Journal of
Irish and Scottish Studies

1495 ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Gordons of Cairness and the Gordons of Cluny: Some Legacies of Caribbean Slavery in North East Scotland

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This paper is a preliminary, archive-based study of two unrelated Gordon families and some of the legacies of their slave derived-wealth in North East Scotland. In the case of the Gordons of Cairness, the family's wealth from their Jamaican sugar income in the 1780's and 1790's, played a significant part in propelling the family into the front rank of the North East's non- titled landed families, helping to fund architectural, educational and economic developments around their Cairness estate as well as subsidising Major General Thomas Gordon's involvement in the Greek Wars of Independence in the 1820's. In the case of the Gordons of Cluny, wealth from the family's Tobago plantations supplemented the Cluny rental income contributing to the redevelopment of Cluny castle and estate and to the purchase of the islands of South Uist, Benbecula and Barra in the Outer Hebrides. As the historiography of Scotland's links to slavery in the Caribbean increasingly places enslavement at the centre of our understanding of the nation's economic progress in this era, research on the lives of the enslaved becomes a powerful tool for the public understanding of 'Scotland's Empire'. A small number of 'slave registers' in the Gordon of Cairness family papers, reveal themes of agency, endurance and resistance. The names of the enslaved help to remind us that the North East's colonial connections intersect not only with the people of the Caribbean but with West Africans too.

'Many a laird of today can trace the possession of his acres to the West Indies'.[1] These are the words of the Aberdeen-born, London-based

1. J. M. Bulloch, *The Making of the West Indies: The Gordons as Colonists* (Buckie, 1915), 3.

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https://doi.org/10.57132/jiss.367

journalist and amateur historian, John Malcolm Bulloch, in his pamphlet, *The Making of the West Indies: The Gordons as Colonists*. Bulloch was one of the very first researchers to investigate the Slave Compensation Records when they were first opened to the public in 1913. The records revealed the names of the claimants of the £20 million compensation fund established by the British Government after the Slave Emancipation Act of 1833. Bulloch combed the Treasury files in the Public Record Office, but only for claimants with the surname Gordon. He found scores of recipients, including a small number of notable North-east families. Today, the University College London (UCL) database, *Legacies of British Slave Ownership*, lists the names of 214 Gordons who were associated with compensation claims, and provides researchers with access to a database of families and individuals in all parts of Britain who were the beneficiaries of slavery.[2]

In his pamphlet, Bulloch noted the important role played by Scots in the development of the eighteenth century Atlantic economy, anticipating the focus of modern scholarship on the role of Scottish networks in the Caribbean.[3] Bulloch's publication was one of the first to expressly connect the institution of slavery with the investment of remitted West Indian wealth throughout Britain, but he treated slavery as a feature of the past which did not require further comment or enquiry. The historical narrative that interested Bulloch was 'the personal note': the family history of the 'House of Gordon', and his research in the Treasury records was just one part of his personal project on Gordon exceptionalism. For Bulloch, the Compensation Records were a valuable source for learning about the contribution of Scots towards the building of the empire. He did not consider the role of the enslaved in building that empire or the savagery underwriting the flow of West Indian wealth to the Gordons and other enslavers. Writing at the height of Britain's imperial power, Bulloch shared the racial assumptions that limited the potential scholarly uses of the compensation records, even if he did encourage researchers to mine this new resource by carefully listing the reference numbers of every file he had consulted. The publication of Bulloch's pamphlet does not seem to have stimulated further research on the Treasury records by British academics in his lifetime, but his recognition of their potential importance, is in some respects, a remarkable piece of original research, undertaken a century before the creation of the UCL database.

One of the first academic researchers to recognise the value of the Compensation Records for historians, was the Trinidadian scholar, Eric Williams. In *Capitalism and Slavery*, published in 1944, Williams highlighted their potential

2. Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/ [Last accessed 21 October 2021].

3. Alan Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake 1740–1800* (New York, 1992); Douglas Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean, and the Atlantic World 1750–1820* (Manchester, 2005).

importance as a source of information on the role of West Indian capital in the financing of Britain's industrial revolution, although he used the resource sparingly.[4] Scholarly argument over the 'William's thesis', however, focussed primarily on the scale and importance of West Indies remittances rather than the wealth that was derived from the work of the enslaved. Even in the mid-1970s, T. E. Devine's important study of the Glasgow tobacco trade provided a detailed description of the trade's beneficial economic impact on the West of Scotland, but did not highlight the role of slavery in tobacco production in Virginia.[5]

The significance of Caribbean slavery in promoting economic development in another part of Scotland was however recognised in a brief but important observation in 1981 by J. D. Hargreaves of Aberdeen University, who placed slavery at the centre of the age of improvement in Aberdeenshire. Hargreaves was one of the small number of British Africanists in the 1960s and 1970s whose extensive published work on West African history consistently emphasised the importance of African agency. He brought this perspective to bear in a slim volume devoted to Aberdeenshire's historical links with Africa, published in 1981 after his retirement.[6]

Hargreaves highlighted the legacy of slave-based wealth in the North-east of Scotland. He described Caribbean slavery as underpinning the lifestyles of many Aberdeenshire lairds at the end of the eighteenth century, and noted the role of wealth from Jamaica in providing capital for agricultural improvements on the Grant of Monymusk estate.[7] More generally, he suggested that wealth derived from Caribbean slavery helped many Aberdeenshire lairds to fund agricultural improvement, education, the arts, church building, and the construction of sev-

4. Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London, 2022), 26.

5. T. E. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords* (Edinburgh, 1975). Professor Devine later expressed regret for his failure to explore the role of slavery comprehensively and subsequently played a leading role in encouraging research into it. The 'amnesia' in regard to Scotland's 'slavery past' is discussed in Stephen Mullen, *It Wisnae Us: The Truth About Glasgow and Slavery* (Glasgow, 2009); T. M. Devine (ed.), *Recovering Scotland's Slavery Past: The Caribbean Connection* (Edinburgh, 2015); David Alston, *Slaves And Highlanders: Silenced Histories of Scotland and the Caribbean* (Edinburgh, 2021). Catherine Hall and Daniel Pick combine psychoanalytic and historical insights in their explanation of the 'politics of remembering and forgetting' in a wider context. Catherine Hall and Daniel Pick, 'Thinking about Denial', *History Workshop Journal*, 84 (2017), 1–23.

