tied

⁹⁵⁸ Porter, Roy *Enlightenment* p207

⁹⁵⁹ Dr Thomas Beddoes left Edinburgh in December 1786 and returned to Oxford to take his MA and MD (Neave, Michael 'Thomas Beddoes (1760-1808)' in *Oxford DNB*)

⁹⁶⁰ PP, LB 37

⁹⁶¹ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 5 September 1788

⁹⁶² Terrell, Michelle M *The Jewish Community of Early Colonial Nevis* p117, quoting Wallis & Wallis 1988 p104

⁹⁶³ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 5 September 1788

⁹⁶⁴ PP, AB 35 Charles Maies' a/c

⁹⁶⁵ PP, LB 8: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 31 May 1788

⁹⁶⁶ PP, AB 40

⁹⁶⁷ PP, LB 37: P & T to TP Weekes, 30 October 1788

⁹⁶⁸ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 15 October 1789

⁹⁶⁹ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 16 February 1789

him over by lending him money from the plantation accounts⁹⁷⁰ and, to generate some extra money, Dr Weekes branched out: he bought some cotton and shipped it to England. The House tried to sell his 'very heavy article' but cotton of that quality only fetched a penny a pound and it was so inferior that it remained unsold for some time.⁹⁷¹ It is likely that Dr Weekes acted, in effect, as a middleman, buying up supplies of cotton that had been grown by enslaved and freed people.

And then, despite his troubling finances, Thomas Pym Weekes bought John Tobin Crosse's house. It cost £1,100 and he purchased it by way of a mortgage⁹⁷² around the time Isabella Livingston came to Nevis. After they had waited to get married for over two years, the couple started their 'Happy Union'⁹⁷³ on 21 April 1789.⁹⁷⁴

To begin with, Mrs Weekes was not very happy in Nevis. JPP suspected that she would 'view the customs and manners of the West-Indies with a Jaundice (sic) eye' yet thought that her affection for Tom and her good sense 'may prevent her from discovering her real sentiments'.⁹⁷⁵ But it appears that Caribbean island life was not for her and, most likely, it was Isabella who suggested leaving Nevis for the Hot Wells in Bristol. A spa town adjoining fashionable Clifton, its waters promised cures for anything from loss of appetite to dysentery and was visited as much for its waters as its spectacular setting in the Avon Gorge. At the Hot Wells Dr Weekes and his young wife would have found themselves in pleasant company with good prospects but JPP considered this plan 'an act of insanity'⁹⁷⁶ and, as he and Mrs P were preparing to leave for Nevis, he must have made a mental note to definitely dissuade his brother-in-law from such an undertaking.

Mrs P had been 'in a very poor state of health' and her visit to Nevis was intended as a recuperative holiday but, after spending six years in England, homesickness as well as curiosity about Tom's wife may well have been added motivations. After Jane Pinney's arrival in early January 1790, brother and sister had four months together before JPP landed; he came on a later vessel.

While his sister was in Nevis, one of their aunts at the Cedar Trees died.⁹⁷⁷ Thomas Pym Weekes acted not only as Betsey Weekes's executor but also inherited an equal share with the two remaining Ladies,⁹⁷⁸ and it appears that by way of this inheritance he acquired five more people, in addition to another seven⁹⁷⁹ who had previously belonged to his father and his grandmother: Mary, Nancy, Jack, Billey, William, Charloe and Tom. These seven had been mortgaged by William Burt Weekes and his mother to JPP, who had earmarked them for Thomas Pym Weekes's own use. In fact these seven had belonged to a group of nine mortgaged people but two had died before the mid-1780s. The rest had been hired to Dr Peterson at Fort Charles prior to Thomas Pym Weekes's arrival in Nevis and, now that he was in the island, he wanted to lay claim to several of them. This was not possible; they had become JPP's property. Another woman, Patty, had been loaned by Betsey Weekes to the Cokers with several others, and she later came into Thomas Pym Weekes's possession, while four people who had previously belonged to his grandmother, had been sold after old Mary Weekes's death in 1784. Tom had received the profit from the sale of these four, some of whom he would have known from when he was a child: Little Dick and Cuffee and the sisters Celia and Grace.⁹⁸⁰

Not long after Thomas Pym Weekes had acquired Aunt Betsey's five people, her legacy to him, he mortgaged them, together with five of the seven JPP had earmarked for his use. Weekes and his wife

⁹⁷⁰ PP, AB 35 Cash a/c

⁹⁷¹ PP, LB 38: P & T to TP Weekes, 14 November 1789

⁹⁷² PP, LB 9: JPP, Bristol, to TP Weekes, 15 September 1789, and AB 43 JT Crosse's a/c

⁹⁷³ PP, LB 9: JPP to Wm Coker, Nevis, 1 September 1789

⁹⁷⁴ Oliver, VL *History of Antigua* Vol 2 p42, quoting *Gentleman's Magazine* p669

⁹⁷⁵ PP, LB 9: JPP, Bristol, to TP Weekes, 15 September 1789

⁹⁷⁶ PP, LB 8: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 23 September 1789

⁹⁷⁷ Elizabeth Weekes died on 23 March 1790 (PP, AB 39)

⁹⁷⁸ PP, AB 43

⁹⁷⁹ PP, AB 36 TP Weekes's a/c

⁹⁸⁰ PP, AB 27 TP Weekes's a/c

mortgaged these ten people to a partnership made up of William Jones, John Taylor and John Frederick Pinney, but the couple did not have to hand them over; they were allowed to retain them for their own use.⁹⁸¹ Two remaining boys, Jack and Billey, came into JPP's possession and went to work on Mountravers. When his brother-in-law was in Nevis, Thomas Pym Weekes made complicated deals with him and it appears that the sale of the two boys was tied up with a mortgage on his property in Charlestown which he transferred to JPP. In 1790 he owed his brother-in-law £967⁹⁸² but by shifting at least part of his debt onto JPP, at least the financial commitments were kept within the family.

During his visit to Nevis JPP sacked his manager, William Coker, and this presented an unexpected opportunity for Thomas Pym Weekes. Although the overseer, James Williams, had served on Mountravers long enough to be promoted to manager, Dr Weekes wanted the job: his wife was pregnant with their first child, he had debts and he needed a steady income. Possibly at Isabella's behest, he applied for the post and, according to JPP, did this 'in the most pressing manner'. Mindful of Tom's temper, his foolishness, his recklessness, and all the bother he had caused as a youth, his brother-in-law did not deem him 'a proper person' and JPP 'resisted for several days'. Then Mrs P got involved. She championed her brother's cause, possibly the more so because of Isabella's pregnancy. A 'domestic and valuable woman', sensible 'Bell' met with the approval of the Pinneys,⁹⁸³ and, swayed by his wife, eventually JPP gave way.⁹⁸⁴ Appointing a doctor as manager at least meant that medical help was available at all times and without having to pay separately for it, and there was a chance that by holding down a responsible job Tom would mature into a responsible family man. While appointing him as manager, to 'advance his interest' JPP also allowed him to carry on as a practicing doctor. Relieved and thankful for the chance he was given, Tom promised to behave. As JPP later put it, 'Gratitude alone, according to your own observation, was an ample security for the performance of your engagement.'⁹⁸⁵ But gratitude alone was not sufficient to keep Thomas Pym Weekes on the right track.

As a gesture of goodwill ('as a compliment') JPP had given him some additional money, and he had started paying his salary on 31 May,⁹⁸⁶ but it was only after the Pinneys left for England on 1 August that Thomas Pym Weekes was in complete charge of Mountravers. He had much to learn. As a medical doctor who had spent his early childhood in a fort and as a seven-year-old had left for school in England, his knowledge of plantation matters must have been limited. He would have had to rely heavily on the overseer and the drivers.

While Thomas Pym Weekes applied himself to the plantation business, his wife was preparing herself for the birth of their first child. Their son William Burt was born on 22 November 1790, almost certainly on Mountravers; Weekes's house in town having been lent to William Coker and his family. This generous act, however, had not prevented Weekes from falling out so badly with his aunt and uncle over his appointment that JPP considered Coker not only his but also Tom's enemy.⁹⁸⁷ Tom always had held the 'affection from his Aunt Coker'⁹⁸⁸ and his uncle had treated him like his own son and, while he was at school in England, had acted as his guardian. But now the Cokers felt betrayed by him. The death of their son John Frederick, Tom's cousin, added to their despair, and he got to feel the full force of their deep hurt when Coker responded to the condolences Tom had sent.

⁹⁸¹ The ten people Thomas Pym Weekes and his wife mortgaged to William Jones, John Taylor and JF Pinney in trust were the mulatto Sally Brooks and her mestize son James George; the mestize Ann and her son Ned; the females Mary and Nancy; and the males William, Sharloe, Tom Thraske and Billy Barrington (ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 f41).

⁹⁸² ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 Unnumbered folio, and PP, AB 39 TP Weekes's a/c

⁹⁸³ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 1 February 1793

⁹⁸⁴ PP, AB 45 Memo

⁹⁸⁵ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 24 October 1791

⁹⁸⁶ PP, AB 39 JPP's a/c and TP Weekes's a/c

⁹⁸⁷ PP, LB 9: JPP, Bristol, to Miss A Weekes, 31 October 1790

⁹⁸⁸ PP, LB 3: JPP, Woodcutts, to William Burt Weekes, Nevis, 4 October 1774

On the Cokers' departure for England, Thomas Pym Weekes entrusted into their safekeeping some peacocks, a peahen and peafowl, and it is likely that he had organised the turtle that the Cokers were to dine on with the Pinneys in Bristol. JPP had asked him to send some peacock feathers - they were intended to be made into a muff - ⁹⁸⁹ but instead of just getting hold the feathers from Mrs Brazier Thomas Pym Weekes sent to Bristol a whole live menagerie. With peacocks being symbols of beauty, vanity and pride, such presents reflect the young man's character. The animals, however, were not only beautiful but also very valuable gifts; large, exotic feathers were popular decorations and an essential part of evening wear. A single plume could cost as much as 16 guineas.⁹⁹⁰ JPP sent some of the animals to his country residence, Racedown, and the rest to Naish House, to be enjoyed by Tom's cousin, Revd William Young Coker, and Coker's young wife.⁹⁹¹

Now that he was in charge of Mountravers Thomas Pym Weekes threw himself with gusto into various building projects. He oversaw the building of a cistern and a windmill - its foundation was laid on 25 July 1791 and kept many workmen occupied for months to come – and repairs and improvements on the boiling houses at Sharloes and at Woodland. He got people to raise a wall around the Pond Piece near the sea, and, up at Woodland, pull down and rebuild the dwelling house. While he had instructions from JPP, for instance, to erect the windmill, he also decided that other work needed doing.

While he managed these building projects very ably, his book-keeping turned out to be less satisfactory. A year into the job he had reminders from his brother-in-law that certain individuals were 'not considered as plantation negroes' and that their hire income should be credited to JPP's private accounts.⁹⁹² This was followed by a similar warning about 'Tom Cook, lately in possession of McGill' who also was 'unconnected with the estate'.⁹⁹³

Possibly because he had acquired a taste for managing a plantation, a year into the job Thomas Pym Weekes contemplated buying his own plantation. His father had finally managed to conclude the sale of his Fortree estate in Aberdeenshire that Tom had inherited from his mother and he may have intended to put the proceeds into property.⁹⁹⁴ He had in mind Symonds Estate. Working as a manager was one thing, owning a plantation another, and JPP angrily dismissed this 'Utopian scheme'. Fearing that Tom would act rashly and leave Mountravers without a manager, JPP instructed his attorney John Taylor to '...immediately appoint another person', possibly Mr Ellery, to the post of manager. However, within a couple of months Thomas Pym Weekes changed his mind ⁹⁹⁵ and the matter was 'at an end', and JPP decided to 'bury what has passed into oblivion'.⁹⁹⁶ But, hurt by his brother-in-law's ungrateful behaviour, in a moment of gloom JPP confided to his account book how 'alarmed' he was at Tom's 'depraved habit', presumably meaning his propensity to spend money thoughtlessly. JPP contemplated sacking him if he did not change his ways.⁹⁹⁷ Meanwhile Dr Weekes was trying to earn additional money by taking on the medical care of people on neighbouring Clarke's Estate but JPP vetoed his proposal. Mr Crosse was a near relation of Mr Clarke's and his comment that Weekes's involvement with that plantation would be 'highly improper' suggests that there might have been problems associated with Weekes's purchase of Crosse's house.⁹⁹⁸

Despite energetically directing several large building projects, after a bad start Thomas Pym Weekes managed to send reasonably good sugars to Bristol. At S69s6d, the Mountravers produce even sold

⁹⁸⁹ PP, LB 9: JPP, Bristol, to TP Weekes, 12 November 1790

⁹⁹⁰ Murray, Venetia *High Society* p97

⁹⁹¹ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 24 October 1791

⁹⁹² PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 24 October 1791

⁹⁹³ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 16 January 1792

⁹⁹⁴ PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii – Summary

⁹⁹⁵ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 4 October 1791

⁹⁹⁶ PP, LB 9: JPP to John Taylor, 22 December 1791

⁹⁹⁷ PP, AB 39 Note

⁹⁹⁸ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 20 July 1791

at S6d more than James Tobin's, and JPP was pleased.⁹⁹⁹ Weekes had improved on Coker's performance and sugars were better than usual but JPP was still not quite satisfied because they were 'not equal to Parris's'.¹⁰⁰⁰ For a plantation to produce good sugar it depended largely on the talents of the sugar boilers. While making a good product was their aim, sugar was also their weapon: if they so choose, they could undermine the sugar-making process and use it as a means of protest. The boilers and their assistants could dent the planters' profits by turning out bad and burnt, or runny and syrupy sugars and, in part, the success therefore depended on how well a plantation was managed, or, at least, how able the manager and the overseer were in making the sugar boilers *want* to produce good sugar. Judging by his end product, Thomas Pym Weekes managed the people sufficiently well for them to reward him with a good output. This may have had something to do with him increasing their food allowances, or with his new way of managing people. For instance, rather than use physical restraint on a man who had repeatedly absconded, as Coker would have done, Weekes fined him. This is the only instance known where such punishment was used, or recorded.

To keep JPP informed, Dr Weekes regularly updated him on plantation matters, which, at the same time, provided him with a good opportunity to seek help from his well-connected brother-in-law in furthering his medical career. But JPP stalled and responded with a patronising lecture:

When you follow Lord Chesterfield's maxim of not putting off until to morrow what can be done to day, you would constantly find sufficient leisure for all you have to do and enjoy a greater share of comfort in your retirement from business.¹⁰⁰¹

A planter from Grenada advised that managers should 'never enter into any mercantile business'¹⁰⁰² but almost as soon as Thomas Pym Weekes had set foot in the island he had engaged in some form of trading, and once he became manager, he continued. For two years running he bought from the plantation a puncheon of rum, which held nearly 120 gallons,¹⁰⁰³ and then he doubled the amount.¹⁰⁰⁴ This rum would have been sold in small quantities in the island – possibly by his people – but in 1792 he arranged for a shipment of twenty puncheons to England. In an effort to settle his debts, the House of Pinney & Tobin was to sell the rum on his account. But just then Leeward Island rum was not much in demand. Worth between about 7s1d and 7s6d per gallon, according to strength, he stood advised that he should have sold the rum in Nevis¹⁰⁰⁵ and that in future the House was reluctant to accept any more. The warning of this 'unprofitable speculation'¹⁰⁰⁶ proved wrong; to the surprise of his correspondents in Bristol his rum sold for the top price of 7s6d,¹⁰⁰⁷ resulting in net proceeds of just over S£250.¹⁰⁰⁸ Encouraged, he dispatched two more consignments of rum, in total about 1,400 gallons worth N£290,¹⁰⁰⁹ and, although in debt with the House, he underwrote his father's annuity so that the House could pay William Burt Weekes an advance on leaving JPP's country residence, Racedown Lodge.¹⁰¹⁰

After spending some time in Scotland, JPP had installed old Weekes at Racedown but his building works there had driven JPP to despair and made him complain about his father-in-law's 'temporary insanity'. Not only did Weekes employ a number of workmen he had brought with him all the way from Scotland – a gardener, a cook, a footman, two carpenters (one left him at Bristol), and a mason -¹⁰¹¹

⁹⁹⁹ PP, LB 38: T & P to TP Weekes, Nevis, 4 July 1792

¹⁰⁰⁰ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 12 September 1793

¹⁰⁰¹ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 24 October 1791

¹⁰⁰² Aberystwyth Bodrhyddan MSS: 2 Unidentified writer [from Grenada], to Miss Stapleton, 11 February 1770

¹⁰⁰³ PP, AB 35 Rum a/c and AB 30 Rum a/c

¹⁰⁰⁴ PP, AB 39 TP Weekes's a/c

¹⁰⁰⁵ PP, LB 38: T & P to TP Weekes, Nevis, 4 July 1792

¹⁰⁰⁶ PP, LB 38: T & P to TP Weekes, Nevis, 10 September 1792, and 29 October 1792

¹⁰⁰⁷ PP, LB 38: T & P to TP Weekes, Nevis, 29 October 1792

¹⁰⁰⁸ PP, MSS in Red Boxes, Oddments Box, file 2: TP Weekes's a/c with Tobin & Pinney May 1792-May 1793

¹⁰⁰⁹ PP, AB 39 Rum a/c

¹⁰¹⁰ PP, LB 38: P & T to William Burt Weekes, c/o Mrs Picketts, Lyme Regis, 22 October 1792

¹⁰¹¹ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 24 January 1791

but his ambitious alterations had left JPP gasping. His father-in-law had altered wall and ceiling heights, raising the chambers 12 inches higher than JPP had intended and had started on the upper floor when JPP intervened:

As the atticks are intended for servants, what necessity of their being as good as the chambers, and why lay out so much money on a house that cannot, after all, be made a good one when it might be made comfortable at a moderate expense.¹⁰¹²

In wanting to make the attics comfortable for the servants William Burt Weekes displayed his sympathetic attitude towards servants and his underlying good nature, but this episode also shows that he did not worry about trifles such as money. Weekes not only spent JPP's cash rashly but also his own. His personal expenditure exceeded his income. This necessitated another loan from JPP, who, quite bluntly, remarked of his father-in-law that he 'cannot manage a house',¹⁰¹³ and that he was 'sacrificing peace of mind at the altar of vanity'.¹⁰¹⁴ Just when all this was exercising JPP, a box of presents arrived from Nevis – the duty alone came to £1:7:8 – but this could not appease JPP¹⁰¹⁵ and, no doubt indignant and with wounded pride, William Burt Weekes agreed to JPP's proposal to leave Racedown and to retire to Lyme Regis on the south coast.¹⁰¹⁶ While Weekes went to board with a Mr or Mrs Pickett,¹⁰¹⁷ Joseph Gill was installed at Racedown, but Weekes only remained in Lyme Regis for less than a year because, through JPP's careful brokering, he and William Coker were reconciled with one another. On 24 August 1793 William Burt Weekes began lodging with the Cokers at Woodcutts. He had been ill in Lyme Regis¹⁰¹⁸ and was still not well when he joined his sister and his brother-in-law at Woodcutts. William Burt Weekes and William Coker had fallen out over money and whereas the two men made their peace with each other, it is likely that Thomas Pym Weekes was never reconciled with his uncle, particularly once he got involved in the financial wrangling between his father and his uncle over the sale of the post of Gunner, back in the 1760s. Thomas Pym Weekes had disputed the accounts, and when he sent his father the arbitration award that had been worked out in Nevis, he scribbled on the bundle of papers: 'The Villany of Old Coker exposed.'¹⁰¹⁹

By the beginning of May 1792 Thomas Pym Weekes's debt with the House of Pinney & Tobin came to nearly £790. A year on it increased again and stood at almost £860.¹⁰²⁰ He should have been fairly well off; he had money coming in from his medical practice in Charlestown,¹⁰²¹ he was on a manager's salary of N£150 a year and had additional benefits: '40 bushels of corn for his feathered stock', as much rum and muscavado sugar as he and his family could consume, and the use of people whom he could hire out.¹⁰²² But he needed all the income he could get, not just to settle his debts but also because he had every intention to live well. He imported cheese, tripe and other such items from the Irish factor – luxuries that went with his status as manager but which swelled his household expenses.¹⁰²³

¹⁰¹² PP, MSS in Numbered Folders (Folder 41): Transcripts from Old LB 10: JPP to WB Weekes, 27 September 1790

¹⁰¹³ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, 10 November 1792

¹⁰¹⁴ PP, Dom Box S1: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 29 November 1792

¹⁰¹⁵ PP, MSS in Red Boxes, Oddments Box, file 2: TP Weekes's a/c with Tobin & Pinney May 1792-May 1793

¹⁰¹⁶ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, 10 November 1792

¹⁰¹⁷ PP, LB 10: JPP, Sherborne and Bristol, to Wm Coker, Woodcutts, 5 and 26 October 1792

¹⁰¹⁸ PP, AB 2

¹⁰¹⁹ PP, Dom Box S1: TP Weekes to WB Weekes, undated, with an arbitration award dated 31 July 1791

¹⁰²⁰ PP, MSS in Red Boxes, Oddments Box, file 2: TP Weekes's a/c with Tobin & Pinney May 1792-May 1793

¹⁰²¹ PP, AB 50 TP Weekes Doctor of Physic, Charlestown a/c 1789-1794

¹⁰²² PP, Pinney Miscellaneous 1783-94, Vol 7, List of Deeds and Papers in Nevis, 14 June 1783

¹⁰²³ Some of the imported commodities such as the meal may have been intended for trading, but included in the goods 'consigned to TP Weekes per Nevis/Captain Maies' were also his personal orders. Although the sums involved for the luxury foods were relatively small, they still represented about a week's wages:

Walter Jacks, Mealman [corn factor]	£43:11:2
Edward Davies, cooper	£30:11:8
Joanna Curtis, cheese factor	£0:12:2
Thomas Granger, tripe seller	£0:17:0
John McCullom, Irish factor	£1:15:0

Charges on merchandise, wharfage, town dues etc. shipping charges £1:16:9 (PP, AB 40)

In June 1792 the House also dispatched a sizeable amount of garden seeds, worth a considerable sum, £4:7:0 (worth almost £600 in 2016),¹⁰²⁴ and it looked as if the young Weekeses were settling down in Nevis after all. Plans to go to England had been put aside. The family was growing, and within less than two years of their first son being born, Bell Weekes gave birth to their second son. They called him Thomas Pym.¹⁰²⁵ Dr Weekes's sister, Mrs P, meanwhile, was pregnant once more, but this did not please his brother-in-law at all. As if he had no part in the matter, JPP grumpily wrote to Tom: 'My wife has taken it into her head to breed again...'¹⁰²⁶ In contrast, Tom was delighted when Bell was pregnant for the third time and, although a medical man, he was not unduly perturbed that this pregnancy followed the birth of Little Tom so very swiftly. But Isabella Weekes died, probably due to complications in her pregnancy or in childbed, on 14 November 1792. She was about 22 years old¹⁰²⁷ and had been married for less than four years. Deeply loved by Tom and well-liked by the Pinneys - JPP spoke kindly of her, calling her an 'amiable companion' - she left behind a distraught husband who now had to care for their two very young sons. Will was beginning to talk and Tom to walk.¹⁰²⁸

Isabella had provided stability in his life and her death threw him into an 'unhappy state of mind'.¹⁰²⁹ He wanted to leave Nevis, 'intent on practising in some other island'. Possibly because he lost interest in the plantation business but maybe because his depression rendered him incapable of work, in the summer of 1793 he neglected to load sugars onto the *Nevis*,¹⁰³⁰ as was standard practice, and later shipped them on another vessel instead.¹⁰³¹ JPP put this incident with the sugar down to personal animosity between Weekes and the master of the *Nevis*, Captain Charles Maies, and alleged that he had 'withheld' the sugar on purpose, not only to 'gratify an unwarrantable resentment against Captain Maies'¹⁰³² but also to 'materially injure' his brother-in-law.¹⁰³³ JPP saw this as a plot against him and expressed his anger in a way that would suggest that Thomas Pym Weekes had undergone a mental breakdown, or that he was suffering from mental illness, but given the context this was written in – forgetting to ship sugar to England – this can be dismissed as JPP's hyperbole. On other occasions, too, he expressed his outrage at people's failings in an exaggerated, virulent manner. He wrote that not sending the sugars were 'such strong marks of a diseased mind' and blamed Weekes's mental state: 'An amazing dejection of spirits and a degree of insanity seem to overwhelm you ...'¹⁰³⁴

What probably amounted to a severe, possibly debilitating, depression caused by his wife's death did not lessen when one of his nephews came to visit. Indeed, Azariah's presence may have deepened his misery because Dr Weekes and his nephew were not on very friendly terms, as indicated by the terse note in Weekes's journal: 'Azariah more polite than usual.'¹⁰³⁵ The most promising and the most business-minded of JPP's sons, the 18-year-old was visiting the island to recover his health. He was tall for his age, had lost a lot of weight and, in a 'declining state of health',¹⁰³⁶ had been sent to Nevis by way of Gibraltar, Madeira, St Vincent, and Grenada.¹⁰³⁷ Having left Bristol in January 1793,¹⁰³⁸ he arrived when Thomas Pym Weekes was still deeply depressed. Upset by 'the unhappy state of mind of Uncle', Azariah wrote that he hoped JPP's presence was going to 'alleviate his insaguary

¹⁰²⁴ PP, AB 40

¹⁰²⁵ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 9 June 1792

¹⁰²⁶ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, 10 November 1792

¹⁰²⁷ Recordset: Scotland, Banffshire & Moray Deaths and Burials (FindMyPast)

¹⁰²⁸ PP, Dom Box S1: TP Weekes to WB Weekes, 4 October 1792, and LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 1 February 1793

¹⁰²⁹ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 12 August 1793

¹⁰³⁰ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 2 October 1793

¹⁰³¹ PP, LB 12: JPP to Azariah Pinney, 24 November 1793

¹⁰³² PP, AB 42

¹⁰³³ PP, LB 12: JPP to Azariah Pinney, 24 November 1793

¹⁰³⁴ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 2 October 1793

¹⁰³⁵ PP, Misc Vols 12 Leeward Islands Calendar 1793

¹⁰³⁶ PP, Misc Vols 8 Diary of JPP

¹⁰³⁷ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, 20 December 1792

¹⁰³⁸ PP, Misc Vols 8 Diary of JPP

unhappiness and poverty'.¹⁰³⁹ JPP was planning another trip to Nevis and was due to sail with his eldest son in December so that they could be in Nevis for John Frederick's coming off age at the beginning of March. Azariah, meanwhile, had to return to England to take up his place at Cambridge University.¹⁰⁴⁰ He arrived home very much sun-burnt and, having put on weight, in very good health.¹⁰⁴¹

Thomas Pym Weekes's nephew may still have been in Nevis when the doctor embarked on a new business venture. Possibly inspired by the success of his brother-in-law's shipping business, Weekes invested N£825 and bought his own vessel. He purchased the sloop *Betsey* from John and Thomas Arthurton. Weekes would have known the men from when Thomas Arthurton worked on Mountravers as a distiller. The sale was witnessed by William Keepe, the son of the mason John Keepe.¹⁰⁴² A couple of years younger than Weekes, William Keepe may well have been a friend of his.

Thomas Pym Weekes considered John Frederick's coming off age a suitable occasion to lay on a party – after all, the official handover of the entailed estate was going to take place when his nephew turned 21, and technically, on his birthday, John Frederick would become his employer (although Weekes was hoping to have quit his manager's job by then). When the windmill was being erected, he had splashed out N£6 of JPP's money on a dozen magnum of claret to 'christen' the structure¹⁰⁴³ and felt justified to spend five times that amount on John Frederick's birthday bash.¹⁰⁴⁴ But he did not consider that the guest of honour might not get to Nevis in time. As it turned out, John Frederick Pinney celebrated his birthday at Cork while waiting for the fleet to assemble.¹⁰⁴⁵ War with France, once more, made travelling unpredictable and dangerous. In fact the war had scuppered Weekes's plans to sail to Britain. Following his wife's death, he had intended to visit England but his brother-in-law considered travelling at this time 'not very advantageous',¹⁰⁴⁶ and Weekes had stayed put.

JPP, his son John Frederick and their servant Pero arrived safely in Nevis on 8 May 1794,¹⁰⁴⁷ and on the same day Thomas Pym Weekes left his post as manager.¹⁰⁴⁸ JPP appointed the overseer, the Welshman James Williams. He had been on a visit home and had returned with JPP and a new overseer.

As soon as his brother-in-law set foot in the island, he took Dr Weekes to task over the expense of the entertainment that he had laid on without JPP's 'knowledge or consent'¹⁰⁴⁹ and then queried why the plantation drawer was, again, short of money. Coker had failed to account for over N£30 of cash and now Thomas Pym Weekes had repeated the same mistake.¹⁰⁵⁰ After sacking Coker, JPP had promised himself: 'I shall never again suffer so much from my affairs to be neglected or any encroachments made...' ¹⁰⁵¹ but he now found that, despite his promises to behave responsibly, Tom's 'ill conduct and mis-management over the last two years' had harmed his interests.¹⁰⁵²

Regarding his brother-in-law's failures, while in Nevis JPP penned yet another memo, which started rather pompously with: 'But alas! Notwithstanding such manifest proof of the attention of Mr P paid to

¹⁰³⁹ PP, Dom Box S2-5: Azariah Pinney to JPP, 23 September 1793

¹⁰⁴⁰ Venn, John and JA Venn (comp) *Alumni Cantabrigienses*

¹⁰⁴¹ PP, LB 10: JPP to Judith Butler Dunbar, 2 August 1793

¹⁰⁴² ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 ff143-45

William Keepe's father, the mason John Keepe, had died in December 1793. Before his death, Thomas Pym Weekes had sold him something – land or people – but the reference indexed as 'Thomas Pym Weekes to John Keepe, Bill of Sale' could not be investigated because the volume in which the transaction was recorded is too fragile to handle (ECSCRN, CR 1792-1794 f231).

¹⁰⁴³ PP, AB 39

¹⁰⁴⁴ PP, AB 39: 1 March 1794

¹⁰⁴⁵ PP, AB 45

¹⁰⁴⁶ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 6 August 1793

¹⁰⁴⁷ PP, AB 41

¹⁰⁴⁸ PP, AB 39 Plantation a/c and AB 50

¹⁰⁴⁹ PP, AB 39: 1 March 1794

¹⁰⁵⁰ PP, AB 50 Cash a/c

¹⁰⁵¹ PP, LB 9: JPP, Bristol, to TP Weekes, 27 September 1790

¹⁰⁵² PP, AB 42

the promotion of the interest and welfare ...' Carefully and over several pages he went on to itemise his objections.

The criticism amounted to Tom

1. agreeing to buy his own estate when he had no money;
2. incurring the expense of pulling down and rebuilding the dwelling house at Woodland;
3. carrying out expensive mason's work at Woodland ('so preposterous an alteration');
4. making poor unnecessary purchases;
5. failing to put 42 hhd's of sugar aboard the fleet sailing home and, last but not least,
6. instead of ordering from England, making injudicious purchases in the West Indies¹⁰⁵³ - for instance the 'wire and handsaw ought to have been written for'.¹⁰⁵⁴

The complaints about his brother-in-law rolled over smoothly into complaints about his father-in-law. One grievance was about money William Burt Weekes 'was to have paid this day and which he omitted notwithstanding he faithfully promised to do it', another about linen he had bought in Scotland. Weekes had availed himself of some but the rest lay '(for the present) in a chest useless'.¹⁰⁵⁵ It all amounted to a rather sad account of JPP's frustration with his wife's father and brother.

JPP's criticism of Thomas Pym Weekes was echoed faithfully by his oldest son. In a letter to Azariah, John Frederick wrote after the trip to Nevis: 'Our arrival at Nevis was much looked for, and much wanted, as the Doctor, has by no means conducted himself with propriety, he is a pleasant man but a man not to be confided in for his speculative turn would cause him to commit most unjustifiable acts, even to the ruin of another man ...' ¹⁰⁵⁶ By 'another man' he meant his father who, after all the expenses, for the year 1794 still stood to make a 'clear profit' of just over £1,000 ('31 hhd's sugar unsold, to come into next year's a/c'). ¹⁰⁵⁷ In 1795 the profit rose to almost £2,500.¹⁰⁵⁸

The Martinique adventure

Two weeks after JPP and his son landed at Nevis, Thomas Pym Weekes left for a brief exploratory sojourn to Martinique. His father had been there in the 1770s, trying to bring back some enslaved people who had been stolen, and his visit may have kindled his interest in this island at an early age. JPP and his son John Frederick had stopped off at Martinique on their way to Nevis, and they may also have recommended it because John Frederick clearly had been impressed by what he saw:

Martinique is a fine and fruitful island, and has many resources within itself which renders it as pleasant as any European country. There are various European amusements and mechanicks of all descriptions ... ¹⁰⁵⁹

The island had only recently been taken from the French. After a failed invasion in the previous summer British troops had landed at the beginning of February and within a fortnight the island had capitulated. Many enslaved people took to the mountains. While the main British force set off trying to conquer other French colonies a garrison remained in the island and the British began recruiting Black Rangers, mostly from among the freed people, to bring under control the people who had escaped to the mountains.¹⁰⁶⁰ The French National Convention had abolished slavery in all its

¹⁰⁵³ PP, AB 45

¹⁰⁵⁴ PP, AB 39 Hamilton Mills & Co's a/c

¹⁰⁵⁵ PP, AB 45 Memo

¹⁰⁵⁶ PP, Cat 3 Dom Box 1763-1793: JF Pinney to Azariah Pinney, 3 November 1794

¹⁰⁵⁷ PP, AB 42

¹⁰⁵⁸ PP, AB 42 Plantation a/c

¹⁰⁵⁹ PP, Cat 3 Dom Box 1763-1793: JF Pinney to Azariah Pinney, 3 November 1794

¹⁰⁶⁰ Burns, Sir Alan *History of the British West Indies* p564 and p567

possessions on 4 February 1794 but the timing of the British take-over meant that their decree never came into effect. While enslaved people lost the opportunity to become free, the white inhabitants benefited from the British take-over. Martinique remained a stronghold of French Royalists – in June 1793 they had invited British troops onto the island and had fought alongside them – and for these people being in British hands meant that they could retain their estates and their people. As an additional benefit they also gained access to lucrative British markets. With over 320 refineries, Martinique boasted a thriving sugar industry.¹⁰⁶¹ In 1788 it had suffered from devastation caused 'by a dreadful hurricane' that had 'laid waste' the island and had killed 'many people, whites and blacks'.¹⁰⁶²

Thomas Pym Weekes stayed in Martinique for three weeks, investigated the possibilities for a career in that island, and then sailed back to Nevis.¹⁰⁶³ Just after he returned JPP received possession of Symond's Estate,¹⁰⁶⁴ the plantation Thomas Pym Weekes had thought of buying, but plantations were not on his mind any more. He was getting ready to leave Nevis for good. He sold to JPP three acres of land in St John Figtree that his father had bought back in the 1770s,¹⁰⁶⁵ and to his aunt Ann Weekes he sold one of his people, Patty Weekes.¹⁰⁶⁶ Some of his surplus workers he may already have hired to Revd William Jones, as advised by JPP,¹⁰⁶⁷ but he took with him to Martinique five of the mortgaged people: two boys – William and Charloe - and a woman, Nancy, and her two mulatto children. It is very likely that Nancy was his mistress and her daughters Betsey and Penny his illegitimate offspring. His legitimate sons, William and Thomas, he deposited with his aunts at the Cedar Trees, appointed his friend Magnus Moreton as his attorney in Nevis,¹⁰⁶⁸ and within days of JPP and his son leaving for England, Thomas Pym Weekes left for Martinique. By mid-October, when Ann Weekes manumitted the woman he had sold to her, Patty Weekes, he and his entourage were already settling down in Martinique.¹⁰⁶⁹

Moving to Martinique was a good choice. At about 80 kilometres long and 40 kilometres wide, it covers almost eight times the landmass of Nevis¹⁰⁷⁰ and, being much larger, it offered better opportunities for a doctor to set up in practice. Its size also meant that it was less parochial than Nevis and, as the young John Frederick Pinney had discovered, the island was rich, comfortable and sophisticated. Culturally it was oriented very much towards Europe and, although the enslaved population was not without revolutionary sentiment and rumours of revolts surfaced every now and then, whites generally considered Martinique peaceful.¹⁰⁷¹ Thomas Pym Weekes's people would have found the lives of their fellow slaves regulated in a way that would have been quite alien to them; in the French colonies legislation called the *Code Noir* laid down minimum standards for allowances and guaranteed each adult a small plot of land. In addition to their rations, enslaved people could grow surplus food on their own account,¹⁰⁷² and although people in Nevis also produced some of their own food and were able to sell their surplus, a systematic approach to enshrine their rights to plots of land and to food and clothing allowances was not done in the British colonies until amelioration legislation was introduced in the late 1700s. In the French colonies the *Code Noir* had regulated the lives of enslaved people for well over a century.

¹⁰⁶¹ McCloy, Shelby T *The Negro in the French West Indies* p118 and p28 and D Watts *The West Indies* p253 and p257

¹⁰⁶² PP, LB 8: JPP, Bristol, to John Patterson, 22 October 1788

¹⁰⁶³ PP, AB 50 TP Weekes's a/c

¹⁰⁶⁴ PP, LB 11: JPP, Nevis, to James Tobin, Bristol, 11 June 1794

¹⁰⁶⁵ PP, AB 50 JPP's a/c and TP Weekes's a/c

¹⁰⁶⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 f173

¹⁰⁶⁷ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 6 August 1793

¹⁰⁶⁸ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 5 December 1794

¹⁰⁶⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 f175

¹⁰⁷⁰ Deerr, Noel *The History of Sugar* Vol 1 p153

¹⁰⁷¹ McCloy, Shelby T *The Negro in the French West Indies* p82

¹⁰⁷² Tomich, Dale 'Une Petite Guinée: Provision Ground and Plantation in Martinique, 1830-1848' in Ira Berlin and Philip D Morgan (eds) *The Slaves' Economy - Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* p69 and pp71-2

Thomas Pym Weekes settled down in St Pierre - a city with shops that displayed 'great brilliancy and taste', and where 'every object' spoke 'of wealth and affluence'.¹⁰⁷³ He would have felt quite comfortable and soon sent for his sons. But he did not write to anyone in his family, and news that he got on 'so well' reached Bristol only via Nevis.¹⁰⁷⁴

Without further details from the doctor himself, the journals of one of his contemporaries shed some light as to what life on Martinique was like in the 1790s. Dr Leonard Gillespie, a young Irish physician, spent seven years at the naval hospital at Fort Royal, the capital. He had been appointed senior surgeon around 1792,¹⁰⁷⁵ and it is very likely that Thomas Pym Weekes would have known him and that they would have found common ground. Dr Gillespie, too, was a modern doctor. He read the latest medical literature, observed his patients' progress, and used empirical evidence to further the cause of medical science. He was primarily concerned with tropical fevers and methodically he recorded the almost daily deaths of hospital inmates. But he also noted other tragic deaths that occurred around him: the execution of two deserters from Fort Martinique and the suicide of an English shoemaker in St Pierre, who, on receiving news from England that his wife had died, hanged himself. Gillespie was sympathetic to the plight of ordinary folk; on a visit to Fort Royal and Fort Bourbon he remembered the men who had built the defences and had perished doing so. Fort Bourbon, stuck upon a ridge and, according to Gillespie, about half a mile long and erected within the past thirty years, particularly impressed him. He felt for the enslaved people, and believed that Europeans would have to pay for their 'injustice and tyranny' towards them. Set against the news that was reaching Martinique from St Vincent and from St Lucia - of the 'caribbes' attacking and taking prisoners English inhabitants and setting fire to their plantations, and of plundering 'brigands and blacks' - set against this mayhem Dr Gillespie acknowledged that white people were responsible for these events: 'humanity must shoulder ... the atrocities we have deliberately and systematically been guilty of towards the negroes'.¹⁰⁷⁶

As far as Thomas Pym Weekes's people were concerned, JPP knew that his brother-in-law was going to take with him Nancy and Charloe, but when he discovered that Weekes had also taken to Martinique William as well as Nancy's mulatto daughters, he was shocked. Tersely he commented: 'I am truly sorry to say that his whole conduct seems marked with imprudence and indiscretion.' Weekes's remaining people in Nevis were under mortgage, and JPP asked for them to be hired out and, when a 'good opportunity' offered itself, he wanted them sold. Weekes's attorney, Mr Morton, of course had to authorise the sale.¹⁰⁷⁷

Thomas Pym Weekes did not keep in touch with his family, and so his nephew Azariah wrote to him - probably at the behest of his mother - and complained about his uncle's 'long and profound silence' but congratulated him on his 'great practice' and, just as JPP used to do when young Tommy was at school, Azariah urged him to write because 'at present we know nothing about you, but that you are in existence'.¹⁰⁷⁸ When Thomas Pym Weekes eventually did write, it was to his brother-in-law with a request for him to use his influence to secure the position of Health Physician in Martinique. In JPP's letter of reply, warm in tone but seemingly evasive, he told Thomas Pym Weekes that, 'being no

¹⁰⁷³ Jackson, Thomas 'Biography - Memoir of the late John Brownell' (Courtesy of Brian Littlewood).

¹⁰⁷⁴ PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 6 April 1795

¹⁰⁷⁵ Cordingly, David *Heroines and Harlots* p106

¹⁰⁷⁶ UKNA, ADM 101/102/9

Dr Gillespie was also sympathetic to the indigenous people, the Caribs. In March 1795 he noted that six Caribs had arrived from Dominica by small 'peroaugue' or sailing boat, having been dispatched by the Lieutenant Governor of Dominica with a letter for the Captain in Martinique. Gillespie saw them and with anthropological interest he noted that they spoke a native dialect, were of middle size and copper-coloured, had small eyes, sharp noses, small features and very long black hair, and they seemed 'very fond of spirituous liquours'. He recorded that some hundreds of families were residing on the eastern mountains of Dominica where they cultivated some cotton besides country provisions and, because of 'the present state of alarm', the men were employed by the government for carrying arms, looking out and alarming the inhabitants from their heights in case of they spotted the enemy. Caribs had been christened by French priests, and Gillespie reflected on the disappearance of a people and the 'avarice, wantonness, bigotry' of his Christian fellows.

¹⁰⁷⁷ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 5 December 1794

¹⁰⁷⁸ PP, LB 13: Azariah Pinney to Dr TP Weekes, Martinique, [no day, no month] 1795

courtier', it was not in his power but that, through friends in London, he would endeavour to advance Thomas Pym Weekes's interests.¹⁰⁷⁹

Having acquired a sloop, Dr Weekes invested in a shipment of grain. It appears that his mission was to make a lot of money quickly. He was building a hospital¹⁰⁸⁰ and needed to fund his new project but, as was the doctor's bad luck, the sloop foundered on the rocks at Bermuda and ran ashore. Trying to claim for the damage from the insurance proved problematic¹⁰⁸¹ and, once again, his finances reached breaking point. When he presented three bills for a total of £600, the House refused to honour them¹⁰⁸² and, in order to improve his cash-flow, pressed for the sale of the mortgaged people. JPP refused to invest in another West Indian venture: 'I am not justified to enter into new engagements the other side the Atlantic in times so perilous and dangerous – it is possible, at this very moment Martinique may be attacked by a force from Guardaloupe.' (sic)¹⁰⁸³ At the beginning of 1795 the inhabitants of Martinique had feared that the island was going to fall into the hands of 'the Republicans'¹⁰⁸⁴ and the French did indeed succeed to regain control over Guadeloupe and St Lucia but they were not strong enough to retake Martinique and for the time being it remained under British control.¹⁰⁸⁵ For JPP, building a hospital in a French island in these unstable times was a gamble too far; for Thomas Pym Weekes's speculative mind the risks were worth taking. If he succeeded, he stood to do well out of his new venture.

The unrest in the Caribbean may have prompted Tom's father to turn his mind towards tending to his assets in Nevis. William Burt Weekes wanted to sort out his annuity of £50 that was attached to the sale of his post as Gunner to Dr Peterson and he sought to divest himself of land that he owned. Ever since he had left the West Indies he had moved around rootlessly. He had no base, no home of his own. He visited and stayed with friends and relatives, accepting their hospitality, until he was ill and, having patched up his differences between himself and his brother-in-law, he had agreed to live with the Cokers and had moved to Woodcutts until, towards the end of 1794, he had started to travel to Bristol and for some months moved between Woodcutts and Bristol. He stayed either with his daughter and her family or with his nephew William Young Coker and his family. It appears that he was a gregarious man and, being a jovial sort of fellow, country life may have been too quiet for him. In addition, life at Woodcutts at this time would also have been without much cheer; Coker was facing the prospect of having to sell the estate. The two men's relationship was made awkward because of their financial ties; they borrowed from each other and each of them borrowed from others, and squabbles over money got in the way. The sale of the post of Gunner had led to a long falling out, and while in the West Indies and acting as his attorney, Coker had cancelled the original bond and had accepted an annuity of £30 without further provision,¹⁰⁸⁶ and, to complicate matters, Dr Peterson had resigned his post in favour of his son John.¹⁰⁸⁷ William Burt Weekes needed to sell his Nevis properties but before he could part with anything, he needed to establish what he owned and where the boundaries lay. He held several pockets of land in Charlestown. Apparently all lay near the Cedar Trees, the Jewish synagogue and James Tobin's Stoney Grove estate.

On William Burt Weekes's land, like on JPP's, lived a 'jumble of free people'. He had lost track as to who had permission to live there and who did not, and his neglectful approach to managing his properties was similar to JPP's and probably typical of many absentees. Their attorneys, already busy with overseeing their plantations, did not necessarily bother to inform landlords when their tenants changed, or pursue tenants who had rent arrears. Weekes now tried to sort out his properties. One

¹⁰⁷⁹ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Martinique, August 1795

¹⁰⁸⁰ PP, Dom Box S4: Mary Smith to Mrs Pinney, 14 February 1796

¹⁰⁸¹ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Martinique, 21 October 1795

¹⁰⁸² PP, Dom Box S4: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 12 October 1795

¹⁰⁸³ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 1 July 1795, and Dom Box S4: JPP to WB Weekes, 12 October 1795

¹⁰⁸⁴ UKNA, ADM 101/102/9

¹⁰⁸⁵ Watts *The West Indies* p253 and p257

¹⁰⁸⁶ PP, Dom Box S1: WB Weekes to Wm Jones, 1 May 1795, and Dom Box S4: JPP to WB Weekes, 12 October 1795

¹⁰⁸⁷ PP, Dom Box S1: Revd Wm Jones to William Burt Weekes, 29 July 1795

piece of his land was occupied by the free black woman Lubbo. Originally mortgaged to JPP, William Burt Weekes and JPP had freed Lubbo in the early 1780s and Weekes had assigned the land to her. Lubbo's lease was valid for another six years,¹⁰⁸⁸ but there was also land on which the late Mulatto Moll's daughter had trespassed. She had planted trees upon it.¹⁰⁸⁹ Weekes had bought this land 40 years earlier, and when he left Nevis he had been in full possession of it. Kate Coker, his former slave, had built a house on that plot; possibly in preparation for living there with her mother. But Kate Coker had moved into one of JPP's properties in Charlestown and a daughter of Mulatto Moll's had erected a house on the land. The building had gone, but Mulatto Moll's daughter was, it appears, claiming squatter's rights. Weekes vehemently resisted her demands. According to him, she had not occupied the land long enough to claim possession; the statute had to run another seven years before she could 'establish such a rascally claim'.

Another piece of land that was giving William Burt Weekes cause for concern had been rented by his former attorney, William Coker, to Solomon Sampson. From his present attorney, Revd William Jones, Weekes received a letter in which the clergyman displayed his anti-Semitism - 'he is too much of a Jew for much fair dealing' - which Weekes repeated almost word for word when he wrote to JPP: 'As fair dealings from him as a Jew is not to be expected'. The correspondence concerned the mulatto woman Betsey Smith; apparently she lived in a house 'adjoining to that of the Israelites'. She rented the house at the rate of seven Joes a year but owed two years' rent. While Betsey Smith pleaded poverty, William Burt Weekes's sister Ann Weekes thought this 'yellow lady' should be turned out because the property was well situated for a retail business and could be put to commercial use. Weekes agreed that Betsey Smith should be evicted and replaced by a tenant who could pay.¹⁰⁹⁰ Another piece of land, opposite where President Herbert used to live, he wanted advertised for sale in the St Kitts Gazette.¹⁰⁹¹

On 12 October 1795 William Burt Weekes was, again, at Woodcuts, and in Bristol JPP was expecting 'the Parson', Revd William Young Coker, to visit 'this evening'.¹⁰⁹² JPP had just written to his father-in-law about Thomas Pym Weekes's debts, and while this was happening in England, on the other side of the Atlantic, on Scarborough's plantation in Nevis, Thomas Pym Weekes was gathering his strength to write a letter to his father. Having been sick for several weeks and after a temporary recovery,¹⁰⁹³ he had left Martinique but the journey to Nevis had taken it out of him, and he was 'almost dead' when he arrived. Very ill, feverish and with a shaky hand he wrote to his father to inform him of his arrival in Nevis.¹⁰⁹⁴

Weekes was staying on Scarborough's estate,¹⁰⁹⁵ his neighbour from Mountravers days. Mulatto Polly, pregnant with her fifth child, was living there with her other children and with their father, the planter John Latoysonore Scarborough. The 'Miss Scarboroughs', his daughters, also lived with them - Azariah Pinney's 'old flames' Elizabeth, Judith Ann and Hester.¹⁰⁹⁶ Thomas Pym Weekes was close to the family; before going to Martinique, he had lent Scarborough's mulatto son James money,¹⁰⁹⁷ and he had sold some of his father's land to Mr Scarborough. He ignored the fact that this was done without his father's approval. The profit from the sale, £100, probably got swallowed up by Dr Weekes's hospital project.¹⁰⁹⁸ When he left Martinique, he had not yet received a reply from JPP

¹⁰⁸⁸ PP, Dom Box S1: William Burt Weekes to Revd Wm Jones, 30 January 1796

William Burt Weekes transferred land in St Paul's Parish to Lubbo by Deed Poll dated 3 September 1782. John Frederick Coker witnessed the document (ECSCRN, CR 1789-1790 f275).

¹⁰⁸⁹ PP, Dom Box S1: William Burt Weekes to ?Miss Weekes, 16 November 1794

¹⁰⁹⁰ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Jones to WB Weekes, 15 May 1795, and Dom Box S4: WB Weekes to JPP, 2 August 1795

¹⁰⁹¹ PP, Dom Box S1: William Burt Weekes to Revd Wm Jones, 30 January 1796

¹⁰⁹² PP, Dom Box S4: JPP to William Burt Weekes, Woodcuts, 12 October 1795

¹⁰⁹³ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 10 November 1795

¹⁰⁹⁴ PP, Dom Box S1: TP Weekes, Nevis, to William Burt Weekes, 13 October 1795

¹⁰⁹⁵ PP, Dom Box S1: TP Weekes to Mrs P, Rec'd 2 January 1796

¹⁰⁹⁶ PP, Cat 3 Dom Box 1763-1793: JF Pinney to Azariah Pinney, 3 November 1794

¹⁰⁹⁷ PP, AB 45 James Scarborough, a free Mulatto a/c

¹⁰⁹⁸ PP, Dom Box S1: Revd Wm Jones to William Burt Weekes, 25 July 1795

regarding the position of Health Physician. JPP's enquiries had revealed that the Commander-in-Chief in the West Indies was responsible for making the appointment for the post on the spot, or that it was done through his recommendation,¹⁰⁹⁹ and it says something about Thomas Pym Weekes's lack of foresight that he had not found that out for himself. Valuable time had been lost trying to garner support in England.

Now he had to attend to other business: during his absence from Nevis, his boy Tom had got himself into trouble and had to be bailed out of jail.¹¹⁰⁰ It was decided, probably by JPP's attorney John Taylor, to hire him out to the army. The other boy, William, had gone to Martinique with Thomas Pym Weekes, but now he was not needed any more, and William, too, was kitted out for the army. He and Tom left for Barbados. As these two were mortgaged, Dr Weekes would not make any money on this deal; their hire income would go to JPP's account. From Martinique Weekes had brought with him, it appears, two 'French Negroes',¹¹⁰¹ but it is not known what happened to them after they came to Nevis.

Thomas Pym Weekes remained on Scarborough's for five weeks and then made his way to John Taylor's plantation, Tower Hill,¹¹⁰² which, incidentally, was the estate on which his grandmother, Mary Weekes, had been raised. It is very likely that John Taylor was a fellow Freemason who had offered him sanctuary on his estate, which, at an elevation of about 750 feet,¹¹⁰³ was cooler and healthier, thereby promising a speedier recuperation. Situated about a mile north of Mountravers, Tower Hill had also been a place of refuge for one of the Mountravers women, Patch, who had been hidden there by one of Taylor's people during Dr Weekes's managership. But now James Williams was in charge and an incident took place in which he used his newly-acquired powers. At one stage during Thomas Pym Weekes's recovery period John Taylor sent someone with a note to Mountravers, asking Williams for a supply of milk for the patient but, despite Taylor's instructions, Williams did not provide any.

Thomas Pym Weekes was under the care of Dr Sholto Archbald, and in about November his fellow 'practitioner of Physick' recommended his return to Martinique.¹¹⁰⁴ Dr Archbald recognised that the influence of climate could contribute to good health; when Horatio Nelson lay at anchor at English Harbour in Antigua, he had written to him, recommending removal to another climate because he considered English Harbour unhealthy,¹¹⁰⁵ and now Dr Archbald thought that, with the dry season approaching and Martinique being cooler, Weekes's health would benefit from the move. By about early or mid-December Weekes's friends believed he was 'nearly recovered' and he considered going to England¹¹⁰⁶ but in the meantime made preparations for his return to Martinique. However, he did not go anywhere. He had not reckoned on being detained by John Arthurton.