6. John D. Hargreaves, *Aberdeenshire to Africa: North East Scots and British Overseas Expansion* (Aberdeen, 1981), 9. Research has confirmed many of his initial observations. Stephen Mullen reviews the development of thinking on this and wider issues in *The Glasgow Sugar Aristocracy: Scotland and Caribbean Slavery, 1775–1838* (London, 2022), 1–27. Among recent scholarship on the subject, Tara Leishman provides local perspectives on the legacies of slavery in 'Legacies of Transatlantic Slavery in Stirlingshire and Perthshire', *History Scotland* (March/April, 2022). A regional perspective is adopted in Alston, *Slaves and Highlanders*. In *The Glasgow Sugar Aristocracy*, Mullen demonstrates how investments in the West of Scotland helped to power national economic transformation.

7. Hargreaves, *Aberdeenshire to Africa*.

eral notable country houses. Hargreaves suggested research on this neglected area of the North-east's history, and emphasised the importance of collections of family papers as a source of information on the 'web of family and financial links' that linked Aberdeenshire and the Americas, but his suggestions were not immediately followed up.

This article is a belated response to Hargreaves's appeal. Using archives in the University of Aberdeen's Special Collections Library, it presents some preliminary research on two Aberdeenshire families: the Gordons of Cairness, and the unrelated Gordon family of Cluny, and their Caribbean estates in Jamaica and Tobago. Some information on the ownership and management of the estates and some initial observations on how slavery-derived income was spent and invested in Aberdeenshire (and in the case of the Gordons of Cluny, in their Hebridean estates), is presented. Further research by others may provide greater detail on many of the general themes identified here and establish more detailed estimates of the wealth derived from slavery and its destinations and impacts. In the case of the Buthlaw and Cairness papers, a small number of slave registers from the Gordon's Georgia estate in Jamaica provide a brief but vital glimpse of the lives and deaths of some of the enslaved men and women who produced the family's Caribbean wealth, and whose labour helped to underpin the Gordon's social and economic position in Aberdeenshire. They are a poignant reminder of the legacy of suffering that links North-east Scotland with the Caribbean and West Africa too.

The Gordons of Cairness

Charles Gordon of Buthlaw and Cairness was the head of a minor landed family in Aberdeenshire which owed much of its upward social mobility in the late eighteenth century to its participation in Jamaica's slave economy. Intermarriage among several members of the Gordons of Buthlaw and the Barclay family of Peterhead earlier in the century, produced a number of complex inheritances involving both families' economic interests in Aberdeenshire and Jamaica. One of Charles Gordon's uncles, also named Charles, had died in Jamaica in 1755, leaving a substantial fortune. Charles Gordon also inherited the Jamaican assets of two other uncles, James and George Barclay, who had settled on the island in the 1720s. By the 1750s, James Barclay was a significant plantation owner in St. Elizabeth Parish.[8] Barclay's brother, George, was a successful merchant in partnership with Thomas Fuller of London. Wealth derived from his business inter-

8. Douglas Hamilton, 'Transatlantic Ties: Scottish Migration Networks in the Caribbean, 1750–1820', in Angela McCarthy (ed.), *A Global Clan, Scottish Migrant Networks and Identities in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2006), 55.

ests in Jamaica enabled George Barclay to purchase the Cairness estate in 1752 and on his death in 1756, the estate passed to his brother, James. When James Barclay died in Jamaica 1765, without children, he left his assets in Jamaica and in Aberdeenshire to his nephew, Charles Gordon of Buthlaw.[9]

Charles Gordon travelled to Jamaica in 1772 to oversee the financial and legal arrangements surrounding the settlement of the Barclay and Gordon estates on the island. The family's decision to send Gordon in person to Jamaica may have reflected anxieties around the complex litigation process that often characterised West Indies inheritance among absentee estate owners. Gordon spent several years in Jamaica although it is unclear whether this was in a single and extended sojourn or whether it involved several visits to the island. During his period in Jamaica, Gordon developed close links with Francis Grant and his brother, John Grant, who was appointed Jamaica's Chief Justice in 1783. John Grant was instrumental in the settlement of the complex legal affairs surrounding the Gordon and Barclay assets and acted for Charles Gordon in the purchase of the Georgia sugar plantation in the Trelawny parish of the island, using money from the sale of these assets.[10] Gordon returned to Scotland in 1781, leaving the management of the Georgia estate in the hands of Francis Grant who acted as factor to a number of estates owned by absentee enslavers.[11] Initially, Gordon seemed to have contemplated selling the estate to John Grant but his marriage to Christian Forbes of Ballogie in 1783, which linked him to a well-connected landed family on Deeside, and a sustained period of rising sugar prices in the 1790s, convinced him to retain ownership of the estate. He had also been reassured in 1788 by George Skene, the MP for Aberdeenshire, that abolition of the slave trade at that time was 'out of the question'.[12]

Georgia was never the Gordon family's only source of income. The family derived rental income from their Aberdeenshire properties of Cairness, Buthlaw and Newtyle and from a share of salmon fisheries at the mouth of the river Dee in Aberdeen. The Lonmay estate was added to their properties when it was purchased from Francis Garden of Troup in 1795. But the Georgia estate seems to have been the jewel in the crown. In 1786, when the combined value of Charles Gordon's Aberdeenshire and Jamaican estates was £45,394, the Georgia estate was valued at £26,352.[13] The architectural historian Dr David Walker has sug-

9. Last Will and Testament of James Barclay, 4 January 1765, Aberdeen University Special Collections and Archives (hereafter AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/1/48.

10. John Grant to Charles Gordon, 9 August 1778, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/6/1–2.

11. Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun*, 67.

12. George Skene to Charles Gordon, 1788, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/4/51.

13. Private Ledger Charles Gordon, 1785–86, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/3/9.

gested that it was ownership of Georgia that led to the Gordons', meteoric rise to riches and social standing'.[14] In fact, the Georgia estate had mixed fortunes over the years, but it did at times make spectacular profits. Gordon received the accounts of his 1791 sugar crop, he was informed by Francis Grant that it had 'netted the amazing sum of £5,762 sterling'.[15] Revenues on this scale were probably greater than the combined income of the Gordon Aberdeenshire rentals at the time and Francis Grant was acutely aware that he was managing 'so great a part' of the Gordon fortune.[16]

The shipments of sugar and rum were sent mainly to his business house, Rose Fuller in London with occasional consignments sent to Glasgow. Most consignments of Georgia's sugar and rum were part of a direct trade between Jamaica and Britain, but some voyages formed part of the Triangular Trade. The database of trans-Atlantic slave trade voyages reveals a Captain Val Bowden arriving in Kingston, Jamaica in 1787 after completing the Middle Passage with a cargo of enslaved Africans on board his ship, *The Fortitude*.[17] A letter from Francis Grant to Charles Gordon in 1789 lists *TheFortitude* with Captain Bowden as one of the ships used to transport some of Gordon's sugar and rum from Kingston to London.[18]

During Gordon's period in Jamaica in the 1770s, he would have been aware of the systematic cruelties of the plantation system. Now, as an absentee estate owner, he was shielded from the brutal reality of slavery but was still involved in the decision making which underpinned it. In 1787, correspondence shows Gordon considering whether to purchase newly enslaved Africans for the Georgia estate or to hire a 'jobbing team' from a neighbouring plantation. His detailed calculations were based on his assumption 'that the life of a negro [sic]cannot be supposed to last longer than 12 years at an average'.[19] After factoring in the overhead costs, including doctor's fees, clothing costs and insurance, Gordon calculated that hiring rather than purchasing, was the cheaper option and would save him ninety-eight pounds sterling. He left the final decision to Grant, who decided to buy, informing Gordon that

14. David Walker, 'Cairness House', in David W. Walker and Mathew Woodworth, *The Buildings of Scotland: Aberdeenshire North and Moray.* Pevsner Architectural Guides (New Haven, 2015), 120.

15. Francis Grant to Charles Gordon, 23 May 1791, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/6/72/1.

16. Francis Grant to Charles Gordon, 11 December 1789, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/6/69–2.

17. Slave Voyages.org, Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database. Voyage ID 81959 [Last accessed 2 December 2018]

18. Francis Grant to Charles Gordon, 6 April 1789, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/6/64/3.

19. Charles Gordon to Francis Grant, 19 May 1787, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/6/86.

additions to Georgia's enslaved workforce would improve the overall value of the estate in the longer term.

The acquisition of Georgia and the successful conclusion of complex litigation on Jamaica gave Gordon the confidence to plan for the future: the existing house at Cairness was extended, and portraits were commissioned from Henry Raeburn. But as the Georgia estate's economic potential began to be fully realised, the Gordon residence at Cairness was superseded by a country house on a completely different scale. Cairness House was designed by James Playfair, a contemporary of Robert Adam, and a rising star among Scottish architects. It was built between 1791 and 1797 with building costs estimated at between twenty-five thousand and thirty thousand pound sterling.[20] It is regarded as a Neoclassical masterpiece, at the cutting edge of architectural design of the time and one of North-east Scotland's finest country houses.[21]

The financing of Cairness House proclaimed the Gordons' arrival in the front rank of North-east non-titled landed families and would have involved funds drawn from the whole range of their economic interests including the Georgia estate. The building of Cairness also demonstrates the way in which wealth from slavery could flow downwards and outwards to benefit much broader sections of local society. Specialist masonry mouldings and furnishings for the house were certainly supplied by experts from London, but the granite masonry of Cairness House was mined at nearby Cairngall, employing local labourers. Numerous local skilled workers like Alexander Smith of Rathen, who had worked on the Gordons' previous house, were employed on the building work. Between March 1791 and May 1793, twelve wrights including Smith received £2,716 in wages.[22] As Cairness House developed, the policies around it were also transformed. Specialist designs were produced by the renowned English landscape designer, Thomas White, but the thousands of trees planted were supplied by William Anderson of Pitsligo.[23]

Wealth derived from Georgia may also have played a part in wider social and economic developments initiated by the laird of Cairness in his role as an improving landlord. As one of the six heritors in the parish of Lonmay, Gordon contributed to the building of a new parish kirk in 1787 and became its patron. He may have contributed to the erection of a wind pump for a land reclamation scheme on the nearby

20. The Reverend Charles Gibbon of Lonmay kirk and a close friend of Charles Gordon's son, Thomas, claimed in his contribution to *The New Statistical Account* that the house cost twenty-five thousand pound sterling. The Reverend W. Temple suggested 'about £30,000', in *The Thanage of Fermartyn* (Aberdeen, 1894), 275.

21. Walker, *Aberdeenshire North*, 119–25.

22. Book of [Wrights']Days at Cairness, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/28/2.1792.2

23. Supply of Elm Plants to Cairness, 1787, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/28/1/6.

Loch of Strathbeg.[24] From 1784, he was active in developing St Combs as a small harbour and fishing village supplying herring to fish merchants in Fraserburgh. Like other landed families in Scotland, the Gordons also embraced a wider north British culture and identity which underpinned their economic interests in the West Indies and their social ambitions at home. After Charles Gordon's death in 1796, his widow Christian Forbes sought a bigger stage for their son, moved to Windsor, and enrolled Thomas as a day pupil at Eton after which he attended Brasenose College, Oxford between 1804 and 1808, before joining the Scots Greys.[25]

Christian Gordon died in Windsor in 1802 and both Cairness and Georgia were run by trustees before Thomas inherited the family's Aberdeenshire and Jamaican estates in 1809, aged twenty-one. Shortly before inheriting his estates, Britain's abolition of the slave trade may have prompted Gordon to explore some of the moral issues that he would face as the owner of a plantation on Jamaica. A letter in the family archive by his friend and fellow Etonian, the Reverend Charles Gibbon of Lonmay kirk, refers to Gordon raising the issue of emancipation with friends. In a letter to Gordon, Gibbon argued forcefully against it advising Gordon not to 'encourage these speculations'.[26] The limit of his obligations to the enslaved was 'to be kind and benevolent to those that are in servitude to us'.[27] Gordon's sometime mentor and near neighbour at Crimonmogate House, Patrick Milne, MP for the Elgin Burghs who regularly advised Gordon on the running of Cairness also impressed upon him the importance of Georgia's income for the running of the estate and the upkeep and maintenance of Cairness house.[28]

It is difficult to assess the degree of genuine concern felt by Gordon for his enslaved workforce when he inherited Georgia, but in 1809 and 1810, the Caribbean was clearly on his mind, and he considered transferring from the Scots Greys to the eighteenth Regiment of Foot based in Jamaica. His intention to seek military service in the West Indies was opposed by his relatives and friends, and by Mary Burnett of Crathes, who released him from their engagement.[29] In the event, Gordon resigned from the army in May1810, before embarking on a life of travel and adventure. It is not clear if Gordon ever visited Jamaica. He does not seem to have raised the issue of emancipation again, and in 1814, asked

24. New Lease of Life for Loch of Strathbeg Windpump. https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/scotland/posts [Last accessed 15 November 2021].