On the very day he was leaving Nevis, on 1 February, John Arthurton arrested him for debt – either he had not paid for the sloop in full, or he owed money for merchandise supplied by Arthurton. To his shame, Weekes was to appear in Court the following month. A date was set, and in the meantime one of John Latoysonore Scarborough's sons stood security for him. 'Deeply wounded', Weekes went to his aunts' house at the Cedar Trees, 'but as soon as he arrived he gave himself up to despair; a relapse was the consequence - he was brought down the first of this month'. Having endured 'up for four months with most wonderful spirits against a violent fever', aided by the care and attention 'of his kind aunts' and friends who all thought he was convalescing, he 'was suddenly overpowered' by the

¹⁰⁹⁹ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Martinique, 21 October 1795

¹¹⁰⁰ PP, AB 47 Cash a/c

¹¹⁰¹ PP, AB 52 f16 TP Weekes's a/c

¹¹⁰² PP, Dom Box S1: TP Weekes to Mrs P, Rec'd, 2 January 1796

¹¹⁰³ Map 'Nevis with Part of Saint Christopher (Saint Kitts)' Series E803 DOS 343

¹¹⁰⁴ PP, Dom Box S1: TP Weekes to Mrs P, Rec'd, 2 January 1796

¹¹⁰⁵ Naish, GPB (ed) *Nelson's Letters* p32, quoting BM Add. MSS 3903 Bridport Papers, Archbald to Nelson, 21 July 1786

¹¹⁰⁶ PP, LB 12: JPP to William Burt Weekes, Woodcutts, 3 February 1796

'shock he received' and two days later, on 3 February 1796, 'the poor Doctor expired in the night'. Aged 31, Thomas Pym Weekes died 'perfectly in his senses and quite resigned'.¹¹⁰⁷

Some said that Thomas Pym Weekes had died of yellow fever,¹¹⁰⁸ and yellow fever certainly had gripped Martinique during his residence there. In January several people had died within a few days of each other and Dr Gillespie had begun suspecting that yellow fever was to blame. On the 6th he only suspected it; five days later he could confidently attribute it as the cause of death for many. In addition, at the beginning of March an outbreak of dysentery had occurred in St Pierre where Dr Weekes had lived, affecting all children and many adults.¹¹⁰⁹ Weekes's death may have been caused by yellow fever but equally well he may have died from any of the other diseases that were prevalent in the West Indies, such as typhus, typhoid, cholera, or malaria.

John Taylor actively sought to have his friend 'decently interred as a Mason',¹¹¹⁰ and two days after his death he was buried in the churchyard at St Thomas Lowland.¹¹¹¹ Revd Green presided over the burial, with Dominick Alvarez and the free mulatto Roger Wallwin acting as sextons.¹¹¹² Thomas Pym Weekes was interred 'as a Freemason',¹¹¹³ and, as his aunt Jenny Weekes put it: 'He dyed with us and had a genteel burying, was attended by all the Masons and buried in form of their Brotherly Love.'¹¹¹⁴ John Taylor ordered a loaf of sugar from (of all people!) the merchant company of John Arthurton senior, and at his own expense supplied refreshments which he laid on 'at the tavern for forty Masons who came up from St Kitts to pay the last respect' to his friend.¹¹¹⁵ Sextons fees and other funeral costs were accounted later: coffin furniture for N£6:15:0, 'sundry articles', 11 ½ yards of black ribbon supplied by Ann Frizzle, and the loaf of sugar costing N£2:2:0.¹¹¹⁶ The books had to balance even for the dead.

'Poor Doctor Weekes [was] no more.'¹¹¹⁷ He had let it be known in Nevis that in Martinique he had 'a fine field before him of accumulating a very large fortune in his professional live (independent of the Hospital) his practice was 2,000 a year' and that he 'had great hopes of a post worth 4,000'. Even acquaintances wished that he had been more cautious: 'then he would not have laid out so much money, to so little advantage on an immense building, medicines, etc.'¹¹¹⁸ His aunt Jenny, who had known him from childhood, felt for the 'poor fellow, he did not know the value of money - his extravagancy were to an access [excess]'. Fittingly, his legacy was described in ever smaller denominations. According to his aunt Jenny 'he died not worth a shilling';¹¹¹⁹ according to JPP he left his two sons 'without a penny'.¹¹²⁰

¹¹⁰⁷ PP, Dom Box S1: Revd Wm Jones to WB Weekes, 5 April 1796, and Dom Box S4: Mary Smith to Mrs Pinney, 14 February 1796

¹¹⁰⁸ PP, AB 3: Joseph Gill to Simon Pretor, undated

¹¹⁰⁹ UKNA, ADM 101/102/9

The devastating effect of a fever - probably the same yellow fever which occupied Dr Gillespie - was recalled by William Richardson, the gunner of HMS *Tromp*. Immediately after the ship arrived in Martinique, fever killed the first lieutenant, the clerk, the master and his wife, the boatswain, surgeon's mate, and most of the midshipmen, the master-at-arms, the armourer, gunner's mate, captain's steward, cook, tailor, the captain's lady's maid 'and many brave men'. Richardson's wife was saved by being taken ashore where she was cared for by a French black woman who had a reputation as an excellent nurse, and a French doctor. The remaining crew cleaned the vessel by sprinkling the decks with vinegar, smoking out the areas below deck and rinsing the hold with clean water. The *Tromp* was then inspected by Dr Gillespie (Cordingly, *David Heroines and Harlots* pp106-09, quoting William Richardson *A Mariner of England...* London 1908).

¹¹¹⁰ PP, Dom Box S4: Mary Smith to Mrs Pinney, 14 February 1796

¹¹¹¹ PP, Dom Box S1: Revd Wm Jones to WB Weekes, 5 April 1796; also VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 3 (Cayon Diary)

¹¹¹² PP, AB 47 Cash a/c and TP Weekes's a/c

¹¹¹³ PP, Dom Box S1: Revd Wm Jones to William Burt Weekes, 5 April 1796

¹¹¹⁴ PP, Dom Box S1: Jane Weekes, Nevis, to William Burt Weekes, 28 July 1796

¹¹¹⁵ PP, Dom Box S4: Mary Smith to Mrs Pinney, 14 February 1796

¹¹¹⁶ PP, AB 47 Cash a/c and TP Weekes's a/c

¹¹¹⁷ PP, LB 12: JPP to Azariah Pinney, at William Furlong, Angier Street, Dublin, Ireland, 29 May 1796

¹¹¹⁸ PP, Dom Box S4: Mary Smith to Mrs Pinney, 14 February 1796

¹¹¹⁹ PP, Dom Box S1: Jane Weekes, Nevis, to William Burt Weekes, 28 July 1796

¹¹²⁰ PP, LB 12: JPP to Azariah Pinney, at William Furlong, Angier Street, Dublin, Ireland, 29 May 1796

£90 did come in from the insurance company for the loss of the sloop *Betsey* and this was credited to Weekes's account - ¹¹²¹ presumably to benefit the boys - but Dr Weekes had not made a will and it took years until all his financial concerns were wrapped up. They proved an irritant long after his death. One of these was Dr Crosse's house and land that he had acquired prior to getting married and that the boys inherited. The property had been mortgaged to the company of Tobin & Pinney¹¹²² and after Weekes's death a Mr Smith appears to have stepped in and taken over the mortgage. When Smith died in Nevis, his death put an end to the 'treaty',¹¹²³ and JPP decided that the property should be sold for £500.¹¹²⁴ James Williams sold it but the money from the sale was not relayed to England immediately, and in 1808, twelve years after Thomas Pym Weekes's death, JPP remembered the deal and enquired whether all the money from the sale of 'Weekes' house in town' had been paid. JPP did not describe its location but suggested that Miss Jenny Weekes and Mrs Erskine would know where it was.¹¹²⁵

After Thomas Pym Weekes's death

Weekes's sons, the 'little boys', went to live with their great-aunts, The Ladies at the Cedar Trees,¹¹²⁶ with John Taylor¹¹²⁷ and Ann Weekes¹¹²⁸ acting as unofficial guardians. Ann Weekes had been very sick the previous autumn – she had been so poorly that she had made her will – and shortly after Weekes's funeral she, her sister Jenny and also the children became extremely ill. They had either been infected by Thomas Pym Weekes, or they had caught some other illness but they did not die. By the beginning of April the boys and Aunt Jenny felt better. Only Aunt Nancy was 'still in a very weak state'¹¹²⁹ and continued to be ill with fevers. To ease the burden on The Ladies, the Braziers offered to take the boys and they went to stay with the family.¹¹³⁰

A millwright and carpenter who had done work on Mountravers during Thomas Pym Weekes's time, Edward Brazier had either bought or was leasing from JPP the old Mountain estate in St John Figtree, and by giving shelter to the Weekes children, he and his wife Anne were, in effect, repaying an unspoken debt they owed to the Pinneys. Their youngest son Joseph (Joe) Griffin Brazier had travelled to England with JPP in 1794¹¹³¹ and was attending Revd Valpy's school in Reading with JPP's son Pretor,¹¹³² and around the time the Weekes boys came to stay with the Braziers, Joe fell ill

¹¹²¹ PP, LB 12: JPP to John Arthurton senior at Messrs Latham & Sons, London, 21 November 1796

¹¹²² PP, Dom Box S4: JPP to William Burt Weekes, Woodcuts, 12 October 1795

¹¹²³ PP, LB 16: JPP, Bristol, to Ann Weekes, Nevis, 26 November 1800

Although the name John Smith is very common, it is possible that the Mr Smith whom JPP referred to was in fact the husband of Mary Williams Wenham and the son or brother-in-law of the Mary Smith who wrote to Mrs P about TP Weekes's death. Mary Williams Wenham had married John Smith, described as a gentleman, in 1798. He died some time after April 1800 (the date in the St John Figtree parish register is illegible). The timing of JPP's letter to Ann Weekes, together with the sincere sorrow which Mary Smith had expressed for the destitute Weekes children, makes it likely that the Smiths had stepped in to help the orphans and that Mary Smith had got her son or brother-in-law John Smith to underwrite a deal involving Dr Weekes and his sons.

There may also have been a Scottish connection: a Mary Smith, daughter of Thomas Smith of Castleton, Rochdale, became the second wife of Hugh Duncan Baillie of Redcastle. This made Mary Smith Elizabeth Pinney's sister-in-law - Elizabeth Pinney's husband being Peter Baillie of Dochfour.

That there may have been a Smith/Baillie connection is strengthened by an earlier transaction: a settlement had been reached between William Burt Weekes and Mr Smith and JPP, 'securing for Tommy an annuity of S£125' which with the negroes in the possession of Mr Weekes is the consideration given by Mr Smith'. JPP had agreed with Smith £150 in the presence of James Baillie but Smith had been persuaded to reduce the amount. The money was thought to be useful when Tommy started 'his intended profession, the law' (PP, LB 4: JPP to William Coker, c mid-July 1776). This Mr Smith, no doubt, was James Smith, whose daughter Sarah was married to Alexander Baillie. Their son was James Smith Baillie.

¹¹²⁴ PP, LB 16: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, 9 October 1801

¹¹²⁵ PP, LB 22: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 4 May 1808

¹¹²⁶ PP, Dom Box S1: Jane Weekes, Nevis, to William Burt Weekes, 28 July 1796

¹¹²⁷ PP, Dom Box S1: Revd Wm Jones to William Burt Weekes, 5 April 1796

¹¹²⁸ PP, LB 12: JPP to Mrs Livingston, Old Aberdeen, 25 June 1796, and 6 October 1796

¹¹²⁹ PP, Dom Box S4: Mary Smith to Mrs Pinney, 14 February 1796

¹¹³⁰ PP, Dom Box S1: Ann Weekes, Nevis, to William Burt Weekes, 18 July 1796

¹¹³¹ PP, AB 42

¹¹³² PP, LB 12: JPP to Valpy, Reading, 25 January 1797

and was being nursed by Mrs P in Bristol. Their oldest son, Edward junior, had also been under the Pinneys' care during his time at school in England and had stood godfather to the Pinneys' last son, the Bristol-born Charles.¹¹³³ The three Brazier daughters, Harriet, Anna Maria and Bethia, presumably, were in Nevis and would willingly have taken care of Will and Tom. Two years earlier the Braziers had lost their 12-year-old son William¹¹³⁴ and it was said that they treated the Weekes boys like family.¹¹³⁵ But they were not family and another long-term solution had to be found for them.

Thomas Pym Weekes had left his children destitute. It turned out that their grandmother in Scotland had sent to their father £800 which, intended for their mother, had been spent by their father.¹¹³⁶ No doubt it had gone towards his hospital project, as had other money, such as several hundred Pounds he had made from the sale of old William Burt Weekes's properties.¹¹³⁷ Not only did he appropriate the money but Thomas Pym Weekes had also sold the land to Mr Scarborough without his father's approval,¹¹³⁸ and, once aware of this, 'Scarborough cried off the purchase'.¹¹³⁹ A little money was coming in but the sums were trivial - a few Pounds from Andrew Hamilton for the sale of a patch of land at Morton's Bay - ¹¹⁴⁰ and not enough to sustain the boys for long. And then, among Thomas Pym Weekes's papers, John Taylor found the pledge from Aberdeen, dated 17 September 1787: 'I hereby promise ... that I Lilius Livingston do hereby promise to Isabella Livingston the sum of four hundred pounds sterling ...'. Taylor held on to the note. He did not want it to fall into the hands of the creditors but intended the money for the boys. Their mother had kept her undertaking, the promissory note had never been redeemed and it was time for Lilius Livingston to pay up. In a letter to Isabella's brother William Livingston JPP politely 'hinted' that he had no doubt their Aunt Lilius would give the £400 to the boys.¹¹⁴¹ Meanwhile, as Taylor had feared, Dr Weekes's creditors lined up to ask for their share: John Latoysonere Scarborough's son William and John Arthurton senior were the first to stake their claims.¹¹⁴²

Lilius Livingston, Isabella's second oldest sibling, was by then in her early forties but nothing else is known about her or her financial circumstances.¹¹⁴³ JPP corresponded with her brother, Dr William Livingston, who held the position of Professor of Medicine at Marischal College in Aberdeen.¹¹⁴⁴ It must have been difficult for Dr Livingston to put his mind to plan for his nephews' future, having recently lost his wife. They had been married for only three years, and she had died very young, in February, in the same month as Thomas Pym Weekes.¹¹⁴⁵ It was generally agreed that the children should come to Britain, or, to be more precise, to England (if the Livingstons had their way); to Scotland (as far as JPP was concerned).

A correspondence ensued between the interested parties. Dr Livingston wrote to William Burt Weekes, noting the distressing deaths and the situation of the destitute boys. He thought that Dr Weekes's friends in Nevis (the Freemasons?) would no doubt help. Being dependent on his 'professional exertions' he claimed to have only a limited income but promised to do what he could.¹¹⁴⁶ William Burt Weekes could not be expected to contribute but JPP could, yet he, by way of reply, informed Dr Livingston of his strained circumstances: he had six children of his own, they cost a

¹¹³³ Family Bible in the Georgian House

¹¹³⁴ Memorial Tablet in St John Figtree church

¹¹³⁵ PP, Dom Box S1: Ann Weekes, Nevis, to William Burt Weekes, 18 July 1796

¹¹³⁶ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Livingston, Aberdeen, to William Burt Weekes, 26 May 1796

¹¹³⁷ PP, Dom Box S1: William Burt Weekes to Revd Jones, undated but post-1795

¹¹³⁸ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Jones to William Burt Weekes, 25 July 1795

¹¹³⁹ PP, Dom Box S1: Revd Wm Jones to William Burt Weekes, 5 April 1796

¹¹⁴⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 f606

¹¹⁴¹ PP, Dom Box S1: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 2 June 1796

¹¹⁴² PP, LB 12: JPP to John Arthurton senior at Messrs Latham & Sons, London, 21 November 1796

¹¹⁴³ Lilius Livingston was baptised on 13 May 1755 at Aberdeen St Nicholas (IGI Microfiche for Aberdeen).

¹¹⁴⁴ Dr William Livingston also practised medicine at Gordon's Hospital, Aberdeen, and the Infirmary (*The Aberdeen Almanac for the Year 1800*, printed by J Chalmers, Aberdeen p177 and p187).

¹¹⁴⁵ Dr William Livingston married Agnes Sim (possibly Syme) on 15 October 1792; she died on 22 February 1796 and was buried in St Nicholas, Aberdeen (<http://www.compapp.dcu.ie/~humphrys/FamTree/>).

¹¹⁴⁶ PP, Dom Box S1: Wm Livingston, Aberdeen, to William Burt Weekes, 26 May 1796

lot of money, 'and the critical situation of the Colonies' meant he was not in a position to support the boys.¹¹⁴⁷ In truth, he could neither plead poverty nor lack of house room; he simply was not going to bail out his wife's family yet again. JPP had always warned his brother-in-law to be prudent, to put something aside for the boys, to plan for their future and for their education, but Thomas Pym Weekes had made no effort to provide for his children. He, and by extension his children, thereby had become 'undeserving' of JPP's support. Other issues might have played a part, too: firstly, as was customary among enslaved people, the boys belonged to their mother, and secondly, JPP may not have wanted to expose his own children to the weaknesses that ran in the Weekes family - the sins of their father (and their grandfather) may be visited onto Will and Tom. The five older Pinney children were grown up but the last son, Charles, who was just a little younger than the Weekes boys, was still at risk, and so JPP jumped at the news from Nevis that a Mr Smith from Martinique had called on The Ladies at the Cedar Trees, telling them that he, Mr Smith, would try and prevail on their uncle in Aberdeen to take the children.¹¹⁴⁸ This was just what JPP wanted to hear; he felt vindicated in his refusal to become responsible for the children, and his resolve was strengthened when he found out that the Livingstons 'seem to place great dependence on what they are to get from me'. He felt that they saw in him the rich relative who would bail out the poor boys. To JPP this was particularly galling because it turned out that the promissory note for £400, which the boys' mother had signed back in 1787, was 'good for nothing'. It had no legal status; it had been written on improperly stamped paper.¹¹⁴⁹ Despite this revelation, two years on this sum was still entered in the accounts as being owed to Thomas Pym Weekes's estate.¹¹⁵⁰ Either JPP thought that, even if Liliaston had no legal obligation, she at least had a moral duty to pay the £400, or he carried forward this sum because as long as he believed that the boys were owed this money, then he could rest his conscience.

Whatever motivated him to wriggle out of paying for the boys' upkeep, his excuses were shameful and from the manner in which he defended himself towards Ann Weekes it is clear that she, too, judged him mean-spirited. No doubt, others in Nevis agreed with her. People felt much sympathy for 'the dear little boys with the silent tears tricking down their cheeks',¹¹⁵¹ and they remembered their father as a 'pleasant' man, charming and full of promise, cut short in his prime. JPP's actions towards the boys must have been viewed by everyone as vindictive, ungracious and uncharitable.

While their relatives in Bristol and in Aberdeen tried to abdicate their responsibilities, the 'two lovely boys' were still 'under protection of Miss Ann Weekes'¹¹⁵² and negotiations took place between her and JPP about their removal from the island. He sent stockings, shoes and a hat for each of the children, and a piece of linen to be made into shirts. His offer to allow Ann Weekes the use any of his plantation seamstresses to sew the shirts seems petty.¹¹⁵³ As to their passage home, JPP asked that they be placed under Captain Maies's immediate supervision.¹¹⁵⁴ Two years earlier JPP had accused Thomas Pym Weekes of withholding sugar to 'gratify an unwarrantable resentment against Captain Maies',¹¹⁵⁵ and now the captain was made responsible for the boys. They were to sail on the *Nevis*, a Pinney ship, and JPP asked that their expenses be paid with plantation produce: a beer barrel full of rum for Maies and twenty gallons for the steward who was asked to 'undertake the care of Dr Weekes's children on their passage home'.¹¹⁵⁶

JPP gave specific instruction that the boys should not be escorted by a servant, claiming that such a person 'would rather be a trouble than a convenience'. But his real objection he spelt out to John

¹¹⁴⁷ PP, LB 12: JPP to William Livingston, Professor of Medicine, Marrischal College, Aberdeen, 2 June 1796

¹¹⁴⁸ PP, Dom Box S1: JPP to William Burt Weekes, 29 August 1796

¹¹⁴⁹ PP, LB 12: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 15 November 1796

¹¹⁵⁰ PP, AB 32 Estate of TP Weekes's a/c

¹¹⁵¹ PP, Dom Box S4: Mary Smith to Mrs Pinney, 14 February 1796

¹¹⁵² PP, LB 12: JPP to Mrs Livingston, Old Aberdeen, 25 June 1796, and 6 October 1796

¹¹⁵³ PP, LB 12: JPP, Bristol, to Ann Weekes, Nevis, 5 November 1796

¹¹⁵⁴ PP, LB 12: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 24 November 1796, and 5 October 1796

¹¹⁵⁵ PP, AB 42

¹¹⁵⁶ PP, LB 12: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 15 November 1796

Taylor: there already was too much intercourse between the mixed-race people and the inhabitants in England.¹¹⁵⁷ They might spread discontent among his own and other servants in Bristol, and they might return to Nevis with new ideas about liberty and equality. He also objected to one particular women being sent, and to lend weight to his argument, he included his wife in his deliberations. He told Ann Weekes that 'Mrs P as well as myself desires you will drop the idea of sending a servant with them' and went on to say that a likely woman, also called Ann, could not do the job because her ownership was disputed.¹¹⁵⁸ When Ann Weekes suggested another woman, he objected to her, too,¹¹⁵⁹ but by the time he got down to writing his response, this woman, the black Nancy or Nanny Weekes, had already set sail from Nevis with the boys.¹¹⁶⁰ For their passage James Williams supplied them amply with provisions: four sheep, a hog, a kid, 18 fowl, four dozen eggs, and vegetables. It was as if by providing a wholesome range of foods he was trying to atone for spitefully withholding milk from their sick father. The cost of their sea stores, over N£20, was borne by JPP.¹¹⁶¹

On the very day on which Thomas Pym Weekes had died JPP had sat down in the counting house at Great George Street and written to William Burt Weekes. He told him about his son's stay at Nevis and that he 'seemed quite recovered – he talked of coming to England'.¹¹⁶² Having had such encouraging news, the shock of receiving the message that his son had then died, after all, must have been devastating for the old man. Weekes had already buried three children and as many wives, and now he had lost his last son. Only one child remained, his daughter Jane. He could take comfort that at least she was well settled and well provided for.

In August 1796 William Burt Weekes formally gave up boarding with the Cokers and sought to lodge with a Revd Edward Fleet, but while Fleet was willing to accommodate him as a friend, he did not want to commit himself to a long-term boarding arrangement.¹¹⁶³ Coker, too, invited him back, to come and stay as a friend but not as a boarder,¹¹⁶⁴ suggesting that their living together had not always been agreeable. William Burt Weekes remained in Bristol but became increasingly ill until, towards the end of November, while staying at his nephew's house near Bristol, he was confined to bed.¹¹⁶⁵ On 16 December he made his will in the presence of his nephew, Revd William Young Coker, and of two other gentlemen.¹¹⁶⁶ At this stage William Burt Weekes's possessions consisted of three properties in Charlestown with a total value of N£1,790: one lot near the market place that had buildings on it (N£1,000); Cedar Trees, 'with two houses and a kitchen thereon erected' (N£750); and some land occupied by Lubbo (N£40).¹¹⁶⁷ His bequest was simple: he left all his possession in Nevis in trust to his grandsons, but, as his sisters were tenants for life, Cedar Trees could only be put on the market after the last Lady had died. He appointed trustees for the boys: John Frederick Pinney in England and his sister Ann and James Williams in Nevis. Having tidied up his affairs, two days later, on Sunday, at 3 o'clock in the morning William Burt Weekes died at Naish House. Attended by his family and their servants, he was buried on 21 December 1796 in the churchyard in nearby Wraxall.¹¹⁶⁸ His death was said to have been due to him being 'worn out' rather than from disease.¹¹⁶⁹

¹¹⁵⁷ PP, LB 12: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 24 November 1796

¹¹⁵⁸ PP, LB 12: JPP to Ann Weekes, Nevis, 24 November 1796

¹¹⁵⁹ PP, LB 12: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 18 January 1797

¹¹⁶⁰ Nanny Weekes and the boys probably sailed on 8 December 1796, when James William accounted for 'Cash for Goods AW (Anne Weekes) and presents to Dr Weekes' children and Attorney S£32:18:6' (PP, AB 41).

¹¹⁶¹ PP, AB 47 Cash a/c

It appears that travellers sometimes took provisions for themselves as well as their fellow passengers. For one voyage the millwright Edward Brazier brought 'rum, cordials, strong waters and several other articles as stores for his own and the other passengers use'. The leftovers were 'seized or secured' on arrival in England, and JPP, on Brazier's behalf, tried to get them returned or the tax reduced (LB 40: TP & T to Commissioners of HM Exercise, London 12 July 1797). However, it is also possible that, in order to circumvent tax laws, Brazier claimed that these goods had been his sea stores.

¹¹⁶² PP, LB 12: JPP to William Burt Weekes, Woodcutts, 3 February 1796

¹¹⁶³ PP, Dom Box S2-3: William Burt Weekes to Revd Edward Fleet, 1796

¹¹⁶⁴ PP, Dom Box S4: William Coker to JPP, 4 October 1796

¹¹⁶⁵ PP, LB 13: ?Azariah Pinney to Miss Ann Floyd, undated

¹¹⁶⁶ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 f384, and UKNA, PROB 11/1354

¹¹⁶⁷ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff287-91

¹¹⁶⁸ SRO, D/P/Wraxall Burials 2/1/3

¹¹⁶⁹ PP, LB 13: ?Azariah Pinney to Miss Ann Floyd, undated

Thomas Pym Weekes's sons, Thomas Pym and William Burt

Within weeks of their grandfather's funeral taking place, William Burt Weekes junior and Thomas Pym Weekes junior arrived in Bristol in the company of their temporary servant, Nanny Weekes. Mrs P would have received her only nephews in the way she treated her own and other people's children: with warmth and motherly care. At the house in Great George Street a succession of children who needed nursing through illnesses, or just looking after, came and went, and if Mrs P could look after 'our little friend Joseph'¹¹⁷⁰ and his brother Edward Brazier, and after George Guppy, young Mills, Sally Jones and the two ill-behaved Huggins boys when these were laid up with whooping cough,¹¹⁷¹ then, undoubtedly, she would have fussed over her nephews, making them feel welcome and comfortable. It is very likely that soon debates ensued in the Pinney family as to whether the boys should remain in Bristol. Just a few weeks earlier Mrs P had convinced JPP to manumit Mulatto Polly and two of her children but, remembering his wife's intervention in getting her brother appointed as manager, this time JPP may have been disinclined to yield to his wife. To him the expense of getting the boys to England, clothing them and dispatching them to Scotland was sufficient, and some time after May 1797 John Frederick Pinney took the children to Aberdeen.¹¹⁷² Nanny Weekes returned to Nevis. In December the 47-year-old Anne Griffin Brazier, the millwright's wife who had looked after the Weekes boys in Nevis, died of a fever.¹¹⁷³

When the two boys began their new life in Aberdeen William was six years old and Thomas four or five. Aberdeen, a large town with 27,000 inhabitants, had a busy harbour from where whalers set off for Greenland and was a bustling, exciting place that was developing apace. But outwardly it could be depressing: slate-grey buildings, leaden skies and views onto the dull North Sea. The boys moved in with their grandmother, Mally or Mary Livingston, a widow in her sixties. They lived in the part of town called Old Aberdeen from where it was just a skip and a hop down to the bustling harbour but, born and raised in the sun, the boys did not take to their new surroundings. At first they had problems settling in but, two years on, they were still unhappy.

Their sorrowful state was such that it attracted the attention of a gentleman whom they met one day. He, 'struck with the misery of their appearance, enquired their names'. Shocked, the man relayed news of this encounter to a Mrs Kelly, who just happened to have been a relative of Mrs Tobin, the wife of JPP's business partner. Mrs Tobin, in turn, told Azariah Pinney. He then wrote to his father, informing him that the children were 'miserable in mind and neglected in everything that belongs to comfort in body'. Azariah passed on to him what the gentleman had told Mrs Kelly: that they could not have had any allowance, or if they had, that 'it was most shamefully misapplied'. If Mrs Tobin had told Azariah all this, it is more than likely that she spoke to Mrs P about the boys as well, and it is therefore equally likely that Mrs P conceived of a plan to assist them. It probably involved Mrs Tobin, Mrs Kelly and the gentleman, as well as her sons because, as if to shame him, Azariah relayed to his father the chain of informants - if everyone knew that the children were poorly treated, then everyone would hold JPP responsible for their misery. Azariah appealed to his father: 'It is my wish ... to have them brought here. We can put them at school, for the whole year and prevent them giving you any trouble.' Azariah promised to assist financially, splitting the cost with his brother John Frederick, and thought that in the meantime 'Double their present allowance will be an ample supply.'¹¹⁷⁴ Acting immediately, Azariah sent £30 for the boys - their board for six months.¹¹⁷⁵ Grandmother Livingston acknowledged the money but maintained that there was still a shortfall and, although it cost less to

After his father-in-law died, JPP received a letter from John Ridout, William Coker's lawyer brother-in-law, in which he asked for repayment of a loan. JPP's curt reply that the claim was obsolete and that Mr Weekes had 'repeatedly declared it was satisfied a great many years ago' illustrates JPP's exasperation with his father-in-law's finances (PP, LB 12: JPP to John Ridout, Langton nr Blandford, 2 May 1797).

¹¹⁷⁰ PP, LB 12: JPP to William Humphrys, Fair-Hill, nr Birmingham, 18 August 1796

¹¹⁷¹ PP, LB 40: TP & T to Edward Huggins, 7 July 1797

¹¹⁷² PP, AB 41 Expense a/c

¹¹⁷³ Memorial Tablet in the church of St John Figtree, Nevis

¹¹⁷⁴ PP, Dom Box S4-2: Azariah Pinney to JPP, 18 August 1799

¹¹⁷⁵ PP, Dom Box P: M Livingston, Aberdeen, to Azariah Pinney, 15 April 1801

educate the boys in Scotland than in England, she could not make up the deficiency. Mrs Livingston was well-connected and she promised that two friends of hers, Bishop Skinner and Revd M Blake, would forward information on 'the high schools in general and in particular of that charitable foundation where her husband was physician for forty years',¹¹⁷⁶ and presumably based on the fact that schooling in Scotland would be cheaper, a decision was made to commit the orphans to the care of a John Bower in Aberdeen. They remained in Scotland and attended the Grammar School in Aberdeen.¹¹⁷⁷ The scheme to bring them to England had failed.

Not long after this incident the boys' great-aunt Ann Weekes died in Nevis. She had wanted JPP and his eldest son to act as trustees but JPP, on his and his son's behalf, declined, claiming 'the situation of myself and son puts it out of our power to render any real service by interfering in the trust'. The financial machinations between JPP and the Weekes family may have been the reason but the context in which he turned down the request suggests that he was reluctant to have anything to do with the children. Instead, he recommended William Hamilton and James Williams. He believed that these men would do their 'utmost to serve the orphans and to bring their little matters to a point as soon as possible' but, having withdrawn from their affairs, he nonetheless wanted to know how much money Ann had left for his nephews.¹¹⁷⁸

Ann Weekes had provided generously provided for the boys. She had made her will in September 1795, when she had been very ill. Some months before their father died, she had decreed that eight enslaved people were to be held in trust, with the profit of their sale going to Will and Tom once they reached the age of 21: the black boys Dick, Sam Hood, the mulatto boy Jack Abbott, the black women Moll and Clemenina, the black girls Sarah and Mary and the mulatto girl Fanny Chissers. Since Ann Weekes had made her will, Fanny Chissers had given birth to a daughter called Nancy, and in a most unusual codicil to Ann Weekes's will, sworn by her nephew Charles Ellery after her death, it was stated that Fanny Chissers and her daughter were intended to be sold to the merchant William Slater – presumably the father of Fanny Chissers's child. He did, indeed, buy them, as well as a third, the woman Moll, for a total of N£190, but whether that money ever went to Will and Tom is questionable.

They certainly did not benefit from another person who had been left to them: one of the mulatto boys, Jack Abbott, had already been transferred to his father, George Abbott.¹¹⁷⁹ Jack's mother, Patty, had at one stage been owned by their father who had sold her to Ann Weekes who then freed Patty. As to the other individuals mentioned in Ann Weekes's will - Clemenina, the boys Dick and Sam Hood, and the girls Sarah and Mary – there are no further records of them. However, Ann Weekes also left two more individuals: the black man Dick and another black girl called Mary. They went in the first instance to the remaining Lady at the Cedar Trees, Jane Weekes, but after her death, Dick was to go to Will and Mary to Tom, and once Will and Tom reached the age of 21, both Dick and Mary were to be sold. These two had a special relationship with The Ladies at the Cedar Trees which meant that Ann Weekes directed their future ownership by two clauses in her will: that they were to remain in the island and, most unusually, that they were allowed to choose their new owners.¹¹⁸⁰

In Nevis people got to hear, through Edward Brazier, who had taken in Will and Tom after their father's death and that 'The young Weekes are both well and promising boys'.¹¹⁸¹ But the boys grew up very much as the poor orphans. From a young age they were made aware of their station in life and their dependent status. When they started school, the principal promised that he would 'not fail to instil in them a proper sense of their situation and to impress them with gratitude and a deep sense of

¹¹⁷⁶ PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii – Summary: M Livingston to Azariah Pinney, 17 October 1799

¹¹⁷⁷ In 1800 John Bower was an English teacher at the Grammar School (*The Aberdeen Almanac for the Year 1800*, printed by J Chalmers, Aberdeen p178).

¹¹⁷⁸ PP, LB 16: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, 31 January 1801

¹¹⁷⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1799-1801 ff112-14 (Courtesy of Michelle Terrelle)

¹¹⁸⁰ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 f368-74

¹¹⁸¹ PP, LB 15: JPP, Bristol, to Edward Brazier, Nevis, 1 July 1800

obligation to all their friends and benefactors.' Rather touchingly, in his letter to Azariah the schoolmaster attached a little message from Will and Tom ¹¹⁸² - written, no doubt, at the teacher's behest.

In Old Aberdeen the boys became part of the wider Livingston family. They would have attended the weddings and christenings that took place in nearby St Nicholas church. At the age 39 their uncle William got married for a second time, again to a much younger wife. His new wife, Margaret Gibbon, was only 23 years old - the same age his first wife had been when she died and about the same age at which the boys' mother had died. The couple had no children, and in the new Mrs Livingston Will and Tom may have found a surrogate mother. They also had cousins; their uncle Hay Livingston and his wife Elizabeth had at least five children: Elizabeth, Alexander, Thomas, Mary and Margaret. ¹¹⁸³ This uncle Hay, a Lieutenant-Colonel, and their uncle William were respectable and prominent members of Aberdeen society. William Livingston, for instance, was once chosen by a working class poetess to publicly attest to the authenticity of her work; the other dignitaries included none other than the Bishop of the Scotch Episcopal Church. ¹¹⁸⁴

As befitted their status, the 'two genteel boys' were brought up to be gentlemen and their education included learning to dance. They proved themselves 'very quick scholars' (sic) but when it came to Latin William's progress was slow. From an early age he had developed a love of the sea and aged eleven he knew he wanted to follow a naval career. It was easy for young boys to be captivated by life at sea: during the Napoleonic wars the British Navy fought tremendous battles under the leadership of some outstanding men. Among them, of course, was Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson, who by then had separated from his wife and was living quite openly with his mistress, Emma Hamilton. William would have known of Nelson's daring victory at the Battle of the Nile and would have been inspired by his exploits at the Battle of Copenhagen. William Bligh, commander of the *Bounty*, whose crew had mutinied, took part in this battle. He had served under Nelson and William would have heard of his tremendous achievement of navigating almost four thousand miles and leading the men loyal to him to safety. But young William knew nothing of shipping and it was thought best if he dropped Latin and instead applied himself to the study of arithmetic and navigation. The Livingstons were supportive ¹¹⁸⁵ and Azariah Pinney keenly followed William's progress but at the beginning of 1803 Azariah died. The boys' most committed and energetic champion was buried on 6 January, his 28th birthday, ¹¹⁸⁶ and they were put 'under direction' of their cousin John Frederick. A dull, insipid character, he had married a surprisingly lively and sensible woman, the daughter of a Member of Parliament: the well-connected Frances Dickinson. The couple lived in London where John Frederick practised law. ¹¹⁸⁷

The Livingstons planned to get William recommended to a good captain and rated as a midshipman ¹¹⁸⁸ but, presumably because they did not have suitable connections, no posting materialised, and in an effort to set William's naval career in motion, the Pinneys consulted their contact in the Royal Navy, Captain George Tobin. The son of JPP's business partner James Tobin and a veteran of Captain Bligh's second breadfruit voyage to Tahiti, Captain Tobin had gone to school with William's father and was willing to use his influence. For some years Tobin had also served under Captain Alexander Cochrane and thought he had sufficient interest with Cochrane for him to take William as a Volunteer, 'the only situation a gentleman's son can at first enter upon'. William would receive 'small pay' but with an allowance of £30 or £40 this would be adequate for his support.

¹¹⁸² PP, Cat II.1755- Dom III.ii – Summary: John Bower, Aberdeen, to Azariah Pinney, 24 May 1800

¹¹⁸³ Dr William Livingston married the 23-year-old Margaret Gibbon in December 1799, and Hay Livingston married Elizabeth Martin in March 1796, not long before William and Thomas had come to Aberdeen. The marriages and also all the baptisms took place in St Nicholas church, Aberdeen (<http://www.compapp.dcu.ie/~humphrys/FamTree/> and IGI Microfiche for Aberdeen).

¹¹⁸⁴ <http://digital.lib.ucdavis.edu/projects/bwrp/Works/MilnCSimpl.htm>

¹¹⁸⁵ PP, Dom Box P: M Livingston, Aberdeen, to Azariah Pinney, 15 April 1801, and 19 April 1801

¹¹⁸⁶ PP, LB 17: JPP, Bristol, to Edward Parson, George and Blue Boar, Holbourn, 3 January 1803

¹¹⁸⁷ JF Pinney married on 20 August 1801 (PP, AB 42)

¹¹⁸⁸ PP, Dom Box P: M Livingston, Aberdeen, to Azariah Pinney, 15 April 1801

At JPP's behest John Frederick consulted Dr Livingston¹¹⁸⁹ but instead of joining Cochrane's ship, in March 1804 William entered the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth.¹¹⁹⁰ JPP commented wearily that trying to procure a situation for Dr Weekes's eldest son 'requires such great interest, independent of a heavy expense.'¹¹⁹¹ By good fortune at least some money had come through from Nevis: Ann Weekes's legacy and various other sums, small amounts of interest and, best of all, almost £200 from two debtors.¹¹⁹²

William was just over 13 years old when he entered the Naval Academy and almost 17 when he started his naval career.¹¹⁹³ George Tobin offered to take him although, 'to be candid', the vessel under his command was 'not an eligible ship for a boy to first embark in'. Not only did it want repairs, Tobin also felt that he could not devote much time to his new charge because the officers under his command were all young and recently promoted, leaving him with 'so much of the detail to attend'.¹¹⁹⁴ By proposing him for the Midshipman's position he could, however, keep a friendly eye on William at the start of his career - Tobin understood that William needed his influence; he was using his position to help this Pinney relative just as others had helped him to get started. JPP appears anxious to shelve off the responsibility for looking after Weekes onto Tobin and reiterated that Tobin's 'interest' could be beneficial to young Weekes's career. While gently reiterating the virtue of gratitude, JPP made clear his admiration for the captain: 'You ought to think yourself very fortunate in being on board of a ship commanded by so excellent an officer as Captain Tobin and one if you deserve his attention will be your real friend and one whom you know all my family highly respect.'¹¹⁹⁵

Preparing himself for life at sea, at a cost £3:5:0 William had an 'admiral book bound in elegant Marocco (sic) leather gilt', and, having received his allowance from his cousin John Frederick, he asked for more money. JPP could see patterns repeating themselves: extravagance, ungratefulness and a certain forgetfulness in financial matters. For the unnecessarily luxurious binding he blamed the Portsmouth bookseller - 'for a book to be used on board a Ship of War' the man should have advised to have it bound in calf leather -¹¹⁹⁶ but he also took William to task for his profligacy and for failing to settle his bill with his former drawing master. As to wanting more money, JPP declined his request: '... in answer to your letter, without date, I can only say that ... you are so amply provided with all articles you stand in need of, and you have an increase of £10 per annum more than at first was intended ...'¹¹⁹⁷

In the company of George Tobin, in the morning of 7 September 1807 young William Burt Weekes left JPP's house¹¹⁹⁸ and enlisted as a rated midshipman on the frigate *Princess Charlotte*.¹¹⁹⁹ Having come from Cork, the vessel was being refitted in Plymouth Dock.¹²⁰⁰ Her crew was a truly international mixture of 30 English and Welsh men, 22 Irish and four Scotsmen, six from America, two from Prussia - including Albertos Hoff who had been punished for stealing - and one man each from Curaçao, Norway, Lisbon, Hamburg, Charlestown, Martinique, Quebec, Bermuda, 'New Briton', Guadeloupe, Campeche, Amsterdam, 'Sweedland', Copenhagen, and Honduras. The youngest on board were two boys aged 13 and 14, young 'quarter-deck gentlemen, trainee officers', and in William's age group were six trainee seamen. Tobin regularly complained that his ship was short of men but as the captain of a Royal Navy vessel he had the power to requisition a number of sailors from the merchant fleet, and just before the *Princess Charlotte* had left Ireland for her refit at

¹¹⁸⁹ PP, LB 17: JPP to JF Pinney, 1 July 1803

¹¹⁹⁰ O'Byrne, William R *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*

¹¹⁹¹ PP, LB 18: JPP to Dr Thomas, Guildford, 21 July 1804

¹¹⁹² PP, AB 42

¹¹⁹³ O'Byrne, William R *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*

¹¹⁹⁴ PP, Dom Box P: George Tobin, Plymouth, to JPP, 31 August 1807

¹¹⁹⁵ PP, LB 22: JPP to William Burt Weekes, *Princess Charlotte* at Cove, 15 October 1807

¹¹⁹⁶ PP, LB 46: JPP & JF Pinney to Richard Livesay, Portsea, Portsmouth, 23 September 1807

¹¹⁹⁷ PP, LB 22: JPP to William Burt Weekes II, on board *Princess Charlotte*, Plymouth Dock, 23 September 1807

¹¹⁹⁸ PP, LB 22: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 7 September 1807

¹¹⁹⁹ O'Byrne, William R *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*

¹²⁰⁰ UKNA, ADM 51/ 1643 Lieutenant James Grierson's log

Plymouth he had impressed crew from the last slaver to sail out of Liverpool legally. Bound for Bonny, the *Kitty's Amelia* had a crew of nearly sixty men and Tobin had commandeered 'four of the best'.¹²⁰¹

After her refit and having anchored in Cawsand Bay and Plymouth Sound, Tobin and his crew sailed back to Cork.¹²⁰² The *Princess Charlotte* mostly engaged in boarding and inspecting vessels off the Irish coast but the following year made forays to Madeira and Portugal,¹²⁰³ and then one journey to the West Indies. William was confronted with the reality of life at sea when a man drowned off the Skelligs in March 1808, another died in July while the ship was in Cork and some months later two more men died during heavy gales. Tobin was also losing men through desertion. In August 1808, at Plymouth again, six crew members did not return from shore leave and were recorded as having 'Run',¹²⁰⁴ another five absconded in Ireland in the following two months, and in May 1809 five more crew were absent when mustered at Port Royal in Jamaica. They were 'supposed to have swam from the ship in the night'.¹²⁰⁵ If caught, the men were flogged. Punishment on board ship was brutal; Tobin is recorded as having administered 12 lashes for insolence, 18 for contempt, and 36 for drunkenness or theft,¹²⁰⁶ but by the standards of the time these sentences were the norm.

On her passage home from Barbados and Jamaica the *Princess Charlotte* chased and boarded vessels and, returning via Bermuda and the Azores, Tobin, an accomplished water colourist, captured some of the sights in his paintings. On 8 July 1809 the *Princess Charlotte* arrived back in Plymouth¹²⁰⁷ and William left Tobin's command, thereby narrowly missing another man with Nevis connections: Lieutenant Magnus Morton Kelly joined Tobin on the *Princess Charlotte* at the end of July.¹²⁰⁸

Although his cousin John Frederick was in charge of guiding his career, his uncle JPP was still willing to assist, using his 'little interest' in getting Weekes appointed as Lieutenant – provided, of course,

¹²⁰¹ The *Kitty's Amelia* was the last slaver to set sail from Liverpool legally. The British slave trade had been abolished with effect from 1 May 1807 but *Kitty's Amelia* had sought clearance for the slaving voyage prior to that date and was therefore protected. She continued outfitting and left Liverpool on 27 July 1807.

The four crew members taken by George Tobin may have been spared death by being impressed. They certainly were spared a very hazardous triangular voyage. After the men were taken aboard the *Princess Charlotte*, the master, Hugh Crow, continued to Bonny where another ten or twelve other slavers were waiting to load captive Africans. According to Crow, he bought 'as fine a cargo of blacks, as ever had been taken from Africa' but having had to wait a long time, once they were underway a malignant fever and dysentery broke out among the crew. It baffled the two doctors aboard ship. Then a fire broke out about a thousand miles from land but, owing to the prompt action of the master, it was put out. The sickness aboard ship continued and after a passage of eight weeks, the slaver had lost the two doctors, 50 of the Africans and 30 of her crew. Arriving at Kingston, Crow found 16 other slavers who suffered sickness and death but on board the *Kitty's Amelia* the sickness had died out before they reached land and, with his cargo in better shape, Crow was able to sell at a profit. Crow later published his memoirs as *Memoirs of the late Captain H. Crow of Liverpool...with descriptive sketches of the Western Coast of Africa*, London, 1830 (Small, David *The Career of Rear-Admiral George Tobin*, quoting George Francis Dow *Slave Ships and Slaving* David and Charles, Newton Abbott 2002 p181; first published by the Marine Research Society, Salem, Massachusetts 1927).

¹²⁰² *The Times* 1 October 1807 and UKNA, ADM 51/1822

¹²⁰³ UKNA, ADM 51/ 1822

¹²⁰⁴ UKNA, ADM 37/ 1433

¹²⁰⁵ UKNA, ADM 51/ 1953

¹²⁰⁶ Small, David *The Career of Rear-Admiral George Tobin*, quoting UKNA, ADM 51/ 2699 and ADM 51/ 1643

¹²⁰⁷ *The Times* 11 July 1809

¹²⁰⁸ UKNA, ADM 11/ 58

Lieutenant Magnus Morton Kelly's father Captain William Hancock Kelly had served with Nelson in the West Indies and had married a cousin of Fanny Nisbet's (Lady Nelson), Sarah Morton from Nevis. Both couples were married around the same time. Nelson commented on the Kellys in several letters to his wife and appears to have taken a particular dislike to Mrs Kelly. He described her as 'all self' (Oman, Carola *Nelson* p80, quoting Naish p325) and concluded one letter from Barbados with a PS, in which he complained about Mrs Kelly for having been uncivil to him in not even responding to his kind note, asking if there was anything she wanted sending to Nevis via the schooner (Naish, Nelson to Mrs Nisbet 23 April 1786). Later on Nelson commented that he did not think that Mrs Kelly was much liked; 'C.C. said as much as that she was odd'. Captain William Kelly, 'Fat and merry as ever', Nelson recorded as 'very well spoken of by those who served in the West Indies with him' (Naish, GPB (ed) *Nelson's letters* pp202-03 Nelson to wife 28 March 1795; pp395-96 Nelson to wife 4 May 1798 and Nelson to wife 23 August 1796). Captain William Hancock Kelly died a Rear-Admiral (Naish p17 fn3).

A watercolour in the National Maritime Museum of the capture of the *Comet* (*La Comete*) by the *Andromache* (the *Princess Charlotte* was renamed) and the *Sparrow* has been attributed to George Tobin and a 'W.M. Kelly' but it is likely that this could in fact have been Lieutenant Magnus Morton Kelly. The painting is also dated incorrectly as 13 December 1810; the capture did not happen until 14 March 1814.

that his conduct warranted his support,¹²⁰⁹ and either through the Pinneys' influence or through his own efforts, in July 1809 William started serving under Captain Henry Gage Morris on the *Jalouse*. He proved himself an able leader. Within six months and while patrolling the Bay of Biscay he was put in command of the cutter of the *Jalouse*, which, together with other boats, after a three-hour chase took a French privateer. Weekes and his fellow mariners 'gallantly boarded' the captured vessel.¹²¹⁰

While William was enjoying his life at sea, his brother Thomas 'was brought up in the study of physic and surgery'.¹²¹¹ Relations between JPP and the Livingstons had improved - hostility had turned to civility – and, together with Thomas, Aunt and Uncle Livingston had even stayed at JPP's new country house, Somerton Erleigh.¹²¹² JPP had bought this residence not long after he had refused to accommodate the orphaned Weekes boys (on account of his poverty), and the Livingstons, no doubt, on the quiet commented on this apparent contradiction. Nevertheless, they would have been impressed by the elegantly furnished house, its garden and pleasure grounds. William had missed his relatives' visit due to having to dash off with Captain Tobin to Plymouth, but the following year he spent his shore leave at Somerton where he met up with JPP.¹²¹³

Thomas attended Marischal College in Aberdeen but then he, too, wanted to escape life in Scotland. Had he so chosen, he could have set himself up in practice anywhere in any of the West Indian islands, but he was set to follow a medical career in the East Indies.

Ever since the British East India Company had won the Battle of Bengal in the 1750s and thereby opened the way to British rule on the Indian subcontinent, a shift from West to East had taken place in the British conscience. Thomas was set to try his luck in this new and exciting empire, and by 1810 he had entered the East India Company's Army as Assistant Surgeon.¹²¹⁴ He had been sent on his way by JPP who had expressed his confidence in his 'discretion and prudence',¹²¹⁵ but in true Weekes fashion Thomas disappointed his uncle: after being allowed £300 for equipment he pleaded for additional funds. Grudgingly JPP paid him off with another £50 -¹²¹⁶ at least the young man would be far away and would not make any more demands. Thomas started his 'lucrative position' in India¹²¹⁷ and, apart from a request to JPP to use his influence to further his career by trying to get an introduction to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Thomas Hislop,¹²¹⁸ Thomas did not, indeed, make any more demands on the Pinneys, and for the next two decades he disappeared from view. Not so William. While serving on the *Jalouse* he asked JPP for money, foolishly concluding "If you will be so good as to grant me what I ask I will not trouble you again as long as I am in the service - this is all the friendless and undersigned asks you." JPP was livid. He responded immediately:

After receiving a good education fitted out properly for your situation with an allowance, in addition to your pay at £40 pa fixed on by the Captain you have served under and which has been regularly paid to you to see such a conclusion to a letter of yours satisfies (sic) my mind that your motto is ingratitude. However it is some trifling consolation to find that you will require no further assistance from my son or me after receiving the enclosed £10 which I send agreeable to your request.