25. Aglaia E. Kasdagli, 'The Papers of Thomas Gordon of Cairness (1788–1841)', *Northern Scotland*, 14 (1994), 110.

26. Charles Gibbon to Thomas Gordon, 1810, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/20/83.

27. Ibid.

28. Patrick Milne to Thomas Gordon, 12 August 1810, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS1160/20/84.

29. Mary Burnett to Thomas Gordon, 22 July 1809, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/20/58.

Patrick Milne for advice on whether to buy additional land in Jamaica to extend his holdings there.[30]

During the years of Gordon's ownership of Georgia, the estate was run by his factors, John Baillie, who succeeded Francis Grant and subsequently, Patrick Waugh. Georgia's fortunes fluctuated but in some years, the estate could still yield significant profits. In 1820, the net value of Georgia's sugar and rum was £4035.[31] These profits played an important role in paying off the costs of maintaining Cairness House and funding Thomas Gordon's extensive travels in Europe. Gordon does not appear to have taken much interest in the running of Georgia: his real interest was in the Greek struggle against Ottoman rule. He followed in the footsteps of Lord Byron, another unrelated Gordon notable, in actively supporting and fighting for the Greeks in their war of independence. It is deeply ironic that wealth produced by enslaved Jamaicans on the Georgia estate may have helped to fund Thomas Gordon's role in the Greek liberation struggle of the 1820s.[32] Major General Gordon as he became, was awarded the most prestigious Greek honour, the Order of the Redeemer, but he does not appear to have considered the issue of emancipation again. In 1834, he was awarded a £5,296 compensation for the 266 enslaved men and women on his estate.[33] This substantial sum helped to supplement the declining revenues from sugar and rum experienced by the Georgia estate in the years immediately after emancipation.[34] Subsequently, Gordon divided his time between Cairness and Greece where he owned properties in Athens, and in Argos and Napoli di Romania in the Pelopennese.[35]

Like his father, Thomas Gordon also invested modestly into wider social improvements at home. He continued to develop the small harbour of St. Combs, giving bounties to attract fisherman to the planned village which in 1835 operated thirteen herring boats. He also established St. Comb's school and schoolhouse at his own expense.[36] Further research may provide greater detail

30. Thomas Gordon to Patrick Milne, 10 March 1814, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/20/105.

31. Sales of Sugar, 1820, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/7/9

32. Thomas Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution* (Edinburgh, 1832). Gordon wrote an account of the Greek revolution and his role in it after returning to Cairness in 1831. Gordon's extensive personal correspondence has not been studied for this article, but further research may reveal his thinking on the differences between the 'liberation' of Greeks and enslaved Jamaicans.

33. Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/16224 [Last accessed 21 November 2021].

34. Georgia Estate Accounts, 1835–1839, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/7/1. In this period, the annual net value of sugar exports fell from one thousand five hundred and 10 to seven hundred and twenty pound sterling.

35. Gordon,Thomas (1788–1841), *Dictionary of National Biography, 1885–1900*. https://en.wikisource.org/ [Last accessed 6 July 2024].

36. *The New Statistical Account*, 1834–1845, vol X11, Parish of Lonmay, 234.

on the contribution made by Georgia's profits to the building of social capital in Aberdeenshire during Gordon's lifetime.

Gordon died in 1841 and initially, his estates were managed in Scotland by his trustees. After extensive litigation, Cairness and Georgia were inherited by his illegitimate son, James Wilkinson Gordon, but Buthlaw and Newtyle passed to another branch of the family. Despite declining revenues from Georgia in the early1840s, its importance to the Gordons increased as a result of the loss of the Buthlaw and Newtyle rentals, and obligations to pay substantial annuities to Gordon's widow, Barbara Hanno de Hatchko, and to his cousin, Captain John Leith. Correspondence shows that the trustees were worried by their declining income, increasingly concerned at having to pay increased wages to the Georgia workforce after the end of the apprenticeship system of forced labour, and supportive of attempts to force down workers' wages.[37] As Georgia's revenues continued to decline, the trustees at one point were unable to pay their annuities and considered selling off the estates, but this did not happen, and they were inherited by Thomas Gordon's illegitimate son. The management of Georgia under James Wilkinson Gordon and subsequently Charles T. Gordon, has not been studied, but James Wilkinson still valued it highly, and his gravestone bears the inscription: James Wilkinson Gordon, 'of Cairness and Georgia, Jamaica'.

Repression and Resistance on Georgia Estate

James Wilkinson Gordon's ownership of the Georgia estate lay wholly within the post-slavery era, but his inheritance was built by the estate's enslaved men and women whose lives had been blighted and destroyed by slavery. In the Gordon of Cairness Papers, a small number of slave registers provide a brief glimpse of the enslaved on the Georgia estate and shed light on lives which were not simply endured, but which contested and sometimes fiercely resisted oppression.

A list of the enslaved on the Georgia estate compiled at the start of 1788 records the names, physical conditions and the types of employment of all the men, women and children on the plantation.[38] A majority of the women and girls in the list have English Christian names,whereas Roman and classical names are applied almost exclusively to male slaves. No one has a surname. Several Scottish place names including Leith, Edinburgh and Glasgow have been given to males,

37. A. E. Fuller to Rev. James Roberson, 24 September 1841 (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/7/1F.

38. A List of Slaves upon Georgia Estate, 1 January 1788 (AUSCA) Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/6/54.

but the plantation's connections with the North-east of Scotland are suggested by the presence of Forres, Aberdeen, Banff, Nairn and Kinloss in the lists.[39]

Some scholars of slave-naming conventions suggest that the men and women who arrived in the Caribbean from the Middle Passage were usually named by their owners and that the names imposed were intended to erase the cultural memories and ethnic solidarities that might encourage resistance to the plantation regime. There is less agreement on the dynamics of naming among subsequent, Creole generations of the enslaved.[40] Thus in a Georgia register of births for 1785, 'Cuba' is recorded as giving birth to her 'mulatto' daughter, Ann. Did Cuba name her mixed-race daughter or was this the decision of the white father? By 1822, in the register which lists births and deaths, every mother giving birth had an English Christian name and surname, and only two of the thirteen children recorded as being born that year, 'Moses' and 'Pompey', do not have English common names.[41] Had the mothers' own names been imposed at birth, or were they given by their own families? And who decided and why, that the son of 'Elizabeth Gordon' born on the second of January 1832, should be called Moses rather than Edward or William?