¹²⁰⁹ PP, LB 23: JPP to William Burt Weekes, *Princess Charlotte*, Cove of Cork, 28 February 1809

¹²¹⁰ O'Byrne, William R *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*

¹²¹¹ PP, LB 23: JPP to JC Mills, 24 September 1812

¹²¹² PP, LB 22: JPP to William Burt Weekes, *Princess Charlotte*, Cove, 15 October 1807

¹²¹³ PP, LB 22: JPP to George Tobin, 3 August 1808

¹²¹⁴ British Library, India Office Records: Military Department Records: Assistant Surgeons' and Surgeons' Papers, East India Company Medical Service (1804-1858) and Indian Medical Service (1858-1914): IOR/L/MIL/9/363/110-13 [nd]

¹²¹⁵ PP, LB 23: JPP to Dr Livingston, Aberdeen, 26 May 1809

¹²¹⁶ PP, LB 23: JPP to TP Weekes, 3 Gregory Place, St Thomas' ?Fon, 2 December 1809

¹²¹⁷ PP, LB 23: JPP to JC Mills, 24 September 1812

¹²¹⁸ PP, LB 24: JPP to Rob William jun, Bedford Square, London, 3 October 1813

JPP signed off with 'Wishing you health and happiness ...'¹²¹⁹ Having barred himself from borrowing any more money, in the following year William just overdrew his allowance, taking £70 within nine months instead of £40 over the whole year,¹²²⁰ and two years on was brazen enough to tap his cousin for more money. John Frederick noted in his diary on two successive Sundays: 'Weekes £10'.¹²²¹

In June 1812 the last of The Ladies at the Cedar Trees died.¹²²² Jane Weekes, Aunt Jenny, had been ill for some time and JPP thought 'it a happiness that the Almighty hath been pleased to release Mrs Weekes from her sufferings.' William and Thomas stood to inherit everything but after paying for her funeral there was not much money left. Their grandfather had used the Cedar Trees, his property, to secure a loan of £300 from JPP in Nevis, and JPP charged another loan of £150 '(and other uncalculated sums)' against it.¹²²³ Thomas and William inherited all the furniture from the house at the Cedar Trees but other people also benefited: some silverware was left to their great-aunt, Mrs Frances Coker; a table, some bed linen, a pair of glass shades and a small mahogany table Jane Weekes had bequeathed to a free mixed-race man, John Frederick Bertrand; and a mattress and N£10 she had left to another free man, the mulatto William Augustus Claxton. Jane Weekes had manumitted both of them when they were boys. While Jenny Weekes's clothes were divided among her females, Thomas and William shared the remaining possessions with their great-aunt Coker and a relative of hers.¹²²⁴ William Burt Weekes appointed John Colhoun Mills and Joseph Brazier, Edward Brazier's younger son, as their attorneys in Nevis¹²²⁵ and another man in London, Joseph Roberts.¹²²⁶ All the properties in Nevis could now be put up for sale, including the Cedar Trees, which William sold, on his own and his brother's behalf. He passed it on to JPP for the 'trifling sum' of £298. William clearly felt that the property could have fetched more on the open market because in seeking his brother's consent for the sale he acknowledged the 'immense debt which you and I owe to Mr Pinney' and admitted that, had JPP not assisted him in times of need, he would have been 'inevitably ... sent to jail'.¹²²⁷ The brothers still owed just over £500 to the Pinneys and the sale of the enslaved people was to go towards paying off their debts. William had drawn most of this money; to his brother he confessed that he had been 'so very impudent as to very much exceed the small income which I possess as Lieutenant'.¹²²⁸

William Weekes had left the *Jalouse* to join the flagship of Sir James Saumarez and for about eighteen months had served on the *Victory* as midshipman in the Baltic. This had come about through the influence of an old friend of the family and through her he then achieved his promotion to Lieutenant. The Pinneys had not completely washed their hands off William; in an effort to further his career, John Frederick's father-in-law, the Member of Parliament, had written to Lord Hood,¹²²⁹ and JPP had followed this up with a letter to another Member of Parliament,¹²³⁰ but it was through the personal intervention of Viscountess Nelson that William joined the *Victory* and was then made Lieutenant. No one could refuse a request from the widow of one of the great naval heroes of the day, as this note testifies:

Mr Yorke presents his respects to Viscountess Nelson (Duchess of Bronte) and is extremely happy in being able to obey her commands by the Promotion of Mr William Burt Weekes to

¹²¹⁹ PP, LB 23: JPP to William Burt Weekes, *Jalouse*, Cork Harbour, 6 December 1810

¹²²⁰ PP, LB 23: JPP to JF Pinney, 5 December 1811

¹²²¹ PP, Misc Vols 20 JF Pinney's Daily Journal: 9 and 16 May 1812

¹²²² RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

¹²²³ PP, WI Box 1801-1836: 5 October 1812

¹²²⁴ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1805-1818 ff233-35

¹²²⁵ PP, WI Box 1801-1836

¹²²⁶ PP, LB 23: JPP to Joseph Roberts, 47 Lambs Conduit Street, London, 9 October 1812

¹²²⁷ PP, LB 23: William Burt Weekes, London, to TP Weekes, Bombay, 10 October 1812

¹²²⁸ PP, LB 23: JPP to Joseph Roberts with a copy of a letter sent to WB Weekes to send to TP Weekes, Bengal, 9 October 1812, and LB 23: William Burt Weekes, London, to TP Weekes, Bombay, 10 October 1812

¹²²⁹ PP, Misc Vols 10: Lord Hood, ship ?Yarmouth Road, Isle of Wight, probably to William Dickinson MP, 30 September 1811

¹²³⁰ PP, LB 23: JPP to Wm Pitt MP, Kingsweston, Dorchester, 1 January 1812

the Rank of Lieutenant, a Commission having this day been signed for him, Admy March 23rd 1812.¹²³¹

Viscountess Nelson knew William's grandfather and also his father (she probably remembered that evening in 1783 when Mrs P's nightcap caught fire after the Pinneys returned from Nevis); she would have heard of his father's early death and the straightened circumstances in which he had left his sons and, no doubt, she lent her support willingly. In fact her patronage had enabled William to jump the promotion queue; Lord Hood's own protégées who had passed their examinations for Lieutenant, and who were awaiting advancement, had 'very few chances of their being promoted soon.'¹²³² For William, once again, an old Pinney/Nevis connection had proven an invaluable asset.

Shortly after his appointment, in April 1812 Lieutenant Weekes started serving on the *Gloucester* as the fifth Lieutenant.¹²³³ While JPP was keen to downplay his children's West Indian birth,¹²³⁴ William was proud of his; on board the *Gloucester* he was known to have been born in one of the West Indian islands and as having Scottish 'connections'. One of the crew remembered him for an incident in which he played a vital role in the rescue of a drowning man, displaying not just quick thinking but also physical fitness and 'a great deal of courage and goodness of heart'. A man from the *Gloucester* had fallen overboard while fishing for mackerel, and Lieutenant Weekes 'sprung boldly into the mizzen shrouds, directed the lowering of the boat, and was in the act of dropping into it, when it was let down. He hung aloft suspended by his hands; in this situation, gave his orders and then by his activity, got back so as to reach the deck.'

When this happened, he had been recently appointed Lieutenant 'and was not a little proud of his authority', and it is easy to imagine how the story of young Weekes's daring action quickly spread in naval circles. His fellow mariner from the *Gloucester* summed up his character by saying that

he had a good person, and possessed considerable skill in the accomplishments of drawing and oil-painting. He was brave but impetuous; all his passions were violent, and his temper such as to make him a dangerous associate: but his heart was I believe, not bad, and his natural talents were considerable; so that should he live long enough to gain experience, he may probably be respectable.

The echoes of JPP's assessment of William's father are unmistakable, and one could probably add that, like his father, William was a risk-taker, impulsive and restless. His spelling, too, was like his father's; JPP's note in the margin of one of William's letters is reminiscent of how JPP used to correct Thomas Pym Weekes's spelling: 'The word write in Weekes' letter is spelt wrought'.¹²³⁵ Patterns were, indeed, repeating themselves. While serving his next appointment as Lieutenant on the *Echo*, which was stationed off Flushing and in the Downs, William incurred yet more debts,¹²³⁶ and then, in February 1814, he got married.

Aged nearly 24, he was the same age his father had been when he had married, but William was in an even worse position to support a wife and children. It was a bad time for a Navy man to start a family. Following Napoleon's abdication in April 1814, the Treaty of Paris ended the war with France,¹²³⁷ and if there was no war, there was little chance of employment and even less of

¹²³¹ PP, Dom Box B6-7

In the Navy List the date of William Burt Weekes's promotion is given as 21 March 1812 (Navy List 20 December 1852 p39).

¹²³² PP, Misc Vols 10: Lord Hood ship ?Yarmouth Road, Isle of Wight, probably to William Dickinson MP, 30 September 1811

¹²³³ UKNA, ADM 196/1, 176; see similar in ADM 196/6, 548

¹²³⁴ MacInnes, CM *Bristol: A Gateway of Empire* p324, quoting PP, Old LB 1781-84 f279

¹²³⁵ PP, LB 23: William Burt Weekes, London, to TP Weekes, Bombay, 10 October 1812

¹²³⁶ PP, LB 24: JPP to Joseph Roberts, [no day] October 1814, and 1 November 1814

¹²³⁷ Britain returned to France all conquered territories, including Martinique but not Tobago and St Lucia (Buckley *The British Army* p268). Britain returned to the Dutch their six Caribbean islands, among them Saba and St Eustacius (Goslinga, Cornelius Ch *A Short History of the Netherland Antilles* p86).

advancement and promotion. With his last employment on the *Echo* having ended in mid-July 1813, he would have been on half pay, the usual salary for out-of-service naval officers. His wife, Grace, a daughter of Peter Bunworth of Mallow in County Cork,¹²³⁸ was Irish, five years older than him and probably did not bring a dowry of note into the marriage. While his father had died before he could be hauled off to prison for debt and William had been spared jail through the Pinneys' financial assistance, his wife, however, had actually been in prison - presumably for debt. This was the more shocking as there was a lawyer in Grace Bunworth's family.¹²³⁹

Having got married in Mallow,¹²⁴⁰ the newlyweds moved to Bristol, and William, once more, appealed to the Pinneys for financial help. Unwilling to assist yet again, they returned his letter to his home at Number 10, Bedminster Parade. And then, in the spring of 1815, it looked as if William's luck was turning: war seemed imminent. Napoleon, who had been banished to the Italian island of Elba, had fled back to France to reassume power and was mustering troops to fight the British. In preparation for war, the Admiralty appointed Lieutenant Weekes to a vessel. But Weekes needed uniforms and he needed cash. This time he wrote to his aunt, Jane Pinney, hoping she would help him since he was 'an altered man', now that he had a wife to support.¹²⁴¹ Mrs P did not believe a word of it and packed years of frustration into her reply. She did not accept that he had changed; he did not deserve any help because of his bad conduct in marrying when he had nothing to live on and, worse still, he had married a woman 'just out of goal'. Her advice to him: his wife should return to her friends immediately. Unable to completely cut off a relative in need, Mrs P did, however, something practical to assist and sent along a tailor. The man was accompanied by her husband's business partner, Robert Case, who was to ensure that William would not exploit her generosity and order for himself too much fancy gear. How the Pinneys felt about William is evident from a completely uncharacteristic malicious comment which Mrs P added; she told her nephew that she had sent the tailor 'to take your measure with a hope that a lucky shot may take you off.'¹²⁴²

Lieutenant Weekes served on the *Mastiff* from 28 April 1815 but on 11 June was 'detained by Civil Powers'. Given his previous problems, it is likely that his debtors had caught up with him. He left service on 22 June¹²⁴³ - exactly four days after Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo. Napoleon was banished to St Helena in the Atlantic, and for Lieutenant Weekes something akin to banishment from the Navy began. Apart from about seven months' service on the *Vangeur* in 1818, he had to wait for another five years until he received a new commission and this, apparently, only because great efforts had been made on his behalf after he suffered what appears to have been a mental breakdown. Long years of waiting for an appointment, exchanging his swashbuckling sealife for settled domesticity, existing in miserable poverty - whatever the cause, 'extremely nervous' he ended up under the care of a doctor. In his distressed state he turned to religion and 'read the Scripture a lot' so that by February 1822 he was 'much recovered' and friends could talk about his 'late parlous affliction'. JPP had died some years earlier, and Charles, the youngest of JPP's sons, came to Lieutenant Weekes's aid. Charles asked a friend, Revd Thomas Roberts, to look after him and his family. Revd Roberts was a member of the Baptist congregation in Bristol and, having buried Frances Coker, the Pinneys' long-term servant from Nevis, already had connections with the Pinneys.

Revd Roberts found Lieutenant Weekes's wife Grace 'an interesting person'. With regards to her belief, he thought she was 'quite as much disposed as her husband to obtain a knowledge of the

¹²³⁸ O'Byrne, William R *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*

¹²³⁹ Pigott's Directory for County Cork lists the attorney Peter Bunworth in 1824 at Vittoria Lodge, Mallow, County Cork (<http://www.archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/GENIRE/2001-05/0989538436> Correspondent quoted Mallow Field Club Journal #8 p138).

¹²⁴⁰ <http://www.familysearch.org> taken from the original parish records in the PRO, Dublin, for Church of Ireland, Parish of Mallow (Baptisms 1776-1839, Marriages 1777-1839, Burials 1776-1837)

¹²⁴¹ PP, Dom Box S1: William Burt Weekes (Navy) to Mrs Pinney, undated

¹²⁴² PP, Dom Box S1: Mrs Pinney to William Burt Weekes, undated

¹²⁴³ I am grateful to Jeremy Eddon of the 1805 Club for this reference and sight of a copy of the muster roll. See also ADM 37/5641

truth'. This pleased Charles Pinney because he, his sisters and their sister-in-law, John Frederick's wife Frances, were Evangelical Christians, and anyone who tried to follow the True Path were worthy of their support. And the Weekeses needed a lot of support. Living in 'wretched lodgings'¹²⁴⁴ with their three daughters Harriett, Ann and Jane they gladly accepted the plan that their benefactors devised for them. Revd Roberts suggested to Charles Pinney that they should rent a 'very small but very neat' house with a small garden where Lieutenant Weekes could grow vegetables. It would cost £20 a year, including taxes, and the family would need help with furniture but from then on Lieutenant Weekes and his family would get by on his half pay. Revd Roberts promised to try to find him employment in Bristol and, after borrowing £2 from the clergyman, William duly promised to 'conduct himself with propriety in future'. The family moved into a house just beyond the Stokes Croft Turnpike,¹²⁴⁵ immediately outside the centre of Bristol, and from there William wrote to his aunt Livingston - of course about money: £100 that was to be forwarded to one of the Pinneys.¹²⁴⁶ This may have been his inheritance from his grandmother who had died some years earlier, or from his uncle Dr William Livingston who had died more recently, in October 1822.¹²⁴⁷ The money, no doubt, was intended to go towards repaying a loan.

Following his period of ill health, in March 1823 Lieutenant Weekes finally returned to the sea. For just over two years he served as second Lieutenant on the *Prince Regent* under Sir Benjamin Hallowell and commanded his tender, the cutter *Ash* or *Asp* in the North Sea. He served on the *Prince Regent* until May 1825 and, with no more hope of an appointment to the fleet, he joined the newly-formed Coastguard Service. His actual service in the Royal Navy, starting with his position as Lieutenant on the *Gloucester*, amounted to no more than a total of four years and 36 days.¹²⁴⁸ Apart from one foray to the West Indies, his time aboard ship was mostly spent off the British coast or in European waters and, no doubt, he looked back on his naval career with a sense of disappointment.

The family moved to the fishing town of Dawlish, 'a most delightful place' on the Devon coast. The Coastguard Service provided housing for its employees and the Weekeses would have been able to move into ready-made accommodation. As a Royal Navy Lieutenant he would have been the Chief Officer, with several boatmen serving under him. When the Coastguard Service came into existence in 1822, it united several other land and sea-based services designed to eradicate smuggling. High taxes on luxury goods, such as silk, tea, coffee and alcohol had created an alternative import trade, with tin from Cornwall and iron from Sussex being exported illegally. While the majority of the population welcomed cheaper goods, the government lost out on collecting taxes. The Coastguard was meant to remedy this.

Weekes began corresponding with John Frederick's wife, Frances, because, no doubt, the appointment to the Coastguard had been through her intervention; William thanked her for her 'kindly interest'. He was soon happily settled; he liked his 'present employment very much' and had 'been called on, and invited to the houses of several of the first class people in, and about Dawlish'. One of his visitors was none other than his old mentor, Captain George Tobin. The owner of Stoney Grove plantation in Nevis, which he had inherited from his father and mortgaged to the Pinneys, Captain Tobin had retired to Teignmouth after the end of the Napoleonic wars. He spent his time sketching and painting naval and local scenes.¹²⁴⁹ Captain Tobin and his wife Dorothy showed Lieutenant Weekes and his family 'every attention in their power' and invited them to Teignmouth, just a few kilometres along the coast from Dawlish.¹²⁵⁰

¹²⁴⁴ PP, Dom Box C2-8: Thomas Roberts, Bristol, to Charles Pinney, 12 February 1822

¹²⁴⁵ PP, Dom Box C2-8: T Roberts, Kingsdown, to Charles Pinney, 16 February 1822

¹²⁴⁶ PP, LB 28: William Burt Weekes, 12 Ashley Row, Bristol, to Mrs Livingston, 22 March 1823

Ashley Row does not exist anymore but in 1830 the company of George Briggs (rope and twine makers) were at Ashley Row, Baptist Mill, Bristol (*Pigot's Directory for Bristol, Gloucestershire, etc*)

¹²⁴⁷ <http://www.compapp.dcu.ie/~humphrys/FamTree/>

¹²⁴⁸ UKNA, ADM 196/1 and 176; see similar in ADM 196/6 and 548 (This does not mention Weekes's Coastguard service)

¹²⁴⁹ Small, David 'George Tobin (1768-1838)' in *Oxford DNB*

¹²⁵⁰ PP, Dom Box A4-66: William Burt Weekes, Dawlish, to Mrs Pinney, 24 August 1825

Coastguards were supposed to intercept smugglers but at Dawlish not a single piece of contraband had been spotted for nearly three years. Lieutenant Weekes considered moving. He had his eye on Beer station, about thirty kilometres to the east. To Mrs John Frederick Pinney he wrote that she must think him a 'most fickle man ... but read on': at Beer his chances were good! There no Chief Officer made less than £2,000 because 'a vast deal of smuggling' took place, 'consequently a great deal of prize money' was waiting to be earned. The move there, however, lay in the hands of the Comptroller General and of course this appointment, too, was through connections. When Weekes once met an acquaintance of the Pinneys he had told the man that he was 'justly proud of the relationship' with the family and added rather coyly that he was afraid people thought he was using the Pinneys' name to gain the attention of a 'most respectable family', but, of course, he was doing just that. He appealed to Mrs John Frederick Pinney to secure the backing of the Comptroller General.¹²⁵¹

This particular scheme did not come to fruition and four years on, hoping she would continue to promote his advancement, he asked Mrs Pinney to use her influence in trying to get him the command of the revenue cutter *Sylvia*.¹²⁵² The following year he asked for her backing to get command of the *Sparrow* and the year after that, of the *Pike*. Still, there was no progress. Desperate to advance his career, he did everything he could to make himself known to the right people. Equipped with a note from Mrs John Frederick Pinney he contacted the Admiralty in person, approached the First Sea Lord, Sir George Cockburn, and at his recommendation wrote to Lord Melville - ¹²⁵³ still hoping that Mrs Pinney would gain the support of 'Sir John Beresford or any other friend of [her] acquaintance of equal influence'. He knew there was 'nothing like a personal application backed with interest'¹²⁵⁴ and played his trump card: he impressed on Sir Cockburn and on the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir James Graham, that he 'had been patronised by Lady Nelson'. But, owing to his benefactress' absence abroad, he 'had been deprived of her interest' for some years, and it was time to enlist her help again. Lieutenant Weekes felt he could not approach Lady Nelson directly but asked for Mrs John Frederick Pinney's assistance in getting her to write on his behalf. To support his application, he tried every angle. Seeking to gain Sir Graham's sympathy he even evoked the memory of his dead father who 'had lost his life in consequence of his voluntary and gratuitous services to the British sick forces after the capture of Martinique in 1794.'¹²⁵⁵

For fear of collusion with the local population, after a period of time coastguards were posted to different places and Lieutenant Weekes and his family moved house several times. By August 1829 he had transferred to the Portsmouth station and lived on Hayling Island, by May 1832 at Hamble River, south of Southampton in Hampshire. By July 1834 the Weekes were back on Hayling Island, this time at Stoke Bay. But he was still a Lieutenant in the Coastguard. His career change was partly about him wanting more 'active employment'¹²⁵⁶ and better opportunities for seizures and therefore more prize money. In addition, being in command of a revenue cutter would bring him closer to the Admiral of whom he might 'make a friend'; William Weekes was relying on his charm to place himself in a better position for further promotion. One drawback was the expense of accepting such a command; according to him buying new uniforms and various accessories would cost in the region of £60-£70, about a year's salary. But Weekes had, like his father and his grandfather before him, expensive tastes. He lived as if he was a man of means but he did not have the income to sustain such a lifestyle, and in November 1829 William Weekes, once again, 'solicited pecuniary assistance from Mr Pinney'. This time he approached John Frederick but his cousin did not respond. William acknowledged that over the years he had more help from him 'than I could have expected or indeed

¹²⁵¹ PP, Dom Box A4-66: William Burt Weekes, Dawlish, to Mrs Pinney, 24 August 1825

¹²⁵² PP, Dom Box L3-34: William Burt Weekes, Hayling Island, to Mrs Pinney, 19 November 1829

¹²⁵³ PP, Dom Box T4: Lt W B Weekes, Hayling Island, to Mrs Pinney, 14 August 1830

¹²⁵⁴ PP, Dom Box L3-34: William Burt Weekes, Hayling Island, to Mrs Pinney, 29 November 1829

¹²⁵⁵ PP, Dom Box F1-7: William Burt Weekes, Hayling Island, to Mrs Pinney, 8 March 1831

¹²⁵⁶ PP, Dom Box T-4: Lt W B Weekes, Hayling Island to Mrs Pinney, 14 August 1830

deserved'.¹²⁵⁷ Since childhood, he and his brother had been brought up to be grateful to their benefactors, and William certainly was appreciative, but the impression remains that he was not altogether sincere and only went through the motion. It seems that he believed that he was owed the Pinneys' benefaction.

Like his father and grandfather before him, William Weekes liked to spend money but part of his financial problems stemmed from having three daughters who all underwent schooling. Middle class girls were expected to be educated, and the Weekes girls attended various institutions: the school run by the Misses Vines in Peckham in London,¹²⁵⁸ Mrs Elliott's Seminary in Devizes, Mrs Eccles' school in Plymouth,¹²⁵⁹ and Mrs Carpenter's in Saltash near Plymouth.¹²⁶⁰ JPP's daughter Mary, now Mrs Ames, contributed an allowance, and the cost of the girls' education may have been borne by her and Mrs John Frederick Pinney but some of the money that was paid to William Weekes came through the House in Bristol, and it is likely that occasional sums, such as the fare for the steam packet to Mrs Eccles' school,¹²⁶¹ were the result of a personal arrangement the widowed Mrs P had made with one of the partners in the firm before her death in 1824.

The next generation of Pinneys took an interest in the welfare of the Weekeses, too. While the youngest of William's daughters, Jane, was at Mrs Carpenter's school, Fanny, the daughter of John Frederick and Frances Pinney, rode over to see her. Fanny reported that Jane was 'suffering dreadfully from a scorbutic affection but her Mistress in other respects gives a good account of her.'¹²⁶² This was in such contrast to how William Weekes portrayed his daughter. Jane's behaviour made him lose control of himself and brought him close to breaking point. Indeed, he may well have suffered another breakdown. At the root of the child's - and also his wife's - anger against him appears to have been his unsuccessful attempt to enlist as a soldier. This was meant to have been kept secret but Mrs Mary Ames had passed on the information to his immediate family. Despite this breach of trust he called Mrs Mary Ames and Mrs Frances his only true friends.

He turned to the two women not only for financial but also for emotional support. He felt that his marriage to Grace Bunworth had proven to have been a dreadful mistake and he desperately regretted his 'early and impudent marriage'. He accused his wife of possessing neither education nor feeling. But his loathing was evenly spread between his wife and his youngest daughter whom he wanted taken away for the sake of the eldest, 'for her conduct is such, that at times I can hardly contain myself, and what makes it worse, is that her mother encourages her in it; conceive what my feelings must have been, when two days ago, she called me a coward and villain, and threw stones at my head, when in attempting to inflict the punishment such conduct deserv'd my wife attempted to shield her.' Remembering his violent disposition, one wonders what chastisement he was about to inflict on the child. His letter to Mrs Pinney was coherent but urgent. He asked of her, indeed, he pleaded with her, to rid him of 'one of the plagues' of his life, his daughter Jane. He wanted the girl sent away 'so that she may be taught to feel the respect due to a parent'. His affection towards his daughter destroyed, he just wished Jane out of his sight: 'I care not where ... and I should even be pleased to find that she were placed in a charitable institution, where her provoking and overbearing spirit would be broke in.' He sought to have Jane removed so that when her sister came back from school, she would be gone. Harriett, his eldest daughter had 'proved a dutiful and affectionate child' to him and he attributed this 'to her having been brought up out of reach of bad example' and, to save his daughter from her sister's bad influence, in the following year he planned to send Harriett to his brother in India. Harriett would then have been seventeen. Although hinting that it would drive him mad, he was willing to 'put up with the outrageous usage' he experienced from Jane until Harriett was

¹²⁵⁷ PP, Dom Box L3-34: William Burt Weekes, Hayling Island, to Mrs Pinney, 29 November 1829

¹²⁵⁸ PP, Dom Box A4-66: William Burt Weekes, Dawlish, to Mrs Pinney, 24 August 1825

¹²⁵⁹ PP, LB 63: PA & Co to Lt William Burt Weekes, Hayling Island, Hawant, 25 January 1831

¹²⁶⁰ PP, LB 64: Mrs Jane Carpenter, Saltash, to PA & Co, 3 December 1831

¹²⁶¹ PP, Dom Box C3-15: William Burt Weekes, Hayling Island, to RE Case, 28 January 1831

¹²⁶² PP, Dom Box I i/12: Charles Pinney to Mrs Pinney, October 1831

shipped off to India. Her going away would ease his 'mind of a load of excruciating anguish, which if too much excited will' - he felt convinced - 'at last give way'.¹²⁶³

Having poured out his grievances to Mrs John Frederick Pinney, in the next month things had calmed down at home. He had regained his equilibrium and, once again, using naval terms, he reported to her: 'I have brought Miss Jane Weekes to her bearing, the breeze is blown over'. He was not expecting any 'more rebellious conduct on her part' towards him, claiming that knowing of his reporting the episode to Mrs Pinney 'was quite enough to tame her'.¹²⁶⁴ There are echoes here of William's father, Thomas Pym Weekes, and his wilful temper as a child but it is possible that Jane's 'scorbutic affection' was the underlying cause of her outbursts. Among the symptoms for scurvy are depression and irritability, and with a more wholesome diet at home than at school her condition, and therefore her behaviour, may have improved.

William Weekes's conduct, however, was so bad that it worried his friends; Mrs Ames feared he would soon be confined 'as he must be mad'.¹²⁶⁵ It is very likely that his mind was disturbed not only because of his strained relationship with his daughter but also because he felt aggrieved that his career had not progressed. He was still a Lieutenant in the Coastguard. At one stage he stood in for the Inspecting Commander of the Gosport District but he talked of being 'cast adrift', of other men being promoted after serving as Lieutenant for only three years when he had been in post for eight. Unable to provide for his family, the provocation from Jane was an added pressure on top of his money problems. Once again petty debts put him 'in the utmost need' and he asked Mrs Pinney to bail him out with another £20.¹²⁶⁶

Even his brother in India tried to assist and offered to enlist the help of relatives of his son-in-law's. Dr Thomas Pym Weekes, too, had married young; first 'a French lady', Emilie Rontaunay, and then Jane Wickham, the daughter of James Wickham of Bullington in Hampshire. Her brother was a banker in Winchester.¹²⁶⁷ Dr Weekes's first wife had died in India in 1813, a few months after giving birth to their daughter, Emilie Eliza. The little girl was baptised in Calcutta,¹²⁶⁸ but, following his second marriage in Cheltenham in 1817,¹²⁶⁹ his next three children were baptised in Hampshire: Elizabeth Jane in 1818, Emma Mary in 1819, Julia Isabella in 1820 and Alfred Wickham Pym Weekes in 1830. The boy was born in London. It is not known for how long Dr Weekes stayed in England but it is likely that his wife remained in the country (her mother died in December 1831) while he left for India.¹²⁷⁰ In January 1831, after a passage of nearly five months, he arrived back at Bombay (today's Mumbai) accompanied by a Miss Weekes. This may have been his oldest daughter, Emilie Eliza, who soon after his return to India got married: at Bombay she married 'a young man of good family and prospects', Lieutenant Michael Franklin Willoughby.¹²⁷¹ Popular and loved by all, he was related to people who were potentially useful; he was 'a first cousin of Sir Nisbet Willoughby CB and Digby Willoughby, both Captains in the Navy'. Thomas offered to write to them to assist Lieutenant Weekes's career.¹²⁷²

¹²⁶³ PP, Dom Box A4-66: William Burt Weekes, Hamble River, to Mrs Pinney, 31 May 1832

¹²⁶⁴ PP, Dom Box A4-66: William Burt Weekes, Hamble River, to Mrs Pinney, 24 June 1832

¹²⁶⁵ PP, Dom Box A4-66: Mrs Ames, Great George Street, Bristol, to ?, '25 Ju 1832' (postmarked)

¹²⁶⁶ PP, Dom Box Q: Lt WB Weekes, Hamble River, to Mrs (J F) Pinney, Somerton, 2 December 1832

¹²⁶⁷ The bulk of the information about Thomas Pym Weekes's family is taken from notes and a family tree - overwritten and sometimes unclear - which were produced by Anna Maria Pinney, the daughter of John Frederick Pinney. She must have heard family discussions about the Weekes family and seen some of their letters (PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9).

¹²⁶⁸ <http://www.search.fibis.org> and <http://www.familysearch.org>, citing Parish Register transcripts from the Presidency of Bengal, 1713-1948, India. Office of the Registrar General

¹²⁶⁹ I am grateful to Richard Kennedy-Moffat of Hawera, New Zealand, for information about Thomas Pym Weekes's marriage to his second wife, Jane Wickham.

¹²⁷⁰ <http://www.familysearch.org> Batch Numbers C14506-1 and CO 4793-2, and *Gentleman's Magazine* December 1831 p651

¹²⁷¹ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹²⁷² PP, Dom Box A4-66: William Burt Weekes, Hamble River, to Mrs Pinney, 24 June 1832

Thomas urged his brother to send his daughter Harriett to him, and the now-married Mrs Emilie Willoughby also wrote, pressing her cousin to come to India where she would be 'loved as a sister'.¹²⁷³ This was a tempting proposition for Harriett. She had left school at sixteen and if she remained in England, she would have to work as a governess, a situation for which she 'always had a dislike'. She wanted to please her parents and ease their financial burden,¹²⁷⁴ and so travel arrangements were put in place for Harriett's removal to India. Fearing that William Weekes would spend too much money, Mrs Ames insisted that it should be done 'in the cheapest possible way ...'. She knew that 'if it is left to him, he will make arrangements suited to a person of property'. While willing to shore up Lieutenant Weekes and his family financially, Mrs Ames wanted to instil a sense of gratitude. It was to be 'understood that it is an act of charity to send her to her uncle who intends to provide for her'.¹²⁷⁵ It is almost certain that Harriett was the 'Miss Weekes' who on 2 July 1833 sailed from Portsmouth on the *Marquis of Hastings*. After a passage of just over five months she arrived at Bombay.¹²⁷⁶

Within the Coastguard there was still no promotion in sight and Lieutenant Weekes tried a different route to advancement. He wanted to get command of the Falmouth Packet, and once again he sought Mrs Pinney's backing.¹²⁷⁷ But more pressing were his finances; by now he had reached 'the greatest pecuniary distress'. He had repaid a loan from a fellow officer but two lawyers threatened to arrest him for debt. He was in turmoil: 'so many creditors...I think I shall lose my senses'. To pay it all off, he asked Mrs Pinney to influence her husband so that John Frederick would lend him £100. The money was to be repaid from his Navy half pay over a period of two years. Her help was crucial. Without it, he would be sent to gaol. He made various offers to his creditors but the most pressing, the grocer Mr Thomas of Gosport, wanted half his debt paid immediately and, unable to oblige, on 9 October 1834, Lieutenant Weekes was arrested for debt. He was given bail and six days later had to surrender at the King's Bench Prison. He sought and was granted leave of absence from the Coastguard and on 18 October found himself in the King's Bench Prison. Again he turned to the Pinneys for help, this time on behalf of his family whom he had left 'penniless' (sic). In his last item of correspondence to Mrs Pinney he, once more, asked for money. He needed £16 to get him through the Insolvent Court and a small sum for expenses while in prison.¹²⁷⁸ The King's Bench Prison was a profit-making institution; prisoners had to provide their own bedding and pay for their keep and if they were sufficiently solvent, they could purchase the liberty to move within a three-mile radius outside the prison walls. At the end of their sentence a release fee was due, but anyone unable to pay was not released. The Pinneys must have despaired at William Weekes's requests from prison which, apparently, went unheeded for some time. Declared an insolvent debtor, in 1838 this 'late prisoner' could only offer a small sum to achieve his release.¹²⁷⁹ The Pinneys did, however, willingly continue to finance his daughter Ann's schooling with Miss Catherine Chambers in Cheltenham.¹²⁸⁰

While Lieutenant Weekes had languished in the Coastguard as a lowly lieutenant, his brother had prospered in India. By 1824 he was Surgeon for the 1st Regiment Light Cavalry; ten years later he had become Superintending Surgeon in the Southern Division of the Deccan.¹²⁸¹ He, too, had asked for an introduction through the Pinneys,¹²⁸² which had not been forthcoming. However, by the late 1830s Dr Thomas Pym Weekes had risen to become Physician-General of the Bombay Army¹²⁸³ and for some time held the post of President of the Bombay Medical Board. When his wife's father died in England, Jane Weekes had been left a substantial sum of money but his father-in-law had ensured

¹²⁷³ PP, Dom Box A4-66: William Burt Weekes, Hamble River, to Mrs Pinney, 24 June 1832

¹²⁷⁴ PP, Dom Box A4-66: Harriett Weekes, Hamble River, to Mrs Pinney, 20 June 1832

¹²⁷⁵ PP, Dom Box A4-66: Mrs Ames, Great George Street, Bristol, to ?, '25 Ju 1832' (postmarked)

¹²⁷⁶ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹²⁷⁷ PP, Dom Box T4: William Burt Weekes, Stokes Bay, to Mrs Pinney, 6 July 1834

¹²⁷⁸ PP, Dom Box H2: Lt William Burt Weekes to Mrs Pinney, Somerton, 1 and 9 September 1834, and 18 October 1834

¹²⁷⁹ *London Gazette* 27 March 1838, 6 October 1840, 12 May 1842 on Find My Past

¹²⁸⁰ PP, LB 66: P & C to Miss Catherine Chambers, 5 Ormond Terrace, Cheltenham, 17 June 1836

¹²⁸¹ Pers. comm., Richard Moffat-Kennedy, 17 October 2017

¹²⁸² PP, Dom Box T4: William Burt Weekes, Stokes Bay, to Mrs Pinney, 6 July 1834

¹²⁸³ *The Times* in PP, Dom Box B7-1

that Dr Weekes did not have access to the inheritance¹²⁸⁴ – suggesting that he, like his brother William and their father before him, found it impossible to live within his means.

In 1839 Thomas Pym Weekes was widowed for a second time when his wife died in England, in her parents' village, Bullington.¹²⁸⁵ Her death may have prompted his intention to leave India but he may also have suffered from ill health when, after thirty years of service, in January 1841 he retired on a pension. The Governor praised him for having conducted his duties 'in a credible manner'.¹²⁸⁶

Before he set off he made his will and, together with one of his unmarried daughters, he left India on 1 February 1841. Bound for Suez, they travelled by steamship, the *Berenice*.¹²⁸⁷ This was a very new mode of transport and must have added to the excitement of their journey. As the canal link to the Mediterranean did not yet exist, the travellers had to make their way overland from Suez to Constantinople (today's Istanbul). There they boarded a French steamer, the *Dante*. The vessel called at the island of Malta, then a British colony. Dr Thomas Pym Weekes was sick with dysentery and admitted to the Lazaretto.¹²⁸⁸ He died on 21 March 1841.¹²⁸⁹ In his late forties, he was buried at the St George's or *Tal Hofra* Cemetery.¹²⁹⁰ Apart from Emilie Eliza, he left three as yet unmarried daughters, Elizabeth Jane, Emma Mary and Julia Isabella, and a young son, Alfred Wickham Pym Weekes.¹²⁹¹

Before Dr Thomas Pym Weekes had left India for Europe, his brother had made the same voyage in the opposite direction. Following an assault on his commanding officer, in 1840 Weekes had been dismissed from the Coastguard.¹²⁹² He departed for the East Indies in order to assume the command of a so-called 'country ship'.¹²⁹³ In India he would have seen his dutiful daughter Harriett again and also his difficult daughter Jane, who had followed her sister to Bombay. It is very likely that Jane was the 'Miss Weekes' who travelled on the *Buckinghamshire* from London via Mangalore and Goa to Bombay, arriving there at the beginning of May 1837. William Weekes's third daughter, Ann, who in 1836 was at school in Cheltenham, may have been visited there by her cousin Emilie Eliza; it was in Cheltenham that in March 1837 Mrs Emilie Eliza Willoughby gave birth to a baby daughter.¹²⁹⁴ The child did not survive.¹²⁹⁵

Unsurprisingly, given his own experiences of early married life, William Weekes had become 'no advocate for too early marriages',¹²⁹⁶ but by the time he came to India, both his daughters were wives already: Harriett had in 1836 married Captain William Morgan, and Jane two years later a Scottish customs officer, Pulteney Main Dalzell.¹²⁹⁷ Both sisters died young. Mrs Harriett Morgan died some

¹²⁸⁴ Richard Kennedy-Moffat in his unpublished manuscript on the Weekes family stated that James Wickham left £9,000 to his daughter Jane, 'taking great pains to ensure that Jane's husband, Thomas did not have access to the money'.

¹²⁸⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine* October 1839 p435

¹²⁸⁶ I am grateful to Richard Kennedy-Moffat for this reference in *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register ...* Vol XXXIV p242. See also *The Bombay Calendar and Almanac for 1842* p106.

¹²⁸⁷ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹²⁸⁸ Visitors from infected countries had to undergo a period of quarantine. The poet Byron had also stayed at the lazaretto which remembered with some bitterness: 'Adieu, thou damndest quarantine – That gave me fever and the spleen.'

The St George's or *Tal Hofra* Cemetery was set up in 1802 for the burials of non-Catholic seamen, soldiers and other British subjects. Later the cemetery was portioned into two sections, one of which was reserved for Catholics. A chapel, dedicated to St George, and a few tombstones stood on the site until 1970. Some of these tombstones are now preserved at the erstwhile Santo Spirito Hospital at Rabat (Malta) (Cassar, Paul 'A Tour of the Lazzaretto Buildings' in *Melita Historica* Vol 9 (1987) 4 pp369-80).

¹²⁸⁹ *Gentleman's Magazine* July 1841 p110

¹²⁹⁰ <http://website.lineone.net/~aldosliema/rw.htm>

¹²⁹¹ UKNA, PROB 11/1960 TP Weekes's will

¹²⁹² Extract from *The Examiner*, London, 18 October 1840 on <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>

¹²⁹³ O'Byrne, William R *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*

¹²⁹⁴ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹²⁹⁵ In his will, Thomas Pym Weekes only mentioned Emilie Eliza Willoughby's daughter Alice.

¹²⁹⁶ PP, Dom Box A4-66: William Burt Weekes, Hamble River, to Mrs Pinney, 24 June 1832

¹²⁹⁷ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

time in or after 1843 when she gave birth to a son, Henry Pottinger Morgan; Mrs Jane Dalzell died childless ¹²⁹⁸ some time before 1857 - the year her widowed husband married again. ¹²⁹⁹

In India William Weekes could finally continue life on board ship and for a few years he retained command of an eleven-hundred-ton country ship. However, by 1846 and still a Lieutenant on naval half pay, ¹³⁰⁰ he had moved back to Britain. ¹³⁰¹ It is likely that his daughter Ann had also travelled to India; in June 1845 a Miss Ann Weekes arrived in Madras as a steerage passenger. ¹³⁰² Nothing more is known about her.

William Weekes and wife Grace did not remain in India. As if they could not decide whether to move to Ireland, England, Scotland or Wales, the couple settled in the Isle of Man. The island had once been the centre of a thriving smuggling trade – something which Weekes would have been all too familiar – and although a change in Manx law meant that residents could now be sued on the island for debts incurred elsewhere, one consideration may have been that the Weekeses wanted to put themselves beyond easy reach of their old creditors. When the couple moved to the island, it was seen 'as a suitable residence for the genteel poor'. ¹³⁰³

From his new home William Weekes again corresponded with Mrs John Frederick Pinney. Her son William had become a Member of Parliament, and while acknowledging that, as an MP, he must always be pestered for favours, Weekes went on to discuss the relative merits of getting onto different lists of Lieutenants who were entitled to the rank of Retired Commander and, in a roundabout way, was asking Mrs Pinney for her help in having him moved onto the more advantageous list. He continued in the same vein as before and noted flatteringly that, in contrast to friends who merely pretended, she and Mrs Ames had been his two 'staunch and unflinching well wishers.' ¹³⁰⁴ He was finally appointed Commander on 18 April 1854. ¹³⁰⁵

With one house servant, a young local woman called Jane Kelly, William and Grace Weekes lived by the sea in Douglas, the island's capital. Having at least one live-in servant conferred on them respectability and status in the community. For Jane Kelly it would have meant having to cope not only with the usual household chores but also with caring for two elderly people. They lived at South Quay, 'a fairly posh place'. ¹³⁰⁶ Formerly a rocky and gravelly beach until a row of houses was built at the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the time the Weekeses lived in Douglas, South Quay was home to a bank, a brazier and tinsmith, a carver and guildler, as well as a farmer and several members of the 'nobility, gentry and clergy'. ¹³⁰⁷ William Weekes proudly displayed his naval credentials; in the census of 1861 he was recorded as a Retired Commander RN, ¹³⁰⁸ in the Thwaite's 1863 Directory for Douglas as 'Captain'. ¹³⁰⁹

Both he and his wife died in the following year within a day of each other, and after his death, too, his very brief career in the Royal Navy was remembered. The couple were buried in the Kirk Bradden Cemetery where a rather unusual four-tiered, roofed headstone marks their grave. The awful

¹²⁹⁸ PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9

¹²⁹⁹ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹³⁰⁰ O'Byrne, William R *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*

¹³⁰¹ <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/fulltext/sd1846/index.htm>

¹³⁰² <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹³⁰³ John Belchem (ed) *A New History of the Isle of Man Vol 5; the Modern period 1830-1999* Liverpool University Press p18 and p207

¹³⁰⁴ William Burt Weekes noted that the 1830 list would have only got him the rank but not the pay of a Commander whereas the 1816 list entitled him to the pay and a 'trifle more pension' for his widow, and he asked for help in getting onto the 1816 list (PP, Dom Box A4-66: William Burt Weekes, 18 October 1850).

¹³⁰⁵ UKNA, ADM 196/1, 176

¹³⁰⁶ Pers. comm., Frances Coakley, 18 December 2007

¹³⁰⁷ <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/fulltext/sd1846/index.htm>

¹³⁰⁸ Pers. comm., Wendy Thirkettle, Manx Heritage Library, November 2003, citing the 1861 Census, Enumeration District 1 No 272

¹³⁰⁹ <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/fulltext/tg1863/domisc.htm>

accusations of the 1830s were long forgotten; the inscription evokes an affectionate relationship and reflects their religious devotion:

Sacred
to the Memory
of Commander
William Burt Weekes, R.N.
aged 73
and of
Grace
his beloved wife
aged 78
who fell asleep in Jesus
on the
19th and 18th of January 1864.¹³¹⁰

In his will, he had appointed his wife his sole beneficiary and a Richard James Davids of Caernarfon in North Wales as his sole executor. He described himself as 'William Burt Weekes of the Town of Douglas in the Isle of Man Retired Commander in Her Majesty's Royal Navy'.¹³¹¹

William and Grace Weekes left no children. Their daughters Harriett and Jane had died before them, and possibly also their daughter Ann, and there appears to have been no surviving grandchildren. There were, however, descendants of his brother. Dr Thomas Pym Weekes's daughters Emma Mary and Julia Isabella¹³¹² (she may have been the 'Miss Weekes' who had accompanied him on his final voyage). Both married army lieutenants at Bombay: Emma Mary married Robert Spottiswood Parker and Julia, the youngest, Charles Potts Rosser.¹³¹³ Their sister Elizabeth Jane did not marry.

While living in India, Mrs Emma Mary Parker gave birth to at least two daughters, in 1851 at Poona (Pune) and in 1852 at Tanna. A son, born at Mahableshtar, one of the cool hill stations, had died in January 1849 before he was ten days old.¹³¹⁴

Mrs Parker's sister, Mrs Julia Rosser, soon after getting married gave birth to a child and then had at least six more children. Mrs Rosser, too, moved around: a daughter was born in 1847 in Poona, a son in 1850 in Mahableshtar and another son in 1851 in Kirkee until the family settled in England. Julia's husband Charles Rosser served in the Crimean war, rose to the rank of Captain¹³¹⁵ and eventually Major. Wounded before Delhi,¹³¹⁶ for his services to the British Empire he received the Indian Mutiny Medal.¹³¹⁷ Before he died in 1868, he served at the Royal Military College Sandhurst. His widow and her unmarried sister Elizabeth Jane settled in genteel Southsea near Portsmouth, very close to where the family of Lieutenant William Burt Weekes had lived in the 1830s. At Southsea Elizabeth Jane died in the 1890s at her sister's home, St Wilfrid's in Ashburton Road.¹³¹⁸ Commenting on her death, Edmund Rogers Coker, another descendant from another Mountravers manager, sent to JPP's grandson a newspaper cutting which contained Elizabeth Jane Weekes's obituary.¹³¹⁹

¹³¹⁰ William Burt Weekes was buried on 22 January 1864 (Bradden Parish Records, Isle of Man Burials, 1598-1950).

¹³¹¹ Pers. comm., Wendy Thirkettle, Assistant Archivist, Manx National Heritage Library, November 2003, citing Bradden Burials, Grave No 1678 and Wills, Archdiaconal wills series, 1864 No 34

¹³¹² Miss Julia Weekes arrived by steamer in December 1844 at Bombay from Suez, with two travelling companions called 'Miss J Weekes' and 'Miss Weekes' - probably her sisters Elizabeth Jane and Emma Mary (<http://www.search.fibis.org>).

¹³¹³ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹³¹⁴ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹³¹⁵ <http://www.crimeantexts.org.uk/sources/bsk/persindex.html>

¹³¹⁶ PP, Misc Vols 44 Anna Maria Pinney's Notebooks Vol 9

¹³¹⁷ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹³¹⁸ *The Times* in PP, Dom Box B7-1

According to Anna Maria Pinney, Elizabeth Weekes died unmarried at Bombay.

Julia Isabella Rosser died in February 1902 and was survived by her daughter Julia Adeline Rosser (ancestry.com).

¹³¹⁹ PP, Dom Box B7-1: E Rogers Coker, (?Malwa) House, Babbicombe (sic), to Wm Pinney, 14 February 1898 (?1893)

Dr Thomas Pym Weekes's son, Alfred Wickham Pym Weekes, followed an army career and joined the 78th Highlanders Regiment. First as Ensign and then as Lieutenant, between 1849 and 1853 he was known to have made three sea voyages to Bombay, each time departing from the port of Aden in today's Yemen. Once, when the 78th Highlanders were brigaded at Aden, Alfred Weekes had the misfortune of being attacked by a local man but he managed to save his life through strength and quick thinking. He escaped serious injury or even death with physical strength, courage and nimble intelligence in much the same manner as many years earlier his seafaring uncle had saved the life of a drowning man. An old India hand recounted the story of how 'Young Weekes' was riding along on horseback when an Arab man tricked him into stopping. Drawing his attention elsewhere, the man viciously attacked him, striking him with a double-edged crease. The 'very powerful young officer' was fighting for his life. Just when his assailant was aiming the final blow, Weekes managed to wrench the weapon away from the man and, 'tho' his left arm was bleeding profusely', he held fast. At last, drawing the would-be murderer close to him, he plunged the dagger behind the ruffian's ear, severing the jugular vein. The man dropped dead on the spot.¹³²⁰

In 1858 Alfred Wickham Pym Weekes was promoted to Captain,¹³²¹ and soon after got married to Elizabeth McCulloch.¹³²² The couple lived in Albany Street in the centre of Edinburgh. In Edinburgh his wife gave birth to a daughter and two years later to a son, Thomas Pym Burt Weekes. By then the couple was in Sandgate in Kent,¹³²³ but the Weekeses moved to New Zealand, had two daughters, Emilie and Julia, and by 1868 lived in Australia. Their son, also called Alfred Wickham Pym Weekes, was born in Australia.¹³²⁴ The family returned to Britain and in 1881 Captain Alfred Weekes was living in Scotland while his wife and children were in England. He worked as a clerk and lodged at 21 Rose Street in Glasgow; his wife Elizabeth and their four children Emilie, Julia, Alfred and Thomas lived with a servant in Bath, at 3 Belgrave Crescent, Walcot. Serving as a midshipman, Thomas, the older son, was following in the naval footsteps of his great-uncle, William Burt Weekes.¹³²⁵

While living in Glasgow Alfred Weekes made contact with one of the Pinneys. Writing to John Frederick and Frances Pinney's son, William, he enclosed an advert from *The Times*. In this a solicitor sought descendants of a Richard Burt of Smethwick in Staffordshire and Alfred Weekes wanted information to help establish a relationship 'through my late Uncle William Burt Weekes who was formerly in the Royal Navy'. He did not know why his uncle was called Burt.¹³²⁶ That his great-great grandmother, Mary Burt, had married a William Weekes had not been handed down through the generations.

This letter was written in 1882 and is his last communication that has come to light. In 1898, at the age of 67, Alfred Wickham Pym Weekes died in Winchester, Hampshire. His seafaring son Thomas

¹³²⁰ The story of 'Young Weekes' being attacked by an Arab ends with Weekes remounting his horse and galloping into camp. A search party was sent to recover the corpse and the dead man's body strung from the gallows. Sentries prevented anyone from recovering the body for burial; as a warning to others, it was left to decompose. This act of intimidating the local population has its parallels in the West Indies where the bodies of criminal enslaved people were left on display in cages, or on gallows (http://www.archerfamily.org.uk/bio/whitlock_wh.html).

It is not clear when the attack on Weekes happened. Records show that on 6 January 1849 Ensign Weekes of HM 78th Highlanders arrived at Bombay on the steamer *Feroze*, having left Suez on 21 and Aden on 28 December 1848. He made that journey at least twice more: in the following year he travelled on the steamer *Berenice*, arriving on 27 October 1850, and, by then a Lieutenant, he arrived at Bombay on 23 February 1853 on the steamer *Victoria* (<http://www.search.fibis.org>).

¹³²¹ *London Gazette* 26 November 1858 p5075

¹³²² <http://www.familysearch.org> Batch No M11 685-1

¹³²³ *Gentleman's Magazine* May 1861 p566 and May 1863 p652

¹³²⁴ <http://www.ancestry.com> 1881 Census (England and Wales) and <http://www.familysearch.org> citing Parish registers, 1851-1880 Church of England in Australia. Christ Church (St Kilda, Victoria)

Information also exists for the birth or baptism of Alfred Wickham P Weekes in 1874 in Edmonton, Hertfordshire (<http://www.ancestry.com> BMD Birth Index).

¹³²⁵ <http://www.ancestry.com> 1881 Census (Scotland) and 1881 Census (England and Wales)

¹³²⁶ PP, Dom Box B7-1: Alfred W P Weekes, Glasgow, to Wm Pinney, 6 February 1882

Pym Burt Weekes died two years later, aged 37, in Gravesend in Kent.¹³²⁷

Alfred Wickham Pym Weekes's oldest sister, Mrs Emilie Eliza Willoughby, returned from Cheltenham to Bombay and in June 1844 gave birth to another child, a boy.¹³²⁸ In all, she had at least seven children but it is not known what happened to this Bombay-born son, or to another son of hers, Edward Cotgrave Parr Willoughby.

Her three surviving daughters got married and were alive in the mid-1920s as Mrs WF Peel, Mrs W West and Mrs Bullock. Of Mrs Emilie Eliza Willoughby's oldest son, Michael Weekes Willoughby, it is known that he had a distinguished army career and rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General; his honours included the elevation to 'Companion of the Order of the Star of India'. Michael Weekes Willoughby died at Cheltenham in March 1925 on the eve of his 92nd birthday. A widower for the last five years of his life, he was survived by four of his five children. His son, Brigadier General M[ichael?] E Willoughby, continued the family tradition of serving in the army. One of his daughters was Lady Bax-Ironside,¹³²⁹ the wife of Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, a Minister Plenipotentiary to Chile and to Bulgaria.¹³³⁰ Lady Bax-Ironside, this great-great-granddaughter of the Nevis-born Mountravers plantation manager Dr Thomas Pym Weekes and his Scottish wife Isabella Livingston, through her marriage had reached the upper echelons of British society.

The Weekes family's people

The story of the Weekes family's people begins with Mary Weekes, the four times great-grandmother of this last generation of Weekeses. In the late 1760s she and her son, William Burt Weekes, mortgaged several individuals to JPP. Then William Burt Weekes and his third wife gave some of theirs as security for further loans and finally Weekes's son Thomas Pym Weekes mortgaged people on his own account and also with his father.¹³³¹ Most of the information about the Weekes people is gleaned from official papers and the Pinney account books.

The deals tended to be complicated. For instance, Thomas Pym Weekes originally gave six people as security for a bond of S£428:2:6 - William, Charloe, Tom, Nancy and her two children - but a year later these six and an additional three - Ann, Louisa, Hector - appeared in a lease 'of a spot of land and houses in Charlestown'. This lease was secured with a bond for £708:16:11 from William Burt Weekes to Thomas Pym Weekes, Azariah Pinney and James Tobin.¹³³² The transactions are complex because some loans cancelled previous loans, attracted interest that was added, or people died in between mortgages being taken out and expiring, and then others had to be added to make up for the deficiencies and to cover the amounts owed. Because so many people were involved and their situation so fluid, in order to avoid confusion over ownership at one stage JPP charged his father-in-law 30 gallons of rum 'for the hire of three negroes as an acknowledgment of them being my property'.¹³³³ The payment of rum was a reminder to William Burt Weekes that JPP had become the legal owner. However, all these transactions were undertaken between mortgagor and mortgagee, lessor and lessee and do not inform about the lives of the mortgaged people and are therefore not detailed here. As far as the Weekes people were concerned it is important to understand that for years they lived in a state of insecurity, not knowing whether they would remain with the Weekeses, end up with JPP, or with another owner. Indeed, might they become free? Would their lives improve or worsen?

¹³²⁷ <http://www.ancestry.com> BMD Death Index 1837-1893

¹³²⁸ <http://www.search.fibis.org>

¹³²⁹ CRL, 'The Looker-On' 21 March 1925

¹³³⁰ University College Cambridge, The Churchill Papers: Reference codes CHAR 11/33 and CHAR/13/45/86

¹³³¹ ECSCRN, CR 1776-1778 f28; also PP, WI Box O Misc unnumbered item

¹³³² PP, AB 45, AB 39 TP Weekes's a/c; also ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 (December 1795)

¹³³³ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f67 Plantation a/c and AB 20 f196 Wm Burt Weekes's a/c

The earliest names of any of the Weekes people were found in a document from 1763 and more details emerged from a document of September 1769 when, for the purpose of a mortgage, two planters, John Richardson Herbert and Aeneas Shaw, valued thirteen men, women and children.¹³³⁴ Of these, all but three (**Viola, Belinda and Madam**) survived until 1777 and were given as security for further loans. Another girl, **Sabina**, was in 1777 included in a mortgage but, most likely, died before June 1781. In 1781 the original 1769 mortgage fell due and, because JPP chose not to augment his workforce with the majority of these people, in preparation for being sold they were appraised by Roger Pemberton and James Tobin. One outstanding debt (amounting to nine people) JPP settled on Thomas Pym Weekes¹³³⁵ and reserved for him a further seven: Frank, Cudjoe, Old Sarah, Grace, Ceelia, Cuffee and Little Dick. They had originally belonged to Thomas's grandmother, Old Mary Weekes.