The changing dynamics of plantation naming practices reveal complex and shifting patterns of cultural identification in the Caribbean, but Georgia's terse and sparing records often obscure underlying change. The 'John Baillie' who was removed from the same register in 1832, was clearly named after Georgia's factor, but his relationship to the factor is unknown, as are the reasons why he bears Baillie's name. Researchers are at an early stage in understanding to what extent names reveal calculated strategies of acculturation, are evidence of sexual exploitation by enslavers and other whites, or might even be themes of resistance.[42] Laura Álvarez López has also pointed out that the names appearing in estate lists and records are the officially recognised names of the enslaved but not necessarily the names used for and by themselves in personal and family contexts.[43]

39. Ibid.

40. For two different perspectives see Trevor Burnard, 'Slave Naming Patterns: Onomastics and the Taxonomy of Race in Eighteenth Century Jamaica', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 31, 3 (2001), 325–46; Jerome S. Handler and John Jacoby, 'Slave Names and Naming in Barbados 1650–1830', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 53, 4 (1996), 685–728.

41. Increase and Decrease of Slaves on Georgia Estate for 1832, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/7/12.

42. Sarah Abel, George F. Tyson and Gisli Polsson, 'From Enslavement to Emancipation: Naming Practices in the Danish West Indies', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 61, 2 (2019), 332–65; Margaret Williamson, 'Africa or Old Rome? Jamaican Slave naming revisited', *Slavery and Abolition*, 38, 1 (2017), 117–34.

43. Laura Álvarez López, 'Who Named Slaves and Their Children? Names and Naming Practices among Enslaved Africans Brought to the Americas and Their Descendants with Focus on Brazil', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 27, 2 (2015), 162.

Some of the Georgia documents provide evidence of the causes of death among the enslaved. In every year between 1783 and 1787 with the exception of 1784, a mother was to see her child die of 'lockjaw'(tetanus) within a year.[44] The causes of adult deaths included 'dropsy', 'lockjaw', 'yaws', 'worms' and 'fever', all indicators of poverty and malnutrition. The enslaved communities on the Georgia estate were given small areas of land to grow their own provisions but sustained periods of poor weather or sudden storms could periodically undermine the self-sufficiency of enslaved families. During these periods, shortages on the provision grounds were supplemented by imported supplies of food (mainly herring and flour) supplied from estate stores. Writing to Charles Gordon in 1781, Francis Grant informed him that estate food supplies had been used to alleviate food shortages on the plantation, and that more was needed to be obtained, however reassured Gordon that 'this has been done with constant economy.'[45]

Some deaths on the Georgia estate were the consequence of 'dirt eating'. Incidences of geophagia among the enslaved in the Caribbean have been documented. Some enslavers viewed geophagia as a deliberate act of resistance, and repeated instances of it, as a method of committing suicide. Punishment for dirt eating included the wearing of a metal mask to force the mouth closed, similar to the punishment for drunkenness.[46] The Aberdeen doctor, Jonathon Troup, who provided plantation medical services on Dominica between 1789 and 1792, associated geophagia directly with the trauma of separation felt by the enslaved.[47] On Gordon's Georgia estate in 1784, the death of 'Argyll,' one of four deaths that year, was attributed to 'eating dirt'. The following year, the reasons for the deaths of 'Hawke' and 'Aphelia' (Ophelia?), two of the three deaths recorded in 1785 are given as 'eating dirt'.[48] Occasionally, the violence and despair of the plantation are recorded unambiguously. On the second of January 1786, 'London drank a bottle of gin which killed him' while on the thirty-first of July in the same year 'William' was 'hanged for robbery'.[49]

The careful documenting of the causes of death among the enslaved can reveal some of the physical and mental stresses of slavery but also illuminates the racist universe that underlies the Georgia business model. The careful collection of sta-

44. Account of Negroes upon Georgia Estate, 1783–1787, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/6/54.

45. Francis Grant to Charles Gordon, 7 July 1781, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/6/14.

46. Julia Skelly, 'Representing Punishments for Dirt Eating and Intoxication in Richard Bridgen's West India Scenery, with Illustrations of Negro Character, 1836', *Canadian Art Review* (2011), 56.

47. *The Journal of Jonathon Troup*, 1788–1790, (AUSCA) MS 2070, 50–1. Troup treated a young polyglot, Angelo, who was probably the son of an important West African merchant family, possibly from Calabar. Angelo had been the victim of a credit agreement gone wrong and had been shipped to Liverpool and back to West Africa before being landed on Dominica.

48. Account of Negroes upon Georgia estate, 1783–1787. MS 1160/6/54.

49. Ibid.

tistical detail by Georgia's bookkeeper was extended to the estate's animal population whose deaths are recorded in the same documents as the deaths of enslaved men, women and children.Thus while we learn from a document of 1822 that the decrease in the slave population for that year included 'Prudence, an invalid died of debility' and that 'Dick, died of Fever', in a section on stock losses on the same page, we learn that the mules, 'Taylor' and 'Blackey' have both died in the pasture.[50]

Some individuals who had reached their limits of endurance, sought liberation through escape. In the 1832 list of births and deaths on the plantation, 'Hawke' and 'Daphne', described as 'runaways for many years', are now presumed to be dead. They were aged seventy-five and sixty-five respectively.[51] Escape from slavery was also possible for the small numbers released from servitude through manumission. The Register for 1822 notes that Ann Campbell and her four children, 'are manumitted.' although there are no other details given. The majority of those manumitted in the Caribbean were employed in domestic households on the estates[52] and it is possible that Ann Campbell was employed in Georgia's 'Great House', but until further research can reveal the subsequent life of this free woman and her children, the experience of their personal journey out of servitude is unknown.

For some slaves, escaping servitude and finding some form of personal or family freedom was not enough. Men from the Georgia estate were involved in the mass Jamaican uprising of 1831 led by Samuel Sharpe. The uprising seriously threatened the slave system on Jamaica and although ruthlessly suppressed, contributed to Britain's decision to abolish slavery. Edward Grant, John Baillie, John Kelly, Robert Lamont and Thomas Reid were all found guilty of 'acts of rebellion' and sentenced to life imprisonment in the workhouse just one year before the British Parliament passed the Emancipation Act.[53]

Resistance took many forms and was a daily and dangerous activity for the enslaved. The Georgia registers reveal a small number of African names: 'Cuffie', 'Mimba', 'Quashie', and 'Cuba'. Could the persistence of African names be evidence of deliberate acts of resistance by parents?[54] In the Register for 1788, we learn that 'Quashie' a young boy, was working in the overseer's house. 'Quashie' was a generic name for an enslaved male used in a racialised and derogatory way. The real name is Kwasi; an Akan day name commonly used in the Asante kingdom. There are no indications of how Kwasi came by his name, whether he was African or Creole or if he had any connection with Greater Asante. Was his

50. Increase and decrease of Slaves on Georgia estate for 1822, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cairness Papers, MS 1160/7/10.