The Ladies of the Cedar Trees played an important role in the lives of the Weekes people. Bessy Steward's sons Jack and Billey went to live with the ageing spinsters who already had with them their sister Nancy; JPP had allowed one of the Weekes sisters, Betsey, the use of Nancy. In fact Betsey Weekes had expressed a preference for having Nancy instead of another woman who was mortgaged to JPP, Jenny Young, and he had agreed that she could make the swap.¹³³⁶

Although owned by JPP, by virtue of the foreclosed mortgage William Burt Weekes still felt under some obligation to provide for his former people and through one of his sisters he sent a pair of shoes for Jack Steward and a piece of Osnaburgh cloth for others.¹³³⁷ The old Weekes people were primarily intended for use by The Ladies at the Cedar Trees but after Thomas Pym Weekes returned to Nevis, he laid claim to the family's people. This caused conflict between him and JPP. No doubt, the doctor employed some, if not all, of the Weekes people as domestics for himself and, after his marriage, for himself and his wife. JPP certainly wanted Thomas Pym Weekes to have the use of Mary and Charloe¹³³⁸ who were hired to Dr Peterson until March 1788,¹³³⁹ but Dr Weekes may well have had living with him another two, William and Tom Tross. The three Stewards - Jack, Billey and Nancy - presumably remained at the Cedar Trees until 1790 when Dr Weekes began managing Mountravers.

A few months before he went to work on Mountravers, Dr Weekes's aunt Betsey died, and from her probably came five people whom he was known to have acquired some time before October 1790: two women, Sally Brooks and Ann, their sons James George and Ned, and Billy Barrington. These five (together with Nancy, Mary, William, Charloe and Tom) Dr Weekes gave in trust to a partnership of William Jones, John Taylor and John Frederick Pinney, but the doctor and his wife were to have the use of them during Weekes's lifetime.¹³⁴⁰ At the same time two of the boys JPP had reserved for Thomas Pym Weekes's use, Jack and Billey Steward, left the Cedar Trees and went to work on Mountravers. They became plantation workers and their stories are therefore not told in this section but included in the biographies of the Mountravers people.

Tom Walker (also known as Thomas Verchild alias Walker, and Thomas Verchild Walker). He was black and most likely born before the late 1740s.

¹³³⁴ PP, WI Box D; also typed transcript of an appraisal in WI 'Damaged or Fragile' Box

¹³³⁵ The nine people whom JPP settled on TP Weekes were Penny (who had consumption), Bessy Steward, Mary, Nancy, Jack, Billey, William, Charloe, Tom (PP, AB 27 TP Weekes's a/c).

¹³³⁶ PP, LB 6: JPP to Elizabeth Weekes, 27 October 1787

¹³³⁷ PP, AB 37 and LB 6: JPP to Ann Weekes, Nevis, 6 March 1786

¹³³⁸ PP, LB 6: JPP to Elizabeth Weekes, 27 October 1787

¹³³⁹ PP, AB 30 TP Weekes's a/c

¹³⁴⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 f41

The ten people who on 9 October 1790 were transferred by TP Weekes 'for the love of his wife Isabella' in trust to William Jones, John Taylor and John Frederick Pinney, were the mulatto Sally Brooks and her son James George; the mestizo Ann and her son Ned; the black females Mary and Nancy; the black males William, Sharloe, Tom Thraske and Billy Barrington. The Weekeses were to have use of these ten during his lifetime.

Originally he had been given as security for a mortgage and when this fell due, it presented an opportunity for him to buy his freedom. Appraised at N£130 in June 1781, by October he had paid off the first two instalments, amounting to N£60.¹³⁴¹ Tom Walker had either worked for Dr Sholto Archbald or the doctor advanced him the cash because Archbald paid one of the instalments and JPP recorded that 'his master promised to get the balance'.¹³⁴² It is interesting to note that, although he now legally owned Tom Walker, JPP still considered his father-in-law Tom Walker's master.

His appraised value put Tom Walker among the elite. He was a skilled man - a driver, sugar boiler, or a tradesman – but he may also have been a superior domestic. He was someone William Burt Weekes knew well and trusted, and when it came to choosing a manservant to accompany him on his voyage to England, Weekes chose Tom Walker. Just a few months after the island had capitulated to the French and it was safe again to travel, the two men left Nevis. They departed on 23 September 1782 on the *Ondermiening*.¹³⁴³

Tom Walker was not the only black man aboard ship.¹³⁴⁴ A enslaved man called Jenolas alias Julius was also heading for England. He belonged to Mrs Smitten, most likely the wife of Captain Peter Smitten on whose vessel William Burt Weekes had sailed to Martinique some years earlier. According to Mrs Smitten, Captain Hillcoat had taken Jenolas without asking her permission. Wanting her man back, she turned to JPP for help. She wanted him to contact his father-in-law because she was hoping that Mr Weekes would send a statement which would enable her to prove in Court that 'the fellow was actually on board the ship and made the passage with him, as well as every other circumstance necessary to elucidate the fact' that Jenolas had escaped to England.¹³⁴⁵ It is not clear from the correspondence whether Captain Hillcoat was claiming possession of a person Mrs Smitten had mortgaged to him, or whether he had assisted in Jenolas's escape.

William Burt Weekes spent a few months travelling around England and Tom Walker may well have accompanied him, but he was back in Nevis nine months later. Unsurprisingly, his 'master' - forever in debt - had not kept his promise of paying the balance. N£40 was still outstanding. Obliging JPP lent Tom Walker the money¹³⁴⁶ and manumitted him on 21 June 1783.¹³⁴⁷ A year later, on 1 September 1784, Thomas Walker 'completed his purchase' and paid the final instalment of N£40.¹³⁴⁸ JPP must have considered Tom Walker a man deserving of his support because he did not charge interest on the loan and was willing to accept N£30 less than the appraised value.

After he returned to Nevis, Tom Walker took on the alias of Verchild. As William Burt Weekes was related to the Verchilds on the Burt side of his family,¹³⁴⁹ Tom Walker may have previously belonged to that family. It is not known how, once free, he earned his living but he may have been involved in some sort of trading and transport venture: at one stage the manager on Mountravers paid him N£2:2:0 'for freight of seven puncheons of rum from the landing to Town' and another time Tom Walker bought unspecified goods worth N£5:16:0 from the plantation.¹³⁵⁰ From about August 1786 onwards he rented one of JPP's houses in town¹³⁵¹ but a year later failed to keep up payments.¹³⁵² He

¹³⁴¹ PP, AB 26 TP Weekes's a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f38 and f45 and AB 17: 15 December 1781 and AB 27: 13 August 1781 and 22 October 1781

¹³⁴² PP, AB 27 f43 List of slaves mortgaged ... to JPP, 8 April 1777

¹³⁴³ PP, AB 27 f43 List of slaves mortgaged ... to JPP, 8 April 1777

¹³⁴⁴ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to George Warry, 21 September 1782

¹³⁴⁵ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Burt Weekes, 25 November 1782

¹³⁴⁶ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f132; also Misc Vols 6 List of Deeds and Papers, 1783, and AB 1769 (On cover Family Account Books Estates England 1783-1797)

¹³⁴⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1783-1785 f130

¹³⁴⁸ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f155

¹³⁴⁹ William Burt Weekes's cousin Penelope Burt had married the Honorable James Verchild (Chris Birch *The Generations* p83; see also NHCS, GE/H3 Pym Burt Notes, and PP, LB 3: JPP, Nevis, to Messrs Alex Henderson & Murray, St Kitts, 8 March 1775

¹³⁵⁰ PP, AB 31 Plantation a/c and AB 36 Plantation a/c

¹³⁵¹ PP, AB 35 Houses in Town a/c

also owed Thomas Pym Weekes close to N£15,¹³⁵³ possibly for rum. Dr Weekes had earlier purchased rum from the plantation for a similar sum which he may have passed on to Tom Walker.

Thomas Verchild Walker lived as a 'free negro' for less than six years. He died on 7 March 1789.

Dick. When appraised in 1769, Dick and Tom Walker, both black adult men, were valued at N£90 each. Over the next thirteen years their values rose to N£120 and N£130 respectively, probably because they had acquired skills rather than just appreciated in value, but while Tom Walker was allowed to buy himself for N£30 less, Dick was up for sale for N£10 more than his assessed value. On the day he was appraised, Mary Neale, a well-to-do mulatto woman, started buying him,¹³⁵⁴ and she completed the purchase at the end of May the following year. Not handing over the money straightaway cost Mary Neale over N£2 in interest.¹³⁵⁵

It appears that Mary Neale's family was engaged in fishing; she owned a canoe and two seine houses which stood on her land in the Charlestown bay. In addition to this land, during her lifetime she also had a property that had been left to her by Rowland Gideon Devereede. His 'front house exclusive of the shop' in Charlestown¹³⁵⁶ stood opposite the Cedar Trees,¹³⁵⁷ and it is likely that some of Mary Neale's family lived with her; she had two daughters and nine grandchildren. One of her granddaughters was the free woman Ann Batterton. She had freed a man called Joseph Batterton, who in 1782 bought another mortgaged Weekes slave, Grace, and it appears that most of the former Weekes people ended up living in close proximity.

Not long after Mary Neale started purchasing Dick, she died. In her will, made early in 1782, she left to her two daughters and grandchildren all her properties, including eight enslaved people. Among them was a Dick Weekes, and it is likely that it was the same man JPP had sold to Mary Neale. Along with two other people she left these three to her grandchildren; they were to benefit equally from them being hired out.¹³⁵⁸

Ned was sold to the cooper James Carroll on 21 October 1782.¹³⁵⁹ His appraised value of N£130 suggests that he was a skilled man – perhaps a cooper – but, after being appraised, he contracted a hernia and, being 'raptured', had to be sold at a reduced price of N£90. Nothing more is known about Ned.

James Carroll also bought several other mortgaged Weekes people: Sabella (with her daughter Fanny), Dick Rayes and Cato.

John, born perhaps in about 1761, was black and in 1769 valued at N£35,¹³⁶⁰ in June 1781 at N£90.

He was sold on 1 August 1781, to Dr Sholto Archbald for N£100.¹³⁶¹ A month later, Dr Archbald also bought Bessy Gould from JPP, who was intended for one of Robert McGill's sons. Sholto Archbald

¹³⁵² PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger (Mt Zion) 1789-1794 f5 Thomas Verchild Walker a free Negro a/c and AB 39 f1

¹³⁵³ PP, AB 30 TP Weekes's a/c

¹³⁵⁴ PP, AB 27 List of slaves mortgaged by Wm Burt Weekes and Mary Weekes to JPP, 8 April 1777; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 and AB 26 TP Weekes's a/c

¹³⁵⁵ PP, AB 26 Mary Neale free Mulatto a/c

¹³⁵⁶ Terrell, Michelle M *The Historical Archaeology of a Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Jewish Community* (Draft version) pp328-29, quoting BW 1763-1787 f285

¹³⁵⁷ PP, Dom Box S1

¹³⁵⁸ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1763-1787 ff557-59

¹³⁵⁹ PP, AB 27 List of slaves mortgaged by Wm Burt Weekes and Mary Weekes, 8 April 1777; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f88; also AB 26 James Carroll's a/c

¹³⁶⁰ PP, WI Box D

had bought another boy for another of McGill's sons, and John may also have been destined to be given to someone else. Nothing more is known about John.

Harry London, too, took the opportunity to buy his freedom. He was noted as buying himself for N£120, which amounted to N£10 less than his appraised value. Dr Sholto Archbald, who also put up money for Tom Walker's purchase of himself, made a first payment of N£40 on 22 October 1781, and the following year Harry London paid another N£10¹³⁶² but N£70 was still outstanding when JPP left Nevis. He recorded Harry London as a 'doubtful debt'.¹³⁶³ To make up for the shortfall, JPP devised an incentive scheme. He instructed Joseph Gill to hire Harry London out on the following conditions: without being sick, every week Harry London was to bring in seven bits and Gill was to credit that money to the plantation account. If Harry London also paid off N£10 towards the outstanding sum of N£70, for each N£10 paid by Harry London Gill was to deduct one bit a week (worth just over N8s)¹³⁶⁴ which Harry London could keep for himself so that, theoretically, after seven weeks the purchase money would be paid off and the plantation would receive no more hire income from him. This was an unusual arrangement and unusually generous but in the end it did not work out – presumably because Harry London did not earn enough money to put aside regularly for his purchase. He was hired to Modeste Lapula, a free French fisherman, who earlier in the year had also hired John Wilks and Leah Weekes, and paid his hire charges not weekly but intermittently and in small lump sums. Employed at a weekly rate of N5s3d,¹³⁶⁵ he paid off over N£50 in total but still owed nearly another N£15. He never achieved his freedom.

Harry London died on 22 November 1785.¹³⁶⁶

Catherine, a black woman, was born perhaps in the late 1730s, or early 1740s. She may have previously belonged to James Emra or his wife Catherine (nee Burt);¹³⁶⁷ Catherine's daughter Kate Coker later called herself Catherine Emra. Kate Coker was black, while Catherine's other daughter, **Nancy**, was a mulatto.

William Burt Weekes gave Catherine and her daughter Nancy to his sister Frances and signed them over on 4 June 1763,¹³⁶⁸ the day Frances Weekes married the Mountravers manager William Coker. They were a wedding gift. Her daughter Kate probably was with the Cokers already.

In 1767 Catherine bought from William Coker a pair of shoes - 'Dble Channel Pumps' – and a large quantity of soap. The amount of soap she bought, almost a hundred pounds, suggests that she was either a professional washer or that she was selling it.¹³⁶⁹ She also raised fowls and in April 1770 sold to JPP three ducks.¹³⁷⁰ By then Coker had given Catherine back to William Burt Weekes because he had left for England. Indeed, by returning Catherine to her former owner she may have been used to settle Coker's debts with Weekes.

In April 1771 Catherine's daughter Nancy almost certainly travelled to England with her sister Kate Coker, accompanying Mrs Coker and her two sons on their voyage as servants. Nancy appears to

¹³⁶¹ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778; also AB 27 'List of slaves mortgaged ...'

¹³⁶² PP, AB 17; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f42 also AB 27 Tom Pym Weekes's a/c and f45

¹³⁶³ PP, AB 1769 (On cover Family Account Books Estates England 1783-1797): 5 July 1783

¹³⁶⁴ Translating coins into recognisable values is fraught with difficulty but helpful in this exercise were FG Cassidy and RB Le Page's *Dictionary of Jamaican English* Cambridge University Press 2002 and Patrick Kelly's *The Universal Cambist and Commercial Instructor* Vol 1 London 1811 (Courtesy of Brian Littlewood).

¹³⁶⁵ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f132 and f139; AB 30 Negro Hire a/c and AB 31 Negro Hire a/c

¹³⁶⁶ PP, AB 31 Negro Hire a/c and Harry London's a/c

¹³⁶⁷ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 5 p315

¹³⁶⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1763-1764 f161

¹³⁶⁹ PP, DM 1173/1 1766-1778 Pinney WI, probably Coker's Journal f18 and f38

¹³⁷⁰ PP, AB 17: 30 April 1770

have remained at Woodcutts with the Cokers and was last mentioned in 1776. Kate returned to Nevis and was hired out, bought her freedom and was manumitted in 1778 at the same time as Fanny Coker who later became one of the Pinneys' servants in Bristol.

In October 1782 Catherine's daughter Kate Coker started buying her. She paid JPP a first instalment of N£22:16:0.¹³⁷¹ The year before Catherine had been appraised at N£90, which was above the average value of a woman, suggesting she was reasonably healthy and strong. In fact, since having been appraised at N£80 in 1769, her value had risen by N£10. Kate Coker had intended to buy and then free her mother but before she could complete the purchase, Catherine fell sick. She died on 10 May 1783.

The following month JPP informed the Cokers that 'Kate's mother, Catherine, died the 10th Ultimo, after a very short illness.'¹³⁷² JPP passed on these details not because they had lost property – they no longer owned her - but because a person they knew well had died.

Sibella, also **Sabella**, was perhaps born between about 1753 and 1759.¹³⁷³ Since being mortgaged in 1777, she had given birth to a son, **Mickey**. In June 1781 the boy was valued at N£25 and Sabella at N£110.

A few months later, on 19 October, JPP and the cooper James Carroll agreed on a price of N£120 for Sabella.¹³⁷⁴ She was pregnant again and presumably being pregnant had increased her value. (Now she was worth double the amount she had been valued at as a child fourteen years earlier.) But Sabella's sale was not completed until five months later and because he had delayed payment, Carroll was charged an additional N£4 in interest.¹³⁷⁵ By the time he had fully paid up, Sabella had given birth to a daughter, **Fanny**, who was sold with her. Her young son Mickey, however, remained among the people reserved for Thomas Pym Weekes.

Just before he began purchasing Sabella James Carroll had manumitted two mulatto girls, Nancy and Charlotte,¹³⁷⁶ and a few years later freed four more: Billey, Charles, Elizabeth and Penelope.¹³⁷⁷ It is likely that all of these mulatto children were his offspring.

At James Carroll's, Sabella and Fanny were with three other mortgaged Weekes people - Ned, Dick Rayes and Cato – and then Carroll also hired from Mountravers the woman Phillee and her son Billey Keefe. They remained with him until 1785. By then Sabella had lost her son Mickey.¹³⁷⁸ When he died he would have been eight years old at the most.

In addition to his work as a cooper James Carroll also became a tavern keeper. He and his wife Hester rented one of JPP's houses in Charlestown which they had turned into a popular drinking place. Carroll died some time before the end of 1796 but neither Sabella nor Fanny was among his appraised effects, or any of the mortgaged people Carroll had bought. However, it is likely that he had sold at least two of them to a free mixed-race fisherman called John Rayes. This man died in 1810, and among his possessions were a black fisherman called Dick and a black woman called Fanny. It is possible that this woman was Sabella's daughter. She would then have been about 32 years old.

¹³⁷¹ PP, AB 27 f45 TP Weekes's a/c; also AB 26

¹³⁷² PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to William Coker, 10 June 1783

¹³⁷³ In 1769, Sibella was a girl, not young girl, and, according to a typical 1783 value, probably aged about 10 to 16 years old.

¹³⁷⁴ PP, AB 26 James Carroll's a/c; also AB 26 TP Weekes's a/c

¹³⁷⁵ PP, AB 27 Cash a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778: 25 September 1781 and 12 March 1782

¹³⁷⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1778-1783 f690

¹³⁷⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1788-1789 f408

¹³⁷⁸ Listed as reserved in 1781 (PP, AB 27), Mickey was not among the people reserved for TP Weekes (appendix to the 1785 list).

When he died, John Rayes was in debt and one of his creditors, Revd William Green, applied for the executorship. Four men appraised Rayes's effects: William Burke, Francis John Galpine, Joseph Jones and William Slater. They valued Dick at N£180 and Fanny at N£140.¹³⁷⁹ As Rayes had died indebted to several people, it is likely that they were put up for sale so that his creditors could be paid off. If Revd Green acquired Fanny and Dick, they would not have remained long with him. The clergyman died in April the following year.¹³⁸⁰

Bessy Guy, later Bessy Gould, probably also Betsey and Elizabeth Gould, was born at least before September 1763 when she and 16 others were acquired by William Burt Weekes. Altogether worth N£1000, they were either bought from a man called Joshua Snook, or they had been given as security for a loan and came into Weekes's possession when Snook was unable to repay the money.

Nothing is known about their previous owner except that he witnessed some documents and that in 1755 he had paid tax on only one person¹³⁸¹ while by 1763 he was in possession of 17. The 16 others in this group were five males and five mothers and their six children: Robin, Wiltshire, Jack, Old Quakoo and Parry; and Fatamah and her two daughters Grace and Little Celia, Dianna and her daughter Betty, Phiba and her daughter Dina, Peggy and her son Tim, and Penny and her daughter Bess.¹³⁸² Out of these 16, in addition to Bessy Gould four others also fell due in the mortgage in 1781: Fatamah's daughters Grace and Little Celia, and Penny and her daughter Bess (Betsey Steward/Stewart).

Appraised at N£50 as a girl in 1769, in June 1781 Bessy Gould was appraised at N£110. Her value suggests she was a domestic rather than a field worker. She was sold on 27 September 1781 for an additional N£10 to Dr Sholto Archbald. For N£120 he bought her 'to and for the use and behalf of Thomas Hart McGill, a minor son' of the merchant Robert McGill.¹³⁸³ In the McGill household there already were several other enslaved people who belonged or were mortgaged to JPP.

It appears that she was manumitted and in 1801 re-appeared as Betsey Gould, a free black woman, who for two years rented one of JPP's houses in Charlestown¹³⁸⁴ and then, as Elizabeth Gould, benefited from a transaction between George Dasent and Thomas Kipps Higgins.¹³⁸⁵ Dasent probably was a free black or mixed-race man, Higgins certainly was. He worked as a writing clerk¹³⁸⁶ but no more details are known about Bessy or Betsey Gould.

Penny, also Pinney, was black and perhaps born in the late 1730s. Her daughter Bessy (also Betsey) Steward¹³⁸⁷ was born, most likely, around 1759. The child's name suggests a connection with Stewart's plantation that had belonged to William Burt Weekes's father-in-law, Dr Thomas Stewart, and it is likely that the black man **Peter Stuart** who was manumitted by William Burt Weekes and JPP on 27 June 1783, may have been Penny's son, brother, or husband/partner.¹³⁸⁸

¹³⁷⁹ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1805-1818 f153

¹³⁸⁰ NHCS, RG 9.1 Gravestone Inscriptions, St Thomas Lowland Cemetery

¹³⁸¹ ECSCRN, CR 1754-1758 f107 and unnumbered folio, and PP, Dom Box P

¹³⁸² ECSCRN, CR 1763-1764 f107

¹³⁸³ ECSCRN, CR 1778-1783 ff636-37; also PP, AB 27 'A list of slaves mortgaged...' and p45; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f40 'Sundry accounts ... to TP Weekes'

¹³⁸⁴ PP, AB 47 and AB 57 Houses in Town a/c

¹³⁸⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1814-1817 ff115-16

¹³⁸⁶ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1805-1818 f334

¹³⁸⁷ Names were not always consistent. In the Snook indenture **Penny** was listed as Penny and her child as Bess; in an appraisal she was Pinney, mother of the black girl Betsey. In AB 27 Penny was listed above Bessy Steward.

¹³⁸⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1783-1785 f424

In 1781, although valued at a relatively high N£90, Penny was said to have been 'in a consumption'.¹³⁸⁹ She died before 1785.¹³⁹⁰ Her daughter had also died by then.

Bessy (also Bess and Betsey) Steward, Penny's daughter, was black and probably born in the late 1750s. Aged around ten she was valued at N£45.¹³⁹¹

Bessy Steward had at least three children: Nancy Steward, who was born, most likely, in about 1773/4; Jack Stuart in 1774/5 and Billey Stuart in 1778. By 1781 her value had doubled, and she and the children were valued at N£90, N£50, N£40 and N£25 respectively.

Together with three others (Mary, William and Charloe), Bessy Steward and the three children were hired to William Burt Weekes's successor at Fort Charles, Dr Bates Williams Peterson. The enslaved people's living quarters at the fort were known as the 'negro rooms'.¹³⁹²

The whole group (except for Charloe) was hired out at only N£8 a year. The rate was so low because most of them were young children and therefore unproductive.¹³⁹³ Indeed, in this arrangement the children were not counted; JPP wrote that for the new incumbent William Burt Weekes had furnished a house at the fort and hired *two* of his people to attend to Dr Peterson and his family.¹³⁹⁴ Dr Peterson and his wife Ann¹³⁹⁵ had at least three children: Thomas, a 'prudent and steady young man' who became a merchant,¹³⁹⁶ John or Jack, who in 1783 travelled to England with the Pinneys,¹³⁹⁷ and Grace, who inherited her aunt's land and people. Her aunt, Grace Patterson, lived in London and also jointly owned land in St Thomas Lowland with the Petersons.¹³⁹⁸ This may have meant that the people hired to Dr Peterson had to work in the fields - if not all, then at least some of the time.

It is likely that Bessy Steward (or Mary) had a child in May 1783 but that the child died within a year. Two months later, from the beginning of July, Bessy Steward was hired out, apparently on her own, at N£12 a year, with the income going to Thomas Pym Weekes. Although JPP retained ownership, she and seven others were earmarked for Weekes's use. She was hired out until 19 April 1784,¹³⁹⁹ which was either the day she fell ill or when she died.¹⁴⁰⁰ In her mid-twenties, Bessy Steward left behind three young children. Bessy Steward's mother also died some time before 1785.

Mary, black and perhaps born around 1767/8, was valued in 1781 at N£80 and among those people hired to Dr Peterson.

It is possible that Mary gave birth in May 1783 (although this may also have been Bessy Steward), but it is more likely that Mary had a child in 1791. In both cases the children died young.¹⁴⁰¹ Mary was not taken to Martinique and not included in the group of people who in June 1794 were given as security for a bond.¹⁴⁰² It is likely that she had died by then.

¹³⁸⁹ PP, AB 27

¹³⁹⁰ Penny was not sold nor on a list drawn up in 1785 by JPP in which he reserved seven people for TP Weekes.

¹³⁹¹ PP, WI Box D

¹³⁹² UKNA, CO 186/12: 18 November 1819

¹³⁹³ PP, AB 27

¹³⁹⁴ PP, LB 5: JPP, Nevis, to Simon Pretor, 19 September 1782

¹³⁹⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1785-1787 f302

¹³⁹⁶ PP, LB 15: JPP to Mrs Patterson, Lambs Conduit Street, London, 17 April 1799

¹³⁹⁷ PP, AB 30 TC Chivers' a/c 19 August 1783

¹³⁹⁸ SCRO, Moberley and Wharton Collection, D/MW 34/1

¹³⁹⁹ PP, AB 26 TP Weekes's a/c

¹⁴⁰⁰ PP, Pinney Miscellaneous 1783-1794, Vol 7, List of Deeds and Papers in Nevis, 14 June 1783 f75 Negro Hire received by Joseph Gill

¹⁴⁰¹ There was a decrease in the number of taxable people from ten in 1791 to nine in 1792.

¹⁴⁰² PP, AB 45: 24 June 1794

Nancy, also Nancy Steward (Stewart), the daughter of Bessy Steward, was black and, most likely, born about 1773/4.¹⁴⁰³

In 1785 Nancy was 'at school at Mrs Wenhams'.¹⁴⁰⁴ By then her mother had died and she may have been chosen to be trained so that she would be able to support herself. Her having undergone training may have been the reason why Elizabeth Weekes later preferred to have her rather than Jenny Young¹⁴⁰⁵ but wanting Nancy in her service may also have been an attempt by her to keep Bessy Steward's orphaned children together.

By July 1794 Nancy Steward had given birth to two mulatto daughters. One was named Betsey Stewart, after Nancy's mother, and the other Penny, after her maternal grandmother. It is possible that the girls were twins, born between about April 1790 and some time in 1791.¹⁴⁰⁶ It is also very likely that Nancy had become Thomas Pym Weekes's mistress and that the children were his; he took all three with him to Martinique (as well as William and Charloe) but left behind the other boy, Tom Tross, as well as his two legitimate sons. JPP was surprised to hear that his brother-in-law had taken the mortgaged people to Martinique: 'He never gave me the least hint of his intention of taking William nor did I understand that he was to have taken the two mulatto children.'¹⁴⁰⁷

When Thomas Pym Weekes returned from Martinique to Nevis, Nancy Steward also came back. She had two more children. Although their names are not known for certain, these probably were two boys: Thomas and William Augustus.

While at Mountravers, Nancy's brother Jack Steward ran away several times but was caught and eventually, in September 1797, sent to Jamaica to be sold there. It may have been the lead-up to this traumatic event that caused or contributed to Nancy Steward's illness; from mid-August onwards, for two months she received treatment:

14 August 1797	A pot carob diuret. electuary for Nancy Steward in a dropsy	N12s
24 August	6 diuret. anodyne boluses	N£1:10:0
1 September	6 corr. diuret. boluses	N£1:10:0
18 September	boluses repeated	N£1:10:0
17 October	scarifying the heel	N10s
18 October	a diuret. mixture and ? [illegible]	N£1:4:0. ¹⁴⁰⁸

Nancy Steward died soon after she had received the last treatment.

Informed of her death, JPP wrote to the Mountravers manager that he believed 'Nancy Steward's four children by and by will sell for a good price'.¹⁴⁰⁹ One of these probably was the mulatto boy William Augustus who was freed by Jane Weekes on 28 April 1798.¹⁴¹⁰ Born after Nancy Steward went to Martinique and not included in the latest mortgage, the boy would have belonged to Thomas Pym Weekes and, after his death, could have been freed by The Ladies at the Cedar Trees – after all, one of them was Thomas Pym Weekes's executrix. Jane Weekes remembered William Augustus Claxton in her will. She left him a mattress and N£10. He may have been the son of the planter Butler Claxton.

¹⁴⁰³ Around the time Nancy was born, in 1774, another Nancy Stewart, the daughter of Pallas and Penelope, was baptised, with her sisters Elizabeth Stewart and Sarah Webbe, in St John Figtree. This appears to have been the earliest baptism of children of black enslaved people (NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825).

¹⁴⁰⁴ PP, AB 27 f43

¹⁴⁰⁵ PP, LB 6: JPP to Elizabeth Weekes, 27 October 1787

¹⁴⁰⁶ Having previously paid tax on seven people, in 1791 Weekes paid tax on ten. One probably was a child of Mary's that died.

¹⁴⁰⁷ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 5 December 1794

¹⁴⁰⁸ PP, AB 47 Archbald and Williamson's (& Hope's) a/c

¹⁴⁰⁹ PP, LB 14: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 10 January 1798

¹⁴¹⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1797-1799 ff160-61

While Nancy Stewart's daughters, the two mulatto girls Betsey and Penny, were under mortgage to JPP and the House of Tobin & Co, another Lady at the Cedar Trees, Elizabeth Weekes, appears to have bought Penny. She also wanted to buy Betsey Stewart but JPP would not accept the sum she offered. He felt the people had been mortgaged 'for a considerable sum' more than they were worth and he wanted to sell Betsey Stewart for no less than S£20.¹⁴¹¹ Two years on the sale was still not completed. Interest had accrued and finally a bill presented by Dr Archbald was used to settle the amount. JPP allowed for the money, including the interest, to be credited to Thomas Pym Weekes's account.¹⁴¹²

Betsey Stewart, as Elizabeth, was freed by Jane Weekes on 28 February 1803 with a boy called Thomas (probably Nancy Stewart's fourth child and therefore Betsey Stewart's brother),¹⁴¹³ and a month later Jane Weekes also freed a mulatto girl called Jenny.¹⁴¹⁴ This may have been mis-read for Penny (or Penny was manumitted at some other time), because in 1817 a woman called Penny Weekes registered two people: Cotto (also Catto) and Fanny, a black 20-year-old creole and a 21-year-old African woman.

On 14 July 1818 Penny Weekes sold the creole woman to John Huggins senior, but, some time before December 1819, Penny Weekes died. From her executors Huggins also bought the African woman, Fanny.¹⁴¹⁵ When Huggins died in December 1824 neither Cotto nor Fanny were mentioned in his will, only a female called Little Cotto (her daughter?), whom he left to his wife.¹⁴¹⁶

Nothing more is known about Thomas or Betsey Stewart. The fourth child believed to have been Nancy Stewart's son, William Augustus Claxton, may, possibly, have been the 'William A Claxton' who in April 1863 was among those Nevis inhabitants who signed a letter of thanks in support of Revd Walter Fawkes Maynard.¹⁴¹⁷

William, also known as Dr Weekes' William, was black and born between about 1765 to 1767 and one of seventeen people mortgaged by William Burt Weekes and his mother.

William, with Mary, Charloe and several others was hired to Dr Peterson at Fort Charles,¹⁴¹⁸ but in late 1782 he was hired out on his own. His employer was John Arthurton junior, who paid N£10 a year. He did not remain long; in March the following year 'he was sent home ... to have his toe cured of a sore'. The cost of the treatment came close to half his annual hire rate, N£4:3:4.¹⁴¹⁹

With his health restored, William was then dispatched to the mulatto Joseph Browne Herbert 'to learn to be a carpenter'.¹⁴²⁰ Free since at least the late 1750s and living in the parish of St John Figtree, Herbert was among the early mixed-race elite in the island: a skilled man with property – land and two domestics – he fathered several children whom he manumitted.¹⁴²¹ By the turn of the century he had created a considerable clan of free Herberts.

¹⁴¹¹ PP, LB 14: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 14 October 1798

Although Betsey Stewart legally belonged to JPP, it appears that Thomas Pym Weekes had sold her to one of his aunts because in her will Ann Weekes left a mulatto girl Betsey she had purchased recently to her sister Jane Weekes. After Jane's death, Betsey was to be freed (ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 f368-74).

¹⁴¹² PP, LB 16: John Pinney, Bristol, to Ann Weekes, Nevis, 26 November 1800

¹⁴¹³ ECSCRN, CR 1803-1805 f17

¹⁴¹⁴ ECSCRN, CR 1803-1805 f42

¹⁴¹⁵ UKNA, T 71/364 and T 71/365

¹⁴¹⁶ Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Reviderede regnskaber, Vestindiske regnskaber, Overformynderiregnskaber 1805-1917, Box 78.6, St Croix 1825-1827 Schedule B (Courtesy of George Tyson)

¹⁴¹⁷ SRO/I, Maynard Papers, HA 178-1/57

¹⁴¹⁸ PP, AB 27 TP Weekes's a/c

¹⁴¹⁹ PP, AB 26 and AB 27 TP Weekes's a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Journal 1780-1790 f107

¹⁴²⁰ PP, AB 27 f43

¹⁴²¹ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 f97

Once Herbert had taught William the trade of carpenter, the young man was hired to Mr Jones, at N4s 1/2d 'per lunar month', and then to Mr Crosse, probably Captain Thomas Bickham Crosse, the master of the *Perseverance*. From December 1793 he was hired out again¹⁴²² until in August 1794 Thomas Pym Weekes took him to Martinique, with Charloe and Nancy and her two children. By then both William and Charloe had acquired a reputation for stealing and, not wanting to give them an opportunity to nick anything on Mountravers and cause any disruption, JPP asked his manager to bar them from the plantation:

If the Doctor should return to Nevis, as I am afraid he will be obliged to do, from the critical situation of the French Islands, and bring with him Charloe and William, it is my desire that you will not permit these negroes to come into my yard, under any pretence whatever, as they are notorious thieves, and will in all probability cause disputes.¹⁴²³

Manager Williams, ill-disposed towards Thomas Pym Weekes, would have been only too happy to oblige but when Dr Weekes did return to Nevis, it was not because of the 'critical situation of the French islands', as JPP had predicted, but because he was ill. Ideally JPP wanted the mortgaged people sold but they, by then, had acquired a bad reputation and he doubted whether anyone would want to buy them.¹⁴²⁴ In the meantime he wanted them hired out. Almost immediately William was sent to work on two ships, for 28 days on Captain Chivers's ¹⁴²⁵ *Mariner* and for 31 days on the *Nevis*.¹⁴²⁶ Two other men, John Wilkes and Prince, were employed on Captain Maies's *Nevis* as well. And then an opportunity presented itself that solved several problems all at once: William was hired to the army. This was a long-term engagement, brought in regular money, and, short of being sold, he was off the island and under someone else's control. William did not go alone; Tom Tross was also 'sent on the expedition', and from 26 November 1795 onwards the two young men served in the army. Kitting them out with a few 'sundry articles' cost a mere N9s9d, and this outlay would quickly be off-set by their hire of three shillings Barbados currency per day.¹⁴²⁷

Britain and France were at war once more. The French had drafted into their army large numbers of their free as well as enslaved people, and the Commander-in-Chief in the Windward and Leeward Islands, Lieutenant General Sir John Vaughan, in late 1794 responded by setting out his vision of a British West India corps that would consist of 'the ablest and most robust negroes'. Made up of ten companies of a hundred men each, the men would be recruited from a variety of sources: each of the British Leeward and Windward islands would contribute a set quota of enslaved people, and if the local legislatures refused to provide these, Africans would be purchased from the slavers arriving in the West Indies. If both measures failed to come up with the required numbers, free blacks would be enlisted. Vaughan saw the potential of a native-raised army: well adapted to the climate and immune to diseases deadly to whites, they were used to withstand hard, physically demanding labour and, being on familiar terrain, were better suited to the kind of war that was then being fought. An additional bonus was that they were on the spot and did not need to be shipped across the Atlantic, thereby saving on shipping costs,¹⁴²⁸ which, during the 1795/6 Caribbean campaign, amounted to over one million Pound Sterling.¹⁴²⁹ In short, they were ideal recruits who could be turned into capable, professionally trained soldiers.

¹⁴²² PP, Misc Vols 12 Leeward Islands Calendar 1793

¹⁴²³ PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 15 December 1794

¹⁴²⁴ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 1 July 1795

¹⁴²⁵ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 14 May 1795

¹⁴²⁶ PP, AB 47 Ship *Nevis* a/c; AB 52 Negro Hire a/c; AB 47 f83

¹⁴²⁷ PP, AB 52 Negro Hire a/c; AB 52 TP Weekes's a/c and Government of Great Britain a/c; also AB 47 JPP's a/c, Negro Hire a/c and Cash a/c

No records have been found in The National Archives at Kew regarding Tom or William in pay or muster rolls (WO 12/11239, 11339, 11449, 11509 11531, 11542, 11553).

¹⁴²⁸ Buckley, RN *The British Army* p117 and p188

¹⁴²⁹ Marshall, PJ (ed) *The Oxford History of the British Empire* p190 and p191

Vaughan put forward what he considered a compelling and perfectly reasonable case, to which could be added that a precedent existed elsewhere in the British Empire: in India native *sepoys* fought alongside the British. But his requests to raise an army in the West Indies were met with stern opposition. For fear of armed rebellion whites in the islands had long been jittery about letting their people get anywhere near arms and ammunition, and planters and their influential political allies in Britain protested loudly at the dangers an internally-raised army would pose. It took two full years for Vaughan's suggestion to be accepted. It was the staggering rate at which death and disease felled British troops that finally convinced the British government to act decisively, because not only did fevers quickly eliminate healthy young men stationed in the West Indies, but at any one time a shocking number of British troops were too ill to serve.¹⁴³⁰ Keen to establish greater direction of West India affairs, the British Government brushed aside colonial opposition and appealed to all the West Indian islands to supply 'negroes for general service'. Conditions of service were that the men had to be aged between 18 and 30, be at least 5' (1.52 m) tall, single and unattached, and of 'sound body, and in all points able to carry arms'.¹⁴³¹ Jamaica declined to send any men because, once again, planters there were busily fighting their own internal war with the Maroons, but elsewhere islanders realised that, in order to defeat the enemy, they had to contribute to the West Indian war effort. Most islands consented to send people. In one year, 1797, Martinique, for instance, raised 868 men, Dominica agreed to supply 300, and St Kitts, 'at the last count', mustered 112 'pioneers'.¹⁴³²

William and Tom were among an early tranche of recruits who became known as 'fatigue slaves'. Having accepted Vaughan's arguments for raising a West Indian army, the Secretary of War and Colonies, Henry Dundas, devised a plan to hire enslaved people who would carry out general labour and in August 1795 called on the islands to supply 4,500 men and women for imperial service. A third of these were to come from Jamaica, the rest from the Leeward and Windward Islands. Numbers drafted were to be in proportion to the number of people per estate. A small number of these hired 'fort-negroes' were engaged as officers' servants (army regulations laid down a maximum of three for the highest ranking field officers), while others carried out tasks of a domestic nature, such as hauling water, collecting firewood, working in the kitchens and cleaning living quarters. Most of their duties, however, would have been physically very demanding, such as clearing ground, building and repairing fortifications and defences, and keeping roads and barracks intact. Often their work was dangerous - one woman who served at Fort Charlotte on St Vincent was crushed to death in an accident - but generally military fatigue duties resembled plantation labour: long hours doing tiring, monotonous, menial tasks. Prohibited from enlisting into the West India regiments, 'fort-negroes' enjoyed few rewards. In addition to receiving the same rations as the soldiers, they were provided with clothing and equipment.¹⁴³³ For some, though, the break from the daily grind of plantation life may have been of benefit. They mixed with different people in different surroundings; they could exchange skills and ideas and, although still in a controlled environment, bring to the fore strengths they would not have been able to display in a plantation context.

West Indian planters and other slaveholders answered Dundas's call and supplied the army with about 7,000 enslaved men and women, skilled and unskilled.¹⁴³⁴ Perhaps the reasons for their eager take-up were similar to what motivated JPP's representatives in Nevis when they dispatched William

¹⁴³⁰ On 1 April 1797, for instance, out of a total of 12,993 'HM Troops in the Leeward and Windward Islands' 9,797 were fit for duty, another third (3,196 men) 'sick and convalescent'. A month later, through the arrival of the 43rd Regiment and 17th Light Dragoons, the total had risen to 13,192 men, and of these, 10,169 were fit for duty while another 3,023 suffered illness or were recovering (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.8 f239 Abstract of Returns).

It has to be remembered that a few black men were among the troops sent from Britain; the 4th West India Regiment of Foot, for instance, which was raised in Britain, included in its payroll the Privates Caesar and Jupiter (UKNA, WO 12/11509) and the 6th West India Regiment of Foot had in its ranks men called Peroo and Mahmet Cossum (WO 12/11542).

¹⁴³¹ Buckley, RN 'The British Army's African Recruitment Policy, 1790-1807' in *Contributions in Black Studies Special Joint Issue with the New England Journal of Black Studies* Vol 5 (1981) Article 2 p5

¹⁴³² RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.8 f229

¹⁴³³ Buckley, RN *The British Army* pp132-35

¹⁴³⁴ Buckley, RN *The British Army* p133

and Tom Tross to the army. JPP had wanted Dr Weekes's people sold, or at least hired out, and getting the two young men into the military must have seemed a good solution: surplus to requirement and deemed unsuitable for plantation work, they were off the island and could not cause any more problems but at the same time generated a decent hire income. Short of selling their people into exile abroad, for slaveholders this was a neat solution to rid themselves of those they considered disruptive and unmanageable. These people became someone else's responsibility. Planters had nothing to lose: if their people were killed, the army paid compensation.

William and also Tom Tross almost certainly were attached to the 7th West Indian Regiment at Barbados. John Lewes, a white officer appointed in September 1795, was in command. At first recruitment had been very slow; in the Leeward and Windward Islands 'not a man' had been given 'by any of the islands'. The aim was to raise a thousand men for each regiment and the officer in charge of recruitment prophesied that the British government's plan for a West India army would fail. He wrote this on 5 December 1795, shortly before 395 men were recruited into the 7th West Indian Regiment at Barbados.¹⁴³⁵ This was the properly constituted West Indian branch of the British army, along the lines envisaged by Sir Vaughan. Originally ordered to be raised in St Domingo, it was made up of men from different islands and fully established by mid-July 1797.¹⁴³⁶

William and Tom Tross were hired to the army for almost two years when on, or just before, Tuesday, 31 October 1797, William was 'hung in the service of Government'.¹⁴³⁷ Undoubtedly, linked to Williams's death was the disappearance of Tom Tross on the same day.

In the eighteenth century crimes against property were still punishable by death, and although it is possible that his thieving was William's undoing, no record of what he stood accused has yet been found. However, he must have trespassed army discipline to such an extent that flogging was not deemed a sufficient sentence. The army was known to have inflicted brutal punishment beatings; of the 4,338 cases that were heard at general court martial during the period from 1796 to 1825, a third resulted in the offenders being flogged, on average, 794 times; 627 of the offenders were sentenced to a thousand or more lashes, and three men received 2,000 strokes each for offences such as desertion, disobeying orders and using insolent language, and being drunk on duty and desertion. The punishment was carried out with the cat-o'-nine tails (a whip made of nine knotted strands secured in a handle) and often resulted in the mutilation or the death of the accused.¹⁴³⁸ Desertion from post carried the death sentence.¹⁴³⁹

Apart from a final hire payment that covered the period until 31 October 1797, the firm of Pinney & Tobin also received N£180 compensation from the Government. This represented William's appraised value.¹⁴⁴⁰ Payment was made through Andrew Hamilton, a London merchant and the agent for Nevis.¹⁴⁴¹

It is just possible that, while serving on Barbados, William Weekes had a son called Thomas. Years later, in January 1823, a boy called William, who was the son of a Thomas Weekes, was christened in the parish of St Philip in Barbados.¹⁴⁴² The recurrence of typical Weekes names – Thomas and William – may be a coincidence; further research is required.

¹⁴³⁵ The Leeward Islands and the Windward Islands were responsible for raising the 1st, 2nd and 8th West India regiments; St Domingo was responsible for raising the 4th and 7th. In 1817 the 7th West India Regiment was ordered to be disbanded (RN Buckley *Slaves in Red Coats* p31, p135, p30, p153, p371 and p166, quoting UKNA, WO 1/85 Leigh to Dundas 5 December 1795, and p36, quoting WO 25/662 ff1-39).

¹⁴³⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.8 f241 Distribution of HM Forces

¹⁴³⁷ PP, LB 14: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 10 January 1798

¹⁴³⁸ Buckley, RN *The British Army* pp228-29 and p203

¹⁴³⁹ UKNA, WO 90/1

¹⁴⁴⁰ PP, AB 47 Government of Great Britain a/c

¹⁴⁴¹ UKNA, CO 186/6

¹⁴⁴² <http://www.familysearch.org/eng/> Ref: C513931, 1648-1848, Source Call No 1157934, on film

Tom alias Tom Tross, also **Tom Thraske**, a creole, was probably born about 1774 or 1775. JPP had bought his father, Tom Thraske, sometimes also known as Tom Tross, from the free black woman Sophia Tobin.¹⁴⁴³ On Mountravers Tom Tross's father was employed as a tailor.

Valued at N£40, Tom Tross was not hired with the other Weekes people to Dr Peterson at Fort Charles but in 1785 was with his father, 'learning to be a taylor'. A decision had been taken to teach several of the children skills. At the same time William was 'with Joseph B Herbert to learn to be a carpenter' and Nancy 'at school at Mrs Wenhams'.¹⁴⁴⁴

While Thomas Pym Weekes took William and Nancy to Martinique, Tom remained in Nevis. He may have chosen to stay behind. He may have gone into hiding which would explain why, once caught, Tom Tross ended up in prison. James Williams, the manager on Mountravers, bailed him out by paying N7s6d gaol fees,¹⁴⁴⁵ and almost as soon as he was released, from 22 June 1795 onwards Tom Tross was hired out. He worked for John Smith, the overseer who had not long before arrived from England. The only other record of Tom Tross having been employed elsewhere was from November 1793 when a 'Mr Cross' – most likely the ship's captain Thomas Bickham Crosse who also employed William – hired him at a weekly rate of N8s3d.¹⁴⁴⁶ Earlier that year Tom Tross may also have worked for John Keepe, a mason. Keepe purchased him on 26 July 1793 for N£170¹⁴⁴⁷ but the arrangement probably did not work out and Keepe returned him.

Tom Tross was employed until 28 October 1795,¹⁴⁴⁸ and a month later he and William were hired to the Army. Following William's execution in the autumn of 1797, he fled. By some means this information was passed to James Williams who passed on the news to JPP. As if he had expected no better, in JPP's immediate response to the 'deplorable account of Dr Weekes' negroes' one can hear his sense of resignation and frustration. He wanted Tom Tross sold, either in Nevis or elsewhere: '- you say that Tom Tross belonging to him and mortgaged to me & T & P has gone off the island and you believe to St Eustacius - should you purchance ever meet with him again, send him as a venture to some other island unless you should be able to get a decent price for him on the spot.'¹⁴⁴⁹ A year later Tom Tross had not returned and JPP asked his manager to endeavour to recover him from St Eustacius 'whenever an opportunity offers'.¹⁴⁵⁰ Tom Tross did not come back. He may already have got away on a ship but he could also have stayed in Stacia, which remained in Dutch hands until it surrendered to the British in April 1801.

Charloe, also Sharloe, was probably born between about 1773 and 1776. His name derived from Charlot, the lower part of the Mountravers estate where the works were situated.

In 1781 Charloe was valued at N£50 and hired to Dr Peterson at N£4 a year, half the rate the doctor paid for hiring William, Nancy and her children. In 1785 Charloe and Mary were still with Dr Peterson but in 1787 JPP allowed Thomas Pym Weekes 'the use' of these two mortgaged individuals.¹⁴⁵¹ Although they were owned by JPP, or as he put it, 'the right of property was vested in' him, he wanted Charloe 'to work out for the benefit' of Thomas Pym Weekes – any hire income was to go to the doctor. Once he was appointed manager to the estate, Weekes used this concession to his advantage and for four and a half months hired Charloe to Mountravers.¹⁴⁵² Charloe, in the meantime,

¹⁴⁴³ Sophia Tobin's mulatto daughter Ann Tobin had inherited Tom Tross from James Tobin the Elder, presumed to have been her father (ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1763-1787 ff258-59)

¹⁴⁴⁴ PP, AB 27 f43

¹⁴⁴⁵ PP, AB 52 TP Weekes's a/c; also AB 47 Cash a/c

¹⁴⁴⁶ PP, Misc Vols 12 Leeward Islands Calendar 1793

¹⁴⁴⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1792-1794 ff431-32

¹⁴⁴⁸ PP, AB 52 Negro Hire a/c and John Smith's a/c

¹⁴⁴⁹ PP, LB 14: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 10 January 1798

¹⁴⁵⁰ PP, LB 14: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 14 October 1798

¹⁴⁵¹ PP, LB 6: JPP to Elizabeth Weekes, 27 October 1787

¹⁴⁵² PP, Misc Vols 12 Leeward Island Calendar 1793

had been trained as a mason, and as Thomas Pym Weekes endeavoured to carry out major building projects, Charloe proved a handy addition to the workforce while Weekes, at the same time, profited from a regular hire income. Weekes may also have benefited from the expertise of the masons on Mountravers in teaching Charloe his trade; no record of a payment of an apprentice fee has been found.

While Thomas Pym Weekes considered hiring Charloe to Mountravers a clever and satisfactory scheme, JPP thought otherwise - particularly as much of what had been done was 'unnecessary work, contrary to Mr P's directions'. Consequently JPP charged Thomas Pym Weekes close to N£36 to recover the money for Charloe's hire that Weekes had debited to the plantation account.¹⁴⁵³

JPP had wanted Charloe, Tom Tross, William, Nancy and Mary sold, or hired to Mr Jones, 'whose estate must be in great want of negroes',¹⁴⁵⁴ but Thomas Pym Weekes took Charloe, William, Nancy and her two children with him to Martinique. Charloe, like William, had acquired a reputation as a 'notorious' thief and, with William, was to be barred from entering Mountravers for fear of causing disputes.¹⁴⁵⁵ After their return JPP renewed his request to have them sold,¹⁴⁵⁶ but while William and Tom Tross were hired to the army at Barbados, Charloe, at first, remained in Nevis and then appears to have been hired to the army at Martinique. James Williams, however, did not immediately inform JPP of this. He only notified him of William having been executed and of Tom Tross having 'gone off the island' so that JPP was left wondering: 'What is become of him?'¹⁴⁵⁷

It is not clear what did happen to Charloe but he certainly did not return to Nevis. Once this was established, the firm of Tobin, Pinney & Tobin realised that they had 'to claim on Government for the value of another of Dr Weekes's negroes who went to Martinique and never returned.'¹⁴⁵⁸ However, there is no record of a compensation payment having been made.

Old Mary Weekes's people

Seven people who belonged to William Burt Weekes's mother, Old Mary Weekes, were mortgaged in 1777 and reserved by JPP for Thomas Pym Weekes. This meant that the income from those who were sold went to Thomas Pym Weekes. Valued at a total of N£546, two died and the remaining five were sold for a total of N£426. This was credited to Thomas Pym Weekes's account on 5 April 1784.¹⁴⁵⁹

JPP wanted **Frank** and Cudjoe hired out, with one of the Ladies at the Cedar Trees, Ann Weekes, collecting the money on Thomas Pym Weekes's behalf,¹⁴⁶⁰ but before this system could be instituted, Frank was briefly hired out through the plantation. In 1783 he worked for eleven days on a ship, Captain Johan Trangberg's, bringing in N£1:13:0.¹⁴⁶¹ After that Ann Weekes would have kept track of Frank's income until her sister Jane Weekes sold him on 19 July 1790. Frank was sold for N£130 to the brothers Frederick and John Huggins.¹⁴⁶² In 1817 Frederick and John Huggins registered their enslaved people but Frank was not among them.¹⁴⁶³

¹⁴⁵³ PP, AB 50 TP Weekes's a/c

¹⁴⁵⁴ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 6 August 1793

¹⁴⁵⁵ PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 15 December 1794

¹⁴⁵⁶ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 1 July 1795

¹⁴⁵⁷ PP, LB 14: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 10 January 1798

¹⁴⁵⁸ PP, LB 40: TP & T to James Williams, Nevis, 13 October 1798

¹⁴⁵⁹ PP, AB 27 TP Weekes's a/c

¹⁴⁶⁰ PP, LB 6: JPP to Joseph Gill, Nevis, 24 June 1784 (copy also in LB 7)

¹⁴⁶¹ PP, AB 26 Jane Weekes's a/c

¹⁴⁶² ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 f563

¹⁴⁶³ UKNA, T 71/364

Cudjoe was appraised but no sale was recorded. Almost certainly he died some time after 1781 and before April 1784.

The woman **Old Sarah** died before she could be sold.

The sisters **Grace** and **Little Celia** (Ceelia) were sold separately. They had in 1763 been acquired with their mother Fatamah and 14 other people by William Burt Weekes from Joshua Snook; ¹⁴⁶⁴ but their mother had died between 1763 and 1769. Other Snook females, Penny and her daughter Bess and Bessy Guy/Gould, were among the 17 mortgaged people whom JPP reserved for Thomas Pym Weekes.

Celia was sold on 18 July 1781 for N£70/S£43:15 to John Podd. He also bought the mortgaged Foe. ¹⁴⁶⁵ JPP already knew the gentleman John Podd; he was JPP's and Daniel Ross's witness when they declined to act as executors for William Woolward, the father of Frances Nisbet, later Lady Nelson. ¹⁴⁶⁶ A document of 1789 was the last reference to John Podd, ¹⁴⁶⁷ and nothing is known about Celia's later life.

Celia's older sister Grace was sold for a relatively high amount, N£100, in the following year, on 9 December 1782. She was bought by a free black man, Joseph Batterton. Grace's new owner was perhaps in his thirties, literate and worked as a fisherman, and in 1783, not long after he had purchased Grace, moved into one of JPP's properties in Charlestown. He had already bought the woman Catto from JPP, ¹⁴⁶⁸ as well as a large quantity of rum from the plantation. ¹⁴⁶⁹

As a boy, Joseph Batterton had been owned by a woman called Penelope Batterton and after her death had been bought by one of her executors, the free woman Ann Batterton. ¹⁴⁷⁰ Ann Batterton, then in her early twenties, had manumitted him and also the woman Mirtilla Batterton, ¹⁴⁷¹ who probably lived with Joseph Batterton. In the following year Ann Batterton also bought and then freed another Mirtilla ¹⁴⁷² and it was almost certainly her, who as Myrtilla Dowse, on 31 August 1787 freed Grace. Documented as 'Grace Weekes, a negro woman purchased from JPP', her manumission was witnessed by a man called William Weekes. ¹⁴⁷³ The son of a woman called Martha Mitchell, this William Weekes may have been a free man.

After being freed, Grace lived in Charlestown near Lubbo Weekes, a mortgaged woman previously freed by William Burt Weekes and JPP. Grace was last mentioned in a letter from 1794. ¹⁴⁷⁴

Joseph Batterton bought and manumitted several more people but experienced financial difficulties and mortgaged Catto and her daughter to the former Mountravers employee Thomas Arthurton. ¹⁴⁷⁵ The last reference to Batterton relates to a debt of nearly N£40. He owed JPP this money in 1793. ¹⁴⁷⁶

¹⁴⁶⁴ ECSCRN, CR 1763-1764 f107

¹⁴⁶⁵ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f30 Mary Weekes's a/c; AB 27 f43; also AB 26 Mary Weekes's a/c

¹⁴⁶⁶ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1763-1787 f466 and f467

¹⁴⁶⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1789-1790 f1

¹⁴⁶⁸ PP, AB 26 Joseph Batterton, a free Negro a/c; also DM 1173 Nevis Journal 1780-1790 f94

¹⁴⁶⁹ PP, AB 26 Rum a/c

¹⁴⁷⁰ Penelope Batterton had died before 1761 (ECSCRN, CR 1757-1762).

¹⁴⁷¹ ECSCRN, CR 1763-1764 f1, CR 1764-1769 ff182-83, and UKNA, CO 186/6: 9 December 1772

¹⁴⁷² ECSCRN, CR 1764-1769 ff520-21

¹⁴⁷³ ECSCRN, CR 1788-1789 f162

¹⁴⁷⁴ PP, Dom Box S1: William Burt Weekes to sister, 16 November 1794

¹⁴⁷⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1788-1789 f72

¹⁴⁷⁶ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, 9 February 1793

Ann Batterton, who as young woman had bought and then freed Joseph Batterton and Myrtilla Dowse, in 1830 owned land that abutted a property which John Frederick Pinney owned.¹⁴⁷⁷ Aged 'about 89', Ann Batterton died in August 1832.¹⁴⁷⁸

Little Dick, later Dick, was a black creole born around 1770.¹⁴⁷⁹ On 4 August 1781 he was sold to Ann Weekes for N£66.¹⁴⁸⁰ Another boy, **Cuffee**, who was probably born about 1769, was a few days later sold to Jane Weekes for N£60¹⁴⁸¹ and then disappeared from view completely.

It is likely that Little Dick was the son of the black man Dick who was sold to the free woman Mary Neale. She held property opposite the Cedar Trees and was the grandmother of Ann Batterton who had freed Joseph Batterton and Myrtilla Dowse, who, between them, had bought and then freed Grace Weekes. It is quite likely that Dick and Grace either were brother and sister or, more likely, partners, and that, in effect, members of one family, the Neales and Battertons, were buying members of another family. In this they were assisted by two of The Ladies at the Cedar Trees, Ann and Jane Weekes.

In fact Dick's labour was intended to provide financial support for Ann and Jane Weekes's mother, old Mary Weekes, as suggested by an entry in the account book made just after the sale - 'Interest for life on Dick to Mrs Weekes' -¹⁴⁸² and another relating to the 'use and labour' benefiting old Mrs Mary Weekes. When Dick was not employed by her, he would have been hired out, with the money he earned supporting her until she died in April 1784. Dick's actual owner, however, was Ann Weekes, and when Ann Weekes died, she left him in her will to her sister Jane, together with a black girl called Mary. Ann Weekes laid down clear guidelines as to what should be done with these two. She stipulated that after Jane Weekes's death, Dick was to be sold, with the money going to Dr Thomas Pym Weekes's sons William and Thomas, while William was to inherit the girl Mary. She wanted Dick and Mary kept in their familiar surroundings and with friends and family, and neither of them was 'to be suffered to be taken off the island'. She asked that her executors permit any of her people who were to be sold to choose their new owners.¹⁴⁸³ This was an unusual gesture and arose because Ann Weekes was torn between wanting to provide something of value for her impoverished nephews and wishing to allow her enslaved people as much freedom as possible. It was the most Ann Weekes could do without actually freeing them, but Dick and Mary must have been utterly miserable when they saw Jane Weekes, the last of The Ladies at the Cedar Trees, free one person after another. Among them were a girl called Elley, a man called William,¹⁴⁸⁴ the mulatto woman Lydia Fisher and the children Thomas, Elizabeth, Jenny¹⁴⁸⁵ and William Augustus.¹⁴⁸⁶

Dick was a skilled man. He had been trained as a carpenter. But when he was hired out, he refused to hand over to Jane Weekes the money he had earned and at some stage Dick would have been summoned to explain himself to John Colhoun Mills. In 1810 Jane Weekes had turned to Mrs P, her niece, for help, informing her that Dick 'will not pay her a Shilling of his hire', and Mrs P told her husband, who, in turn, asked his attorney in Nevis to intervene. JPP asked Mr Mills to receive Dick's hire charges and give the money to Jane Weekes and, if no regular payments were forthcoming, Mills was to rent Dick to an estate.¹⁴⁸⁷ In getting Mills to collect the money from Dick, the Pinneys were not only relying on a man to put pressure on Dick - particularly a powerful man with influence - they also knew that, for the threat of being rented to an estate to have any effect, this had to come from

¹⁴⁷⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 ff297-98

¹⁴⁷⁸ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 474

¹⁴⁷⁹ UKNA, T 71/364

¹⁴⁸⁰ PP, AB 27; also DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f34

¹⁴⁸¹ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778 f37; AB 17 and AB 26 Jane Weekes's a/c

¹⁴⁸² PP, AB 17 Nevis a/c; also AB 27

¹⁴⁸³ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff368-74

¹⁴⁸⁴ ECSCRN, CR 1801-1803 ff518-20

¹⁴⁸⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1803-1805 f17 and f42

¹⁴⁸⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1797-1799 f161

¹⁴⁸⁷ PP, LB 23: JPP to JC Mills, 10 January 1811

someone who could easily turn threat into reality. The thought of ending up on an estate, perhaps doing fieldwork, may have been enough for Dick to begin making payments although if he did, he would not have had to do so for long: Jane Weekes died in 1812.

His refusal to part with his income had not soured relations between him and JPP. He was in demand for his carpentry skills. JPP wanted Dick to make a chest to replace one JPP believed Jennetta, a woman from Mountravers, may have stolen from him. Again JPP involved Mr Mills who knew what the old chest had looked like; JPP wanted Mills to see if Dick 'possibly may be able to make a proper one under your directions equally as good as the one I had made.' JPP credited Dick with being 'an ingenious fellow and a good carpenter'.¹⁴⁸⁸

In the same letter to Mills JPP addressed the fact that, with Jane Weekes's death, both Dick and Mary had become the property of Dr Thomas Pym Weekes's sons. JPP thought that they 'ought to be sold but as both Weekes were of age, it was their decision.'¹⁴⁸⁹ Four other people, the woman Kitty and her three sons Billey, Monesses, and Almond, were claimed by JPP to cover debts incurred by the two young Weekeses. Kitty was said to have been aged about forty and it is likely that she was Dick's partner and her sons his children.

Dick, said to have been 47 years old, was in 1817 registered as belonging to Lieutenant William Burt Weekes, while Mary, by then 24 years old and called Mary Nugent, was swapped with one of the Pinney-reserved people on Clarke's estate. Most likely this happened during Charles Pinney's visit to Nevis during 1820/21, and it is very likely that at this stage Dick took the decision to finally free himself. Certainly by 1822 he had 'absconded'. William Burt Weekes's attorney in Nevis, Joseph Brazier, died in 1824¹⁴⁹⁰ and from then on there was no one who would have taken a personal interest in Weekes's affairs in Nevis. Weekes did not appoint another attorney and no one completed another slave register for him.¹⁴⁹¹

While it is not known what happened to Kitty and her other sons Almond and Monesses, it has been established that Billey had chosen to remain with the free Customs Clerk John Frederick Bertrand. He lived at the Cedar Trees and, apart from Billey, in 1817 registered four other individuals: Mary, a black 28-year-old creole, and Ritta, a 22-year-old African, and Celia and Eliza, two sambo girls aged two and a half and nine years, who probably were Bertrand's offspring (he manumitted Eliza).¹⁴⁹² In the Bertrand household was also a boy called Adea or Adeon, an illegally imported African. In November 1818, a full ten years after the Transatlantic Slave Trade had been abolished, he had been taken from Africa but the slaver which had transported him had been seized, and Adea had been handed over to the newly appointed Comptroller of Customs, Robert Claxton.¹⁴⁹³ Under the arrangements in force after the British withdrew from the transatlantic slave trade, this nine-year-old child, already said to have been a carpenter, was apprenticed to John Frederick Bertrand who was one of Robert Claxton's colleague in the customs service. Apprenticed for the maximum term of 14 years, Adea, however, only served a few years of his apprenticeship. He died before 1822.¹⁴⁹⁴ John Frederick Bertrand also died, in 1821,¹⁴⁹⁵ and from then on Billey and the three other females - Mary, Ritta and Celia - were

¹⁴⁸⁸ PP, LB 23: JPP to JC Mills, 24 September 1812

¹⁴⁸⁹ PP, LB 23: JPP to Samuel Pemberton and Francis John Galpine, 19 October 1812

¹⁴⁹⁰ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b) and VL Oliver *The monumental inscriptions* p92

¹⁴⁹¹ UKNA, T 71/364-9

¹⁴⁹² ECSCRN, CR 1817-1819 Vol 2 f465; also UKNA, T 71/365

¹⁴⁹³ UKNA, CO 186/11: 8 October 1818 and CUST 34/510 Item No 37

¹⁴⁹⁴ UKNA, CO 239/4 and 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'

¹⁴⁹⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

registered by Jane and Eleanor Bertrand.¹⁴⁹⁶ When slavery was abolished, these two women received £77 compensation for their four people.

Billey, who then called himself William Weekes, celebrated the abolition of slavery by getting married. His wife was Mary Webbe/Parris, one of the women JPP had originally reserved for himself. She had worked on Clarke's estate but moved to Charlestown. There William Weekes was a carpenter. In March 1840 the couple had a son whom they called Richard, no doubt in memory of Dick, the man who had absconded. Their child, Richard Weekes, was baptised on 11 April 1841,¹⁴⁹⁷ and just over a month later, on 28 May 1841, the burial ceremony was held for another Richard Weekes. This was a man said to have been seventy years old and resident in Charlestown.¹⁴⁹⁸ The deceased could very well have been Dick who, after having absconded, could have returned to Nevis after Emancipation.

Five more people who belonged to Dr Thomas Pym Weekes

On 9 October 1790 Thomas Pym Weekes transferred ten people in trust to a partnership of Revd William Jones, John Taylor and John Frederick Pinney but he and his wife Isabella retained the use of these people. Included were five of the people previously owned and mortgaged by William Burt Weekes and his mother (Mary, Nancy, William, Tom and Charloe) and another five: the black boy Billy Barrington, Sally Brooks and her son James Herbert, and Ann and her son Ned.¹⁴⁹⁹ Most of these people re-appeared in a lease of 1795, together with two more – **Louisa** and **Hector**. Louisa presumably was the Louisa Weekes who was lent to the Cokers - her story is told in the section on William Coker and his enslaved people - but about Hector nothing is known.

Billy, also William, Barrington was probably born about 1781. This was around the time William Burt Weekes's cousin Governor William Mathew Burt died and Billy Barrington's name may have derived Governor Burt's residence at Antigua, Fort Barrington.

On 19 July 1793 Thomas Pym Weekes sold Billy Barrington to Charles Andrew Mills for S£70.¹⁵⁰⁰ Mills, in turn, accepted 'from the trustees of Mrs Martha Williams Hamilton one hundred pounds for the negro boy Billy Barrington for her sole use and benefit'.¹⁵⁰¹

In 1817 the Deputy Naval Officer of Tonnage and Surveyor, George Abbott,¹⁵⁰² registered a 35-year-old creole called William Barrington, together with another ten males and three females.¹⁵⁰³ Almost certainly this was the same man because Abbott had not only witnessed Thomas Pym Weekes sale to Mills, he also had other Weekes connections: George Abbott lived near the Cedar Trees and had a mulatto son, Jack Abbott, with one of Ann Weekes's former women, Patty Weekes.

Between 1817 and 1822 George Abbott sold Billy Barrington to a large estate in St James Windward, Russell's Rest and Maddens. It then belonged to 'the heirs of the late Mrs Catherine Stapleton and others'. Billy Barrington may possibly have been sold to that plantation because he had a son there - a sambo boy called Barrington. This child was born in about 1815 but died some time before 1822.

¹⁴⁹⁶ In 1828 John F Bertrand's register for four people was signed by Robert Prescott Browne. Eleanor Bertrand still lived at the Cedar Trees when she was buried in January 1839, aged 36 (NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1837-1840/1 No 74).

¹⁴⁹⁷ NHCS, Nevis Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 No 14

¹⁴⁹⁸ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1954 No 232

¹⁴⁹⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1790-1792 f41; also CR 1794-1797 f431

¹⁵⁰⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1799-1801 ff268-9

¹⁵⁰¹ It is likely that this man was the same Charles Mills whose arrival in England Fanny Nisbet announced a year later to her husband when she told him that Charles Mills had come home to be a West India merchant (GPB Naish (ed) *Nelson's letters* pp256-58 Mrs Nelson to husband 16 October 1794 and 2 November 1794).

¹⁵⁰² UKNA, CO 186/10: 18 July 1814

¹⁵⁰³ UKNA, T 71/364

After he was sold to the Stapleton plantation William Barrington became known as William Abbott. His age was estimated at 30 years; his previous owner may have claimed that he was younger than he was in order to fetch a better price. William Barrington/Abbott died between 1825 and 1828.¹⁵⁰⁴ He was in his forties.

Around the same time George Abbott had sold Billy Barrington he had purchased from the estate of a deceased mariner, William Edward Phillip, an 18-year-old sambo man called Tom.¹⁵⁰⁵ Abbott may have acquired this young man to crew the schooner he bought in 1824, the two-masted *Martha Eliza*.¹⁵⁰⁶

Sally Brooks, a mulatto woman, in October 1790 had one child, a son called James Herbert. It is not known how old he was. Some time in the early 1790s she gave birth to a girl called Judith Scarborough, and Thomas Pym Weekes sold both of them for N£180.¹⁵⁰⁷ The buyer was James Scarborough who in 1793 manumitted mother and daughter¹⁵⁰⁸ and, very soon after Thomas Pym Weekes died, also her son James.¹⁵⁰⁹ Nothing more is known about Sally Brooks after she was freed.

Sally Brooks's son James Herbert became a father in 1803. This daughter, Frances Herbert, almost certainly was his first child. Much later he had another daughter, Anne, who was baptised in October 1824.¹⁵¹⁰ By then James Herbert was married to a woman called Maria Slaidler.¹⁵¹¹

James Herbert lived with his family in New Town in the parish of St Thomas Lowland. He was a carpenter. In September 1829, having already done some work on behalf of the Legislature,¹⁵¹² he tendered for repairs to the Court House,¹⁵¹³ was awarded the contract but three years on still had not finished the repairs to the doors and windows. Mr Galpine, who was dispatched to enquire about progress, confronted him.¹⁵¹⁴ This was around the time James Herbert lost his daughter Frances. She died, aged 29, in September 1832,¹⁵¹⁵ and he also lost his wife, Maria. He re-married some time before the mid-1830s. James Herbert became a Parish Clerk, and presumably in that capacity was called upon to witness several marriages which took place in the church at St Thomas Lowland.¹⁵¹⁶

On 3 March 1833 James Herbert enjoyed the privilege of being among a handful of free mixed-race people who were administered the 'first Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood'. This took place in the church at St Thomas Lowland, and it must have been a momentous occasion for everyone in the parish, not just the regular worshippers. For the first time the Holy Sacrament was given to a mixed congregation of nine whites, five free and eight enslaved individuals.¹⁵¹⁷

In 1817 James Herbert had registered seven people and despite selling one (the black woman Sarah whom he sold to Matilda Herbert for N£120), and freeing another (the woman Present),¹⁵¹⁸ by 1834 he was able to claim compensation for a total of thirteen people. Four of these belonged to his second

¹⁵⁰⁴ UKNA, T 71/367

¹⁵⁰⁵ UKNA, T 71/365

¹⁵⁰⁶ UKNA, BT 107/484

¹⁵⁰⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1794-1797 f34

¹⁵⁰⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1792-1794 ff465-66.

¹⁵⁰⁹ James Scarborough manumitted James Herbert as James George (ECSCRN, CR 1803-1805 f5).

¹⁵¹⁰ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 57

¹⁵¹¹ UKNA, T 71/366

¹⁵¹² UKNA, CO 185/9: c 1820

¹⁵¹³ UKNA, CO 186/13: 10 September 1829

¹⁵¹⁴ UKNA, CO 186/14: 25 August 1832

¹⁵¹⁵ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 590

¹⁵¹⁶ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

¹⁵¹⁷ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873 Notes at the back

¹⁵¹⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f103 and CR 1829-1830 Vol 1 f327

wife, Judith; two to his deceased wife, Maria; one to his dead daughter, Frances, and one had come to him by way of a bequest from the free woman Elizabeth Stapleton.¹⁵¹⁹

For his people James Herbert received £212 in compensation,¹⁵²⁰ and possibly with this windfall, he and his wife bought the land that, before their marriage, had belonged to his wife. It appears that she had sold or mortgaged it to the mariner Edward Halliday. On 24 July 1838, a week before Emancipation, James and Judith Herbert paid N£100, the residue of the purchase money. He signed the document; she made her mark. This land in New Town measured 54' by 36' and abutted property which the Herberts already owned. It lay to the east of the Street (presumably the main island road) and bordered to the west the land of the late James Lawrence and to the north property of three Keepe women,¹⁵²¹ one of whom, Rebecca Keepe, was a school teacher on Peter Thomas Huggins's estate.¹⁵²²

The Herberts either moved to Cotton Ground in St Thomas Lowland parish, or they added to their property portfolio when in 1845 they leased half an acre of what used to be Clifton Paynes and Mortons Bay plantation.¹⁵²³

Sally Brooks daughter **Judith Scarborough** who had been freed with her mother in 1793, had by 1817 acquired five females aged between eight months and 30 years. Five years on, and the baby Polly had died, as well as one of the women, Violet. When Judith's father died in 1823 she acquired five more individuals, of whom one died by 1828, Eliza, a young girl. She then sold the boy Jacob who had come from her father and registered the births of two babies.

In June 1832 Judith Scarborough married John Williamson Huggins,¹⁵²⁴ and the six people she then had in her possession became his property. His claim for slave compensation was, however, reduced to four individuals for whom the couple received £56.¹⁵²⁵ Judith Huggins's husband died in November 1841; he was said to have been 29 years old and living at the Bath.¹⁵²⁶ Judith Huggins was buried on 9 February 1862. She was 68 years old.¹⁵²⁷

Together with James [Herbert], James Scarborough manumitted another mestee boy called **Edward Jones**.¹⁵²⁸ Almost certainly this was Ann's son Ned. Presumably James Scarborough acquired the boys when he stood security for Thomas Pym Weekes following the arrest for debt by John Arthurton.¹⁵²⁹

Ann[e] appeared in a lease of 1795 and, with Ned, in a document of 1796 but no record of her manumission has been found. Various described as a mulatto and a mestize, she may have originally belonged to Michael Stanley; in December 1776 Stanley sold to William Jones a mulatto woman called Anne for N£125.¹⁵³⁰ Also possible is that she may have been the mulatto wench JPP acquired in 1773 from Ann Sprowles. However, JPP decided that Ann Sprowles, one of Revd Robert

¹⁵¹⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f8, and UKNA, T 71/1038 Claim No 140

¹⁵²⁰ PP, Dom Box R-6: Compensation file and HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlvi: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08

¹⁵²¹ ECSCRN, CR 1838-1847 f40

¹⁵²² NHCS, Blue Book Nevis 1840

¹⁵²³ ECSCRN, CR 1838-1847 f706

¹⁵²⁴ NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842

¹⁵²⁵ UKNA, T 71/1038 Claim No 224

Judith Scarborough's slave registration returns did not always accurately reflect the number of people she had in her possession (UKNA, T71/366-68).

¹⁵²⁶ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1838-1965 No 251

¹⁵²⁷ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1838-1965 No 1248

¹⁵²⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1803-1805 f5

¹⁵²⁹ PP, Dom Box S4: Mary Smith, Nevis, to Mrs Pinney, 14 February 1796

¹⁵³⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1776-1777 f561

Robertson's four daughters, was to retain the use of Ann 'during her natural life' and after Ann Sprowles's death, Ann was to go to Ann Sprowles's niece Elizabeth Washington 'for ever'. The transaction was witnessed on 14 September 1774 by JPP's white servant and his children's white nurse, Thomas Peaden and Ann Ward.¹⁵³¹ It is not known, though, how Ann would have come from Elizabeth Washington's possession into that of Mrs Jones but it is known that Thomas Pym Weekes acquired Ann and her son from Revd William Jones. For some time there was an ongoing dispute over Ann's value and her ownership because Ann was 'settled on Mrs Jones totally independent of her husband', and JPP believed that Revd Jones had no right to sell her to Thomas Pym Weekes.¹⁵³²

JPP was adamant that Ann should not accompany the Weekes boys to England,¹⁵³³ and in fact, in the following year she was hired to Revd William Jones for four months at N4s6d a week.¹⁵³⁴ Then JPP wanted her and her child sold; Mrs Jones had agreed to execute the papers.¹⁵³⁵ The final communication regarding Ann was an instruction from JPP to James Williams: 'Dispose of Ann if you can settle with Mrs Jones as she must be a party to the sale, who is to have one fourth of the purchase money for signing the bill of sale. Whatever sum you may pay her Mr William Jones is accountable for to the Estate of Dr Weekes as he sold her as his property unencumbered.'¹⁵³⁶

Ann's son Ned (Edward), with whom Sally Brooks's son James (Herbert) was manumitted in 1796, became a writing clerk. In 1817 Edward Jones registered two individuals and from the executors of Elizabeth Arthurton bought another one in 1820, a six-year-old girl called Shurey.¹⁵³⁷ In May 1821 he manumitted her as 'Sheurey alias Amarilla'.¹⁵³⁸ One other, Jemmy, he gave up for sale to Trinidad.¹⁵³⁹

Edward Jones had a child with Elizabeth Jones, purchased by Martha Archbald in March 1820 from Revd Samuel Lyons and then manumitted.¹⁵⁴⁰ The couple lived in Charlestown, and when they had a daughter, they named her Ann, or Nancy, after his mother. The child was baptised in December 1824.¹⁵⁴¹ Edward Jones did not live long after his daughter was baptised. He died young, aged 31, and was buried in July 1826.¹⁵⁴² He was sufficiently prominent in the community for this death to have been recorded in the diary of a white inhabitant.¹⁵⁴³

The widow Jones was a shopkeeper but a month after her husband's death suffered 'a great robbery' in her premises. Being poor, she sought financial support from the Legislature and, being considered deserving (she was said to have been industrious), she was granted \$200. Two enslaved men were accused of the burglary, tried but acquitted.¹⁵⁴⁴ Aged 36, Mrs Elizabeth Jones died in March 1833.¹⁵⁴⁵

When her husband died, Mrs Elizabeth Jones acquired his people, and the overseer or manager Thomas E Archbald signed her first register. In 1831 she had three and by the time she died, she had four. The last addition was the new-born Grace. In her will, she freed a woman 'for her faithful service' and bequeathed the other three people to her sisters.¹⁵⁴⁶

¹⁵³¹ ECSCRN, CR 1773-1775 f86

¹⁵³² PP, LB 9: JPP to Revd Jones, 18 September 1789, LB 12: JPP to Ann Weekes, Nevis, 24 November 1796, and LB 12: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 15 November 1796

The root of this dispute probably went back to a bond worth £1,120 given by Revd Robert Robertson to his grandson, Revd William Jones (PP, WI 'Damaged or Fragile' Box).

¹⁵³³ PP, LB 12: JPP to Ann Weekes, Nevis, 24 November 1796

¹⁵³⁴ PP, AB 52 and AB 47 Cash a/c

¹⁵³⁵ PP, LB 40: TP & T to James Williams, Nevis, 17 May 1798

¹⁵³⁶ PP, LB 14: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 14 October 1798

¹⁵³⁷ UKNA, T 71/365

¹⁵³⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1819-1823 ff471-73

¹⁵³⁹ UKNA, T 71/366

¹⁵⁴⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1819-1823 ff32-3

¹⁵⁴¹ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 63

¹⁵⁴² NHCS, St Paul's Burial 1825-1837 No 135

¹⁵⁴³ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

¹⁵⁴⁴ UKNA, CO 186/13

¹⁵⁴⁵ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 506

¹⁵⁴⁶ ECSCRN, Book of Wills 1830-1837 f68

The glazier's sons James and Henry Williams, 1794-1803 and 1803-1805

James Williams was the first manager JPP employed from outside the family and the only man promoted from his job as overseer. Williams's story conforms to the image of the typical plantation manager: he was an alcoholic, he had a mistress on the plantation with whom he had children, enriched himself at his employer's expense, and he died in service. He was succeeded by his brother Henry who was sacked for incompetence.



James Williams

The son of Lewis Williams and his wife Elizabeth Hopkins, James Williams was christened on 16 March 1763 in Chepstow, Monmouthshire. Almost certainly Henry was his older brother but so far no record of his christening has been found. James and Henry came from a large family, and most of their nine brothers and sisters were born in quick succession: Lewis was baptised in May 1764, George in February 1766, Theophilus in December 1767, Elizabeth in February 1769, Mary in October 1770, and then, after a gap, Warren [William] in May 1776. When the oldest girl, Elizabeth, died, another girl of the same name was baptised in August 1777. She was followed by Catharine, named after the paternal grandmother and christened in January 1780,¹⁵⁴⁷ and finally, when James was already twenty years old, Richard, was born. He was baptised in December 1782.¹⁵⁴⁸

The Williams brothers came from a family of artisans. Their father worked as a glazier, like his father had done before him. In the 1730s and 1740s the brothers' paternal grandfather, Theophilus Williams, is said to have had a shop at 9 High Street in Chepstow,¹⁵⁴⁹ but it is not known whether Lewis Williams worked from the same premises.¹⁵⁵⁰ The brothers' maternal grandfather, James Hopkins, plied the trade of a shipwright, also in Chepstow. It is likely, though, that his forebears originated from Brockweir or Hewelsfield, villages just a few kilometres north of Chepstow on the Welsh/Gloucestershire border.¹⁵⁵¹ It appears that both the Williamses and the Hopkinses were relatively well-to-do; they either owned, or had an interest in, property. In the year James was baptised, their maternal grandfather made over to their father some land in St Briavel's (this lay between two roads leading from Brockweir towards 'Hudnolls or High Knowles Common'), and later the brothers' father was due to pay a small annuity from several properties in Hewelsfield and St Briavel's. Rented out to tenants, these were modest dwellings¹⁵⁵² but nevertheless show that the family enjoyed a certain wealth and status as people who owned or derived income from property.

Chepstow sits at the mouth of the river Wye, just inland from the Severn Estuary. Although the Severn tides rise by as much as 14 metres (46 feet), the town was well situated as a transport centre. From upriver, from Brockweir and other small ports, came vessels laden with iron, timber and timber products, such as bark and charcoal, as well as Hereford cider and other goods. These then made

¹⁵⁴⁷ Theophilus Williams married Catharine Coxe in November 1729 in Chepstow (<http://www.familysearch.org/eng/>).

¹⁵⁴⁸ GRO, D/pa 86.13.3 Chepstow Register of Christenings and Burials 1761-1812

Several men with the surname Williams were among the early settlers of Nevis but they almost certainly were a different branch (N Dermott Harding *Bristol and America: A Record of the First Settlers* p387 and p412; Coldham, Peter Wilson *Complete Book of Emigrants, 1661-1699* and VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 3 List of Nevis Inhabitants). William Coker's mother's maiden name was also Williams, and JPP corresponded with a Mrs Williams from Dorchester but these, too, almost certainly were unconnected to the Williams brothers. There is no evidence that James or Henry had any connections with other Williamses in the island.

¹⁵⁴⁹ Waters, Ivor *The Town of Chepstow Part 6: High Street*

¹⁵⁵⁰ Theophilus Williams operated from 9 High Street during the period 1732 to 1747 at least while between 1802 and 1821 a grocer known to have occupied the premises. More recently, a department store called Herbert Lewis was run from Numbers 9, 10 and 11. In 2011 Herbert Lewis still occupied the same premises.

¹⁵⁵¹ James Williams's early Hopkins forebears in 'Huelsfield' may have been Thomas, whose wife Blanch died in 1627. Several generations later there was another Thomas Hopkins but he was from 'Brockweir'; his wife Ann died in 1763. Also of Brockweir was James Hopkins, whose daughter Elizabeth died in 1734 and his wife of the same name in 1753. Another James Hopkins lost his wife, Bridget, in 1771. He died in 1786 (<http://www.forest-of-dean.net/>).

¹⁵⁵² GA, D/2957/161/13 Marriage Settlement Lease and Release James Hopkins and Lewis Williams; GRO, Npt MSS 887, and Monmouthshire RO Documents: Evans & Evill, Solicitors, Chepstow ref 0741 (Vol 2 p290)).

their way to Bristol along the Severn and up the river Avon, while cargoes from sailing ships that arrived at Chepstow were broken up and transported upstream in shallow-draught boats. Chepstow also engaged in foreign trade but its main commerce was with Bristol, and a weekly market boat that transported as many as ninety passengers connected the two ports. Apart from its importance as a trading centre, the town also developed its own thriving ship-building industry that arose from the Wye timber trade.¹⁵⁵³ In the boatyards along the banks of the river local craftsmen even constructed big West Indiamen. When in the 1820s the House planned to have a new vessel built, a Chepstow company won the bid over one based in Bristol, and at least one slaver, the brig *Betsey*, is known to have been constructed in Chepstow.¹⁵⁵⁴ But the transatlantic ships rarely visited their home port; usually they were on charter to Bristol merchants, and after 1809, when Bristol built its Floating Harbour to accommodate bigger ships, even fewer entered the river Wye. During the course of the C19th the town's shipbuilding industry declined, and foreign trade ceased altogether towards the end of the century. The closure of the customs house marked the passing of Chepstow's status as a player - albeit a minor one - in the global market.¹⁵⁵⁵ Given that there was this international dimension to his hometown, it is not surprising, then, that James Williams ended up abroad. According to Joseph Gill, he had arrived in Nevis on Captain Henry Webbe's ship. Almost certainly Williams had been a sailor.

He may have previously worked on the *Nevis Planter* under Captain Ashfield Hunt. The ship had left Bristol in January 1781 and returned from Nevis exactly three months later. Among the crew were two men called James Williams and Thomas Williams.¹⁵⁵⁶ It is possible that James Williams then worked on the *Theopoldus* and, after a break, signed on with another Chepstow man, Thomas Williams, to serve on the *Trusty*. It cannot be said with certainty that this was the same James Williams; Williams is a very common Welsh family name and altogether three seamen called James Williams and three men called Thomas Williams operated out of Bristol, and on the *Trusty* was also a John Williams (from Bristol). The master of the *Trusty* was Henry Webbe, a Bristol man,¹⁵⁵⁷ who regularly plied the Nevis route. Webbe often recruited sailors from Wales; on a previous voyage of the *Merlin*, for instance, he had employed two men from Monmouth.¹⁵⁵⁸

On 5 November 1783 the *Trusty* left Bristol. The vessel remained abroad for an unusually long time and only returned to its home port in mid-June the following year. According to the ship's muster roll, James Williams was not among the 17 crew, but it is possible that he had been missed off the documents when the crew was paid off on their return. A man who had left the vessel as soon as it got to Nevis several months earlier and who was then left behind in the West Indies could have been forgotten.¹⁵⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵³ Farr, Grahame E *Chepstow Ships* p13 and Ivor Waters *The Port of Chepstow*

¹⁵⁵⁴ William Scott of Bristol lost the tender to build the *Charles* and the contract went to William James of Chepstow. On the stern, the vessel appears to have borne the Pinney arms (PP, LB 58: William James to PA & Co, 24 July 1824).

The brig *Betsey* was built in 1756 in Chepstow and, registered in Bristol, on at least one voyage sailed to Africa and Jamaica (David Eltis *et al* (eds) *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade CD-ROM Voyage No 17451*).

¹⁵⁵⁵ Farr, Grahame E *Chepstow Ships* p11 and Ivor Waters *The Port of Chepstow*

¹⁵⁵⁶ BRO, Ships' Muster Rolls 1783-1784 No 115

¹⁵⁵⁷ *Sketchley's Bristol Directory 1775* and BULSC, DM 1061

For most voyages between 1770 and 1775 Henry Webbe was master and sometimes part-owner of the *Nevis Planter*, with Bush & Elton, Daniel Henderson and Henry Bright (BRO, 39654 (2) and Ships' Muster Rolls 1771-1783, and Walter Minchinton *The Trade of Bristol* p129

¹⁵⁵⁸ BRO, Ships' Muster Rolls 1780-1781 in Volume 1777-1783 No 7

¹⁵⁵⁹ BRO, Ships' Muster Rolls 1783-1784 Numbers 117 and 139

While one James Williams was on the *Nevis Planter* (between 24 January and 24 April 1781), two worked from 9 March to 16 May 1781 on the *Apollo* (BRO, Ships' Muster Rolls 1783-1784 Numbers 115 and 132). The men called Thomas Williams served on the *Bristol* (from 16 October 1783 to 29 July 1784), the *Liverpool* (from 20 April to 2 August 1784) and the *Jupiter*. This ship had sailed to Africa and Jamaica and the Thomas Williams who served on her died on 14 March 1784 (Numbers 156, 149 and 147).

Confusingly, according to Joseph Gill's accounts in October 1783 James Williams paid him some money on Tom Wenham's behalf (PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f159; also AB 30), but that man could have been one of the Nevis Williamses (PP, WI Box J-1).

Whatever James Williams's movements had been, he arrived on Captain Henry Webbe's ship in poor health. Joseph Gill looked after him and by July 1784 Williams was well enough to go to St Kitts on Gill's behalf. He probably lived on Mountravers; certainly by August 1784 he did so.¹⁵⁶⁰

Williams arrived at a time when Gill was having problems managing the estate. JPP felt obliged to travel to Nevis but then business in England detained him and, assisted by JPP's attorney, Gill struggled on. The overseer, Samuel Bennett, proved difficult, and Gill sacked him – after all, he already had a replacement on hand – and engaged James Williams instead. As it turned out, the young man was in the right place at the right time. Gill later reminisced how he had helped not just James Williams but also JPP:

I took him in a most sickly state from Capt Webbe and made useful to me as a kind of clerk etc and to assist about the plantation business for which I never charged Mr Pinney a farthing, although it saved him latterly £100 a year overseer wages – fed him and found him in everything a year and a half at my own expense ...¹⁵⁶¹

Gill had forgotten that he had written: 'Mr Gill the Manager charges £40 per annum for his board.'¹⁵⁶² He had also forgotten that this money came out of the plantation account.¹⁵⁶³ But from the day Williams officially started to work, 23 August 1785, Gill refused to provide his board.¹⁵⁶⁴ Williams's salary was N£90 a year and, because as the overseer he was not entitled to any servants, at a cost of N6s a week he engaged two women from the plantation: Phillely, who was in her late twenties, and Leah Weekes, a woman in her early thirties. This is the only instance of an overseer paying to hire servants, and he did not engage the women for long. They remained with him only for four weeks.¹⁵⁶⁵

Gill was supposed to instruct him but had already become increasingly unable to manage life, let alone the plantation. JPP's attorney John Taylor stepped in and arranged for a former Mountravers employee, Thomas Arthurton, to assist and train James Williams.¹⁵⁶⁶ Just after Christmas Joseph Gill packed up, left Mountravers and went to live in Charlestown.¹⁵⁶⁷ A replacement manager was on his way from England; William Coker began work in mid-January.

Williams and Coker appear to have got along well, and presumably through Coker he became familiar with the affairs of Coker's sisters-in-law, The Ladies at the Cedar Trees. Over the years Williams came to have much contact with these woman, and it is likely that Coker introduced the newcomer to other people in the island. Gill appears to have kept himself to himself but Coker was well known, particularly as he had married a local woman and had held public office. Coker's son John Frederick came to Nevis, with his cousin Thomas Pym Weekes, around the beginning of 1788,¹⁵⁶⁸ and it would have been a very discreet man indeed who did not disclose to his right-hand man, the overseer, details about young Weekes's problems at school, his passion for spending time in the tavern, his temper, and his and his father's debts. While the newly qualified Dr Thomas Pym Weekes was setting himself up in his medical practice in Charlestown, James Williams may already have developed resentment towards him. When Coker, too, fell short of JPP's expectations and got sacked from his post as manager, Williams, no doubt, stood by him and supported him. The two men would have been united in their disapproval of JPP's choice of Dr Thomas Pym Weekes as the replacement manager. Still on the same salary, N£90 a year,¹⁵⁶⁹ James Williams must have hoped that his time

¹⁵⁶⁰ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790, and AB 35 James Williams's a/c

¹⁵⁶¹ PP, MSS in Numbered Folders (Folder 6)

¹⁵⁶² PP, AB 35 James Williams's a/c

¹⁵⁶³ PP, AB 31 Plantation a/c

¹⁵⁶⁴ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1780-1790 f178 Memo

¹⁵⁶⁵ PP, AB 30 Negro Hire a/c

¹⁵⁶⁶ PP, AB 35 and AB 30 Joseph Gill's a/c and Thomas Arthurton's a/c

¹⁵⁶⁷ PP, AB 35 Joseph Gill's a/c

¹⁵⁶⁸ PP, AB 33 Capt Charles Maies' a/c

¹⁵⁶⁹ PP, AB 43 James Williams' a/c

for promotion had come - after all, he was manager material. Having worked for five years as overseer, he had served his apprenticeship. He was familiar with the plantation regime, and he was literate. He had done the book-keeping for Coker.¹⁵⁷⁰ His handwriting was nicely formed and fluent, and for the purpose of keeping his employer briefed it did not matter that sometimes his spelling and his punctuation were erratic. Weekes, on the other hand, had left the island as a child and only had a second-hand knowledge of plantation management. It is likely that Williams would have let it be known at every opportunity that he was more experienced, and probably also more capable. Roughly the same age, the two men may just not have liked each other. Whatever the reason, there certainly were tensions between James Williams and Thomas Pym Weekes.

James Williams wore shirts made of Irish linen, a blue coat with trimmings, and 'fine brown thread stockings'. These had to be ordered from England. From England he had 'a good silver watch' sent as well, and Weekes, who passed on this order to JPP, also relayed a request for a cornelian to be made into an ornament. The cornelian was in Williams's possession and dispatched from Nevis 'in the tin case' in which the documents and other valuables were shipped across the Atlantic. Williams was somewhat in a hurry to get the cornelian back,¹⁵⁷¹ and almost certainly the ornament was a present for his mistress, Jenetta. Born on Mountravers, she was about ten years younger than him and undoubtedly lived with him in the overseer's house at Sharloes. When Williams requested the ornament be made, she was either pregnant with their first child, or their child had just been born. Their son was called Lewis, after Williams's father and one of his brothers. When Lewis was about six months old, James Williams bought his first person - perhaps Jenetta was putting pressure on him to have someone assist her with the baby.¹⁵⁷² Most likely the person he bought was Flora, an African woman in her early twenties.

After Weekes was in post for a while, JPP pondered who might succeed him as manager in case he died or suddenly left the plantation. The doctor had enquired about buying his own estate but was also thinking about returning to England. He had got married, but Isabella, his Scottish wife, was not happy in Nevis, and, given his impulsive nature, it was possible he might pack up and leave quickly. JPP wanted a successor in place. First he chose William Coker's nephew-by-marriage, Charles Ellery, because he was family and needed a job but Ellery's 'violent proceedings' were so 'reprehensible' that JPP changed his mind and opted for James Williams. JPP had met Williams during his visit in 1790 and knew him to be a capable man. He spoke well of him, and as a measure of his approval granted a (long overdue) pay increase of N£10.¹⁵⁷³

At the end of 1792 Isabella Weekes died, and while the grieving widower slumped into deep depression, Williams probably had to cover some of the manager's duties and deal with an increased workload. Left with two young sons, Thomas Pym Weekes wanted to escape to another island to practise medicine,¹⁵⁷⁴ or at least visit England,¹⁵⁷⁵ and while he was deliberating, one of JPP's sons, Azariah, came to Nevis to recover his health and inspect the plantation. Perhaps encouraged by Azariah, James Williams decided to leave for a visit home once crop was finished. On 1 August 1793 he boarded Captain Maies's ship, the *Nevis*, and sailed for England.¹⁵⁷⁶ The captain left behind sugars that Thomas Pym Weekes had parked on the beach for him, ready for loading,¹⁵⁷⁷ and he left behind a young stowaway. The day before the ship sailed, Maies had discovered a boy, 'concealed and half starved'. He 'was immediately sent onshore to his master Mr Moreton'. But among Williams's fellow passengers was another 'negro lad', a free man on his way back to England. Having been hired

¹⁵⁷⁰ PP, AB 35 Undated note

¹⁵⁷¹ PP, AB 43 James Williams' a/c

¹⁵⁷² PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 9 June 1792

¹⁵⁷³ PP, LB 9: JPP to TP Weekes, 22 December 1791; also JPP to John Taylor, 22 December 1791

¹⁵⁷⁴ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 2 October 1793

¹⁵⁷⁵ PP, LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 6 August 1793

¹⁵⁷⁶ PP, AB 39 and AB 42

¹⁵⁷⁷ PP, AB 45 Memo and LB 11: JPP to TP Weekes, Nevis, 2 October 1793

the previous year to accompany a gentleman on his passage to Nevis, he had stayed abroad for several months and was now returning on Maies's ship.¹⁵⁷⁸

Williams must have been glad to get away - and not just to escape Dr Weekes's dark moods. At the beginning of the year food had been scarce again,¹⁵⁷⁹ in St Kitts the small pox had broken out again¹⁵⁸⁰ and a virulent fever was sweeping through the West Indies.¹⁵⁸¹ But these were dangerous times in which to travel. Britain, once again, was at war with France. Only recently the *Mercury* had been captured on her way from Bristol to Nevis,¹⁵⁸² and although the *Nevis* had earlier in the year received a licence to carry arms,¹⁵⁸³ she would have stood little chance against any French privateers patrolling the Caribbean waters.

Maies's failure to pick up all the sugars from the beach upset JPP badly. The missing cargo later arrived on the *Alert*¹⁵⁸⁴ but the damage was done. JPP attributed this act of negligence to a plot by Thomas Pym Weekes against himself and Maies,¹⁵⁸⁵ a view sustained, perhaps, by Williams's version of events. When Williams saw JPP in Bristol, he confirmed that Dr Weekes definitely wanted to leave Nevis, and at this stage JPP was positive that James Williams was the right choice to become Weekes's successor. A new man was to be found for the post of overseer.¹⁵⁸⁶ While casting around for a suitable replacement, JPP received a message from another Nevis planter, John Smith Budgeon. He had heard that one of his men had sailed to England aboard Maies's ship. JPP assured him that the House had made 'every enquiry in our power respecting your negroe boy' and thought that Mr Moreton's boy, the stowaway whom Maies had caught, 'may possibly have given rise to the report'. It is quite likely that someone may have seen the free black servant alight from Maies's ship, mistaking him for Budgeon's man.¹⁵⁸⁷

Williams went to Chepstow. Most likely, this was his first visit home, and no doubt he would have brought with him presents of exotic fruits and curiosities such as shells and calabashes. His young brothers and sisters would have grown beyond recognition, and it is likely that during this visit his brother Henry formed the idea of following him to the West Indies. However, it appears that James Williams might have considered not returning to Nevis but, equally, this could have been a bargaining position he adopted. He certainly delayed his return. Apparently he had a sore on his leg, caused by the friction of his boot. This injury was said to have been so bad that it prevented him from returning to Bristol in time to catch the first fleet. In mid-December he received a letter from JPP, promising to pay his fare (the delay may have made his employer more inclined to induce him with this bonus) and also the fees for an eminent surgeon in Bristol to attend to the sore. Very keen to employ him, JPP pressed Williams to try and catch the second fleet. If he missed the second fleet because the leg still had not healed, the birth would be kept open for him – and JPP underlined this - 'at all events'. Just before Christmas James Williams got another letter from JPP with a repeated appeal to hurry up and join the fleet.¹⁵⁸⁸

Williams probably returned to Bristol on Monday, 23 December, on the weekly market-boat that sailed to Bristol. He would have got off at the 'Second Slip on the Back', the 'Welsh Back' where boats from

¹⁵⁷⁸ The free 'negro lad' who had accompanied a gentleman on his voyage to the West Indies is rare evidence of a black servant being brought from England to Nevis, rather than a servant being taken from Nevis (PP, LB 39: P & T to John Smith Budgeon, Twickenham, Middlesex, 26 October 1793).

¹⁵⁷⁹ UKHO, Remark Book 39 (AC1): Remarks by HMS Sloop *Fairy*, Francis Laforey Commander

¹⁵⁸⁰ Evans, JAH *Nathaniel Wells of Piercefield and St Kitts* p96

¹⁵⁸¹ PP, LB 12: JPP, Bristol, to Richard Pew, Shaftesbury, 28 November 1793

¹⁵⁸² PP, LB 39: P & T to Wm Colhoun MP, Wretham nr Thetford, Norfolk, 25 July 1793

¹⁵⁸³ PP, AB 40 Owners of Ship *Nevis* a/c

¹⁵⁸⁴ PP, LB 12: JPP to Azariah Pinney, 24 November 1793

¹⁵⁸⁵ PP, AB 42 and LB 12: JPP to Azariah Pinney, 24 November 1793

¹⁵⁸⁶ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 2 October 1793

¹⁵⁸⁷ PP, LB 39: P & T to John Smith Budgeon, Twickenham, Middlesex, 26 October 1793

¹⁵⁸⁸ PP, LB 12: JPP to James Williams at Mr Williams, Chepstow, 12 and 21 December 1793

Wales dropped off their cargo and passengers.¹⁵⁸⁹ He was just in time to catch Captain Maies's ship. Travelling with him were JPP, his son John Frederick, their servant Pero Jones and a new overseer, John Smith.¹⁵⁹⁰ They had plenty of time to get acquainted with each other because it took ten weeks for a convoy to assemble. Having sailed from Bristol to Ireland, the *Nevis* reached Cork harbour on Thursday, 26 December 1793 but they did not leave until 2 March.¹⁵⁹¹ Both James Williams and John Smith started work on the day they arrived in Nevis, 8 May 1794.¹⁵⁹²

James Williams's salary went up by a third to N£150 a year.¹⁵⁹³ In addition he was entitled to extra benefits: '40 bushels of corn for his feathered stock', 'as much rum and muscavado sugar' as he could use, and five servants. His contract of employment stipulated that occasionally he was to supply broth 'for sick negroes and other slaves' and also some of his own garden produce. JPP, too, was entitled to have some of it sent to England. His employer was very particular about the sheep Williams was allowed to keep. A flock of up to forty 'very good sheep' could roam the pasture, and he could keep another fifteen for fattening, but he was to give the overseer a quarter of the flock killed. At the very most he could let fifty sheep graze in the pasture below the mansion house, never in the better pastures above. In addition, he had to keep the house at Woodland in good repair so that the manager could vacate the Great House and move there if the Pinneys ever come to stay.¹⁵⁹⁴

JPP, his son and Pero Jones returned to England, Thomas Pym Weekes took some of his people and went to Martinique to start a new life there, and Williams could settle down to his new job. He was to work under the supervision of JPP's friend and attorney, John Taylor.

Ten years after arriving in Nevis, James Williams, the glazier's son from Chepstow, had made it. He had literally moved up in the world because from his overseer's house at swampy Sharloes he shifted his few belongings uphill into the Great House. And with him, no doubt, came Jenetta and their son Lewis. JPP, meanwhile, was busying himself with account books and, while still at sea on his way back to England, managed to spot James Williams's first accounting error. It was to be corrected: 'Give credit for one day's hire of Tom McGill more than you have already credited, as we find, upon casting up his time, he was on board [the ship *Nevis*] 65 days instead of 64'.¹⁵⁹⁵

On becoming manager James Williams's social status grew. When he was overseer, he had been given the minor (and passive) task of witnessing documents,¹⁵⁹⁶ but now he was in demand to take on responsible legal roles. One of The Ladies at the Cedar Trees, Ann Weekes, appointed him as a trustee in her will,¹⁵⁹⁷ as did her brother in England, William Burt Weekes. Another unmarried woman, Mary Keep, who lived in St Thomas Lowland, called on him to act as a joint executor with her brother¹⁵⁹⁸ and a cooper, John Jones, wanted him to be his sole executor.¹⁵⁹⁹ William Coker, as well as a partnership of James Tobin, his son Henry Hope Tobin and Azariah Pinney, engaged Williams as their attorney.¹⁶⁰⁰ JPP had such confidence in his abilities that he asked him to take on additional duties. The manager at one of the mortgaged estates in Nevis, Mount Sion, was inattentive in his bookkeeping and JPP wanted Williams to assist George Hobson with this. In addition to borrowing

¹⁵⁸⁹ Farr, Grahame E *Chepstow Ships* p13

¹⁵⁹⁰ PP, AB 41 Cash a/c

¹⁵⁹¹ PP, AB 45 f22

¹⁵⁹² PP, AB 39

¹⁵⁹³ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 29 November 1794

¹⁵⁹⁴ PP, Misc Vols 7 1783-1794 List of Deeds and Papers at Nevis

¹⁵⁹⁵ PP, LB 11: JPP, at Sea, to James Williams, 9 August 1794

¹⁵⁹⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1785-1787 f256, CR 1794-1797, and PP, WI Box L

¹⁵⁹⁷ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff368-74

¹⁵⁹⁸ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff223-24

¹⁵⁹⁹ John Jones was a fellow Welshman; his three brothers and sisters were of Shrewsbury, Shropshire, and of Montgomeryshire (ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff353-55). It is possible that he was the same John Jones who, described as a blacksmith, was in 1787 sent to Nevis to work for John Latoysonere Scarborough (PP, LB 37: P & T to JL Scarborough, 24 April 1787). Jones did work on the mill at Woodland (AB 47 John Jones & Scarborough a/c). In a subsequent account of 1801 it was noted that he had died (AB 57 John Jones dec'd a/c).

¹⁶⁰⁰ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 5 p3

supplies from each other, Williams, being near town, was charged with buying the supplies for both estates.¹⁶⁰¹

JPP foresaw that from this scheme problems could arise: Hobson was a creole and Williams was not. He feared that Hobson might 'consider himself in too high a light to condescend to receive any information from Williams'. Hobson's fault was that he did 'not observe that methodical course',¹⁶⁰² but little did JPP know that this was also going to be Williams's downfall. Williams, however, did not rush to assist Hobson with his bookkeeping and received another appeal from JPP to do so¹⁶⁰³ but for the time being was spared any further work because Hobson was asked to leave Mount Sion.¹⁶⁰⁴ In his stead Taylor placed the overseer and distiller from Mountravers, John Smith.¹⁶⁰⁵ His removal placed Williams 'in a very awkward and unpleasant situation' -¹⁶⁰⁶ he had lost a capable overseer - but for Smith this led to his brief, temporary appointment as manager on Mount Sion. George Hobson, the son of a St Kitts planter,¹⁶⁰⁷ had presided over an appalling loss of people and stock and, under Williams's direction, John Smith was charged with getting the estate back in order.¹⁶⁰⁸ For the next crop James Williams was 'to lend every assistance' from his estate, and if Williams heeded JPP's request, for the people on Mountravers this could have meant taking on extra work in another part of the island. It is unlikely, though, that this plan came to fruition; George Hobson was re-instated, Smith lost his job at Mount Sion and everything went back to normal – except that Smith did not return to Mountravers.