51. Increase and Decrease of Slaves on Georgia Estate for 1832, (AUSCA), MS 1160/7/12.

52. Kenneth Morgan, *A Short History of Transatlantic Slavery* (London, 2016), 141–3.

53. Increase and Decrease of Slaves on Georgia Estate for 1832, (AUSCA), MS 1160/7/12.

54. For the argument against African names as a form of 'cultural resilience', see Abel, Polsson and Tyson, *From Enslavement to Emancipation*, 360. The authors argue that Creolisation led enslaved parents to favour European names for a variety of reasons.

name imposed by the slave ship's captain, or in an act of ridicule in a Kingston auction? Was it given by his enslaved parents as a conscious identification with their past or did Kwasi survive the Middle Passage from an Akan speaking area of West Africa and arrive in Jamaica with his own name intact? Did Kwasi even use this name in that part of his life that was hidden from the official estate record? It is impossible to say but the name 'Quashie' appears again, thirty-four years later in the Georgia records. In 1822, he is recorded as 'a runaway for a number of years and supposed dead.'[55] We cannot say for certain that this was the same person, but there was only one 'Quashie' in the register for 1788, and only a small number of African names were recorded in the Georgia registers overall.

Kwasi's life of enslavement on the Georgia estate followed by his life of freedom intersects with the reigns of the Asantehenes Osei Kwame (1777–98), Opoku Fofie (1798–99), and Osei Bonsu (1800–1823).[56] His name reminds us that the history of the Gordon plantation on Jamaica links North-east Scots not only with the people of the Caribbean but with the history and people of West Africa too.

The Gordons of Cluny

Like the Gordons of Cairness, the unrelated Gordon family of Cluny was a gentry family, whose extended family network and financial resources helped them to establish and expand their interests from Aberdeenshire into the Caribbean. The first Laird of Cluny, John Gordon, was a former factor to the Third Duke of Gordon and possibly, an illegitimate son. He bought the Cluny estate in 1752 and on his death in 1769, it passed to his eldest son, Cosmo. Cosmo Gordon was a graduate of Marischal College, and after sitting as Tory MP for Nairnshire, served as a Baron of the Exchequer. Gordon was a founding member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and its literary President. His name appears on the list of subscribers to the Edinburgh edition of the poems of Robert Burns. He interacted with a number of Scotland's key enlightenment figures, and in his will, left legacies to Adam Smith and Dr. James Beattie.

Gordon became a personal friend of Dr. Beattie, the Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic at Marischal College, and an early opponent of the slave trade and a critic of slavery. Beattie was instrumental in Gordon's appointment as Rector of Marischal College in 1782, but there is no evidence of Gordon's views on slavery or abolishing the slave trade in his letters to Beattie.[57] Professor

55. Increase and Decrease of Slaves on Georgia estate, 1822, (AUSCA), MS 1160/7/10.

56. Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge, 1975).

57. Beattie's correspondence with Cosmo Gordon is available in Papers of James Beattie, 1758–1799, (AUSCA), MS 30/1.

Beattie's reliance on the patronage of Henry Dundas and others helps to explain his reluctance to become active in the abolitionist movement, despite the personal appeals of activists including Thomas Percival and Wilberforce himself.[58] Personal relationships with friends like Cosmo Gordon, whose wider family had links to West Indies slavery may have played a role in Beattie's reticence too.[59]

Those family links began when shortly after the death of their father, two of Cosmo Gordon's younger brothers, Alexander and James, sailed to Tobago in 1770 to purchase land and establish plantations, probably with financial help from their elder brother. James Gordon died soon after arriving in Tobago, but Alexander remained and prospered. By the 1780s, Alexander had consolidated his estates and was the owner of Speyside and Trois Rivières in the northeast of the island and the Bacolet estate in the south of the island, close to the capital, Scarborough. Drawing up his will in 1784, Cosmo Gordon described his brother Alexander as 'opulent', and not requiring financial help.[60] A later account suggested that the estates provided Alexander with an annual income of ten thousand to twelve thousand pounds sterling in good years.[61] Georgia profits allowed Alexander to purchase a town house in the Strand in London. He may have purchased property in North-east Scotland too.[62]

It is presently unclear how much of Alexander Gordon's income was regularly remitted to his brothers, Cosmo and Charles, during his lifetime. In the 1780s and 1790s, both men made extensive purchases of land and property in North-east Scotland and in Edinburgh and both gained reputations as improving landlords with large capital resources at their disposal. Cosmo Gordon developed Buckie as a fishing port and was an investor in the Aberdeenshire Canal.[63] Charles Gordon developed the Hermitage of Braid estate in Edinburgh, and owned land in Auldearn where he was noted in the Old Statistical Account as the most dynamic

58. Glen Doris discusses Beattie's ideas and the ideas of other Scottish enlightenment thinkers on abolition and slavery in detail. Glen Ian Doris, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Politics of Abolition* (PhD Dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 2011).

59. Robert Arbuthnot to James Beattie, 24 April 1788. Papers of James Beattie, 1758–1799, (AUSCA), MS 30/2/567. Beattie would have been aware of the personal links to slavery of some of his correspondents. Robert Arbuthnot of Haddo-Rattray, for example, in a letter in April 1788, reassured Beattie that the Arbuthnot's son William, who was employed managing the Carriacou estates of his cousin, William Urquhart of Craigston, 'has never imbibed any of the licentious principles which are far too prevalent' [in the Caribbean].

60. Last will and Testament of Cosmo Gordon, 26 August 1784, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cluny Papers, MS 3600/4/6/3/6.

61. John Gordon to John Mackenzie, 14 June 1852, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cluny Papers, MS 3600/1/14/1/22.

62. J. M. Bulloch, *The Gordons of Cluny: From the Early Years of the Eighteenth Century Down to the Present Time* (Buckie, 1911), 33.

63. Receipts for Shares in the Aberdeenshire Canal 1796–99 (AUSCA), Gordon of Cluny Papers, MS3600/3/2/5.

improver in the parish.[64] It is possible that some of Alexander's Tobago wealth may have played a part in these purchases but specific evidence for this is lacking.

A more direct link between the Cluny and Tobago estates was established when Alexander of Tobago died in Bath, in 1801, and left the Tobago properties jointly to his nephews, John, later Colonel John Gordon of Cluny, and John's younger brother, another Alexander. Their father, Charles Gordon may initially have controlled the Tobago estates for his sons but Alexander Gordon seems to have managed the estates on behalf of the brothers for several years, before returning to Britain around 1814.There is no evidence that John Gordon ever travelled to Tobago; after inheriting the whole Cluny estate in 1814, on the death of his father, Charles, he focussed on managing and expanding his Scottish properties and sat as MP for the English borough of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis between 1827 and 1832. His inheritance and his development of Cluny's vast assets led to him being remembered 'as the richest commoner in Scotland', leaving a fortune in excess of two million pound sterling on his death in 1858.[65] He is also notorious as the landowner responsible for one of the most brutal examples of clearance policy in the West Highlands.

Dr David Walker suggests that Colonel Gordon's massive redevelopment of Cluny castle in Aberdeenshire in the 1820s and 1830s, overseen by the celebrated Aberdeen architect, John Smith, 'was financed by Gordon's West Indies estates'.[66] However, the absence of accounts and correspondence in the family archive from the era of slavery,[67] makes it difficult to identify a specific contribution made by slavery-derived wealth to the construction of the castle, and to be able to 'follow the money' back to Tobago. Gordon already possessed enviable levels of capital to fund major projects like this. A recent suggestion that Gordon did not access any of his share of Tobago revenues may, however, be equally unlikely.[68] Writing to his lawyers in March 1852, in the midst of legal conflict over the joint ownership and liabilities of the Tobago estates, Colonel Gordon noted

> 'for some time now, it will not be suggested that I drew a single shilling from the estate while I do believe…that the late Mrs Alexander Gordon was supplied regularly…with large sums of money'.[69]

64. *Old Statistical Account*, Parish of Auldearn, 1798, 621.

65. Obituary of Colonel John Gordon, *The Banffshire Journal*, 20 July 1858, 5.

66. Joseph Sharples, David W. Walker, and Mathew Woodworth, *The Buildings of Scotland: Aberdeenshire South and Aberdeen* (New Haven, 2015), 419.

67. There is no correspondence in the family archive between John and Alexander Gordon relating to the Tobago estates in the era of slavery.

68. Neil Bruce, 'Colonel John Gordon of Cluny: The Richest Commoner and His West Indies Estates', *History Scotland*, 21, 3 (2021), 27.

69. John Gordon to Brundrett, Randall and Simmons, 22 March 1852, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cluny Archive, MS 36001/14/1/21. The emphasis is mine.

It seems likely that Gordon did forgo his share of sugar profits in favour of his brother, but only after a period in which his share of Tobago income had already made its way to Cluny.

In 1834, Colonel Gordon and his brother shared a compensation payment of £12,482 for 653 enslaved men and women.[70] Shortly afterwards, Gordon purchased Barra, South Uist and Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides for the vast sum of one hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling. Colonel Gordon's brother, Alexander, died at Nunton on Benbecula in 1839, suggesting that the acquisition of the Hebridean estates was a joint financial venture using funds from their compensation windfall, their Tobago income and Colonel Gordon's other substantial financial resources.[71] During the 1840s, the financial position of the Gordon plantations on Tobago deteriorated and Gordon, for so long an absentee owner with little interest in the affairs of the estates, now became increasingly involved in their management.[72] Estate policy over the next few years focussed on trying to force down workers' wages, support for the importation of indentured labourers from West Africa, and plans to diversify crops.[73] Gordon blamed his Tobago estates' problems not only on the British Government's policy on sugar duties but also on the Emancipation Act and on the unwillingness of his free workforce to submit to his estates' labour rules and wage rates.[74] Along with many of Tobago's sugar estates, the Gordon properties were threatened with the loss of labour as workers moved to other areas of the island in search of better paid employment and opportunities.[75] In October 1847, his problems worsened when a hurricane devastated the island, leading Gordon's factors to call for significant funds for reconstruction. At the same time, the potato famine in the West Highlands which caused enormous suffering on his Hebridean estates intensified pressure on Gordon to provide long-term assistance for his crofting tenants. The combined effect of these two crises at the same time, may have prompted Gordon to take extreme measures. Large scale clearances on his Hebridean estates, had been mooted in 1839 by his factor, William Fleming, when the time was appropriate.[76]

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70. Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/1301318774 [Last accessed 27 November 2021].

71. The role of slavery wealth in the purchase of a significant number of highland estates in the nineteenth century is discussed in Iain Mackinnon and Andrew Mackillop, *Plantation Slavery and Landownership in the West Highlands and Islands: Legacies and Lessons. A Discussion Paper* (Community Land Scotland, 2020).

72. Bruce, *Colonel John Gordon*, 26–8.

73. John Mackenzie, Report on the Estates of Bacolet, Speyside and Trois Rivieres, in the Island of Tobago, 6 April 1852, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cluny Papers, MS 3600/1/14/1/22, 2.

74. John Gordon to Alexander Macpherson, 31 July 1847, (AUSCA), Gordon of Cluny Papers, MS 36001/14/1.

75. Susan Elizabeth Craig-Jones, *The Evolution of Society in Tobago, 1838–1900* (PhD Dissertation, London School of Economics, 1995), 165.

76. John Fleming, *Report to Colonel John Gordon of Cluny, Concerning the Present State of the Estates of Benbecula and South Uist and Proposed Alterations and Improvements*, 1839, Kildonan Museum, South Uist.

Gordon put the ideas into practice between 1847 and 1851, clearing three thousand crofting tenants in one of the worst examples of coerced clearance.[77]

In 1852, with the clearance of his Hebridean estates completed, Gordon sent his secretary John Mackenzie to Tobago to make recommendations for the management of the plantations. He was anxious to end the joint ownership of the estates with his nephew, Charles Henry Gordon, and seemed willing to sell up. Although Mackenzie was highly critical of Gordon's local managers and accused them of corruption and dishonesty, he believed that by replacing them and by careful but limited investment, the estates, especially Bacolet, could be made to pay. His analysis of the plantations' problems also emphasised the failure to control the terms and conditions of the workforce.[78] McKenzie was critical of the *Métayage* system of sharecropping which had developed after the end of the apprenticeship system and encouraged the *Métayers* to view housing and access to land as a right.[79] When he recorded in his report that the best run plantation on the island 'was unquestionably the estate of Auchenskeoch', run by 'Mr Ventour, a man of colour' from Grenada, neither Mackenzie nor Gordon seemed to grasp the significance of the fact that Auchenskeoch paid substantially higher wages than the Gordon estates.[80] The opportunity to improve the fortunes of his plantations and attract labour to them by using some of Cluny's extensive resources to increase wages and innovate labour conditions were simply not considered by Gordon whose aim was to create a compliant and cowed workforce. Mackenzie could not escape the racial thinking which influenced and helped to constrain Gordon's business plans for his estates. 'I must not forget the indolent disposition and irregular habits of the negro generally', he wrote in his report.[81] In the absence of the kind of order required to control an agricultural workforce with aspirations to improve their living standards and to acquire their own land, Gordon believed that 'the time may not be so distant when the white inhabitants will be expelled by the coloured and black races.'[82] Despite this fear, and in the hope that sole ownership would bring some kind of progress, he bought out his nephew's share of the estate and retained ownership until his death in 1858.