JPP signed one of his letters to Williams as 'your friend and wellwisher',¹⁶⁰⁹ and Williams, as if to confirm that JPP's goodwill was well invested, responded by boasting to his employer about the calves on Mountravers. According to him they were 'the finest ever seen upon the estate'.¹⁶¹⁰ This made JPP feel good, and it made Williams look good. An insecure man, Williams wanted to be seen to be obliging. At another time he volunteered to support legal proceedings to recover a small sum of money. Nero, a young Mountravers slave, had been hired on Captain Crosse's ship but Crosse had left the island without paying the hire charge of N£1:17:1 ½. Williams accounted for this loss, noting Crosse's defence 'that the negro was lent by Mr Pinney's attorney'. Williams eagerly offered to help: 'If Mr Pinney wishes him to be sued for it James Williams can prove the account.'¹⁶¹¹ John Taylor had allowed Crosse to employ Nero free of charge, something Williams knew JPP would not tolerate. While tarnishing Taylor's reputation, he was making himself appear important, honest and loyal.

At the root of this episode appears to have been a conflict between Taylor and Williams. This surfaced when Thomas Pym Weekes came back from Martinique. Ill with fever he did not take refuge with Williams but stayed at Scarborough's and then at John Taylor's Tower Hill plantation. Taylor sent someone with a note to Williams. He was to give the bearer of the note 'as much milk as [he] could spare' but Williams did not comply. JPP later put this down to the note having got lost '...by some neglect or inattention of the negroes',¹⁶¹² thereby excusing Williams's behaviour and giving him a way out, but it looks as if Williams had taken his revenge on Weekes for having beaten him to the job of manager, and possibly also for not having treated him well when he, as the overseer, was answerable to Weekes. Now that Williams was in control, he could make decisions, give orders and, for once, have the upper hand.

¹⁶⁰¹ PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 15 December 1794

¹⁶⁰² PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 10 December 1794

¹⁶⁰³ PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 29 January 1796

¹⁶⁰⁴ PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, 2 February 1796, and JPP to John Taylor, 7 September 1796

¹⁶⁰⁵ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 7 September 1796

¹⁶⁰⁶ PP, AB 47 Note

¹⁶⁰⁷ PP, LB 11: JPP, Nevis, to Webbe Hobson, 15 June 1794

¹⁶⁰⁸ PP, LB 11: JPP to John Taylor, Nevis, 7 September 1796

¹⁶⁰⁹ PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 16 October 1795

¹⁶¹⁰ PP, AB 50 List of Mules and Horses

¹⁶¹¹ PP, AB 47 Plantation a/c; also AB 54 TB Crosse's a/c

¹⁶¹² PP, LB 11: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 29 January 1796

Williams had a toadying side to his character. He was a flatterer and a groveller, and perhaps John Taylor had seen through him. That his relationship with Taylor became strained is evident from what Williams jotted own:

Ill nature between neighbours is the devil all over – one good turn do always deserve another – Mr Williams having understood, his neighbour Mr Taylor, had 6 bags of lime. – Mr Williams requested the favor (sic) of Mr Taylor to lend him some part of the lime – Mr Taylor's answer was he would sell him some but not lend.¹⁶¹³

Despite the mean-spirited way in which he had treated Dr Weekes, James Williams did organise generous provisions (at JPP's expense) when, following Weekes's death, the orphaned Weekes boys sailed to England. He may have felt guilty at the way he had treated their father, or the boys reminded him of his own children. Lewis, his first son, was in age between the young Weekes boys, and Jenetta had just given birth to their second child. Henry, named after another of Williams's brothers, was born in May 1796.

In January 1797 Williams purchased for Mountravers over N£100 worth of cane plants of a new variety called Otaheite,¹⁶¹⁴ and then sold about two thirds of these to a neighbouring estate.¹⁶¹⁵ He had instructions not to plant all of them. It was easy to sell the Otaheite canes; they were much sought after. Among planters they were the latest rage, having been brought to the West Indies just a few years earlier.¹⁶¹⁶ Planters hoping for better yields cleared ever more land to make way for more sugar. In Nevis this meant that cane cultivation was extended to the middle and upper slopes of Nevis Peak, and within a few years this caused the soil on these slopes being stripped completely.¹⁶¹⁷ The excitement about the new strain led one planter, John Colhoun Mills, to report from Nevis: 'Great promise as usual for next year, he [George Webbe Daniell] has a large crop on the ground of Otaheite cane which is in high estimation.'¹⁶¹⁸ John Taylor and James Williams, too, were keen to introduce the new variety but JPP was less eager. He felt the rush to plant Otaheite was 'an infatuation (which) seems to pervade almost every individual in our little spot – your sanguine expectation far exceeds every idea of mine.' Ever cautious, he was bound by the old adage 'Slow and sure is best.'¹⁶¹⁹ Everyone else, however, hoped that 'in the course of a few years' ample profits would repay the initial expense. Worryingly, the planting of the new canes coincided with a long drought in all the islands and an infestation of the borer in St Kitts.¹⁶²⁰ Nevis experienced the longest droughts in people's memory when no rain fell from November 1796 until the following summer,¹⁶²¹ but the next year the weather was favourable again. This resulted in a promising crop. Three years on this was followed by another very long dry spell.

The sugars Williams sent were poor, and JPP fondly remembered the days when his African head boiler Polydore had produced very fine sugars that had sold well.¹⁶²² Less fondly he would have remembered that Polydore had run away, never to return. During Thomas Pym Weekes's time as manager an experienced boiler, Paul, had died, and Williams may have worked with a relatively weak team. It consisted of Warrington, an African, and two creoles, London and Foe. Both London and Foe were not very healthy, had treatment from the doctors and, too weak to work in the field any longer,

¹⁶¹³ PP, DM 1173 Plantation Diary: 25 May 1798

¹⁶¹⁴ PP, AB 41 John Frederick Pinney, *Nevis a/c*

¹⁶¹⁵ James Williams had bought S£60/N£104:19:9 worth of Otaheite cane and sold 16,600 plants to the estate of James Smith Baillie at N£4 per thousand plants, 'payable next crop in rum' (PP, AB 47 Estate of James Smith Baillie a/c; also AB 54 Plantation a/c).

¹⁶¹⁶ Watts, David *The West Indies* pp433-44 and pp437-38, quoting Thomas Coke *A History of the West Indies* London 1811; also N Deerr *History of Sugar* p19 and p21

¹⁶¹⁷ Watts, David *The West Indies* pp437-38, quoting Thomas Coke *A History of the West Indies*

¹⁶¹⁸ SRO, DD\BR\bs/6: JC Mills to William Mills, Bishops Hull, 18 June 1796

¹⁶¹⁹ PP, LB 12: John Pinney to John Taylor, 18 January 1797

¹⁶²⁰ Bodrhyddan MSS 3233: Robert Thomson, St Kitts, to Revd WD Shipley, 1 March 1797

¹⁶²¹ SRO, DD\BR\bs/6: JC Mills to Wm Mills, 6 May 1797

¹⁶²² PP, LB 12: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 10 November 1797

doubled up as watches. Only the oldest in the team, Warrington, was still working in the field. The boilers were supervised by a succession of local men whom Williams employed as boiling house watches, and they may have lacked commitment or experience. Williams had also lost his competent overseer, and he had to make do with a young creole, William Nicholson, (with whom he did not seem to get on well, either), until Nicholson was replaced by a new overseer sent from England.

One man from Dorset who was to have gone to Nevis did not make it because his mother prevented him from leaving. She refused to let her son travel 'in such perilous times'.¹⁶²³ But another Dorset man arrived, the aptly named John Beer. Well-built, apparently fit and healthy, he came with a good reference but for most of the time turned out to be ill or drunk, or both. John Cheyney, another young man JPP had sent from England, was capable of replacing him, but Beer was still bound by contract. Williams, apparently, did not have the authority to sack his overseer, and John Taylor, the attorney, had gone to England.¹⁶²⁴ Taylor had appointed John Colhoun Mills as his own attorney,¹⁶²⁵ but it is not clear whether at this stage Mills had also been engaged to succeed Taylor as attorney for JPP's son John Frederick. In the year 1800 or 1801 John Frederick Pinney did appoint John Colhoun Mills,¹⁶²⁶ and until then James Williams may possibly have been managed and supported by Revd William Jones. He was the attorney for John Frederick's maternal grandfather, William Burt Weekes. Revd Jones, however, would not have been much help; he died early in 1800.¹⁶²⁷ For some time at least, Williams probably lacked guidance and supervision.

One day James Williams sat in his office, opened the plantation diary randomly in the middle, jotted down 'John Beer', encircled this with squiggles and pondered what to do with the man.¹⁶²⁸ He wrote to JPP. His master confirmed what had gone through Williams's mind already: to get rid of Beer ('the sooner the estate is quit of him the better') and to appoint Cheyney as overseer.¹⁶²⁹ But Beer did not budge. Instead he stubbornly stayed put until he had completed his three-year contract.

Like other managers before him, Williams sought to earn some additional money. His third child, Nancy, was born in December 1798, and to support his growing family any extra income was welcome. In fact the House set up a scheme for him with their corn-factors, Messrs W & R Turner. It involved selling provisions on behalf of the company. For transacting all the business on their account Williams received a five per cent commission.¹⁶³⁰ In addition to this import trade, Williams also followed Dr Weekes's example of exporting island produce on his own account. His quantities were less ambitious than Weekes's; he only sent four puncheons of rum and one bale of cotton.¹⁶³¹ JPP managed to sell the cotton with net proceeds of £34:10:5 just in time before prices dropped, and the House informed him that 'The same kind of cotton would not now sell for 2s p lb'. As to the rum, they were 'truly sorry it turned out so bad an adventure'¹⁶³² and when Williams tried his luck with five hogsheads of sugar, these went onto a slow market and sold for only \$50s. Three years earlier even poor-quality sugars had fetched \$65s.¹⁶³³ Markets were unpredictable and Williams's ventures were marred by unfortunate timing. His employer approved of these endeavours as they 'put a little money' in Williams's pocket. JPP, who was overseeing the management of Mountravers on his son's behalf, wanted to keep James Williams contented.¹⁶³⁴

¹⁶²³ PP, LB 12: JPP to James Williams, 16 January 1797

¹⁶²⁴ SRO, DD\BR\bs/6: JC Mills to Wm Mills, 12 September 1798

¹⁶²⁵ Aberystwyth Bodrhyddan MSS 2: Richard & Thomas Neave to Revd Shipley, 11 September 1799

¹⁶²⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1801-1803 ff230-53

¹⁶²⁷ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 (Cayon Diary)

¹⁶²⁸ PP, DM 1173 Plantation Diary: 23 August 1799

¹⁶²⁹ PP, LB 15: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, Nevis, 29 October 1799

¹⁶³⁰ PP, LB 40: TP & T to James Williams, 19 April 1797

¹⁶³¹ PP, LB 40: TP & T to James Williams, 13 October 1798

¹⁶³² PP, LB 40: TP & T to James Williams, Nevis, 29 October 1799

¹⁶³³ PP, LB 16: JPP to James Williams, 25 November 1800

¹⁶³⁴ PP, LB 40: TP & T to James Williams, 19 April 1797

Williams certainly enjoyed his employer's goodwill, and after the birth of his last child, Nancy, he broached the subject of buying his children from the estate. His 'friend and wellwisher' stalled. Mindful of new legislation passed the previous year which touched on having to make provisions for destitute enslaved and free people, JPP begged him 'to consider the consequence it might be to the island by adding to the number of free coloured people.' JPP thought that freeing the children, 'it is possible, may not be beneficial to themselves, unless you can provide for them in this country.'¹⁶³⁵ JPP's negative response would have added to Williams's already troubled state of mind. The new man, John Cheyney, proved to be a most able worker but Williams was falling apart.

Perhaps with a degree of satisfaction, in the previous year James Williams had banished to Jamaica a former Weekes slave, Jack Steward, but in the long run this had no deterrent effect, and during the 1798 crop he had problems keeping people on the plantation. Several key workers took off: Philip, Hector McGill, George Vaughan and Jack Will. Mostly they were gone for a few days only but others stayed away for long periods. Sometimes people returned on their own accord but Williams also sent out hunters. In the plantation diary he noted the workers' absences and their returns. He also recorded the tasks people carried out each day but, as time went on, he lost interest and the details got fewer, and then the notes on what work was being done were reduced to 'as before'. He forgot to order some items or to stock up on supplies. When John Taylor refused to lend him bags of lime (he was about to leave for England), Williams had to find another solution and then, a few days later, managed to borrow from Joseph Webbe Stanley 'one large hhd of coal intended to burn lime'.¹⁶³⁶ From JPP he had reminders about outstanding hire charges,¹⁶³⁷ and added to JPP's complaints about the quality of the sugar there was disquiet about how little sugar he had sent. This led to worries about the expense of keeping the plantation going.¹⁶³⁸ In fact Azariah Pinney thought it best if his brother bought another estate, leaving the land at Mountravers fallow so that the soil could recover. Azariah suggested keeping the works at Mountravers and using some of the Mountravers people to drive forward the new estate. Azariah thought that 'Williams might be induced to superintend the concern'. It is surprising he considered employing Williams because Azariah was most uncomplimentary about his sugars, although, at the same time, JPP's son also blamed the exhausted soil: 'his sugars are so full of molasses and are so dirty in general that the land seems to show a want of power to create desirable produce.'¹⁶³⁹

James Williams had taken to drink, like his saviour Gill had done before him. In Williams's case, however, there is no suggestion that mental illness was a contributing factor. There are echoes of Gill though because, like Gill, James Williams felt he had to prove himself, to tell the world that he was competent. For instance, regarding some public work in which he appears to have participated, Williams noted in the plantation diary: 'Mr Williams acting so well as others.'¹⁶⁴⁰ Into a letter to John Frederick Pinney about a visitor to Mountravers he crammed in an equal measure of flattery and self-aggrandisement. Williams wrote to inform the young Pinney

... that Mr Bloxom one of Mr Wedgwood's friends came here this morning, He is returning to England, on board his Majesty's ship *Prince of Wales*, and has got himself appointed Chaplain, he just came here to take some cloaths and other things, that were among Mr W-'s, and admired your estate very much, he says he has not seen such a situation in all his travels, says that he's convinced that Mr W- will be very happy with me and will be in love with the place, Mr W- is at Dominique and I expect him here momentarily, Mr B- complains much of

¹⁶³⁵ PP, LB 15: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 16 July 1799

¹⁶³⁶ PP, DM 1173 Plantation Diary: 1 June 1798

¹⁶³⁷ PP, LB 14: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 14 October 1798

¹⁶³⁸ PP, Dom Box S1: JPP, Bristol, to JF Pinney, 7 August 1798

¹⁶³⁹ PP, Dom Box S4-2: Azariah Pinney to JPP, 2 August 1799

¹⁶⁴⁰ PP, DM 1173 Plantation Diary: 1 November 1799

Martinique, I had just time to put on board a sheep and a few oranges for him, to serve him at sea.¹⁶⁴¹

By telling Pinney of Mr Bloxom's dislike for Martinique, Williams reminded everyone that Thomas Pym Weekes had chosen to head to the wrong place. It looks as if the island - still under British control - was included in Williams's resentment towards the former manager.

Just as Mr Bloxom had advised, the visitor was on his way and Williams would soon play host to Tom Wedgwood, the sickly son of the famous Staffordshire potter and enlightened thinker, Josiah Wedgwood. Wedgwood junior was among the circle of young men that included JPP's sons John Frederick and Azariah, their friend James Webbe Tobin and the poets William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey.¹⁶⁴² Also part of this social group was an up-and-coming scientist, Dr Thomas Beddoes. At the Pneumatic Institution in Bristol he and his assistant Humphrey Davy had been conducting experiments with gases for medical applications,¹⁶⁴³ but Wedgwood and Davy had also carried out their own trials. They attempted to permanently record images - photography in its very earliest stages. Tom Wedgwood, a bright young man with an inquisitive mind, had come to the West Indies to recover his fragile state of health.

On 12 May 1800 - on the day the sugar boiler Warrington returned to Mountravers after he had absented himself for a short while - on that same day Tom Wedgwood's boat arrived from Dominica. He came with a companion, Mr King. Three people from the plantation carted their luggage up to

¹⁶⁴¹ PP, WI Box F: James Williams to JF Pinney, 1 May 1800

¹⁶⁴² Thomas Wedgwood was seriously and continuously ill and came to the West Indies in the hope that the climate might improve his health. No doubt, John Frederick Pinney had offered to let him stay at Mountravers. The scheme may have been some time in the planning; earlier James Webbe Tobin had written to Tom Wedgwood, complaining about his own state of health and noting how this made him think sometimes 'of proposing myself as one of the companions for your voyage'. Young Tobin offered to write a letter of introduction to an acquaintance, 'should you go to Dominica' (KUSC, Wedgwood Papers, 9418-11 JW Tobin, Falmouth to Tom Wedgwood 23 June [no year]). However, at the end of February 1800 Wedgwood set sail with another companion, a Mr R King. They landed first at Barbados, moved on to Martinique, then Dominica and Nevis. Wedgwood's spirits were in a continual state of flux. After he arrived in Martinique at the beginning of April he wrote in a fairly cheerful mood that he was gaining strength 'very rapidly' and was 'resolved to stop here for 2-3 weeks - I shall easily get to Nevis in 30 hours ...'. Then he became apprehensive about his plan to stay at Mountravers: 'I don't think it will do for me to stay in a country house at Nevis - I shall mope - unless I perceive a succession of symptoms of convalescence of which I cannot at present have any very sanguine hopes. I feel a want of excitement ...' He travelled on to Dominica and from there left for Nevis. He was in poor spirits when he completed a letter he had started at Dominica, and gloomily he wrote from Mountravers about the difficulties his present state of health presented: 'I ... find myself unable to take any exercise, and cannot think that I shall ever regain my strength by baking in the house all day long. The dazzle of the sky and scenery keep my eyes and head in a perpetual ache. I cannot hope to overcome this - as I am too weak to engage in any occupation which can draw off my attention from these uneasy sensations. Nor can I enter into society here - to entertain or be entertained, for any length of time, I find equally fatiguing.' At first he was positive about meeting some of the local inhabitants: 'I hear of several people coming to call on me - some pleasant ones by report' and promised to 'make another effort to mix in society' but, as it turned out, he was none too impressed by the visitors, or by his boring companion, Mr King: 'The society too is of the coarsest kind. I believe that the danger I ran here of moping ought alone to drive me away. King is, in his very nature, a sprozer; he is deaf and slow of apprehension, and so taken up with writing to his friends, reading and drawing that I am alone almost all day...'

At first Tom Wedgwood had considered remaining in the West Indies for some time but, fatigued and his health as poorly as when he had landed at Barbados, he turned his thoughts to travelling home much sooner. Dispirited after his week-long stay on Mountravers he ended the letter announcing his early departure with the only piece of observation of life around him: 'birds singing on all sides of me - oranges by thousands close to the house - a supper on land-crabs in prospecto - and yet I crave for that desert spot, dear, dear, Gunville'.

Tom Wedgwood spent his 29th birthday on Mountravers but in his writing it is hard to see in him the young, energetic inventor of a process that was later developed into photography. Humphrey Davy, who went on to work for the Royal Institution in London, in its journal published an article in which he described Wedgwood's procedures. Its title summed up Wedgwood's project: 'An Account of a Method of Copying Paintings upon Glass, and of Making Profiles, by the Agency of Light upon Nitrate of Silver.'

After returning from Nevis, Wedgwood maintained contact with John Frederick Pinney and James Webbe Tobin and his brother John, as well as one of the Braziers ('a West India friend'). This would have been Edward Brazier junior, who was ordained in 1801 (PP, LB 17: JPP to Edward Brazier Junior, 8 February 1803). Of John Frederick Pinney Wedgwood wrote that 'Pinney improves much on acquaintance and is a most worthy fellow.' Again, he did not mention the Pinneys' involvement in plantation slavery. Unmarried, Thomas Wedgwood died five years after his visit to Nevis (KUSC, Wedgwood Mosely Collection, W/M 21 and W/M 1112, particularly entries 26 November 1800 and 5 December 1800).

¹⁶⁴³ Neave, Michael 'Beddoes, Thomas (1760-1808)' in *Oxford DNB*

Mountravers¹⁶⁴⁴ and James Williams received his visitors most hospitably. He had made sure the guests had everything to render their stay agreeable,¹⁶⁴⁵ and he would have borne in mind the instructions he had received from JPP. Tom Wedgwood came to Mountravers at the invitation of the young Pinneys, and while it is to his credit that JPP allowed this, he clearly had been anxious about Wedgwood's reaction. He had tried to turn the visit to good effect by using it as a propaganda exercise. JPP had forewarned Williams:

He [Tom Wedgwood] is a gentleman of a most humane and liberal disposition; but I am told he is a great supporter of Mr Wilberforce, respecting the slave trade therefore it will be highly proper for you to act with great circumspection while he is on the plantation. Do not suffer a negro to be corrected in his presence, or so near for him to hear the whip - and if you could allowance the gang at the lower work, during his residence at the house, it would be advisable - point out the comforts the negroes enjoy beyond our poor in this country, drawing a comparison between the climates - show him the property they possess in goats, hogs and poultry, and their negro-ground. By this means he will leave the island possessed with favourable sentiments.¹⁶⁴⁶

JPP, in effect, wrote the script for Williams. His instructions were based on the line that James Tobin and others had taken during the Parliamentary enquiry into the abolition of the slave trade: compared to the plight of the European poor, the enslaved people were well off. As it turned out, JPP need not have worried. Wedgwood was pre-occupied with his poor health and only stayed for a week. As Wedgwood's biographer noted, this son of an ardent abolitionist, this 'great supporter of Mr Wilberforce', wrote 'hardly a word as to the social condition of the people about him, and not a word as to slaves or slave holding.'¹⁶⁴⁷ For James Williams the visit presented a rare diversion but there probably was not much common ground between the two men.

In 1801 and 1802 James Williams was busy with the affairs of various members of the Weekes family, and with overseeing building works and repairs. The second Lady at the Cedar Trees, Ann Weekes, died,¹⁶⁴⁸ and as one of her executors it fell to Williams to take part in distributing her belongings. Her furniture did not amount to much: two beds and a bedstead with two bolsters and four pillows, and a mahogany dressing table. But there were eight people to be sold, with the profit going to the Weekes boys.¹⁶⁴⁹ And JPP instructed him to sell Thomas Pym Weekes's land,¹⁶⁵⁰ which he did, but he then failed to send the money, £500, to England. James Williams also acted as a trustee to wrap up the affairs of Thomas Pym Weekes's father, William Burt Weekes. Ann Weekes had been another trustee and John Frederick Pinney was in England, so Williams ended up having to unravel Weekes's business on his own. He was also William Coker's attorney, and at Coker's behest sold a mulatto boy.¹⁶⁵¹ To witness the transaction he chose a free man, John Frederick Bertrand, who lived at the Cedar Trees.¹⁶⁵² The same man had sold to Williams a large quantity of shingles for repair work to some houses in town.¹⁶⁵³ In addition to work that Edward Brazier, the millwright, was carrying out on

¹⁶⁴⁴ PP, DM 1173 Plantation Diary: 12 May 1800

¹⁶⁴⁵ KUSC, Wedgwood Mosely Collection, W/M 21 Tom Wedgwood to Josiah Wedgwood, 12 May 1800

¹⁶⁴⁶ Courtney, Winifred *Nevis and the English Romantic Writers*; also PP, LB 15: JPP to James Williams, 20 March 1800

¹⁶⁴⁷ Litchfield, RB *Tom Wedgwood, the first photographer* pp91-2

Another potential visitor to Mountravers was the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Desperate to go abroad and get away from the cold damp climate in the Lake District, he wrote that 'If I am absolutely unable to go abroad - (and I am now making the last effort by an application to Mr John Pinney respecting his house at St (sic) Nevis and the means of living there) I may perhaps come up to London and maintain myself, as before, by writing for the Morning Post'. He never made it to Nevis; lack of money forced him to set off for London later in the year (Holmes, Richard *Coleridge* p310).

¹⁶⁴⁸ Under the terms of Ann Weekes's will, which she had made during a spell of severe illness in 1795, James Williams's joint executors were William Vaughan Hamilton and another Lady at the Cedar Trees, Jane Weekes. Hamilton had either died or was not available to act as executor because James Williams carried out his duties as joint trustee with JPP, John Frederick Pinney, John Taylor and Jane Weekes.

¹⁶⁴⁹ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff368-74

¹⁶⁵⁰ PP, LB 16: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, 9 October 1801

¹⁶⁵¹ PP, LB 17: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 6 March 1802

¹⁶⁵² ECSCRN, CR 1801-1803 ff516-17

¹⁶⁵³ PP, AB 47 John Bertrand's a/c; also AB 59 John Bertrand's a/c

the mills – he was repairing the mill at Woodland, putting up a new iron mill and repairing the windmill - ¹⁶⁵⁴ extensive work was being undertaken on Mrs Carroll's house, and also on other of JPP's houses in Charlestown.¹⁶⁵⁵ Williams stocked up on more shingles, as well as boards, planks, timber, and paint.¹⁶⁵⁶ The carpenter in charge of the work was John Handcock, who also happened to rent one JPP's houses in Charlestown. As to Mrs Carroll, she had rent arrears and JPP had wanted her evicted long ago,¹⁶⁵⁷ but Williams had failed to take action. Her husband, who, over the years, had done much work on Mountravers, had died in 1796,¹⁶⁵⁸ and after his death his widow had carried on running their hostelry. 'Mrs Carrols Tavern' was evidently a place where people met ¹⁶⁵⁹ and Williams may well have wished to spare her the eviction. It would have meant taking away her livelihood and him having to find a replacement tenant but JPP lost not only the money Mrs Carroll owed in rent arrears and N£200 for the repairs but also at least another N£20 a year – the increase a new tenant would have had to pay.¹⁶⁶⁰

As overseer his rum allowance had been 45 gallons, but once he had become manager, he could use as much as he wanted. In 1787, for instance, he took 284 gallons in total and in 1789 233 gallons.¹⁶⁶¹ A new instruction by JPP, however, forbade the selling of rum on the plantation.¹⁶⁶² In 1801 his rum allocation jumped to an all-time high of 576 gallons, but that was the year his brother Henry arrived in Nevis. In the following year, possibly owing to Henry's steadying influence, the combined rum consumption for the manager, the overseer and the plantation people dropped to a total of just over 200 gallons, which represented less than two per cent of the rum produced on Mountravers that year (10,488 gallons).¹⁶⁶³

Ever since the Pinneys had returned to England, they had asked for items of produce to be sent. During Dr Weekes's time they had ordered fewer things but requested more again soon after Williams took over. Indeed, his contract stipulated that they had the right to some of his produce. Keen to be obliging, he would also have sent articles of his own accord, such as the coconuts and limes that he put on board ship when overseer Beer finally left Nevis. But in the early 1800s complaints came from England: orange chips were cut the wrong way ('not like Mrs Tobin's'),¹⁶⁶⁴ cashew nut bottles had been so badly packed they arrived broken,¹⁶⁶⁵ and pine plants were not as good as Mr Tobin's.¹⁶⁶⁶ It seems that Williams was taking less care, perhaps intentionally so. He may have protested against his employer's apparent reluctance to let him buy his children by sending him substandard produce.

But not only Williams found himself in trouble. Captain Maies, too, was slipping. First he took on board too much sugar for Protheroe & Claxton and, 'to remedy the evil', Williams was under instruction to ensure that Maies carried sugar for the House.¹⁶⁶⁷ Then Maies had a mishap and his ship ran ashore,¹⁶⁶⁸ and then he forgot to take documents that he had left with James Williams.¹⁶⁶⁹ Eventually Captain Maies was sacked.¹⁶⁷⁰ For many years he had been JPP's eyes and ears in Nevis, and JPP needed someone reliable to report anything suspicious. Perhaps this was the role JPP had in mind when he sent out a new man, William Davis, soon after Maies lost his job: to keep an eye on James Williams. Nothing is known about Davis, only that he was 'desirous' of employment and that Williams

¹⁶⁵⁴ PP, AB 57 Edward Brazier's a/c

¹⁶⁵⁵ PP, AB 57 John Handcock Carpenter's a/c

¹⁶⁵⁶ PP, AB 57 Wm Slater & Co Merchants a/c

¹⁶⁵⁷ PP, AB 57 Hester Carroll's a/c and LB 15: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 16 July 1799

¹⁶⁵⁸ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 f226

¹⁶⁵⁹ *Aaron Thomas's Journal* p50 and p85

¹⁶⁶⁰ PP, LB 15: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 16 July 1799

¹⁶⁶¹ PP, Rum a/c in AB 39, AB 36, AB 35, AB 30 and AB 50 and James Williams' a/c in AB 43, AB 47 and AB 52

¹⁶⁶² PP, Misc Vols 7 1783-1794 List of Deeds and Papers at Nevis f106: Postscript to Memorandum, 8 May 1794

¹⁶⁶³ PP, AB 57 Rum a/c

¹⁶⁶⁴ PP, LB 17: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, Nevis, 8 February 1803

¹⁶⁶⁵ PP, LB 18: JPP, Bristol, to Henry Williams, Nevis, 15 December 1803

¹⁶⁶⁶ PP, LB 16: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, Nevis, 26 August 1801

¹⁶⁶⁷ PP, LB 42: TP & T to James Williams and JC Mills, 15 May 1801

¹⁶⁶⁸ PP, LB 42: TP & T to John Taylor, Swanage, Dorset, 18 September 1801

¹⁶⁶⁹ PP, LB 42: TP & T to James Williams, 8 March 1802

¹⁶⁷⁰ PP, LB 17: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 20 November 1802

was to 'lend him every assistance'.¹⁶⁷¹ But on Mountravers Davis was surplus to requirements. Williams had a competent overseer in John Cheyney, as a boiling house watch he employed a local man, John Coker, and his brother Henry was also in Nevis. No more was heard of Mr Davis.

It appears that Williams had passed on to his employer plantation gossip about Black Polly. She was claiming that JPP was the father of her son Billey Jones. Because JPP had not been forthcoming about selling him his children, it is likely that Williams was only too happy to remind his employer of his own mulatto child, and of his obligation to support his mixed-race offspring. It reached the point where JPP felt pressed to deny paternity.¹⁶⁷² In response to this Williams tried to tap JPP for an increase in his salary. The quality of the sugars he had sent had much improved and JPP had praised it, expecting its 'fine bright straw colour [to] command a market.' Apparently the canes had been cut just at the right time and were so full of juice that Williams's boilers had ground in 'five hours 52 minutes, five coppers of liquor and made nine hhds of beautiful sugar'.¹⁶⁷³ But overall crops on Mountravers had been poor, and the 'misery in the failure' of the last crop was still on JPP's mind¹⁶⁷⁴ when he presented Williams with two options: by way of pay rise he could either earn a Guinea per hogshead, or have an additional N£30 a year. One way or another, any increase in pay was dependent on an increase in the crops.¹⁶⁷⁵ The quality had improved, but the quantity was poor. JPP also expressed concerns about the packing, and Williams received detailed instructions in a new method of ramming the hogsheads.¹⁶⁷⁶ Suspecting that some fraud was going on, the House asked him to check the weights that were in use in Nevis,¹⁶⁷⁷ and his employer spotted an accounting error whereby Williams had gained an extra seven days' pay on his salary.¹⁶⁷⁸ The accounts also revealed that Williams was going through rather a lot of herrings. JPP jotted down a note: 'Remember, you are not to expend above forty barrels of herrings in any one year.'¹⁶⁷⁹

By the spring of 1803 James Williams was ill. His worried brother wrote to JPP about his 'severe indisposition' and that James was planning to take a trip to England to recover his health. JPP replied in very warm tones, wishing him a speedy recovery and, not realising how serious the situation was, he wrote: 'I flatter myself that a voyage to this country will soon set him up.'¹⁶⁸⁰

On 17 March 1803, the day after the fortieth anniversary of his christening, James Williams made his will. He remembered his brothers Lewis, George, Theophilus and William with a token shilling. To his children Lewis, Henry and Ann he left N£50 each but nothing for their mother, Jenetta, or to his sisters. Appointing Henry as his executor, he gave him the remainder of his possessions, which would have included Flora, his African slave. The brothers called on the overseer, John Cheyney, and the boiling house watch, John Coker, to witness the will.¹⁶⁸¹ But as yet Williams could not leave the island. He had to wait until all the ships had loaded their cargoes and were ready to depart in a convoy. Agonising for a sick man awaiting evacuation, this further delay was necessitated by the ongoing war with France.

In April Maies's old ship, the *Nevis*, then commanded by Captain Corey,¹⁶⁸² was in harbour,¹⁶⁸³ and also the *Rachel*. On the day Williams went aboard, Billey Jones gave him money to pass on to Billey's

¹⁶⁷¹ PP, LB 17: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 24 April 1802

¹⁶⁷² PP, LB 16: JPP to James Williams, 26 August 1801

¹⁶⁷³ PP, LB 17: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, Nevis, 6 March 1802

¹⁶⁷⁴ PP, Dom Box P: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, 8 August 1802

¹⁶⁷⁵ PP, LB 17: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 8 February 1803

¹⁶⁷⁶ PP, LB 17: JPP to James Williams, Nevis, 8 February 1803

¹⁶⁷⁷ PP, LB 42: TP & T to James Williams, 10 November 1802

¹⁶⁷⁸ PP, AB 57 Plantation a/c

¹⁶⁷⁹ PP, AB 57 Wm Slater's a/c

¹⁶⁸⁰ PP, LB 17: JPP to Henry Williams, Nevis, 26 April 1803; also LB 17: JPP to Henry Williams, 22 June 1803

¹⁶⁸¹ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff428-29

¹⁶⁸² PP, LB 43: T & P to John Hendrickson, 3 August 1803

¹⁶⁸³ PP, AB 57 Owners of Ship *Nevis* at Bristol a/c

sister Fanny Coker in Bristol.¹⁶⁸⁴ Most likely James Williams died on the same day or on the next, in early June 1803, before the vessel could leave Nevis.¹⁶⁸⁵

If Williams had travelled on the *Rachel* and if he had lived long enough to make it to sea, he would have had a most eventful trip. On her return journey the *Rachel* was captured by the French. Boxes of presents were taken, and 'loose letters & papers ... were all thrown overboard by the prize master'. The Captain, George Cooper, was 'carried into France' but the mate and the steward were left on board. Six days later two armed Liverpool ships retook the *Rachel*.¹⁶⁸⁶

Henry Williams's short interlude

When his brother died, Henry Williams had been in Nevis for about two years. Accompanied by one of his sisters, he had left Chepstow on 25 November 1800 and, with the intention to sail in the next available vessel, had called at JPP's house in Bristol. The sister returned to Wales but Henry stayed in Bristol. To save him the cost of staying at an inn, JPP had generously offered to put him up until the ship sailed. He was expected to leave by the next fleet,¹⁶⁸⁷ which would have departed around Christmas, but Henry Williams had to remain in Bristol rather longer than anticipated and finally left early in the morning of 12 February. He sailed in the *Nevis* to join the convoy at Cork.¹⁶⁸⁸

Within a few months of arriving in Nevis Henry Williams was well settled on Mountravers.¹⁶⁸⁹ It is not clear what exactly he was doing, other than assist his brother. John Cheyney would have undertaken most of the overseer's work, and there were boiling house watches supervising the sugar-making. If he did have duties on the plantation, Henry did not get paid. His brother's salary continued until 1 April 1803, the day his own also started. It was the day John Frederick Pinney's attorney John Colhoun Mills officially employed Henry Williams as manager. Shortly afterwards JPP confirmed the appointment, adding that under Mr Mills's leadership the work was to be carried out according to the existing plantation instructions.¹⁶⁹⁰ From what JPP later wrote it appears, however, that the appointment was of a temporary nature, explained, probably, by Henry Williams's inexperience. In fact it is surprising that he was chosen in preference to John Cheyney who had worked on Mountravers for close to five years and who, by all accounts, had proved himself a diligent employee. Age may have been a consideration. Williams, in his forties, was of mature age while Cheyney was only in his early twenties. Also, having stayed with his employer in Bristol, Henry Williams clearly had won JPP's trust and confidence.

Henry Williams got to work. Unhindered by ties of friendship, he collected an outstanding debt from James Scarborough,¹⁶⁹¹ and perhaps because of the ties of friendship with Captain Maies, bought three African boys from a slaver which Maies skippered to Nevis. These were the first captives that had been bought for Mountravers for many years. No doubt it was Williams who renamed them Pompey, Caesar and Augustus. When Flora, the African woman who had belonged to his brother, gave birth to a son, he also chose a classical name and called the boy Cicero. Classical names had gone out of fashion but Henry Williams may have tried to show off his credentials, to make it known that he had education.

Henry Williams repeated the request to buy his brother's three children, and although to JPP it had become 'clear that for the last four or five years' his brother had 'not fulfilled the management he

¹⁶⁸⁴ PP, LB 18: JPP to Henry Williams, Nevis, 15 December 1803

¹⁶⁸⁵ PP, LB 18: JPP to Henry Williams, Nevis, 5 August 1803

¹⁶⁸⁶ PP, LB 43: T & P to James Chapman, Nevis, 2 August 1803; also Grahame E Farr (ed) *Record of Bristol Ships* p247

¹⁶⁸⁷ PP, LB 16: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, Nevis, 25 November 1800

¹⁶⁸⁸ PP, LB 16: JPP, Bristol, to James Williams, Nevis, 31 January 1801, and 13 February 1801

¹⁶⁸⁹ PP, LB 16: JPP to James Williams, 26 August 1801

¹⁶⁹⁰ PP, LB 18: JPP to Henry Williams, Nevis, 5 August 1803

¹⁶⁹¹ PP, LB 17: JPP to Henry Williams, 22 June 1803

entered into', JPP was willing to sell the children, either directly or by way of a mortgage with 'good security'.¹⁶⁹² As always, JPP communicated this on behalf of his son. John Frederick Pinney had got married, was living in London and working as a lawyer and, although JPP had handed over ownership of Mountravers to his son a decade earlier, in effect he was still guiding the West India business from Bristol. After thirty years of controlling the plantation JPP could not let go and, tellingly, in another letter he let slip that James Williams had not fulfilled 'his engagement with me' [not with my son]. With sadness rather than anger JPP put Williams's failure down to the 'effects of his disorder', 'his propensity to strong liquor'. By way of encouragement and to demonstrate his support for his new manager, he sent Henry Williams presents of beef and tripe. He did make it clear, though, that he had no intention of keeping the young Africans for Mountravers and wanted them sold.¹⁶⁹³ Mills and Williams had misjudged the situation. JPP was content to let the plantation population increase naturally and at this stage did not see the need to buy any more people.

Henry Williams employed John Coker again to watch the boiling house, and for four months engaged a man called John Hill as overseer. Hill was briefly replaced by William Powell until the new man arrived from Bristol, William Thomas Williams. Almost certainly he was not a relation of the Williams brothers. But Henry Williams had little support from the new man. This overseer turned out to be a drunkard; he died within less than a year of arriving in Nevis. Alcohol played a large role in Henry Williams's life, too. By then he was helping himself to rum from the plantation, 236 gallons (1,073 litres) in 1803. As JPP had forbidden its resale, the rum would have been for Williams's own use. He consumed over five pints (not quite three litres) a day.¹⁶⁹⁴

Henry Williams had sent the account books to Bristol and by the spring of 1804 JPP finished perusing them. Combing through page after page, he scribbled comments such as 'don't buy on Nevis' and 'shouldn't have been omitted'.¹⁶⁹⁵ He found out just how badly James Williams had done his job. For instance, his failure to collect Hester Carroll's rent arrears or to evict her for non-payment amounted to negligence, and unless Henry swiftly called on Mrs Carroll and collected the arrears,¹⁶⁹⁶ he intended to charge the money against James Williams's account.¹⁶⁹⁷ JPP discovered that money had been squandered and he got most exercised over oilcakes and the use of horses as transport animals. By feeding the animals oilcakes Williams had done away with, or at least reduced, the arduous task of collecting fodder for the animals but JPP felt that horses would not be suitable for cartage on the estate and, instead, urged Henry Williams 'to keep from 12 to 18 good cart cattle.' They were 'to be fed with fine picked grass when at work, without oil cakes. There is a sufficient quantity of pasture to keep up the cattle.' To reinforce the message, he repeated himself: 'I flatter myself it will go on as it used formerly to do, without oil cakes and cart horses.'¹⁶⁹⁸

JPP was equally unhappy about James Williams's failure to order stores from England, thereby having to make expensive purchases in the island, and, contrary to repeated instructions, allowing the estate to be in debt. Then there were the cooper's and blacksmith's accounts. At close to N£200 their costs had jumped to five or even ten times their old levels.¹⁶⁹⁹ While this was shocking, it was 'insanity' that James Williams had sold off a copper still which had been at Woodland for nearly twenty years.¹⁷⁰⁰ Selling the still to the coppersmith David Evans made JPP gasp: James Williams's

¹⁶⁹² PP, LB 18: JPP to JC Mills, 30 November 1803

¹⁶⁹³ PP, LB 18: JPP to Henry Williams, Nevis, 15 December 1803

¹⁶⁹⁴ PP, AB 57 Rum a/c

¹⁶⁹⁵ PP, AB 57 Memorandum

¹⁶⁹⁶ PP, LB 18: JPP to Henry Williams, Nevis, 20 April 1804

¹⁶⁹⁷ PP, LB 18: JPP to JC Mills, 10 April 1804

¹⁶⁹⁸ PP, LB 19: JPP to Henry Williams, 25 October 1804

Almost certainly these oil cakes were linseed cakes. They were valued for their high nutritional content and gave rise to a saying - 'like oxen fed on linseed cakes' - which would have been understood by everyone (Murray, *Venetia High Society* p213).

¹⁶⁹⁹ PP, MSS in Red Boxes, Oddments Box, file 3: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, 10 April 1804

¹⁷⁰⁰ PP, LB 19: JPP to Henry Williams, 25 October 1804

'conduct in this business is beyond comparison.'¹⁷⁰¹ He also strongly objected to the 'injudicious and profuse expenditure' in the repair costs for the houses in town,¹⁷⁰² and as to the consumption of provisions on the estate, its increase by as much as a quarter was inexplicable. Every one of his previous managers had used less, as had JPP when he was in Nevis.¹⁷⁰³ All this related to James Williams but JPP had also spotted that there seemed to be something wrong with Henry Williams's book-keeping. An entry for the purchasing of seven barrels of mess pork did not look right because six barrels had been sent from England.¹⁷⁰⁴ In despair he asked: 'Where will it end? If something is not done to remedy the evil, the movables had better be sold and the estate abandoned, rather than continue to hold it on such terms.'¹⁷⁰⁵ In fact, for over a year his son had already been resolved to sell Mountravers.

Things appeared to be getting out of control on Mountravers, and it was time for John Frederick Pinney to visit his estate. He had not been to Nevis for ten years, and it was felt that his wife would benefit from a trip to the West Indies. Mrs John Frederick Pinney had not long ago given birth and was feeling poorly. JPP sent instructions to Williams how to receive the visitors: He was to start fattening a sheep for the couple's return journey, borrow beds and transport (a chaise) and as soon as Williams caught sight of the fleet, he was to 'be in town with two or three able negroes'. They were to assist while Mrs John Frederick Pinney and her maid went by chaise up to the estate. Reminiscent of his instructions regarding Tom Wedgwood's visit, JPP also asked that his daughter-in-law be spared anything indelicate: 'Keep the sick people away from being seen by Mrs F Pinney and suffer no correction to be within her hearing ...'¹⁷⁰⁶

Before they Pinneys arrived in early 1805, the three bedsteads that Williams had borrowed from Miss Weekes and Miss Erskine had been put 'in the large room above stairs'.¹⁷⁰⁷ As per previous instructions, Henry Williams moved up to Woodland while the Pinneys made the Great House their temporary home. John Frederick had in his pocket a last minute communication from his father in which he had passed on Mr Mills's judgment that Henry Williams's conduct bespoke 'diligence and attention'.¹⁷⁰⁸ Not so James Williams's. Soon John Frederick got to hear all sorts of allegations against Jenetta. He reported to JPP: 'It does appear to me that the black woman in the house kept by J Williams has been carrying on a most nefarious traffic since we were here last which if I can prove will easily account for the consumption of provisions.' And: 'It appears very clear that Jenetta has been constantly in the habit of distilling drams to sell to the sailors.' He heard that her mother had fleeced his stores, and John Frederick proceeded to approach the whole affair like the lawyer he was: by making enquiries, seeking proof, taking evidence. John Frederick Pinney grilled Henry Williams about his brother ignoring verbal instructions to send all metal to England or, if that was not possible, to sell the material in the island. Williams defended his brother by saying that the instructions were not clear. Regarding the large amount of stores used, Pinney had questioned the plantation people and knew that they had not received an increase, only their usual allowances. In an effort to clear his brother's name, Henry then spent some time copying all the accounts. He tried to justify how his brother had 'consumed the quantity of provisions in his account' but the exercise did not produce any answers. Even Henry seemed 'astounded at the largeness' of what had been consumed. Pinney put a lot of effort into getting to the bottom of all the accusations and gave 'every encouragement to the negroes to inform [him] what they have seen go from the estate.' He was sure that he would discover

¹⁷⁰¹ PP, AB 57 David Evans's a/c

¹⁷⁰² PP, AB 57 Houses in Town a/c

¹⁷⁰³ PP, MSS in Red Boxes, Oddments Box, file 3: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, 10 April 1804

¹⁷⁰⁴ PP, LB 18: JPP to JC Mills, Nevis, 10 April 1804, and LB 18: JPP to Henry Williams, 20 April 1804

¹⁷⁰⁵ PP, MSS in Red Boxes, Oddments Box, file 3: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, 10 April 1804

¹⁷⁰⁶ PP, LB 19: JPP, Bristol, to Henry Williams, Nevis, 22 October 1804

At the turn of the century there had been two litters at the house at the Mountain estate in which the women would have been carried (PP, WI Box A: Mary Travers to Azariah Pinney, 31 May 1701).

¹⁷⁰⁷ PP, LB 19: JPP, Bristol, to Henry Williams, Nevis, 22 October 1804

Back at the turn of the century there had been two litters at the house at the Mountain estate in which the women would have been carried (PP, WI Box A: Mary Travers to Azariah Pinney, 31 May 1701).

¹⁷⁰⁸ PP, LB 19: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, ship *Pilgrim*, Cork Harbour, 17 November 1804

any impropriety¹⁷⁰⁹ but it is not known to what extent people on the plantation succumbed to Pinney's inducements to give evidence against their former manager. The driver Wiltshire certainly spoke up. He told Pinney about James Williams's theft of sugar that was then shipped off on American vessels.¹⁷¹⁰ As to the sugar that was now being produced, John Frederick could not fault its quality and judged it 'very good'.¹⁷¹¹

John Frederick Pinney's letter would have crossed his father's about mid-Atlantic. Both men sat down at about the same time, writing to each other. JPP had noticed a shortfall in the Negro Hire account and asked his son to investigate why Prince and Tom McGill had only brought in N£37:12:1 ½ when in the preceding year they had earned N£10 more.¹⁷¹² JPP began to have doubts about Henry Williams and told his son: 'Your present manager has lost my confidence!'¹⁷¹³ The attorney, John Colhoun Mills, had also lost his confidence. Not only had Mills asked to be paid for his services as attorney (unheard of among gentleman, so JPP said, and grudgingly JPP granted him S£50 a year),¹⁷¹⁴ but he had not been as diligent an attorney as he ought to have been. To his son JPP suggested possible replacements: 'Thomas Arthurton who lived near twenty years on your estate, Mr Brazier and Samuel Laurence.'¹⁷¹⁵ For the time being John Frederick Pinney stuck with Mr Mills.

When JPP received his son's letter with the allegations against Jenetta and her mother, it confirmed what he had feared for some time. His former manager was not only guilty of inefficiency and mismanagement due to drunkenness but, added to this, organised theft. JPP concluded that, unless a 'thorough investigation should prove otherwise', deductions should be made from James Williams's account: N£248:8:2 to cover widow Carroll's outstanding rent arrears that had not been collected; N£152:8:4 ½ for scrap metal not sent to England; N£235:2:8 for hoops and supplies that had not been accounted for; and N£648:17:9 ½ for repair works lost through Williams's 'improper conduct'. The grand total came to nearly N£1,300.¹⁷¹⁶ His carefully worked-out sum later increased to N£2,000. This, JPP calculated, was the amount the Williams brothers' mismanagement and the robberies by their 'favoured females and their adherents' had cost him.¹⁷¹⁷

JPP's first letter arrived in Nevis on the ship *Rachel*. (She had been recovered from her Liverpool rescuers.) On board was also a friend of Henry Williams's, David Jones. JPP had sent him to Nevis, expecting his son to engage him as overseer. John Frederick Pinney did, indeed, engage David Jones and, after JPP's second letter had arrived, he sacked Henry Williams. He engaged a new manager: a creole, Joseph Webbe Stanley. The man started work on 19 May. The Pinneys then left for England and were back home in London at the beginning of July 1805.¹⁷¹⁸ As far as is known, this was John Frederick Pinney's last visit to the island.

After losing his job, Henry Williams spent a few months not 'in very good circumstances' and died, probably in his mid-forties, some time in the autumn of 1805.¹⁷¹⁹

As his executors Henry Williams had chosen George Bucke and Frank P Browne. In the 1780s Bucke had come to Nevis from Suffolk. His brother Walter had followed him to Nevis and was then working on Coxheath plantation but nothing is known about Frank Browne's origin. It is likely that both were

¹⁷⁰⁹ PP, Dom Box P: John Frederick Pinney, Nevis, to JPP, 21 February 1805

¹⁷¹⁰ PP, LB 22: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 12 April 1808; also R Pares *A West India Fortune* p146

¹⁷¹¹ PP, Dom Box P: John Frederick Pinney, Nevis, to JPP, 21 February 1805

¹⁷¹² PP, LB 19: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, 13 February 1805

¹⁷¹³ PP, LB 19: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, Nevis, 15 February 1805; also Dom Box P: Estate of John Frederick Pinney, account current with Tobin & Pinney 1 May 1804 – 1 May 1805

¹⁷¹⁴ PP, LB 18: JPP to JC Mills, Nevis, 5 June 1804

¹⁷¹⁵ PP, LB 19: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, Nevis, 12 February 1805

¹⁷¹⁶ PP, AB 57 James Williams and Henry Williams's a/c and Houses in Town a/c

¹⁷¹⁷ PP, LB 19: JPP to John Frederick Pinney, 4 April 1805

¹⁷¹⁸ PP, DM 1173 Ledger 1803-1806

¹⁷¹⁹ PP, LB 20: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 5 December 1805

fellow managers. In their role as executors, Bucke and Browne would have had to find new homes for James Williams's people: the African woman Flora and her children Billy and Cicero.¹⁷²⁰

Shortly afterwards, in an unforgiving act of vengeance, JPP - under the pretext of acting on his son's behalf - sought to settle old scores by selling Jenetta's children away from the plantation and away from their mother. JPP had been saddened by Joseph Gill's failure, angered by William Coker's 'vile management', infuriated by Thomas Pym Weekes's excessive expenses, but he (and his son) went at the Williams brothers with hammer and tongs. Selling the children away from their mother – they were then eight, ten and 15 years old - was a deliberate act of cruelty. However, as it turned out, the children were not sold. Years later, JPP's son Charles may have felt that his father's mean-spirited behaviour needed to be rectified, and through his agency Nancy eventually became free. Charles sold Nancy to a free woman who manumitted her. Nancy Williams then came to own her father's African slave, Flora, and two of Flora's children. Henry, James Williams's younger son, freed himself by absconding while the older son, Lewis, remained on Mountravers.



The poor management of the Williams brothers not only affected the Pinneys' finances but, more importantly, they affected the lives of the people on the plantation. Indeed, for some the way the plantation was being run would have been a matter of life or death.

Except for the year 1799 when only two children were born (or survived until the next list was drawn up), in every year since 1794 between four and seven children had been born. In 1803 and 1804 this dropped to two births in each year, and in 1805, during Henry Williams's watch, probably no children were born or survived until the next list was drawn up. The first child born in 1805 was a girl called Violet and by then Joe Stanley had taken over as manager. In addition, however, during the Williams brothers' managership another five children were born whose exact birthdates are not known: John Pederro, Fanny Frederick, James, Mary Scarborough and Miah.

Children born between May 1794 and March 1803 during James Williams's managership who survived until registration on the following lists, dated 31 December 1801 and 31 December 1806

Year	May 1794+	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800	1801	1802	To March 1803
Number of births	3	7	7	4	6	2	7	6	6	0

¹⁷²⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1819-1823 ff194-95

When JPP wanted to recover money from Henry Williams's estate, he asked the new manager, Joe Stanley, to do this through the executors; he believed these were Messrs Huggins and Lawrence (PP, LB 20: JPP to JW Stanley, 16 April 1807).

Children born between April 1803 and May 1805 during Henry Williams's managership who survived until registration on the following list, dated 31 December 1806

Year	April 1803 to December 1803	January 1804 to December 1804	January 1805 to May 1805
Births	2	2	0

Informal and formal incentives were in place, meant to encourage women to bear more children and to strive to keep their offspring alive: the baby suits which Mrs P took to sending from 1794 onwards, and two clauses in the 1798 Leeward Islands Melioration Act, which provided cash rewards for mothers and consignment to light work. Failure to comply attracted fines of N£50 and N£20 respectively but from the accounts there is no indication that this money was paid to any women on Mountravers.