Did ownership by Gordon of estates in the Hebrides and Tobago lead to the sharing of strategies and policies? There is no evidence that personnel from the Hebrides moved to employment in Tobago (or vice versa). John Mackenzie, Gordon's Secretary at Cluny, might have played an important role in the management of both Gordon's Caribbean and Hebridean estates, but died in the West

77. James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community* (Edinburgh, 2018), 81–2; Eric Richards, *The Highland Clearances* (Edinburgh, 2000), 208–25.

78. Mackenzie, *Report*, 6.

79. Craig-Jones, *The Evolution of Society*, 137.

80. Mackenzie, *Report*, 14.

81. Ibid.

82. Gordon to Mackenzie, 14 June 1852, in Mackenzie, *Report*, 43.

Indies in 1852 after failing to recuperate from an attack of malaria, and by then, Gordon had cleared much of his Hebridean estates anyway. Information on the management of his Tobago estates would have been gleaned by Gordon from correspondence and reports with his factors but it is difficult to say whether this led to the active and conscious application of specific strategies from one context to another. In the post-slavery era, Gordon may have found it easier to coerce the men and women on his Hebridean estates than the workforce on his sugar plantations in the Caribbean, many of whom voted with their feet and moved away, in a not dissimilar fashion to the first round of 'voluntary' clearances in the highlands at the end of the eighteenth century.

Gordon's racialised perspectives of Hebridean crofters and Tobagonian *Métayer* were mutually reinforcing. He saw both Gael and Creole as lazy and recalcitrant members of his rural estates, undermining his attempts at free market innovation. Speaking about the Creole labourers on the Bacolet plantation, Mackenzie noted that their highest ambition 'is to get a patch of ground to grow the necessities…and there obtained they live in idleness'.[83] This view was remarkably similar to that expressed by incoming landlords towards the Gaelic crofting community in the Highlands. Racial and cultural prejudice reinforced Gordon's business aims to create a compliant workforce on Tobago and control its relationship with the land, and, in the case of the Hebrides, may have helped to convince him to end that relationship completely.

Conclusion

John Malcolm Bulloch's ground-breaking research in the Slavery Compensation Records in 1913 does not appear to have stimulated further scholarly interest during his lifetime. A century after Bulloch's initial examination of the Treasury records, the database, *Legacies of British Slavery*, provides researchers, for the first time, with the raw material for a more comprehensive overview of the scale, influence, and impact of slavery-derived wealth throughout the United Kingdom.

J. D. Hargreaves, in a brief but important observation in 1981, drew attention to the role of remitted wealth from the West Indies in funding agricultural improvements, and educational and architectural innovation in Aberdeenshire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Hargreaves emphasised the importance of family archives in the University of Aberdeen's Special Collections Library for reconstructing these developments, but like Bulloch's earlier observations on the potential uses of the Treasury Compensation Records, his suggestions for further research were not immediately followed up.

83. Mackenzie, *Report*, 14.

The family archives of the Gordons of Cairness and the unrelated Gordons of Cluny, contain important material for researchers to explore North-east colonial connections, but they also have limitations. The Cairness records currently studied do not allow researchers to pinpoint exactly, the flow of slavery money 'from plantation to portico'.[84] They do however, provide a clear picture of the importance of Caribbean income for the family's social progress in the era of slavery. Further research on the management of the Georgia estate under James Wilkinson Gordon and his son, Charles T. Gordon in the post emancipation era, may provide insights on whether an integrated business relationship between the Gordon estates in Jamaica and in Scotland was pursued. In the case of the Gordons of Cluny, correspondence and accounts from the slavery period appear to be absent from the archive, and researchers are reliant on records from the post-slavery era which provide only brief and broad outlines of the family's Tobago estate policies before Colonel Gordon's management in the 1840s and 1850s.[85]

Both archives reveal the somewhat idiosyncratic lifestyles enjoyed by Major General Gordon and Colonel Gordon, but in their role as absentee owners, both men deviated little from the economic orthodoxies of the time, and with the exception of the young Thomas Gordon's apparent attack of conscience on inheriting the Georgia estate in 1809, both men appear to have viewed the suffering of their West Indian workforces with indifference.

One other key limitation in the Caribbean estate records of both family archives, is their lack of detailed information on the lives of the African and Creole men and women whose appearances in the records are usually limited to the estates' accounting processes.[86] A limited number of Georgia's slave registers do however, give researchers a rare glimpse of personal lives, revealing themes of endurance, agency and resistance. A small number of African names on the registers extend the memory of slavery from the plantation, back across the Middle Passage to the capture and kidnapping of Africans from their homelands. The names of these men and women help to remind us of the collective historical experience that connects North-east Scots to the West Indies, and West Africa too.

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84. For a discussion of the different kinds of links between slavery and stately homes see Madge Dresser, 'Slavery and West Country Houses', in Madge Dresser, Andrew Horn (eds), *Slavery and the British Country House* (English Natural Heritage, 2013), 28–9.

85. J. Arthur Howell, The Cluny Gordons (AUSCA), Gordon of Cluny Papers, 1995, MS1160/11/64, 110. An 'unofficial' and unpublished family history by J. Arthur Howell in the Cluny Papers speculates that all the Tobago records from the era of slavery were deliberately destroyed by Colonel Gordon.

86. Historians are now focussed on reconstructing the collective and individual experiences of Africans within the Atlantic diaspora. See for example, Paul Lovejoy (ed.) *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery* (New York, 2000). A number of databases which explore the experience of the enslaved are linked to the website: Peoples of the Historical Slave Trade, https://enslaved.org/data/ [Last accessed 23 December, 2021]