None of the inducements made a discernible difference to the number of births. In all, in the period from January 1796 to March 1802 Mrs P dispatched 52 ready-made baby suits (plus three old sheets to be made into baby suits which she had sent in 1794). Based on the available figures, she over-estimated the need by about a third. The number of children born may, however, have been higher: some children died at birth or before they could be registered on the following list. Only few of these are known: Amelia miscarried once, and Bessy Richens and another woman are known to have had still-born children in 1798 and in 1801.¹⁷²¹

The 57 children born during the period of James and Henry Williams's management just about kept up the numbers on Mountravers.

James (and Henry?) Williams's personal enslaved people

In 1797 and 1798, James Williams paid tax on two people but then paid no tax in 1799 and 1800.¹⁷²² Other than these entries in his account, there are no contemporary records of James or Henry Williams owning personal enslaved people but from later documents it was possible to establish that they held at least three: an African woman called **Flora** and her children **Cicero** (b 1802/3) and **Billy**.

Probably soon after Henry Williams died, they came into the possession of a free woman, the 50-year-old Sophia Bailey (also Bayley).¹⁷²³ If they were sold, the sale was not officially recorded at the time.

Flora's son Billy appears to have died but in 1810/1 she gave birth to another child, a girl called Belle and in 1818/9 she had twins, Adam and Eve. All her children were black.¹⁷²⁴

In March 1821 their owner acquired another person, a 22-year-old mulatto woman. She was Nancy Williams, the daughter of their previous owner, James Williams. Sophia Bailey bought Nancy from JPP's son Charles Pinney, who was then in Nevis on business.

On the day Sophia Bailey bought Nancy, she went to the Secretary's Office and recorded the purchase in 1806 of Flora and her two sons. The date given, 15 March, was very precise, and after 15

¹⁷²¹ PP, DM 1173 Plantation Diary: 4 August 1798 and 25 November 1799, and AB 47 Plantation a/c

¹⁷²² PP, AB 47 James Williams' a/c

¹⁷²³ ECSCRN, CR 1819-1823 ff194-95

¹⁷²⁴ UKNA, T 71/364 and T 71/365

years the executors even remembered the exact purchase price, N£200. It is questionable whether these facts were as stated; it appears that Sophia Bailey had the transaction documented in order to establish proper ownership of Flora and the children because, while she bought Nancy from Charles Pinney, she sold Cicero to him and he would not have wanted to buy a person without clean title.

Sophia Bailey freed Nancy Williams almost immediately and a week later she assigned Flora to her, together with Flora's youngest children, the two-year-old twins. They were transferred for a token sum, N10s.¹⁷²⁵ While making over Flora and the toddlers, Sophia Bailey retained ownership of Flora's ten-year-old daughter Belle.¹⁷²⁶ She was old enough to be a useful domestic servant and an assistant to an elderly woman.

Flora's children now had three different owners but it is likely that they all lived together in Charlestown with Nancy Williams and Sophia Bailey. Cicero, however, was put to work on Clarke's Estate.

Life on the plantation was tough. The island was suffering from a prolonged drought. No rain fell for months on end. The ageing owner, the widowed Mary Hannah Clarke, was struggling to keep the business afloat. Deeply in debt – the plantation was heavily mortgaged to the House - she could not get credit to buy foodstuffs for her people. They were starving. Workers refused to go into the fields, the mill and the boiling house. The attorneys negotiated with the House to get emergency provisions to feed the hungry, but the death toll on Clarke's Estate was terrible; between 1817 and 1822 close to a quarter of people perished. Their deaths were followed by those of Mary Hannah Clarke in October 1822 and her son Joseph the following April. The problems created by under-investment and the owners' deaths were further compounded when a planter who was owed money withdrew 69 people from Clarke's estate and put them onto his neighbouring plantation. Although fewer people died after 1822, Flora's son was among those who lost their lives. Having worked on Clarke's Estate for less than five years, Cicero died in 1825, or in the beginning of 1826. He was in his early twenties.

In December 1827 Sophia Bailey died at the age of 71,¹⁷²⁷ and after her death, Flora's daughter Belle came into the possession of a young black woman, Mary Crosse. She may not have been free then; Mary Crosse only bought her freedom in February 1829.

Mary Crosse would have known only too well what it meant to change owners. Since October 1821, when she was put up for sale at auction, she had changed hands several times over. First she had been sold to the barrister-at-law, John Peterson, who also held the post of Gunner and lived at Fort Charles.¹⁷²⁸ Peterson complained about it being 'very ragged and decayed',¹⁷²⁹ and it is likely that she had to stay there for some time. Peterson was not only the attorney for Samuel Barnard, to whom Mary had originally belonged, but also to Robert Debuge of Montserrat, and it was for this man that Peterson had bought her. However, in March 1822 Peterson, on behalf of Debuge, sold her to the blacksmith and planter Frederick Huggins,¹⁷³⁰ who did not hold on to Mary Crosse: Huggins sold her in August 1822 to Margaret (Peggy) Jones,¹⁷³¹ a 22-year-old free woman.¹⁷³² The chain of ownership did not end there: Margaret Jones sold Mary Crosse to Henrietta Neale, and it was Henrietta Neale who then freed Mary on payment of N£100.¹⁷³³

¹⁷²⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1819-1823 ff346-47

¹⁷²⁶ In 1822, Sophia Bailey registered that she owned one female (UKNA, T 71/365).

¹⁷²⁷ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1827-37 No 209

¹⁷²⁸ UKNA, CO 187/3 Nevis Blue Book 1821

¹⁷²⁹ UKNA, CO 186/12: 25 June 1823

¹⁷³⁰ John Peterson may have intended Mary as a replacement so that he could swap her for another woman then owned by Frederick Huggins; around the same time he sold Mary Peterson bought from Huggins a young mulatto woman, Betsey Parris, whom he then manumitted (UKNA, T 71/364 and T 71/365).

¹⁷³¹ UKNA, T 71/364, T 71/365 and T 71/366

¹⁷³² ECSCRN, CR 1819-1823 f464

¹⁷³³ UKNA, T 71/1543 Bundle 7, and ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 2 ff25-7

Mary Crosse was also known as Polly Cross (later Mary Cross had to formally attest that she was one and the same person),¹⁷³⁴ and as Polly Crosse – although then still enslaved – she declared in 1825 that she owned two people: Barbet, a 28-year-old woman from Curacao, and Thomas, an 18-year-old sambo from Nevis (this was not the only instance of one enslaved person in Nevis owning another). She had purchased these two from Captain Thomas Bickham Crosse, but in 1828, when Polly Crosse registered Flora's daughter Belle for the first time, she also recorded that she had sold her other two people to Elizabeth T Crosse.

When Belle (also known as Bell Bailey) was bought by Polly Cross, she presumably worked as a domestic. She was 16 years old and her new owner a woman of 35. Having ownership of Belle entitled Polly Crosse to slave compensation but, once she had made her claim, she set Flora's daughter free and discharged her from having to serve the full apprenticeship period.¹⁷³⁵ In 1836 Polly Crosse received £20 compensation for Belle.

With Sophia Bailey's death, Belle's owner had changed but Flora and the twins were still owned by Nancy Williams. Then in her late twenties, Nancy probably went to work for Huggins on Clarke's Estate and presumably Flora and the twins went with her (in 1835 they certainly lived on what was still called Pinney's).

Just a few months before the apprenticeship system replaced slavery, Nancy Williams sold Flora's daughter Eve. On 4 March 1834 Robert Ferrier bought her.¹⁷³⁶ A merchant, he traded as co-partner with Joseph Stanley, the son of the last Mountravers manager under the Pinneys.¹⁷³⁷ Ferrier had several people in his possession – his own and those who belonged to his business concern.¹⁷³⁸ Nancy may have let go of Eve because she owed Ferrier money. With Eve no longer owned by her, Nancy Williams received about S£40 in compensation for Flora and her son Adam.¹⁷³⁹

When Eve came into Ferrier's possession it is likely she was pregnant, or had given birth to a child because in 1835 she was described as an adult while her twin brother Adam, his physical development retarded, as a boy of 'about' 12 years of age. They were 16 or 17 years old when, on 21 January 1835, they underwent baptism in the Methodist Chapel in Charlestown. Both their residences were given as Pinney's, which means that Eve possibly never actually went to live with Ferrier.¹⁷⁴⁰ Eve died young. At the age of 25, she was buried on 5 October 1844.¹⁷⁴¹

Having lived on Peter Thomas Huggins's estate, Adam may have taken on the surname of Huggins and married a woman called Anna Washington. Their wedding was held on 27 August 1840 in the presence of the witnesses Thomas Newton and Stephen Hobson.¹⁷⁴² A few days later, on 3 September, the couple's daughter Georgiana was baptised. The family lived at Round Hill where Adam Huggins worked as a butler.¹⁷⁴³

It is not known that happened to Flora.

¹⁷³⁴ UKNA, T 71/1039

¹⁷³⁵ ECSCRN, CR 1831-1835 f380 Index

¹⁷³⁶ UKNA, T 71/1038 Claim No 146

¹⁷³⁷ UKNA, BT 107/486, and ECSCRN, Kings/Queen's Bench and Common Pleas 1827-1836 f198

¹⁷³⁸ UKNA, T 71/1038 and T 71/1460; also HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlvi: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08) and pp314-15: Nevis Litigated Claims

¹⁷³⁹ UKNA, NDO 4/9

The House acted on behalf of Nancy Williams's Claim No 146 (pre-fixed with 'PTH') for two people (£43:13:1). In another version her compensation amounted to £39:17:9 (PP, LB 66: P & C to PT Huggins, 1 March 1836; Dom Box R-6: Compensation file; HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlvi: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08).

¹⁷⁴⁰ NHCS, Methodist Baptismal Records 1835-1873 Unnumbered

¹⁷⁴¹ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965

¹⁷⁴² NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Marriages 1828-1965

¹⁷⁴³ NHCS, Transcripts of Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1831-1873 No 606

The creole, Joseph Webbe (Joe) Stanley, 1805-1807

Joseph Webbe Stanley was the only creole manager JPP and his son John Frederick employed on Mountravers. With years of experience behind him, Stanley ran the plantation competently but was dismissed from his job when the property was sold and the new owner took over. He was no longer needed.

Stanley lived on Mountravers with his wife and their young children.



The fifth child of Michael Stanley with his wife Elizabeth, Joseph Webbe Stanley was baptised on 7 October 1754 in the church at St John Figtree.¹⁷⁴⁴ On his father's side his background was solidly creole; his paternal grandmother, Ann Smith, came from a branch of the Smith family that had settled in Nevis in the late 1640s.¹⁷⁴⁵ The Stanleys, too, arrived around that time. Said to have been 'a proscribed family', they had been driven from England during the Civil War.¹⁷⁴⁶

The story of Joseph Webbe Stanley's family is a litany of early deaths but typical of a time when life expectancy was low. Michael Stanley, his father, was born in 1716 as the son of the planter Joseph Stanley and his wife Ann Smith. Joseph Stanley died when Michael was very young, and his mother remarried when the boy was eight or nine years old. Her second husband, the planter Richard Brodbelt, was also widowed.¹⁷⁴⁷ By the time Michael Stanley reached the age of 19, he already ran his own affairs; he made enslaved workers available to take part in the Saddle Hill project but provided relatively few.¹⁷⁴⁸ Some time before 1740 Michael Stanley married a woman called Anne but she died in the early 1750s.¹⁷⁴⁹ Left to bring up three young children, not long after he lost his wife the widower married again, and it was this second wife, Elizabeth, who gave birth to Joseph Webbe Stanley. The child's first name was that of his paternal grandfather; his middle name may have been his mother's maiden name. This boy was Michael Stanley's second son called Joseph; another child of the same name had previously died days after being baptised. Michael Stanley's three surviving children from his first marriage – John, Richard and Elizabeth - were 14, 12 and probably about eight or nine years old when Joseph Webbe Stanley was baptised.¹⁷⁵⁰ He appears to have been known as Joe Stanley, and this is what he will be called from now on.

Joe Stanley's mother died, possibly in childbirth, and very quickly his father married again. With Joe's stepmother, Eleanor, his father had three more children: William, Charles, and Anne. They were baptised in 1756, 1758 and 1762. All three died in infancy: William when he was six months old, Charles at the age of two years, and Anne before she reached the age of four years. It would have been his stepmother, Eleanor, who brought up Joe Stanley, but, aged 38, she died in 1768.¹⁷⁵¹ In his

¹⁷⁴⁴ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 1 p326

¹⁷⁴⁵ Members of the Smith family had settled in Nevis by the early 1650s: the brothers Michael, Daniel and Obediah Michael Smith died between 1670 and 1675. His first son and heir, also called Michael, married a woman called Anne, bought Roundhill plantation in 1678 and was a member of the Council. His death was announced in October 1700. Michael and Anne Smith had two children, also called Michael and Ann. In 1714 their daughter Ann married Joseph Stanley, and their son was Michael, the father of Joseph Webbe Stanley. The couple had another child about whom nothing more is known (Oliver, V L *Caribbeana* Vol 4 pp289-96 Smith pedigree).

¹⁷⁴⁶ Namier, Sir James and John Brooke (ed) *The History of Parliament*

The claim that the Nevis Stanleys came from 'a proscribed family' probably referred to Colonel John Stanley, a near relation of the Earl of Derby, who was beheaded by Cromwell (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p363).

¹⁷⁴⁷ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p364 and Vol 1 p45

¹⁷⁴⁸ UKNA, CO 186/2: 28 August to 11 November 1735

¹⁷⁴⁹ VL Oliver gave two different dates for Anne Stanley's burial: 28 April 1752 and 28 April 1751 (*Caribbeana* Vol 1 p325 and Vol 3 p364).

¹⁷⁵⁰ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 1 p232 and Vol 3 pp364-65

¹⁷⁵¹ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 1 pp326-28, pp376-77, Vol 3 pp364-65, and NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825

early teens, Joe was the youngest of the surviving children but old enough to find his own path in life. His father, therefore, did not need another mother to bring up his children, but Michael Stanley had lost the woman who would care for him in his old age, and in September 1776 he wed his fourth wife. Aged sixty, he married the spinster Elizabeth Washington.¹⁷⁵² By then Joe's older half-siblings were already married: his half-brother John to the well-to-do widow Susan Brouncker nee Feuilleteau of St Kitts¹⁷⁵³ and his half-brother Richard to Elizabeth, the daughter of the Nevis planter James Brodbelt.¹⁷⁵⁴ His half-sister Elizabeth, then in her early thirties, had already been widowed. Married to James Nolan by 1766, her life with him lasted less than a decade.¹⁷⁵⁵ The couple had one daughter, also called Elizabeth. Financially Mrs Elizabeth Stanley did not do well out of her marriage; her husband's debts¹⁷⁵⁶ forced the sale of his people. At auction, JPP bought five of the Nolan people for Mountravers.

Joe Stanley grew up in the parish of St John Figtree which, for some years, his father represented in the Assembly.¹⁷⁵⁷ Michael Stanley, like his father before him, was a planter. He cultivated an estate of middling size. In the mid-1740s he owned 47 people,¹⁷⁵⁸ in the mid-1750s he still had the same number although six people, who belonged to his children, were too young, too old, or too ill to work.¹⁷⁵⁹ Michael Stanley was struggling financially and mortgaged his hundred-acre estate and a number of his people to a relative on his father's side, Ralph Willett of St Kitts.¹⁷⁶⁰

Ralph Willett, who retired to live in Dorset,¹⁷⁶¹ also supported John, the older of Joe Stanley's two surviving half-brothers. He appears to have been a father figure in John's life; John later praised him as the 'Honorable friend and benefactor Ralph Willett, the parent of my necessitous youth and the able and faithful councillor of my whole life.'¹⁷⁶² John Stanley honoured his mentor by giving his only son John, who was born in the mid-1770s, the middle name Willett. Although John was Michael Stanley's first-born son, he did not follow in the planting business but went to England to train as a lawyer.¹⁷⁶³ He successfully followed a legal career and began to buy estates in St Kitts and in Nevis, among them Morning Star and Pembroke plantations in the parish of St John Figtree. For a time he acted as Commander-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands and for some years also represented Nevis in London as the island's agent.¹⁷⁶⁴ By the early 1770s John Stanley had become Solicitor-General of the Leeward Islands and then served as Attorney-General of Nevis and Judge of the Vice-Admiralty Court.¹⁷⁶⁵ Governor Burt complained that John Stanley did not spend enough time in the West Indies,¹⁷⁶⁶ but Horatio Nelson rated him as one of the Leeward Islands' Crown lawyers who could always be relied upon to support the Navy. In a private capacity, John Stanley also promised to assist Mrs Nelson with a legacy dispute,¹⁷⁶⁷ and through Horatio Nelson's assessment of him one gets an

¹⁷⁵² NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825

¹⁷⁵³ BULSC, WI Cat 1 DM 41/97/1-2: Settlement on the Marriage of John Stanley and Susanna Brouncker

¹⁷⁵⁴ Joe Stanley's half-brother Richard was born on 6 June and baptised on 23 September 1742. Elizabeth Brodbelt, the daughter of James Brodbelt and his wife Amelia, was 16 years Richard's junior; she was baptised in May 1758. They married in March 1773 (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 3 pp362-65 and Vol 1 pp324-28 and pp376-78).

¹⁷⁵⁵ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p365

¹⁷⁵⁶ SCRO, Moberley and Wharton Collection, D/MW 34/1

¹⁷⁵⁷ UKNA, CO 155/8: 1749/50 and CO 186/6: 8 May 1773

¹⁷⁵⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1741-1749 f123

¹⁷⁵⁹ PP, Dom Box P: General's Tax Notebook 1755

¹⁷⁶⁰ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p363

¹⁷⁶¹ Ralph Willett lived in Merley House outside Wimbourne, Dorset, which he had built (Oswald, Arthur *Country Houses of Dorset*). At one stage Merley House in Merley Park had re-invented itself as a model museum with a caravan park; later it became a company's headquarters.

¹⁷⁶² SCRO, Moberley and Wharton Collection, D/MW 34/1, and BULSC, WI Cat 1 DM 41/104/18

¹⁷⁶³ On 24 February 1758 John Stanley was admitted to the Inn, on 5 June 1761 he was called to the Bar and to the Bench on 27 January 1797 (<http://www.innertemple.org.uk/archive/>).

¹⁷⁶⁴ UKNA, CO 186/7: 10 July 1777 and CO 152/62: 4 August 1782

¹⁷⁶⁵ Naish, GPB *Nelson's Letters* p17 fn2

¹⁷⁶⁶ Goveia, EV *Slave Society* p84, citing CO 152/59: Burt to Germain, 3 June 1779

¹⁷⁶⁷ Nicolas, Sir Nicholas Harris *The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson* pp199-201 Nelson to Philip Stephens, Admiralty, 4 October 1786, and pp160-63 Nelson to William Suckling, 9 March 1786

insight into his personality. After John Stanley failed to reply to one of Mrs Nelson's letters, Nelson remarked to his wife: 'We know he can be a warm friend or a bitter enemy.'¹⁷⁶⁸

Joe's second brother, Richard, meanwhile, had become Deputy Provost Marshal - in that capacity he had conducted the auction and sold James Nolan's (his brother-in-law's) people to JPP. With several other men he had also tried to raise the money to buy a 120-acre plantation in St John Figtree but he and his co-investors defaulted. Among them were the Mountravers plantation manager Joseph Gill and his business partner Robert McGill. At N£16,000 Richard Stanley's loss was the biggest¹⁷⁶⁹ and, instead of owning a plantation, he went to work on William Colhoun's estate and managed that property¹⁷⁷⁰ before he settled down as a distiller on Brodbelt's estate.¹⁷⁷¹

Joe Stanley left Nevis when he was in his early twenties. In June 1775 he was working as a merchant in Basseterre and bought from his sister and brother-in-law, the Nolans, two enslaved women and their mulatto children: **Betty Bone** and **Sydope**, and **Juno** and **Billy**. Together, they cost N£224.¹⁷⁷² It is not known what he did with them because in the following year, the year their father married for the last time, he was abroad. He spent some time in England where he was part of the community of absentees from Nevis. One of these, the planter John Ward, faced being jailed for debt, and Stanley lent him £10 'to save him from going to prison'. (Many years later Ward repaid this with interest.)¹⁷⁷³ Once again, West Indians supported one another. Joe Stanley, in turn, was supported by his brother John who set him up as a merchant.¹⁷⁷⁴ At some stage Joe may have traded in partnership with John Emra; the two men jointly initiated court action to recover debts from various people.¹⁷⁷⁵

In February 1780 Joe Stanley's father died,¹⁷⁷⁶ and at the beginning of March Joe began a twenty-year-long spell of managing his brother's Morning Star and Pembroke plantations in the parish of St John Figtree.¹⁷⁷⁷ John Stanley had also wanted to buy JPP's small plantation in St John Figtree, Mountain or Governor's, but failed to pay for it and JPP took it back.¹⁷⁷⁸

Joe Stanley lived and worked in the parish in which he had grown up. About three miles from Charlestown, the Morning Star estate bordered the churchyard of St John Figtree on one side and Montpelier, President Herbert's estate, on another. At a height of about 500 feet (152 metres) it was cool and commanded good views.¹⁷⁷⁹ Morning Star consisted of 162 acres with 12 acres of pasture land in the mountain and another 96 acres of pasture in the lower grounds. The lower lying Pembroke, where the livestock was kept, measured 110 acres. In total, around two hundred enslaved people lived on both properties. The estates were self-contained units, each with their own works and domestic buildings. Pembroke, which stretched from the High Road down to the sea, generally was in better shape whereas most buildings on Morning Star had become 'very bad' or fallen 'much out of repair', and the two mills were old and the liquor room rotten. On each estate stood dwelling houses which had separate domestic facilities, such as a kitchen, a water cistern, an oven, a necessary (toilet) and a stable. In addition, Pembroke also had a still, a store house and a poultry house.¹⁷⁸⁰ With so many worn-out buildings, during the first three years Joe Stanley was busy organising and

¹⁷⁶⁸ Naish, GPB *Nelson's Letters* pp115-16 Nelson to wife, 28 June 1794

An engraved portrait of John Stanley dated c 1792 was said to have been held by Hastings Museum. It is the only known likeness of any member of the managers' families (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p363).

¹⁷⁶⁹ Although larger by twenty acres, it is just possible that the plantation Richard Stanley and others were trying to buy was the plantation Michael Stanley had been forced to mortgage. Michael Stanley had mortgaged 26 people; the property came with 25 (ECSCRN, CR 1776-1777 f378).

¹⁷⁷⁰ PP, LB 4: JPP to William Colhoun, Pall-mall, 3 May 1777

¹⁷⁷¹ PP, WI Box E: James Brodbelt's Estate Currency a/c

¹⁷⁷² ECSCRN, CR 1773-1775 ff240-41

¹⁷⁷³ PP, WI Box O Misc Item 1: Accounts of John Stanley with Joseph Webbe Stanley

¹⁷⁷⁴ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 pp362-65

¹⁷⁷⁵ ECSCRN, King's Bench and Common Pleas Cause List 1776-1779

¹⁷⁷⁶ NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825

¹⁷⁷⁷ PP, WI Box O Misc Item 1: Accounts John Stanley with Joseph Webbe Stanley

¹⁷⁷⁸ Pares R *A West India Fortune* p82, and BULSC, WI Cat 1 DM 41/104/16

¹⁷⁷⁹ BULSC, WI Cat 1 DM 41/77, and J Davy *The West Indies Before and Since Slave Emancipation* p491

¹⁷⁸⁰ PP, DM 1173 Nevis Ledger 1775-1778: Morning Star/ Pembroke et al appraisalment 26 October 1775

overseeing a lot of building work, which included erecting a new sugar work, underpinning the sick house at Morning Star and repairing the cistern. This presented an opportunity for the people on the estate to earn money: one Sunday Stanley engaged 53 workers and paid them about N5s each to clear away the broken cistern walls. For some of the work he drew on the growing pool of mulatto craftsmen: Jim Sanders renovated the still house at Pembroke and Thomas Cole worked on one of the mills.¹⁷⁸¹

For several years Joe Stanley bought large amounts of rum from the plantation – around a thousand gallons (4,546 litres) a year -¹⁷⁸² and no doubt earned extra money from selling the alcohol in small quantities in the island.

While Joe Stanley managed his brother's plantation, John Stanley rose through the political ranks. In 1784 he was elected Member of Parliament for Hastings, a seat he held for twelve years. His term of office coincided with the beginning of the Parliamentary debates on the abolition of the slave trade, and John Stanley proved his West Indian credentials by joining a group created to fight the abolition of the slave trade - a subcommittee set up in 1788 by the West India Planters and Merchants' Standing Committee.¹⁷⁸³ He used his political position to good effect and in at least one debate 'spoke strongly and at very great length' to defend Britain's commerce with Africa. Along with many other anti-abolition campaigners he did accept that the slave trade needed some regulation.

At least from the time he became an MP John Stanley lived in the London borough of Greenwich, in 'a handsome seat on the south side of Shooter's Hill' that he either rented or leased,¹⁷⁸⁴ but by 1793 he was back in St Kitts and, after Governor Woodley died, remained there to administer on the government's behalf. In 1794, when JPP visited Nevis, JPP made contact with him and the two men met at St Kitts.¹⁷⁸⁵ Stanley was hoping for a permanent appointment to the post of governor but this not happen. Later he stepped in once more as acting Governor of the Leeward Islands.¹⁷⁸⁶

John Stanley had stepchildren from his wife's first marriage but his own son died young, after an illness. The 18-year-old John Willett Stanley was on his way to Portugal to recover his health when he died at Falmouth on the Cornish coast.¹⁷⁸⁷

When Joe Stanley began managing his brother's estate he was in his twenties and of marriageable age, but there is no evidence that he got married then, or that he had children. He may well have taken one of the women on the plantation as a mistress and fathered children. His other brother, Richard, had at least two surviving sons,¹⁷⁸⁸ but he and his wife Elizabeth had lost at least three very young children: Deborah Anne died in April 1783, and Richard and Michael within four days of each other in June 1789.¹⁷⁸⁹

Although John and Richard Stanley were full brothers, John Stanley evidently thought that Joe was the more capable, and he chose Joe as one of his executors.¹⁷⁹⁰ But John Stanley supported both financially; he had backed Joe so that he could establish himself as a merchant and he had lent money to Richard,¹⁷⁹¹ and when John died in 1799,¹⁷⁹² Richard had all debts owing remitted. But John himself had also been in debt. Although he had lands and estates in St Kitts and Nevis, after his death

¹⁷⁸¹ PP, WI Box O: Account John Stanley in account with Joseph Webbe Stanley 2 March 1780-14 January 1800

¹⁷⁸² PP, AB 44 Rum a/c, AB 48 Estate of John Stanley and AB 53 Estate of John Stanley

¹⁷⁸³ Penson, Lillian M *The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies* Appendix II and p213

¹⁷⁸⁴ Lysons, David 'Plumstead' in *The Environs of London* Vol 4 pp537-45 and fn36

¹⁷⁸⁵ PP, LB 11: JPP, Nevis, to John Stanley, 8 May 1794

¹⁷⁸⁶ Namier, Sir James and John Brooke (ed) *The History of Parliament*

¹⁷⁸⁷ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p363; also David Lysons 'Plumstead' in *The Environs of London* Vol 4 pp537-45

¹⁷⁸⁸ BULSC, WI Cat 1 DM 41/80

¹⁷⁸⁹ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p362 and NHCS, St John Figtree Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1729-1825

¹⁷⁹⁰ SCRO, Moberley and Wharton Collection, D/MW 34/1 and ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff234-57

¹⁷⁹¹ BULSC, WI Cat 1 DM 41/104/18

¹⁷⁹² Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 (Cayon Diary), and PP, LB 14: JPP to James Williams, 13 February 1799

there was not enough money to pay all creditors and a Chancery case ensued.¹⁷⁹³ Joe Stanley was left to sort out his brother's complicated business affairs, and the unravelling of the estate continued for some years. Once again, the enslaved people had to pay the price for their master's debts. The Marshal's Office ordered the sale of a number of people in order to recoup some of the money which John Stanley owed his creditors.¹⁷⁹⁴

A few months after his brother died, on 14 January 1800 Joe Stanley gave up his job as manager.¹⁷⁹⁵ During the two decades that he had worked on Morning Star and Pembroke he had improved both properties. The windmill, the dwelling house and the necessary on Morning Star were all in good repair, and the kitchen was praised for its 'very fine water cistern'. Apart from renovating and repairing the buildings, Stanley had shaped the physical environment of Morning Star. In the 1840s the estate was described as having many fine trees, including some tall cabbage palms and 'a many trunked banyan'. It was said that these had been planted about sixty years before,¹⁷⁹⁶ which would have been during Stanley's managership. Although the workforce would have done the actual planting, he had initiated the project and overseen the landscaping. He had left his mark on the environment.

As far as his management of the enslaved people was concerned, it is difficult to judge what impact he had. When he produced an inventory, he appears to have grouped people in family units, or possibly according to the houses they shared. In this he had oriented himself differently from those managers who completed their slave registers alphabetically, or by age or gender, demonstrating that he saw enslaved people as individual human beings rather than just units of production. A large number of people were moved from Morning Star and Pembroke when a mortgage fell due and it is therefore difficult to assess how many people died, but it appears that the number of children born just about fell short of replacing those who had died.¹⁷⁹⁷ In 1802, out of 129 people on Morning Star and Pembroke two had leprosy, one was blind, nine were of 'no use' or 'distempered', and another four were old and of very low value. The number of ill and weak people represented about 12 per cent of the total population, which compared favourably with other plantations where as many as a quarter might have been deemed 'useless'.¹⁷⁹⁸

During his time as manager Joe Stanley performed the usual gestures of friendship, witnessing wills and documents,¹⁷⁹⁹ and acting as an appraiser. Together with two other men he valued the effects of the former manager on Woodland, John Fisher.¹⁸⁰⁰ In June 1800, a few months after he had left his post as manager, he carried out one more appraisal, that of Revd William Jones's estate. The clergyman's status and size of estate required a more comprehensive evaluation, and this Joe

¹⁷⁹³ BULSC, WI Cat 1 DM41/104/25: Case in the Chancery; also WI Cat 1 DM 41/104/6-7

¹⁷⁹⁴ BULSC, WI Cat 1 PP, DM41/104/5: JW Stanley, Nevis, to the executors of John Stanley, 20 March 1802

One woman who had belonged to John Stanley, Eve, was freed in 1803 by Joe Stanley. A free woman, Celia Stanley, put up the S£40 for Eve's manumission (ECSCRN, CR 1801-1803 ff501-02).

¹⁷⁹⁵ PP, WI Box O-1

¹⁷⁹⁶ Davy, J *The West Indies Before and Since Slave Emancipation* p491

¹⁷⁹⁷ Some time between 1790 and 1795 Joe Stanley recorded all the enslaved people on Morning Star and on Pembroke, 197 in all. In 1797 a number of people were mortgaged and given as security to Thomas Latham & Son, merchants of Great Tower Street, London. By 1802, when they were all appraised, 97 people were attached to Morning Star and 42 to Pembroke. It appears that as a result of the mortgage falling due close to sixty had been taken off the plantation. Another two dozen had died, and one man, Benton, probably had been successful in freeing himself. Twenty new names appeared in 1802, and from their position on the list, as well as the fact that 14 of these had the prefix 'Little', it can be assumed that these were children who had been born on the plantation (PP, 1790 AB Estate of John Stanley, and BULSC, WI Collection DM 41/104/4 and 5). This would have represented a net loss of four people over a period of between seven and twelve years.

¹⁷⁹⁸ In 1767, close to ten per cent of people on Jesup's plantation were identified as diseased or useless; on the Stapleton plantation it was close to 30 per cent in 1766 and close to 40 per cent in 1778 (SRO, Moberley and Wharton Collection, D/MW 35/18; Stapleton Cotton MSS 14 and MSS 16 iii D). However, the criteria may have been slightly different ('declining' would have been different from 'diseased') and some of those described as 'diseased' or 'infirm' were not necessarily incapable of work; they might still have carried out less demanding tasks.

¹⁷⁹⁹ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1763-1787 f312; VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 1 p311: Will of William Pemberton, and *Caribbeana* Vol 5 p223: Will of JR Herbert; also PP, DM41/108/2

¹⁸⁰⁰ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff88-90

Stanley did with three other men: Edward Pemberton, the 60-year-old¹⁸⁰¹ William Hanley and the planter John Wallwin Maillard.¹⁸⁰²

Having completed that job, Joe Stanley packed up the account books for his brother's estate, put them in JPP's tin case abroad the *Nevis* and left for England. By 22 September Joe Stanley had reached Bristol,¹⁸⁰³ by the end of October his marriage to Lucy Bligh was firmly fixed, and in November the couple's wedding took place.¹⁸⁰⁴

The speed at which all this happened suggests that Joe and Lucy knew each other already. For Joe Stanley, who was past his mid-forties, this was a late marriage but, if he wanted an heir, he did well to take a younger wife. Lucy was about half his age. The daughter of the Cornishman John Bligh and his London-born wife Lucy Shuter, she had grown up in London where her father held the post of secretary of the Chelsea Water Works.¹⁸⁰⁵ She had two brothers, John and Richard, and probably three sisters. Intent on following a legal career, her brother Richard had just been admitted to the Inner Temple but nothing is known about her sisters, or her brother John. When Joe Stanley married Lucy Bligh, his wife's family lived in Abingdon Street in the City of London, right by the river Thames and the Houses of Parliament,¹⁸⁰⁶ where Joe's brother John had defended merchants' and planters' interests. The Blighs may well have had connections with Nevis or other colonies; included in Lucy's marriage settlement were two skilled men intended for the use of both Joe Stanley and his wife: John, a carpenter, and James, a cooper.¹⁸⁰⁷ Before the couple set off for the West Indies, the new Mrs Stanley stocked up on items to sell in Nevis.

In Nevis, as elsewhere, everyone would have been familiar with the name Bligh. Her uncle William Bligh had become famous after the crew on board a ship he commanded, the *Bounty*, had risen against him. The *Bounty* had been on a mission to transport breadfruit saplings from Tahiti to the West Indies to provide cheap nourishment for the plantation people, but on their return journey members of his crew had mutinied and had cast him adrift with a number of seamen loyal to him. Without charts, Bligh had managed to land them all safely after 47 days at sea - an extraordinary feat of navigation. Hailed as a hero on his return to England, he had then been court-martialled for the loss of the *Bounty*. After an honourable acquittal he knew how to remain in the public eye; he published his 'Narrative of the Mutiny on board His Majesty's ship "*Bounty*"' which was followed by another account of his voyage. However, when he returned from his second, successful breadfruit voyage, publicity

¹⁸⁰¹ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 1

¹⁸⁰² ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1787-1805 ff357-66

¹⁸⁰³ PP, WI Box O (loose item)

¹⁸⁰⁴ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 (Cayon Diary)

¹⁸⁰⁵ Mew, James, revised Beth F Wood 'Bligh, Richard (1780-1838)' in *Oxford DNB*

According to Richard Bligh's biography in the *Oxford DNB* he had married Harriet Maria, the daughter of Vice-Admiral William Bligh, but according to William Bligh's will, his daughter Harriet (also spelt Harriett) Maria had married Henry Aston Barker, while his daughter Elizabeth was the wife of Richard Bligh. This is confirmed by another source, which states that William Bligh's daughter Elizabeth married her cousin Richard Bligh (*Notes and Queries* Series 2 No 50 p473).

¹⁸⁰⁶ <http://www.innertemple.org.uk/archive/>

¹⁸⁰⁷ ECSCRN, CR 1799-1801 f163

Lucy Bligh's maternal great-grandfather William Wharton of Old Park, Durham, was a first cousin of Philip, Duke of Wharton, and may possibly have been related to the Whartons of St Kitts and Nevis. Lucy Bligh's maternal grandmother, Arabella Wharton, had been Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Caroline, the energetic and influential wife of King George II. All that is known about Lucy Bligh's brother John is that he was born in October 1778 and christened in Bodmin, Cornwall (where their father had been born) and that he married a woman called Wasborough or Worborough (<http://www.familysearch.org> with contributions from Anne Baker, Hampshire, and David Okon, Illinois).

It appears that other members of the Bligh family came to Nevis; from 1824 onwards the merchant John Bligh and a Mrs Bligh appeared there in the records. In November John Bligh witnessed the will of Frederick Huggins (Rigsarkivet Kopenhagen, 1825-1827 #78.6 Schedule B), and in May 1825 Mrs Bligh was one of the women who provided the entertainment during the Lord Bishop's visit to Nevis. When the account for this was presented for payment, Mrs Bligh was referred to as 'the late Mrs Bligh' (UKNA, CO 186/12: 21 July 1825). This could just mean that she had left the island but could also mean that she had died since Bishop Coleridge's visit. What is certain, though, is that John Bligh died at Nevis on 22 June 1825. He was 31 old and last resident in Charlestown (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 1 p134; also NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 82, and RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)). This could not have been Lucy Bligh's brother; he was born in 1778 (<http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin>). Indeed, Joseph Webbe Stanley and his wife Lucy applied for the administration of the merchant John Bligh's effects which amounted to N£420 (NCH, Book of Wills 1830-1837 ff249-53).

favourable to the mutineers had reached British audiences and Bligh's reputation was tarnished.¹⁸⁰⁸ By the time Lucy Bligh landed at Nevis, breadfruit trees were already established in the island and elsewhere in the Caribbean.

The Stanleys' first son, John Bligh Stanley, was born in due course and probably also their first daughter, Elizabeth Mary Stanley. The family settled in Charlestown where Joe Stanley appears to have owned two separate plots of land. One of these was located 160 feet from the Main Street.¹⁸⁰⁹ Many freed people lived in Charlestown, and one of their neighbours was Henrietta Creese, a free mulatto woman.¹⁸¹⁰ Stanley's other plot of land was later occupied by the free woman¹⁸¹¹ Ann Huggins and by Josiah Nicholson.¹⁸¹² But the Stanleys' contact with free people extended further; Mrs Stanley appears to have enjoyed a close friendship with the free woman Elizabeth Arthurton who, in her will, left her N£20. However, for some reason Miss Arthurton stipulated that the money was to be paid to the planter's daughter Ann Pemberton who was to expend it 'for the benefit of Mrs Lucy Stanley for the most fitting purpose.'¹⁸¹³ Perhaps this caveat was necessary to prevent Joe Stanley taking the money from his wife.

By the end of 1808 Joe Stanley was the only surviving child of Michael Stanley's. Joe's sister Elizabeth Nolan had died in September 1805, his brother Richard in December 1808. His sister-in-law, John's wife Susanna, had also died in 1808.¹⁸¹⁴

Mountravers under Joe Stanley

On 19 May 1805 John Frederick Pinney appointed Joe Stanley as manager. Then on a visit to Nevis, the owner drew up the contract in person. With the neighbouring planter John Henry Clarke witnessing the document, it was an unusual document. It began on an emotional note and then became a formal contract.

John Frederick Pinney first set out the problems he had experienced under the Williams brothers: 'Having been much injured by the strange conduct of my late managers and having lost considerable sums by their wilfull (sic) deviation from the general instructions left by me...' This could have been written by his father but he continued to draw up a very detailed agreement which in its tone was different to anything old JPP would have written and betrayed John Frederick's training as a lawyer. Whereas JPP had talked about 'sinews of the estate', for John Frederick this was a straightforward contract between himself and his manager. Apart from stating Joe Stanley's allowances, he addressed the planting regime, how fertiliser was to be collected, what provisions should be grown. He set clear parameters, covering just about every eventuality that could give rise to overspending, or abuse: misappropriating plantation people for personal gain, purchasing expensive metal work or plantation stores in the island, or selling scrap iron locally. Any building work (for which permission was needed) was to be done by the people on the plantation: 'Never employ white or other tradesmen as their charges are enormous.' The manager was to run a tight accounting system, clearing all debts by the end of crop and selling surplus provisions to other planters but never lending any. John Frederick Pinney asked Stanley to 'Minute down every time you call a doctor and what he supplies

¹⁸⁰⁸ George Tobin, the son of the Nevis planter James Tobin, had served as Third Lieutenant under Bligh on the second voyage to Tahiti. When news of George Tobin's appointment reached JPP, he only told his son that 'George is made a Lieutenant and is appointed third Lieutenant to the *Providence* Capt Bligh bound to Otaheite, who is to touch at New South Wales and other islands in the South Sea' (PP, LB 10: JPP to Azariah Pinney, 13 June 1791). It is extraordinary that JPP made no comment on Bligh's reputation, the mutiny or even the ostensible purpose of the voyage: to bring breadfruit to the West Indies to feed the very people on whom the Pinney family so depended for their good fortune.

¹⁸⁰⁹ ECSCRN, CR 1805-1808 f239

¹⁸¹⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1814-1817 ff45-8

¹⁸¹¹ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f21

¹⁸¹² ECSCRN, CR 1814-1817 ff55-7

¹⁸¹³ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1805-1818 f312

¹⁸¹⁴ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p364 and p365

the estate', and the overseer was to keep a tally of the sugar and other plantation produce he used.¹⁸¹⁵

When he had worked for his brother, Joe Stanley had started on a salary of N£175 which had risen to N£225 a year. On Mountravers he earned N£25 a year more. In addition he received payment in kind, such as muscovado sugar, but for the first time the rum allowance was restricted. It was still generous: Joe Stanley was authorised to use one puncheon a year. At 120 gallons, or 545 litres, this was equivalent to over two and a half pints, or one and a half litres a day, and would have amply satisfied the demands of most social drinkers. Another completely new point was that, in addition to an unspecified number of plantation servants, the manager was only allowed to retain those two females of his who were already known to Pinney. The manager was not allowed to keep any other of his own workers on the estate. If he acquired more, he would be penalised: after a year they would belong to the plantation. This threat to confiscate unauthorised personal people was a harsh and arbitrary condition but was meant to curtail contact with people who might upset the equilibrium on Mountravers. The same reason, no doubt, was behind another new demand: that no one should be apprenticed without prior consent.

Aggrieved over the number of livestock the Williams brothers had kept, in the contract John Frederick Pinney specifically dealt with sheep. Stanley was to keep four or five in the fattening pen and at least thirty in the pasture but in total no more than forty - otherwise the sheep would compete with the mules and the cattle for fodder and jeopardise their ability to increase. If members of the Pinney family came to visit, sheep were to be made available for their use, and from any sheep killed, the overseer was to get some meat and the plantation people the 'course [coarse] parts'. The manager could keep the increase of any sheep on the estate; this was to compensate him for giving 'small supplies' from his own produce to any sick people on the estate. For the manager to provide plantation people directly with some of his own foodstuffs was also a new development. Of course the manager would give the plantation people the least desirable meat and the produce was intended for sick people only, but enshrining their supply in the manager's contract showed a new sensitivity - John Frederick Pinney was making a gesture, albeit a limp one, towards the Leeward Islands Melioration legislation.

After John Frederick Pinney left the island, his attorney John Colhoun Mills soon reported Joe Stanley's progress to JPP: 'I was yesterday at your son's estate and it gave me great pleasure to see not only the canes look well but the whole appearance of the estate such as reflects great credit on the manager.'¹⁸¹⁶ Joe Stanley added his own report, and to get a sense of how he communicated with his employer and what exercised him - and in this case also his wife - it is worth repeating his first letter in full:

The field negroes are getting into pretty (sic) good order, they do their work now without much trouble and sildom (sic) complain without being realy (sic) sick, but the people in the yard I do not know what to do with. They have lately robed (sic) me to a large amount, they denied it strongly, but the proofs are too much against them tho' I could not find anything with them, they secreted them away. A girl of my own about 13 or 14 years old who I accused confessed upon the other, who were Nanny & Hetty (Billy Jones's sister) she came at first in the yard to assist Sheaba (sic) in washing but the cloathes (sic) were get up so badly that I put a negro of my own in her place and took her in the house to assist in rubbing (sic) furniture etc. She being young with child and not much used to the field work. She three or four times took out a caravan with some things which Mrs Stanley has brought out for sale, however as I disapproved of that she was kept at work in the manner mentioned, by which means she was often in the chamber where she had an opportunity of seeing where each article was put

¹⁸¹⁵ PP, WI Box O-2: JF Pinney's instructions for Joseph Stanley, 19 May 1805, witnessed by John Henry Clarke

¹⁸¹⁶ PP, Dom Box I i/1: JC Mills to JPP, 20 November 1805

away & where the keys were locked up, in two weeks after this Mrs S missed a quantity of dimity 6 yds of lace and many other articles and called on our own girl to give an account of them. She confessed that Nanny had a key that opened the draws and that Hetty had borrowed one from Sally Peaden to open the trunk, on my asking Sally Peaden if it was true, she immediately told me ?y.e ? Hetty came down one day at noon to her in Mrs S. name to borrow the keys to see if any of them could open a trunk, that she gave them to her and an hour after Hetty brought them back and said they answered very well. I tried (sic) the key and it opend (sic) the trunk which the girl said Hetty had taken out of check brown Holland & Nanny dowlas, for they were all concerned together, this had been carried on for some time, and always at noon when the family were at dinner, and one or the other would stay one (sic) the stairs, and if they heard anyone move they would call out holla, as notice that some one was coming. My girl produce (sic) a muslin wrapper which she said was part of what they have taken to make waistcoats of which Frank Fisher had one. Under these circumstances I thought it right and proper to take the parties to justice, where Fisher, said he bought the waistcoat of the girl when out selling, but that was very unlikely, as he had always come to Mrs. S. to purchase whatever he wanted knowing that she would get it as cheap, if not cheaper from her than the girl had liberty to sel (sic) it. They all were of course against the girl, tho' nothing but the wrapper that she produced could be proved upon her. Billy Jones said she brought the wrapper to his wife (Patty Fisher) to cut out and told her she would give her one but that he decided her not to ?compt of it, that she would ruin her master & mistress but that it was no business of theirs. The wrapper the girl produced being part of what was taken away, she was sentenced to have 39 lashes in the public market, the others nothing being found in their possession were dismissed tho the general opinion was that they were all concerned. Hetty I have confined in the old boiling house, it being xmas I was in hope to have her liberty, she may give me an account where the things were so that I might get back some part of them, but as yet I am without any. Nanny & Frank I find very unwilling to wait on me, and have to oblige to threaten them, but I shall avoid any kind of severity. Sheaba Jones behaves very well, Ben has not been able to do anything this three months and ? what is the matter with him he had had medicine from Dr Mills, but still complains of a burning all over & particularly in his stomach, therefore I am obliged to keep Pompey in the kitchen, Nancy Jones does a little work at times, these are the only people, except a little boy in the house, one of Philley sons, by the name of Mick that I employ. It has been long practice, I understand, that of having falce (sic) keys to the locks & make no doubt but it has been the means of so large a quantity of provisions etc being expended. There seems to be a great misunderstanding between Billy Jones and William Fisher. He a few days since beat W. Fisher very much indeed so much that I was obliged to have him blead (sic) and to give him a horse to ride to his house, he has done no work since. I have reprimanded Billy for beating him, & Mr Laurence has also done the same and told him he should inform you of it.¹⁸¹⁷

Under Henry Williams very few children had been born but as soon as Joe Stanley took over from him, several women gave birth to children who survived – four in the first year and eight in the second. The high number of births seems to indicate a healthy regime and a good understanding of plantation management. Joe Stanley also earned JPP's approval for making good sugar,¹⁸¹⁸ but it appears that his management was not perfect. Flour landed by Captain Shilstone was left on the beach for several days and presumably spoilt or got stolen,¹⁸¹⁹ and Stanley let himself be persuaded by several people that JPP had freed them from work when in fact he had not.¹⁸²⁰ Another failing was

¹⁸¹⁷ PP, Dom Box P: JW Stanley to JF Pinney, 27 December 1805

The Mr Lawrence mentioned in the context of reprimanding Billy Jones was John Frederick Pinney's attorney, William Lawrence (PP, LB 41: Unnumbered, undated page), the owner of Belmont estate, which abutted Mountravers (ECSCRN, CR 1801-1803 f272).

¹⁸¹⁸ PP, LB 22: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 1 October [blank] [1808]

¹⁸¹⁹ PP, LB 45: P & T to JW Stanley, 1 November 1806

¹⁸²⁰ PP, LB 22: JPP to JW Stanley, 15 August 1807

how he kept the inventory of people. When Joe Stanley drew up a list of everyone on the plantation the people were not in the same order as 'they originally stood in the list'. This confused JPP, particularly as the register contained names of some individuals JPP did not recognise. JPP asked him to repeat the exercise 'with their names in relation as to age', as near as he could judge. His employer also wanted transcribed from the plantation book the dates of birth of those children born since he had inherited Mountravers, where possible with the names of their mothers.¹⁸²¹ Joe Stanley did not carry out the instruction, and this later led to confusion over some people, but from then on, when children were born, Stanley did register the names of their mothers.

It appears that Joe Stanley employed as servants eight plantation people plus his own. This was a relatively high number but he needed more than other managers who had worked on Mountravers because his family was growing. The Stanleys had arrived on the plantation with a son and at least one daughter, but soon more children arrived: Lucy Brent, Lucretia Woodley and, some time in 1807 or 1808, a son called Joseph, who was followed by another daughter, Frances Laurence. Brent was the maiden name of Lucy Stanley's paternal grandmother, Mary Brent,¹⁸²² while the girls' middle names Woodley and Laurence may have been the surnames of their godparents.¹⁸²³

On Mountravers it was business as usual. The Pinneys were still investing in the estate. They sent some fresh mules from England and Stanley had instructions to plant more trees, for ornamental use and for 'fences to be made of the line'.¹⁸²⁴ Three 'sensible boys' were to be apprenticed to trades, the houseboy 'should be taught to bleed and draw teeth' and Stanley was told to find a midwife, 'as there used to be'. JPP gave permission to improve the overseer's house at Sharloes¹⁸²⁵ and repeated his mantra to plant potatoes for the plantation people.¹⁸²⁶ Among the more unpleasant tasks Stanley had to undertake was to chase money owed from the executors of the previous manager,¹⁸²⁷ and he had to deal with JPP's wrath against James Williams's mistress and children. Earlier JPP and Henry Williams had corresponded about freeing James' children Lewis, Henry and Nancy, but, once JPP discovered how much money James Williams had squandered, the situation changed and JPP asked Stanley to demote the children's mother, Jennetta, to work field. This was followed by instructions to sell her children but not her.¹⁸²⁸ As it turned out, Stanley did not do as instructed. He ran out of time.

Joe Stanley knew that it was the Pinneys' intention to sell Mountravers but he was not kept abreast of developments. JPP was trying to interest Thomas John Cottle in buying the estate¹⁸²⁹ while also negotiating with Edward Huggins, whereas in Nevis James Tobin, on the Pinneys' behalf, was in talks with John Henry Clarke. Tobin sold the estate to Clarke and a new manager was appointed: Samuel Bennett, who in the 1780s had been sacked from his job on Mountravers for cruelty.

At the beginning of August 1807 James Tobin and Thomas Arthurton turned up to take possession on Clarke's behalf. They asked Stanley to leave but, being totally unprepared, as yet he was not ready to go. Tobin reported to JPP:

On 3rd Stanley delivered formal possession to Thomas Arthurton and myself, when we looked over, and examined the stock, stores etc. and gave the keys, books etc etc to Bennett your former servant, who has agreed to take the temporary management by the month, with

¹⁸²¹ PP, LB 20: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 3 February 1807

¹⁸²² <http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin>

¹⁸²³ The reference 'John Woodley Lease and Conveyance in Trust for Mrs Lucy Stanley' suggests that there were early connections between Woodley and the Stanleys (ECSCRN, CR 1810-1814 ff820-23). In 1820 John Woodley married Frances Lawrence (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 3 February 1820). She appears to have been a daughter of Samuel Lawrence (UKNA, T 71/365).

¹⁸²⁴ PP, WI Box O Misc Item 2: Instructions dated 20 May 1805

¹⁸²⁵ PP, LB 20: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 5 December 1805

¹⁸²⁶ PP, LB 20: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 18 November 1806

¹⁸²⁷ PP, LB 20: JPP to JW Stanley, 16 April 1807

¹⁸²⁸ PP, LB 20: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 4 May 1807, and LB 22: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 7 August 1807

¹⁸²⁹ PP, LB 20: JPP to JT Cottle, 7 Seymour Street, Bath, 1 February 1807

the proviso that he continued manager at £300 pa - Stanley begged to have his family remain in the house for ten days, or a fortnight, till his new habitation is put into a little order for him, which of course we consented to.¹⁸³⁰

James Tobin's letter would have crossed JPP's mid-Atlantic because a week later JPP sat down and wrote to Joe Stanley. He did not mention his negotiations over the estate but rather enigmatically wrote that 'it is not in my power to say more at present'. Not knowing about Tobin's transactions and believing Stanley to be still in his post, JPP, concerned about lost documents, wanted him to ask Jenetta whether she knew where James Williams had hidden them.¹⁸³¹ But by the time the letter reached Stanley, he had already left Mountravers and, presumably aggrieved over not having been informed about the sale of the plantation, he did not ask Jenetta about the documents, and JPP later had to enquire from other people.

After Mountravers

Joe Stanley, his wife and their young children left Mountravers. Being an experienced planter, he would have found another job very easily, but, possibly pushed for money, in September 1810 he sold three people: a woman in her early forties called **Peg**, and two children, **Pallas** and **Nan**. He sold them to the free black woman Henrietta Clarke. The children were aged eight and eleven, and, as all three were black, it is likely that they were a mother and her son and daughter. Stanley sold them for N£260.¹⁸³² He was also owed money from a woman called Elizabeth Grace Simpson who may have been a seamstress. One way to recover money was from the estate of a deceased person, and when this woman died intestate, Stanley and the merchant William Slater jointly petitioned for the executorship. Among her possessions were items such as 'one dozen negro handkerchiefs' (valued at N2s each) and a bedstead with a [mosquito] net (N£13:4:0) and personal belongings: a prayer book (worth N9s), a broach with father's and mother's hair (N£3:12:0), and spectacles, valued at N18s.¹⁸³³ Her effects yielded a total sum of close to N£300, and Stanley and Slater would have sold the goods and shared the proceeds.

Stanley also collected debts for JPP.¹⁸³⁴ The two men had, after all, parted on reasonable terms. JPP had asked James Tobin to grovel to Stanley for failing to update him about the sale of the estate; JPP excused himself by saying that his mind had been much 'occupied with business', in fact so much so that Stanley's letters to JPP had been left unanswered for a while because JPP had been too busy. According to JPP, all along his son 'had intended to have made him a handsome remuneration on his leaving'¹⁸³⁵ and Stanley received a belated payment.¹⁸³⁶

Lucy Stanley's father died in 1815, and towards the end of November 1817 her brother Richard married their cousin Elizabeth, one of Vice-Admiral William Bligh's daughters.¹⁸³⁷ The old man died just days after the wedding. In the same year, 1817, Joe Stanley also appeared in the records again when he completed a slave register for himself, his wife and children, as he was required to do by law.

¹⁸³⁰ PP, LB 21: James Tobin, Nevis, to JPP, Bristol, 8 August 1807

¹⁸³¹ PP, LB 22: JPP to JW Stanley, 15 August 1807

¹⁸³² On 8 September 1810 the sale of Peg, Pallas and Nan was witnessed by William Garvey Lawrence, who later became Joseph Webbe Stanley's son-in-law (ECSCRN, CR 1808-1810 f441).

¹⁸³³ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1805-1818 f161

¹⁸³⁴ PP, LB 24: JPP to JC Mills, 31 October 1815

¹⁸³⁵ PP, LB 22: JPP to James Tobin, Nevis, 4 September 1807

¹⁸³⁶ PP, LB 22: JPP to JW Stanley, Nevis, 1 October [1808]

¹⁸³⁷ *Notes and Queries* Series 2 No 50 p473

William Bligh suffered another mutiny after his appointment as Governor of New South Wales, Australia. Colonists objected to his harsh rule, Bligh was arrested, imprisoned for two years and sent back to England. An enquiry exonerated him and the mutineers were found guilty. He was appointed Rear Admiral in 1811 and Vice Admiral in 1814. He died in 1817.

They recorded 14 people. Of these, four were Africans: **James** and **Mary**, both estimated to have been 30 years old, **Frances**, a 28-year-old, and **Scipio**, who was aged 19. Two people came from other islands: the 55-year-old **Charlotte** from St Kitts and the 35-year-old **William Thomas** from St Martin. He was a mulatto, as was the 18-year-old **Maria**. All the others were black Nevis creoles: **Susanna** (12 years old), **Bob** and **Thomas** (10), **William** (8), **Sandy** (7), **Caroline** (5), and **Beda** (3). In the following year Joe Stanley's daughter Lucy received a boy, also called Thomas, as a gift from the widow Mary Laurence, but by 1822 four people had died: Frances and Mary, the two African women, and William Thomas, the man from St Martin, as well as the youngest of the children, Beda. Two other children he gave away: the boy Sandy to his daughter Lucretia, and the girl Caroline to John Huggins.¹⁸³⁸

In addition to his own register, Joe Stanley also completed those for John Colhoun Mills's estates, Prospect and Hulbert's, and for Mills's personal enslaved people.¹⁸³⁹ Mills was then in England,¹⁸⁴⁰ and it is likely that Stanley was acting as an attorney rather than the manager. Nearing his mid-sixties, he may have become too frail to withstand the rigours of plantation work. Indeed, in the following year he was looking for a less demanding job and solicited John Frederick Pinney's interest in getting appointed to a post in the customs house. In his letter to Pinney he referred to his 'advanced time of life' and of 'being incapable of the active pursuits which have hitherto enabled [him] to support a large family.' Stanley knew that there had been an investigation over 'confusion' in the customs house and thought it likely that vacancies might arise.¹⁸⁴¹ The 'confusion' concerned Richard Joseph Brodbelt, the Comptroller of Customs.¹⁸⁴² He appears to have been central to the powder tax affair¹⁸⁴³ that had seen the prosecution and subsequent acquittal of the then Captain Gunner, John Peterson, and he had been deeply involved in the controversy surrounding the illegal importation of various cargoes, as well as people.¹⁸⁴⁴ Brodbelt was held in the guard house, put on trial,¹⁸⁴⁵ convicted, and, being deemed an 'unfit person to hold a government position',¹⁸⁴⁶ suspended from his post as Comptroller of Customs.¹⁸⁴⁷ It was Joe Stanley's intention to get appointed to Brodbelt's job, and he sought John Frederick Pinney's interest to procure him the 'Comptrollership or such other vacancy'. He promised that his brother-in-law in London, Richard Bligh, would obtain the necessary security.¹⁸⁴⁸ He was duly appointed Acting Comptroller at Indian Castle¹⁸⁴⁹ - later in the year Robert Claxton got the Comptroller of Customs post -¹⁸⁵⁰ and in 1821 Joe Stanley was taken on in a lower position as Searcher of Customs. With the post came a salary and also fees. In addition, he was made Deputy Post Master General. This secured him a fixed salary of £60 a year.¹⁸⁵¹ He held this post until he resigned six years later.¹⁸⁵²

¹⁸³⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1817-1819 Vol 2 f129, and UKNA, T 71/365

¹⁸³⁹ UKNA, T 71/364

¹⁸⁴⁰ PP, LB 24: JPP, No 13 Crescent, Cheltenham to JC Mills, Post Office Windsor, 1 June 1817, and LB 53: JPP to JC Mills, William, near Hitchin, Hertfordshire, 24 December 1818

¹⁸⁴¹ PP, Dom Box D1: JW Stanley, Nevis, to John Frederick Pinney, 25 April 1818

¹⁸⁴² RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

¹⁸⁴³ PP, Dom Box Y: Memorial of Council and Assembly to John Julius, May 1815

¹⁸⁴⁴ UKNA, CUST 34/509 (a)

Richard Brodbelt, the Comptroller of Customs, and Lockhard Gordon, the Collector, and the various landing waiters and clerks employed in the Nevis customs house were feuding for a number of years over a number of issues that, at one stage, involved threats 'to blow the comptroller's brains out' and allegations of customs staff passing on information to the 'Friends and Supporters of the Abolition of Slavery in England' that had 'evil consequences' for the island.

¹⁸⁴⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 14 November 1815, 11 May 1816, 28 March, 7 April, 5 May 1818

¹⁸⁴⁶ UKNA, CO 186/11

¹⁸⁴⁷ UKNA, CO 239/4: 10 June (1818)

¹⁸⁴⁸ PP, Dom Box D1: JW Stanley, Nevis, to JF Pinney, 25 April 1818

¹⁸⁴⁹ UKNA, CUST 34/510 No 32

¹⁸⁵⁰ UKNA, CO 186/11: 8 October 1818

¹⁸⁵¹ At the same time as he received his appointment as Searcher of Custom, several Landing Waiters were appointed: William Ensor, William Maynard, Walter Lewis Bucke and James Stanley (UKNA, CO 187/3 Blue Book Nevis 1821). Most likely James Stanley was of the same generation as Joe Stanley but so far no family connection has been found between him and the other Stanleys. James Stanley died in 1824; his widow Ann died in 1834 at the age of 75 (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 85).

¹⁸⁵² UKNA, CO 186/13

The Stanleys' oldest son, John, married a woman called Charlotte,¹⁸⁵³ but it appears that he did not remain in Nevis. He may well have lived in Bristol.¹⁸⁵⁴ The Stanleys' oldest daughter, Elizabeth Mary, chose as her husband John Huggins, the brother of the Mountravers owner Peter Thomas and the son of Edward, known for his flogging of the Mountravers people and other episodes of cruelty. John Huggins was the proprietor of the Eden estate in St James Windward, the plantation that had belonged to James Browne, who for many years had worked as manager on Mountravers. Elizabeth Mary Stanley married John Huggins probably in or around 1821. That year not only was a new house being built at Eden,¹⁸⁵⁵ in November Joe Stanley also gave John Huggins the nine-year-old girl Caroline,¹⁸⁵⁶ and it is likely that Caroline was a wedding present for the Hugginses. However, the couple were not married for long. John was killed in a duel in 1822, and so the Stanleys' first daughter was widowed before their next daughter could get married.¹⁸⁵⁷

The following year the Stanleys' second son, the 15-year-old Joseph, left Nevis to go to university in England. For two years he studied at Pembroke College, Oxford. Around the time Joseph started his education,¹⁸⁵⁸ the second of the four Stanley daughters got married. A decent interval had passed since the murder of her sister's husband, and on 16 October 1823 Lucretia's wedding took place. She married the planter William Garvey Laurence,¹⁸⁵⁹ the son of the lawyer William Laurence.¹⁸⁶⁰ Just as there had been a large age gap between Joe Stanley and his wife, Lucretia was much younger than her husband. She was 17, he was 41 years old. In the following year the couple had a daughter, Lucy Ann, and later a son, William Bligh Laurence.¹⁸⁶¹

In November 1823 one of Joe Stanley's women gave birth to a mulatto boy called **Joseph**, but, aged seven months, the child died in June the following year.¹⁸⁶² He may well have been Joe Stanley's own offspring with the young black woman Susanna. He had duly entered the child's birth and death in the 1825 slave registration, and at the same time he had recorded the birth of another child, the black boy **Andrew**, who was born in September 1824. Unless Stanley had taken to recording the colour of the children haphazardly, Andrew must also have been Susanna's child - she was his only black woman of child-bearing age. She had become pregnant again within a couple of months of giving birth to Joseph. While Joseph apparently had not been baptised, Andrew was the first of the Stanley people to undergo baptism. Aged about six months, the event took place on 6 March 1825 in St Paul's church.¹⁸⁶³ Andrew may have been christened because a new consciousness was taking root in Nevis. Sunday Schools were being set up, and enslaved people were beginning to be baptised all over the island. And Joe Stanley's wife, Mrs Lucy Stanley, was getting involved in 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'. She was among the early members of the Society; in November 1825 she - but noticeably not her husband - made a contribution of N£1 towards the Society's funds. It appears that she was a particularly active and trusted member: when the 'faithful Treasurer' of the Nevis Branch, Revd JD Parham, left the island in April 1827, he handed the Society's remaining money to Mrs Stanley for her to disburse. She did, however, not take over as Treasurer.¹⁸⁶⁴

¹⁸⁵³ NHCS, C1a3 Abrahams, F *Nevis Genealogies*

¹⁸⁵⁴ John Stanley did not appear in the records in Nevis but in May 1838 a John (...?) Stanley witnessed a document, with Lieutenant J Bailey RN, for Walter and James Maynard. It appears that he witnessed it in Bristol (SRO/I, Maynard Papers, HA 178-1/49 and 1/50).

¹⁸⁵⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

¹⁸⁵⁶ UKNA, T 71/365

¹⁸⁵⁷ The memorial for John Huggins, made of marble on polished slate, was produced by Wood of Bristol. The tombstone for Mrs P's grandmother, Mary Weekes, who died in April 1784, also came from Bristol.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Oliver, VL *Caribbeana* Vol 3 p362; also Joseph Foster (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses*

¹⁸⁵⁹ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

¹⁸⁶⁰ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f3

¹⁸⁶¹ Lucy Ann was baptised on 31 December 1824; William Bligh on 21 July 1830 (NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835).

¹⁸⁶² UKNA, T 71/366

¹⁸⁶³ Andrew's name was recorded as 'Handy', the local pronunciation of Andy (NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 80).

¹⁸⁶⁴ Anon *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negroe Slaves*

Throughout the 1820 the Stanleys acquired and lost people. Just before Christmas 1820 Mrs Stanley was given an eight-year-old sambo girl called **Eliza** by Mrs Frances Laurence, and in February 1822 Joe Stanley bought a 25-year-old mulatto man called **Jim**. Presumably because the Stanleys found managing him too difficult, within less than a year Jim was 'sent to Trinidad'.¹⁸⁶⁵ Jim's previous owner had also been Frances Laurence, who probably was the wife, and then widow, of Joseph Laurence. Aged 60, he died in 1824,¹⁸⁶⁶ and it is very likely that her husband's death forced the widow Laurence to sell more people. In October 1825 Joe Stanley bought another seven from her: the 42-year-old mulatto **Polly** and the 36-year-old black woman **Susanna**, as well as five sambos who may well have been Polly's children: **Jim Palmer** (aged 18 years), **Thomas** (17), **Ann** (10), **Mary** (7), and **Edward** (4).¹⁸⁶⁷ They were all Nevis creoles. Not long after Joe Stanley took over Mrs Laurence's people, two children were born: **Lucretia**, a sambo girl named after Joe Stanley's daughter, and a black boy called **James Parker**. He died some time before January 1828.¹⁸⁶⁸

In the same year that the Laurence people came into Joe Stanley's possession, a woman called Ann Nolan made good a debt to his wife. Most likely, she was the unmarried sister of Stanley's deceased brother-in-law, James Nolan. Ann Nolan owed N£98 and, instead of ready cash, she gave Mrs Lucy Stanley an 18-year-old mulatto called **Betsey Bone**.¹⁸⁶⁹ Joe Stanley retained Betsey Bone as well as Susanna, the black woman whom they had acquired from Mrs Frances Laurence, but in 1826 and 1827 sold the other Laurence people. The woman Polly and the little girl Lucretia he sold together, to Sarah Hanley, but the other five sambo children went to different owners, who may, possibly, have been their fathers: Jim Palmer was sold to John Arthurton, Thomas to the mason James Dore, Ann to Thomas Roper, Mary to the stonemason James Powell, and the youngest, Edward, went to Josiah Theobald (also Theobalis).¹⁸⁷⁰ Except for Thomas Roper, all the men are known to have been free men of colour. Roper was a plantation overseer or manager and lived in Charlestown.¹⁸⁷¹

Polly and Lucretia were sold for N£125, Thomas for N£100, and Mary for N£50, but the amounts Stanley received for the others are not known. It appears, though, that unless Jim Palmer was highly skilled and therefore a lot more expensive, Joe Stanley would not have made a profit on the N£625 he had originally invested. Most likely, Mrs Frances Laurence was the godmother of his daughter Frances Laurence Stanley, and he had lent the money to Mrs Laurence (or her husband), taking enslaved individuals as security. Ann Nolan's debt, too, suggests that Mrs Stanley had lent money, again, taking an enslaved person as security. These instances show how family members supported each other, particularly widows and unmarried women, but once again, it was the enslaved people who bore the consequences if their owners were unable to repay loans.

John Henry Clarke, the man for whom Joe Stanley had to make way on Mountravers, had died in the meantime and also his widow, and it fell on Joe Stanley and his son-in-law, William Garvey Laurence,

¹⁸⁶⁵ UKNA, T 71/365 and T 71/366

¹⁸⁶⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 5 February 1824

There was also a Frances Lawrence but by 1820 she was married to John Woodley (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 3 February 1820). She may have been a daughter of Samuel Lawrence (UKNA, T 71/365).

¹⁸⁶⁷ UKNA, T 71/1543 Bundle 7; also ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 ff335-36

¹⁸⁶⁸ UKNA, T 71/368

¹⁸⁶⁹ UKNA, T 71/1543 Bundle 7; also ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f281

In 1817, the spinster Ann Nolan had registered Betsey Bone, then aged 8, together with four males and five females. Ann Nolan was literate and had signed the register (PRO T 71/364).

As a single woman, Ann Nolan clearly lived in very strained financial circumstances; in June 1821 the planter Samuel Sturge took her to Court for a debt of almost N£1,100 (ECSCRN, King's Bench and Common Pleas 1822-1841). She lived in a house owned by another branch of the Stanley family, by Ann, the wife, then widow of James Stanley. In her will of August 1826, Ann Stanley left the house in Charlestown to Ann Nolan, thereby, at least, securing her accommodation. Ann Nolan died intestate in June 1835 and Joe Stanley, as her next of kin, petitioned for administration of her estate (ECSCRN, Wills 1830-1837 f280).

Other property, her houses and lands in St John Figtree, Ann Stanley left to Joe Stanley's wife and daughters. However, by the time Ann Stanley died in February 1834 (NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Burials 1827-1957 No 85) Lucy Stanley had died and presumably Ann Stanley's bequest was shared among her daughters (ECSCRN, Wills 1830-1837 f184).

¹⁸⁷⁰ UKNA, T 71/1543 Bundle 7; T 71/367; also ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f611

¹⁸⁷¹ ECSCRN, Nevis Court Records 1836-1843 f297

to compile an inventory of Mrs Clarke's house and belongings.¹⁸⁷² William Garvey Laurence had been a neighbour of hers when he was managing Belmont, the estate next to Clarke's that belonged to his father, William Laurence. This was during his father's absence abroad; normally Joe Stanley's daughter and son-in-law appear to have lived in St John Figtree parish on the Farm Estate, which also belonged to William Laurence. Primarily a lawyer and Chief Justice at the Court of King's Bench and Common Pleas,¹⁸⁷³ William Laurence also owned plantations and at one time had traded as a merchant. This was back in the 1790s, when he was in partnership with Samuel Laurence, probably his brother. William and Samuel Laurence had also been trustees to the Stanleys' marriage settlement, and for a number of years Samuel Laurence had acted as one of JPP's attorneys,¹⁸⁷⁴ and after JPP's death, as Mrs P's.¹⁸⁷⁵ In fact the Laurences had strong connections with Bristol. At some stage William Garvey Laurence had been to, or had lived in, the city, and in February 1822 his sister Louisa Garvey Laurence had married Captain William Scarth,¹⁸⁷⁶ a long-standing employee of the House of Pinney.¹⁸⁷⁷ Presumably Louisa Scarth had followed her husband and lived in Bristol but she died within a couple of years of marrying.¹⁸⁷⁸ Fittingly for a captain's wife, she died aboard ship, in the Downs.¹⁸⁷⁹ Through his marriage to Louisa, Captain Scarth acquired an interest in his father-in-law's Farm Estate which he tried to realise when it came to claiming slave compensation.¹⁸⁸⁰

Joe Stanley had joint power of attorney (with Samuel Pemberton) from members of the Latham family in London,¹⁸⁸¹ who held a mortgage on Scarborough's, the estate bordering the southern side of Mountravers. Almost certainly it was he who then negotiated the sale of Scarborough's, first to a partnership of Samuel Laurence, William Laurence and Magnus Morton Herbert,¹⁸⁸² and then to Peter Thomas Huggins. By 1825 Scarborough's plantation was in Huggins's possession. The Laurences' interest in the estates surrounding Mountravers suggests that they might have intended to extend their holdings in St Thomas Lowland and that they were competing with Peter Thomas Huggins for ownership of the land. Samuel Laurence died in February 1826, three years after his wife Sarah,¹⁸⁸³ but the ties between the Stanley and the Laurence families were strengthened further when Joe Stanley's daughter Lucy married Samuel Laurence's oldest son, a clergyman.¹⁸⁸⁴ The couple got married on 10 June 1829 in Charlestown. Witnesses at the wedding were Joe Stanley and his son-in-law, William Garvey Laurence. His new son-in-law, Revd John Hendrickson Laurence,¹⁸⁸⁵ was then working in Scarborough in Tobago, and presumably that is where Lucy went to live.¹⁸⁸⁵

Joe Stanley's oldest daughter, the widow of John Huggins, meanwhile had quite quickly married again and just as quickly had lost her second husband. First widowed in June 1822, by December 1825 her second husband, Magnus William Morton Herbert, had also died.¹⁸⁸⁶ The couple had one son,

¹⁸⁷² PP, Dom Box T/3

¹⁸⁷³ UKNA, CO 187/3 Nevis Blue Book 1821

¹⁸⁷⁴ PP, LB 41: Copy of document

¹⁸⁷⁵ PP, LB 48 f127; also LB 52: Draft appointment undated [July 1818] JC Mills and Sam Lawrence by JF Pinney and Charles Pinney

¹⁸⁷⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)

¹⁸⁷⁷ Captain William Scarth was master of the *King David* from 1810 to 1816, and from 1817 to 1823, of the *Charles* in 1825 and 1827, and of the *Agincourt* in 1828 (Grahame E Farr (ed) *Record of Bristol Ships 1800-1838*). In 1829 he was relieved of the command of the *Charles* because he was too unwell (PP, Dom Box C2-13: RE Case to Charles Pinney, Nevis, 23 October 1829; see also Dom Box B5-5: Amelia Dunford, Witson Street Alms House, St James, Bristol, to F W Pinney, 11 April 1888).

¹⁸⁷⁸ UKNA, T 71/366

¹⁸⁷⁹ PP, LB 59: PA & Co to Urquart & Hope, London, 5 August 1824

¹⁸⁸⁰ UKNA, T 71/366 p132 and PP, LB 66: P & C to PT Huggins, Nevis, 15 August 1835

¹⁸⁸¹ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 ff547-49

¹⁸⁸² ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 ff557-80 (Courtesy of WA Pinney)

¹⁸⁸³ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 10 February 1826; also LB 44: Misc docs St George Gingerland, and RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 8 February 1826; VL Oliver *Monumental Inscriptions in the British West Indies*, tablet in St Thomas Lowland church

¹⁸⁸⁴ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 11 June 1829

¹⁸⁸⁵ NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842

¹⁸⁸⁶ Magnus William Morton Herbert was the son of Magnus Morton Herbert, who had sought to buy Scarborough's together with Samuel and William Lawrence. Magnus Morton Herbert was the nephew of President John Richardson Herbert and had originally been called Magnus Morton. Richardson had left his estate to him on condition that he changed his name to Herbert. Occasionally Morton was also spelt Moreton, sometimes even within the same document.

Magnus Forbes Morton Herbert.¹⁸⁸⁷ Having been widowed twice, Mrs Elizabeth Mary Morton Stanley/Huggins/ Herbert did not marry again and at some stage left Nevis for New Haven, Connecticut. Several people from Nevis had gained a foothold there, among them members of the Huggins, the Maynard and the Hanley families.

Between 1827 and 1832 the women Stanley owned gave birth to four more babies: **Lucy, Nelson, Maria Fisher**, and **Fanny**, who was born in the autumn of 1832. Joe Stanley' three older daughters already had people named after them, and this last of his slave-born children was called Fanny after his youngest daughter. Of these four children, one died – Maria Fisher was buried, aged only six months, in February 1832 -¹⁸⁸⁸ but Stanley also lost two adult men: the African James and the creole Robert who, as a child, had been known as Bob. Aged 22, Robert died in January 1830 and he, like Maria Fisher, was given a Christian burial.¹⁸⁸⁹

Joe Stanley also sold two people: the girl Lucy, then four years old, to his daughter Fanny, and the African man Scipio to James Hanley of Gingerland.¹⁸⁹⁰ Scipio, who was in his early thirties, would at least have been with or near those two individuals Joe Stanley had earlier sold to Sarah Hanley. He may well have been intended to work on the estate that had belonged to Hanley's mother, Sherrifs,¹⁸⁹¹ or on another small estate in Gingerland, Brodie's. In the 1820s James Hanley had been to America,¹⁸⁹² and in the 1830s, he, like Joe Stanley's oldest daughter, Elizabeth Mary, was also in New Haven, Connecticut.¹⁸⁹³ Once again, extensive ties bound these Nevisians together.

With all these personal connections and the trade that was going on between North America and the Caribbean it is unsurprising that a cholera outbreak which had started in America would spread through the Caribbean. It reached Nevis in the early 1830s, and it is very likely that both Joe Stanley and his wife fell victim to the disease. Mrs Lucy Stanley died first. Aged 55, she was buried on 23 November 1832.¹⁸⁹⁴ In the following month the widower made his will. As witnesses he called on the merchant William Roper and Roper's relatives, George and William Marriner.¹⁸⁹⁵ Joseph Webbe Stanley, known as Joe Stanley, died on 3 April 1833. He was 79 years old. Both he and his wife were buried in St Paul's.¹⁸⁹⁶

When he died, six of his children and three grandchildren were alive. A seventh, unnamed child had died in 1817.¹⁸⁹⁷ In his will Joe Stanley left parts of a share in the Lambeth Water Works which his father-in-law had willed to Lucy. His son Joseph Stanley had to wrap up business about a property in Gingerland¹⁸⁹⁸ but his slave compensation was claimed by one of Joe Stanley's executors, Robert Ferrier.¹⁸⁹⁹ He was his son's business partner - they traded as Ferrier, Stanley and Company – and it appears that Joe Stanley, too, may have been a partner. His six remaining people Joe Stanley had bequeathed to that company, suggesting that he owed them money. They were appraised at fixed rates: S£62 for the Head Tradesman William who was 26 years old, S£50 each for the Head Domestic Eliza and Betsey Bone (they were aged 20 and 24) and S£30 for the Inferior Domestic

¹⁸⁸⁷ In Edward Huggins's will of May 1827, he left £100 to Elizabeth Mary Morton Herbert, his daughter-in-law; late the widow of his deceased son John (UKNA, PROB 11/1770). Also PROB 11/1845, will of Christianna Morton Herbert dated 11 February 1835

¹⁸⁸⁸ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 479

¹⁸⁸⁹ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 Unnumbered

¹⁸⁹⁰ UKNA, T 71/368

¹⁸⁹¹ PP, LB 56: James Hanley, Nevis, to PA & Co, 10 July 1823

¹⁸⁹² PP, Dom Box C1 Bundle 7: JC Mills to Charles Pinney, 12 August 1823

¹⁸⁹³ UKNA, T 71/1038

¹⁸⁹⁴ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 and RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke: 14 November 1832

¹⁸⁹⁵ William Roper was related to the Marriners, having married Jane Marriner in November 1825 (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b)). William and George Thomas Marriner may have been Jane's brothers. George Thomas Marriner signed William Marriner's 1831 return (UKNA, T 71/368).

¹⁸⁹⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke and NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 507

¹⁸⁹⁷ The child's death or burial was recorded as 'JW Stanley's child', rather than Mr and Mrs Stanley's child (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 4 August 1817).

¹⁸⁹⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1831-1835 ff268-72

¹⁸⁹⁹ UKNA, T 71/1039

Andrew, the boy born in 1824. The two young children under six years of age, James Nelson and Fanny, were judged worth S£10 each.¹⁹⁰⁰ Although the appraisal totalled S£212, in line with the way compensation was paid, Robert Ferrier only received part of their actual value, S£84:11:3.¹⁹⁰¹

Very shortly after Joe Stanley died, on 18 July 1833 the youngest daughter, Fanny Laurence Stanley, got married. The timing might suggest that her parents, or at least her father, had vetoed her relationship with George Samuel Woodley Wattlely, a bachelor from the parish of St John Figtree.¹⁹⁰² Earlier in the year Wattlely had been appointed Judge of the Kings Bench and Common Pleas,¹⁹⁰³ and it appears that he was a relative newcomer to the plantation-owning class. Having just bought Dasent's estate from the Pinneys, he began married life deeply in debt.¹⁹⁰⁴ Some years later Wattlely faced Court proceedings initiated by William Claxton and James Davoren for debts of S£3,500 and other sums.¹⁹⁰⁵

In his will, Joe Stanley had wanted two of his people freed: his oldest woman, Charlotte, who was in her seventies, and Susanna, a woman in her late twenties.¹⁹⁰⁶ At the same time as they were manumitted, Maria, a woman in her early thirties, was also freed.¹⁹⁰⁷ Thomas, who as a boy had been given to Stanley's daughter Lucy,¹⁹⁰⁸ was returned to Stanley's son-in-law, Revd John Hendrickson Laurence.¹⁹⁰⁹ The clergyman left Tobago some time before October 1835 and for a year served as rector at St Thomas Lowland.¹⁹¹⁰ Revd John Hendrickson Laurence presided over many of the baptisms, marriages, and burials of the Mountravers people but he fell ill and died, after a brief illness, in October 1836. He was 35 years old. In his honour, his widow Lucy erected a handsome memorial tablet in St Thomas Lowland church that survives to this day.¹⁹¹¹

Lucy's sister, Joe Stanley's oldest daughter, the twice-widowed Elizabeth Mary Morton Stanley/Huggins/ Herbert, had died the year before, in 1835, in New Haven.¹⁹¹² She left one young son, Magnus Forbes Morton Herbert, who was about ten or eleven years old. She, as well as her mother-in-law, Christiana Morton Herbert, in their wills had made financial provisions for the child. The orphaned boy may well have been looked after by his aunt and uncle, Fanny Laurence Wattlely and her husband George Samuel Woodley Wattlely. Through her attorney, Joseph's Stanley's business partner Robert Ferrier, Mrs Elizabeth Mary Morton Herbert had claimed slave compensation for her four people,¹⁹¹³ but the money, S£69, was paid to the Wattlelys. They were her executors and acted as guardians to the young Magnus Forbes Morton Herbert. George Samuel Woodley Wattlely's own

¹⁹⁰⁰ UKNA, T 71/752 Valuer's Return No 165

¹⁹⁰¹ HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlvi: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08 Claim No 165

¹⁹⁰² Witnesses at the wedding of Francis Lawrence Stanley and George Samuel Woodley Wattlely were the bride's brother Joseph Stanley and the manager on Stoney Grove, Charles Caines (NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842; also RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke: 18 July 1833).

¹⁹⁰³ UKNA, CO 186/14: 17 January 1833

¹⁹⁰⁴ ECSCRN, CR 1831-1835 ff260-67

George Samuel Woodley Wattlely's grandfather may have been John Wattlely who in 1707/8 had in his household only one black female, presumably his slave, and four white males and two white females (VL Oliver *Caribbeana* Vol 3 pp173-79). This John Wattlely may have been the mason who in 1741 was given work on the Saddle Hill defences (UKNA, CO 186/3: 28 May 1741). Possibly his son was called Robert; in 1755, all of Robert Wattlely's four people were written off (PP, Dom Box P: General's Tax Notebook 1755).

¹⁹⁰⁵ ECSCRN, Queen's Bench and Common Pleas 1822-1841 f132 and f116

¹⁹⁰⁶ UKNA, PROB 11/1829

¹⁹⁰⁷ UKNA, T 71/369

¹⁹⁰⁸ ECSCRN, CR 1817-1819 Vol 2 f129

¹⁹⁰⁹ UKNA, T 71/1039 Claim No 165

¹⁹¹⁰ NHCS, St Thomas Lowland Baptisms 1827-1873

After his return from Tobago, Revd John Hendrickson Lawrence dealt with the slave compensation claim for his brother, Samuel Lawrence junior. A former Captain Gunner of Lowland Alarm Post (UKNA, CO 186/12: 25 November 1822), Samuel Lawrence junior had died in May 1833 at Grenada (RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke). Revd John Hendrickson Lawrence shared the executorship with their uncle William Lawrence and with Edward Thomas Wolfe (UKNA, T 71/1038 Claim No 141; also ECSCRN, Wills 1830-1837 f85).

¹⁹¹¹ Oliver, VL *Monumental Inscriptions in the British West Indies* p103 Fragments of Register of births, deaths and marriages from St Thomas Lowland church; also tablet in St Thomas Lowland church.

¹⁹¹² UKNA, T 71/1038

Before she travelled to America, Elizabeth Mary Morton Herbert had made her will (NCH, Book of Wills 1837-1860 ff17-18

¹⁹¹³ UKNA, T 71/1039 Claim No 163

compensation claim for the people on Dasent's, the estate he had bought from the Pinneys, was contested because he had failed to pay the House the purchase money of £3,000.¹⁹¹⁴

The cholera was still killing people in the Caribbean, and in 1835 Ann Nolan, another member of the extended family, died.¹⁹¹⁵ For her two people Joseph Stanley claimed and received S£35 compensation¹⁹¹⁶ and, together with his business partner Robert Ferrier he also received S£1,279 for 75 people on Bush Hill. This plantation was owned by Jane Forbes, a distant relative of the Stanleys.¹⁹¹⁷ The company of Ferrier, Stanley & Co was recovering a loan from her and also from some other planters.¹⁹¹⁸ In addition to running a store in Charlestown,¹⁹¹⁹ Ferrier, Stanley & Co was in the business of lending money.

In July 1833 Joseph Stanley was elected to the Assembly, replacing Peter Thomas Huggins who had gone abroad,¹⁹²⁰ and shortly afterwards he was appointed as Auxiliary Commissioner of Compensation. All the slave compensation claims were processed in the offices of the Commissioners of Compensation, placing him at the centre of the colonial slave compensation bureaucracy.

Just after slavery was abolished and while the apprentices were 'in a most alarming state of insubordination', the President appointed ten men as special magistrates. They were a tightly-knit group that included Peter Thomas Huggins and two of Huggins's family members; Joseph Stanley; his brother-in-law, George Samuel Woodley Wattley; and Chief Justice George Webbe.¹⁹²¹ Chief Justice Webbe was also one of Stanley's fellow compensation commissioners. Both men were Oxford graduates¹⁹²² and may well have been friends.¹⁹²³ In due course Joseph Stanley also became Speaker of the Assembly. Although he held this powerful position, it did not stop the Legislature from disallowing an invoice presented by Messrs Ferrier Stanley & Co for work on the barracks that had

¹⁹¹⁴ PP, Dom Box R-6: Compensation file; DM 1705, HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlviii: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08, and UKNA, T 71/1038 Claim No 87

¹⁹¹⁵ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke: 30 June 1835

¹⁹¹⁶ UKNA, T 71/1039 Claim No 253

¹⁹¹⁷ HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlviii: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08 and pp314-15 Nevis Litigated Claims, Claim No 19 Jane Forbes, by then the widow of George Clarke Forbes, was the sister-in-law of Magnus Forbes Morton Herbert's grandmother Christiana Morton Herbert nee Forbes.

¹⁹¹⁸ Robert Ferrier and Joseph Stanley, as the surviving partners of late firm Ferrier, Stanley & Co, made a counter claim for slave compensation against William Pemberton's claim No 21 for Terrace Gut. This was to recover money following judgments made on 2 July 1831 and 8 April 1835 (UKNA, T 71/1460).

They received S£345 compensation for 27 people on Terrace Gut or Dunbar's. Six of these were Mrs William Pemberton's, the other 21 belonged to the estate. In addition, William Pemberton claimed compensation for another 75 who belonged to that estate (UKNA, T 71/1038 Claims Numbers 20 and 21).

Attached to the claim for Farm Estate in St John's was a claim by Messrs Ferrier and Stanley for four people who belonged to William Laurence and who had by mistake been attached to Belmont Estate. The merchants had advanced money to Laurence for the full value of the compensation (T 71/1038 Claim No 2).

As well as recovering debts through the slave compensation scheme, the company of Ferrier, Stanley & Co also had to have recourse to the Courts (ECSCRN, King's Bench and Common Pleas Minutes 1827-1836 f178).

¹⁹¹⁹ UKNA, CO 186/14: November 1833

¹⁹²⁰ UKNA, CO 186/14: 27 July 1833

Joseph Stanley acted as Auxiliary Commissioner of Compensation from 27 December 1833 until 30 September 1834 and was paid £76 for his services (HoCPP 1837-1838 (215) 'Accounts of Slave Compensation Claims: Return of Sums awarded by Commissioners of Slave Compensation' p346). Stanley was succeeded by James Maynard and Josiah Webbe Maynard junior (UKNA, T 71/1543 Bundle 7).

¹⁹²¹ 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): p334 No 1 Return of the Names of the Special Magistrates removed from Office and p335 Charles Kenny, Nevis, to The President Administering the Government, 6 October 1835

¹⁹²² SRO/I, Maynard Papers, HA 178-1/47 and Joseph Foster (ed) *Alumni Oxonienses 1715-1886*

¹⁹²³ Joseph Stanley witnessed the manumission of Frank Hanley, freed by George and Charles Webbe (ECSCRN, CR 1829-1830 Vol 1 ff21-2 Index). Through George Webbe, who married Sarah Hanley some time around 1834, Joseph Stanley also had a connection with the Hanleys. Two members of the Hanley family, Sarah and James, had bought people from his father, Joe Stanley.

not been approved.¹⁹²⁴ Like so many other businesses, the firm was struggling to recover money owed and had to resort to court action. One debtor alone, Dr Josiah Webbe Daniell, was in arrears to the tune of £2,000. At that stage Stanley and Ferrier had a third partner, Octavius Furlonge,¹⁹²⁵ but in 1839 Robert Ferrier died,¹⁹²⁶ and presumably the partnership came to an end.

In 1837 Joseph Stanley was appointed to the Council¹⁹²⁷ and he ceased being Speaker of the Assembly. He was succeeded by his brother-in-law George Samuel Woodley Wattley.¹⁹²⁸ (His other brother-in-law, William Garvey Laurence, had also been a member of the Assembly, as had his business partner, Robert Ferrier.) Stanley held an honorary position in the Nevis militia; he was one of five Aides des Camp to the President.¹⁹²⁹ Although Joseph Stanley clearly was among the elite in Nevis society, some time after March 1840 (when he refused to act as executor to Peter Butler's will)¹⁹³⁰ he followed other Nevisians and moved to Georgetown in Demerara (today's Guyana).¹⁹³¹ He returned to Nevis where he died at the age of 43. Joseph Stanley was buried on 3 May 1851.¹⁹³²

It is not known whether Joseph Stanley had been married, or when the remaining family members died. Joe Stanley's daughter Lucretia, who had married William Garvey Laurence when she was 17, lost her husband in December 1847. He died, aged 65, and she died in July of the following year. She was 42 years old.¹⁹³³

Fanny's husband, George Samuel Woodley Wattley, was alive in 1861 when he held the post of Colonial Secretary, served as a member of the Council, and was Clerk of Crown Council Chamber.¹⁹³⁴ He died not long afterwards but it is not known when Frances Wattley,¹⁹³⁵ or Lucy Laurence, Joe Stanley's other daughter, died.



In total, Joe Stanley was known to have owned at least 39 people. Several went to new owners and most of the people he sold or gave away could be traced to 1834.

In 1810 Joe Stanley had sold three - Peg, Pallas and Nan - to the free black woman Henrietta (Ritta) Clarke. They all fared well. More than twenty years on, these three were still with their new owner and, judging by the many births and the few deaths Henrietta Clarke recorded, they probably enjoyed a better, healthier life than if they had remained with Stanley.

Having owned people since at least 1797,¹⁹³⁶ in 1817 Henrietta Clarke signed her register for 18 people, among them the three people she had bought from Joe Stanley. The others were Leah, a 54-year-old woman, who was the oldest and the only African, and three sambos: Susan (22 years old), Nancy (20) and Minnet (5). The others were black: Mary Ann (40 years), Peter (25), William (17),

¹⁹²⁴ UKNA, CO 186/15: 17 March 1836

¹⁹²⁵ ECSCRN, Nevis Court Records 1836-1843 f306

¹⁹²⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (a) Diary of WL Bucke: 7 September 1839

¹⁹²⁷ UKNA, CO 187/13 Blue Book Nevis 1839

¹⁹²⁸ UKNA, CO 186/16: 24 January 1839

¹⁹²⁹ UKNA, CO 152/96: 31 January 1810, and BUL, mf XVII.33 Parliamentary Papers, Nevis: Slavery, and CO 187/10: Blue Book Nevis 1836

¹⁹³⁰ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Will 1837-1864 f118

¹⁹³¹ PP, LB 68: P & C to Joseph Stanley, Demerara, 15 November 1847

¹⁹³² NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965 No 767

¹⁹³³ NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1844-1965 Numbers 586 and 631

¹⁹³⁴ In 1859 George Samuel Woodley Wattley held 14 posts, the most of anyone in the island. He was Secretary and Clerk of the Crown, Secretary of the Court of Queen's Bench and Common Pleas and of the Court of Complaints; Clerk of Council and of the Peace; Registrar of Deeds, in Chancery, in Ordinary and in Court of Error; Member of the Executive and the Legislative Councils, the Court of Error, and the Board of Health (UKNA, CO 187/32, CO 187/33, CO 187/34 Blue Books Nevis 1858, 1859 and 1860).

¹⁹³⁵ ECSCRN, Queen's Bench and Common Pleas 1869-1874

¹⁹³⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1797-1799 ff182-83

Sally (12), Kitt and Lovina (also Lavina), who were both 11 years old, Robert (10), Frank (9), Thomas (8), Eliza (6) and Wellington (two years and seven months). The former Stanley people, who were then 50, 15 and 18 years old, were simply recorded as Pegg, Palace and Nan. They did not carry their previous owner's surname.¹⁹³⁷

Henrietta Clarke lived in Charlestown and during the hurricane of 1819 suffered such losses that she, along with many other people, was forced to apply for rate relief. Reduced to the 'state of lowest pauperism',¹⁹³⁸ she and presumably her people endured much hardship, and by 1822 one of the girls, Sally, had died. But three children had been born at a time when on many plantations more people died than were born. And the children were strong enough to survive at least until slavery was abolished.

Undoubtedly, as a young woman Henrietta Clarke had been the mistress of Captain Joseph Clarke, a married man with a daughter, Mary, who was the same age as Henrietta. Captain Clarke had died some years earlier, having left his estate to his daughter and his house and land in Charlestown to Henrietta. He had also intended her to have an annuity of £50 a year, payable from the proceeds of Clarke's estate,¹⁹³⁹ but during his daughter's lifetime the money was not paid in full. Mary Clarke had married her cousin John Henry Clarke, the owner of Clarke's estate and the short-lived occupier of Mountravers, and for many years the couple had been struggling financially. Paying an allowance out of the plantation profits would have been an additional burden, but, equally, stopping the allowance or not paying it in full could well have been a way of taking revenge on a former mistress. It would have been up to the executors to oversee that the money was forthcoming but one of Captain's Clarke's executors, John Arthurton senior, had died shortly after being appointed, another probably was in England (Samuel Boddington), and the third, William Higgins, was a very busy lawyer and responsible for executing many other wills. Henrietta Clarke's predicament would have been a common one for many women – wives as well as mistresses. Whether the non-payment was intentional or not, Henrietta Clarke did not receive all the money she was due. But then John Henry Clarke died, followed in 1822 by Mary Clarke and shortly afterwards also two of their four sons. (Joe Stanley had made an inventory of Mrs Clarke's belongings, together with his son-in-law, William Garvey Laurence.) After these deaths, Henrietta Clarke sought to recover the money she was owed and enlisted the help of the Pinney attorney, John Colhoun Mills. She made a claim for £1,000 back pay plus interest.¹⁹⁴⁰ Henrietta Clarke's claim led to two further applications being made by two other women, Sarah Cartwright and Mary Gray - according to Captain Clarke's will, they should also have received money.¹⁹⁴¹ The House, although claiming they had no knowledge of such bequest, felt honour-bound to pay up since they then had possession of Clarke's Estate.¹⁹⁴² And on 10 March 1830, two decades after Captain Clarke's had died, Henrietta Clarke finally received arrears of N£680:4:6. The money was 'in full of all demands'. She signed a receipt, into which, rather touchingly, her signature had been pencilled already. Very shakily she drew her name over the outline. The document was witnessed by 'J.no W Browne', who almost certainly was the free carpenter¹⁹⁴³ John Webbe Browne.¹⁹⁴⁴ Her future annuity was to be paid by Peter Thomas Huggins 'for her life'.¹⁹⁴⁵

Over the years, from 1817 until slavery was abolished, Henrietta Clarke recorded only three deaths, those of Sally, Leah and Frank. She manumitted Thomas and William,¹⁹⁴⁶ sold Eliza to the free mixed-

¹⁹³⁷ UKNA, T 71/364

¹⁹³⁸ UKNA, CO 186/12: 27 February 1820

¹⁹³⁹ PP, Dom Box 3-7: Will of Joseph Clarke dated 30 June 1797; also ECSCRN, Nevis Wills Book 1787-1805, ff452-53 and CR 1803-1805 f470

¹⁹⁴⁰ PP, LB 60: JC Mills, Nevis, to PA & Co, 22 December 1826, and JC Mills to PA & Co, 2 February 1827

¹⁹⁴¹ PP, LB 62: PA & Co to Chas Shearman, 11 September 1829

¹⁹⁴² PP, LB 62: PA & Co to JC Mills, 6 February 1827

¹⁹⁴³ ECSCRN, CR 1814-1817 Index

¹⁹⁴⁴ PP, Dom Box 3-8

¹⁹⁴⁵ PP, Dom Box T-3: Indenture 12 March 1830 regarding the sale of Clarke's estate

¹⁹⁴⁶ ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 ff496-97 and CR 1831-1835 f312

race woman Ann Bennett ¹⁹⁴⁷ and gave one boy, James, to a child called Joseph Clarke. During the same period, her five women of child-bearing age gave birth to 13 children. One young woman, Lavina, accounted for three of the births, those of Penelope, Thomas and John Henry. All three babies were baptised in St Paul's church.¹⁹⁴⁸ Another child christened was the daughter of Mary-Anne, Sophia,¹⁹⁴⁹ and as was often the case, Mary-Anne herself underwent baptism some years after her daughter. Mary-Anne was living on Clarke's Estate when she was baptised,¹⁹⁵⁰ and some of the others may well have been hired to that plantation. It is noticeable that among Henrietta Clarke's people all the baptisms and one marriage – that of William – took place in St Paul's church,¹⁹⁵¹ and none in the Methodist Chapel.

In 1834 the former Stanley people were alive. Peg was 67 years old, Pallas 32 and Nan 35. They were among those twenty people for whom their owner claimed compensation. Henrietta Clarke signed her claim form in a very unsteady hand.¹⁹⁵² She received a payment of £255,¹⁹⁵³ making her and Ann Bennett the two freedwomen who received the highest awards for the most individually-held people. Only the Smith sisters Hester and Christiana received more compensation but slaveholder had assigned theirs over to them for money owed.

Henrietta Clarke may well have invested her compensation payment in land because by the 1830s she had acquired another property in Charlestown. It bordered the former Customs House.¹⁹⁵⁴ In her sixties, she was still healthy. Although Peter Thomas Huggins was supposed to pay her annuity for the remainder of her life, she decided to sell her annuity.¹⁹⁵⁵ Within months she regretted selling her claim.¹⁹⁵⁶ It is not known what happened to Henrietta Clarke, or to Joe Stanley's former people Peg, Pallas and Nan.



The girl Caroline, who as a child had been given to John Huggins, was, after his death, officially transferred to his widow Elizabeth Mary.¹⁹⁵⁷ She acquired three more people and for her four received compensation of £69.

Polly and Lucretia were sold together to Sarah Hanley in 1827. Sarah Hanley lived in St George's Gingerland and had eight people in total. She had got married in the meantime and so her

¹⁹⁴⁷ UKNA, T 71/367 ff34-5

¹⁹⁴⁸ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 Numbers 22, 163 and 353

¹⁹⁴⁹ NHCS, St Paul's Baptisms 1824-1835 No 75

Henrietta Clarke registered these births in 1822: James (two years and nine months old), Peggy (three months old) and Rebecca (18 months old); in 1825 Penny (two years and three months old), Sophia (one year and seven months) and Henrietta (three years); in 1828 Edward Thomas (two years old) and John Henry (one month); and in 1834 William (two years old), Reuben (6 months), and Lucy Ann (ten months) (UKNA, T 71/364-7, and T 71/369). Another baby called Bryant, the daughter of the young Henrietta, died, only nine days old, and was not registered in 1834. She was given a Christian burial (NHCS, St Paul's Burials 1825-1837 No 529: 29 July 1833).

¹⁹⁵⁰ NHCS, Baptisms St Thomas Lowland 1827-1873 No 210

¹⁹⁵¹ NHCS, St Paul's Marriages 1826-1842

¹⁹⁵² UKNA, T 71/1039 Claim No 258

¹⁹⁵³ PP, Dom Box R-6: Compensation file; HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xviii: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08 (Nevis: List A) and pp314-15 Nevis Litigated Claims, Claim No 258

The numbers are not consistent. In 1817, Ritta Clarke registered 18 people. Up until 1834 she recorded eleven additions (all births) and seven deductions: three deaths (Sally, Leah and Frank), two manumissions (Thomas and William), one person sold (Eliza), and one child gifted (James). This should have left her with 22 people. The only explanation may be that two individuals whom Henrietta Clarke manumitted were not counted. According to the index of the relevant Common Records, she manumitted two individuals called John and Emma (ECSCRN, CR 1831-1835 f20 Index). This may have been Livinia's son John Henry and possibly the young sambo woman, Minnet. Because of the fragile state of the document, it could not be examined to check whether this was the case.

¹⁹⁵⁴ ECSCRN, CR 1835-1838 f406

¹⁹⁵⁵ PP, LB 66: Copy of a letter P & C to Arthur Morgan, Equitable Assurance Officer, 30 March 1835, included in letter to PT Huggins, Nevis, 15 April 1835

¹⁹⁵⁶ PP, LB 66: P & C to PT Huggins, Nevis, 15 December 1835

¹⁹⁵⁷ UKNA, T 71/366

compensation of £83 was paid to her husband, the planter and Chief Judge of Nevis, George Webbe.¹⁹⁵⁸ According to Sarah Hanley's slave register, she had bought another child from Joe Stanley, Charlotte, an eight-year-old mulatto.¹⁹⁵⁹ There is, however, no reference to this child in Stanley's records.

Jim Palmer, sold in 1827 to John Arthurton, very soon came to be owned by Arthurton's son - John Arthurton senior having died.¹⁹⁶⁰ Jim Palmer was among six people for whom John Arthurton junior received compensation, £129 in total.¹⁹⁶¹

Thomas, who had been sold to the mason James Dore, was given as a present to Mary Dore, his new owner's daughter.¹⁹⁶² She herself had once been mortgaged to JPP, but her father had not long ago bought her from JPP's executors, together with her sister and her mother. Her father had then freed them,¹⁹⁶³ and so this former slave came to be in possession of her own slave.

Mary Dore did not claim compensation in her own right, and Thomas presumably was among those seven people for whom James Dore received £154 from the compensation fund. In addition, Dore, his wife Findella with Henrietta Lawrence received £56 for four people. Before Dore's marriage to Findella, these four individuals had belonged to Henrietta and Findella Lawrence.¹⁹⁶⁴ James Dore later lived in Lowland but he was connected to the Hanleys of Gingerland and he was in business with James Powell, to whom Joe Stanley had sold his sambo girl Mary. This girl Mary became one of five people who belonged to James Powell. He, together with Thomas's new owner, James Dore, sought to buy an estate, North Wales, and together both men acquired more people.¹⁹⁶⁵ Powell was a married man¹⁹⁶⁶ with seven children,¹⁹⁶⁷ and as Mary was not only mixed-race but also very young when Powell bought her, she probably was intended to work as a domestic rather than a field hand. Powell's wife died in 1830, he remarried, and he and his family received £251 compensation for 13 people.¹⁹⁶⁸

The girl Ann, sold in 1827 to Thomas Roper, was registered in 1831 by Roper as the only female in his possession but, as he did not complete a register in 1834, it is not known what happened to Ann. The last record of Roper was from 1839 when he appeared in Court. Roper was charged with assaulting a man in Charlestown. He had been armed with a gun loaded with gunpowder and leaden shot. Roper was sentenced to six months in prison and ordered to serve the first 14 days in solitary confinement.¹⁹⁶⁹

Roper had not claimed compensation for Ann but Josiah Theobald, the man who had bought the sambo Edward from Joe Stanley, did claim for Edward and received £12.¹⁹⁷⁰ Edward had been born

¹⁹⁵⁸ UKNA, T 71/1038 Claim No 79

¹⁹⁵⁹ In 1828 John Colhoun Mills's register also included one person purchased from Joe Stanley but this sale was not recorded in Stanley's register (UKNA, T 71/367 and T 71/368).

¹⁹⁶⁰ Jim Palmer was in 1828 registered as James, purchased from JW Stanley. His age was still given as 18 years although he was, by then, at least 21 years old (UKNA, T 71/367).

¹⁹⁶¹ UKNA, T 71/1039 and T 71/752 Claim No 175

¹⁹⁶² UKNA, T 71/368

¹⁹⁶³ At the beginning of June 1824, James Dore paid S£50 to JPP's executors John Frederick Pinney and his brother Charles. Dore bought Mary, her sister Eliza and her mulatto mother Polly, previously mortgaged with other property and people by John Hendrickson dec'd. James Dore then manumitted all three of them (ECSCRN, CR 1823-1829 vol 2 f207). Almost certainly this deal was brokered by the Pinneys' attorney George Clarke Forbes. He had put Dore's case: that Dore had a child by a mulatto woman ('a sister of Dr Hanley') who lived on Hendrickson's. James Dore, 'a very good man', wanted to buy the then four-year-old child 'to make it free'. The child was valued at NE50. The transaction needed the approval of the mortgagees, PA & Co, and it appears that for S£50 they not only sold the child but also her mother and sister (PP, LB 56: GC Forbes, Nevis, to PA & Co, 14 December 1822).

¹⁹⁶⁴ HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlvi: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08 Claim No 186

¹⁹⁶⁵ UKNA, T 71/368

¹⁹⁶⁶ RHL, MSS W.Ind. S.24 (b): 4 July 1830

¹⁹⁶⁷ ECSCRN, Nevis Book of Wills 1837-1864 f252

¹⁹⁶⁸ UKNA, T 71/1038 Claim No 11, and HoCAaP 1837-1838 Vol xlvi: Chadwyk-Healey mf 41.389 pp107-08

¹⁹⁶⁹ ECSCRN, Nevis Court Records 1836-1843 f297

¹⁹⁷⁰ UKNA, T 71/1038 Claim No 61

in about June 1823 and when sold by his first owner, Frances Laurence, he was just over two years old. Stanley sold Edward at the age of four, thereby separating the boy from the children believed to have been his siblings. His fate, and that of the others, shows how families were ripped apart and that many enslaved people were forced to lead itinerant lives.

To read other chapters, please copy this link and paste it into your search engine:
<https://seis.bristol.ac.uk/~emceee/mountraversplantationcommunity.html>

February 2024

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