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JOHN LAMONT OF BENMORE: A HIGHLAND PLANTER  
WHO DIED 'IN HARNESS' IN TRINIDAD

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STEPHEN MULLEN

In 1841, John Lamont, a Scottish emigrant in the Caribbean, wrote to his half-brother Alexander, the Laird of Knockdow in Argyll, Scotland:

I think of making a short visit [to Scotland] ...and returning [early to Trinidad], to endeavour to stem the downward tendency of things here. I find my absence very prejudicial, and that I am looked on as an absentee by all parties, from the Governer to the humblest labourer who works for us. This won't do, and I must act again as an every-day planter.<sup>1</sup>

After almost forty years abroad, the 'every-day planter' accurately predicted that he would 'rather work out' in Trinidad, his permanent place of domicile, than come home to 'lead an idle life' and 'rust out' in Scotland. He died in Trinidad on 21 November 1850, thus fulfilling his wish to 'die in harness' in the plantation economy.<sup>2</sup> John Lamont, therefore, was a permanent emigrant – not a temporary economic adventurer – and thus represented an exception to the sojourning mindset that historians have identified in Scots who travelled to the Caribbean in the colonial period.<sup>3</sup> However, though he chose to die in Trinidad, Lamont's extensive slave fortune came to rest in Scotland just like wealth acquired by many sojourners abroad. Lamont's case, and others like it, are thus significant for our understanding of the development of the Scottish Highlands as well as for the history of Scots in the Caribbean.

There was a long tradition of Scots adventurers travelling the globe in search of opportunities for self-advancement.<sup>4</sup> The Union of 1707, however, opened up a dazzling array of imperial riches throughout the British Empire for both temporary adventurers and permanent emigrants. R.H. Campbell has noted that conditions at home and abroad – 'push' and 'pull' factors – influenced levels of outward migration to the colonies in this period. The economic situation in both highland and lowland Scotland led to an exodus of mainly young men on the make.<sup>5</sup> The East Indies was a favoured location and historians such as

Andrew MacKillop have traced the wealth-generating activities and impact of returning nabobs to Scotland.<sup>6</sup> The West Indies also offered the possibility of lucrative careers and rapid fortunes. The clannish nature of the activities that promoted the acquisition of such fortunes is now well known. In a classic text, Alan Karras revealed the networks of Scots in the Chesapeake and Jamaica, whilst Douglas Hamilton later extended this approach across the Caribbean.<sup>7</sup> How many Scots actually crossed the Atlantic is unknown, due to the lack of detailed ship's passenger lists before 1840.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, based on Karras' shipping advertisements for Jamaica, Hamilton has estimated that around 17,000 young men left Scotland for the Caribbean between 1750 and 1800.<sup>9</sup> The exact number of Highlanders who actually departed amongst this wider exodus will probably never be known but it was most likely a significant proportion.<sup>10</sup>

There were significant risks to Scots involved with the West India trades but the financial rewards could be extensive. Historians have previously examined Scots planters across the British West Indies. Allan Macinnes' pioneering work on the Malcolms of Poltalloch outlined a flow of capital from Jamaica to Scotland via London.<sup>11</sup> Lord Seaforth, Highland estate owner and Governor of Barbados, owned a plantation in Berbice in 1801.<sup>12</sup> Whilst the Malcolms of Poltalloch were able to repatriate significant capital to Scotland on an annual basis, Seaforth's less successful venture demonstrates that even elite absentee investors were vulnerable. In 1814, almost fifteen years after purchasing land and slaves in Berbice, Seaforth's plantation was not predicted to make any return and his affairs were described as 'desperate'.<sup>13</sup> Those who actually crossed the Atlantic also faced non-financial risks. Alan Karras traced the world of physician Andrew Johnston and his eventual death in Jamaica of disease.<sup>14</sup> Some Scots were involved in colonial politics, such as Alexander Campbell from Argyll, who was put to death during Fedon's Rebellion on Grenada in 1795.<sup>15</sup> Whilst many died and not all were financially successful, many adventurers lived to acquire modest fortunes and some – like John Lamont – accumulated wealth that was considerable by contemporary British standards.

Questions remain about the wealth available to adventurers, how the wealth was repatriated and subsequent impact on Scotland. David Alston's work on Highlanders located across British Guiana has traced Scots involved in colonies settled towards the end of Caribbean slavery. Alston charted the 'very rapid and splendid fortunes' made by Highland Scots in Berbice, including a member of the family of the Frasers of Belladrum who was said to have made £40,000 from one trip.<sup>16</sup> Yet, according to Alston, this level of fortune was almost certainly unrepresentative and a quick death from disease was a much more likely outcome. So why did the West Indies continually attract hundreds of Scots on an annual basis? In a recent attempt to explain this behaviour, Alston has drawn on behavioural economics. He argued that successful returned sojourners were stereotyped, exemplified by the saying 'As rich as a Demerary man'. Despite the risks, the perception of available riches continually attracted Scots to the West Indies even though, for the majority, their dreams would be unrealisable.<sup>17</sup>

Fortunes were not only elusive but repatriating them home was a protracted process. Alan Karras pessimistically noted that British capital invested in Jamaica in West India property (land and slaves) was difficult to convert to profits in Scotland without requirement for costly legal action in colonial courts.<sup>18</sup> However, Douglas Hamilton was more optimistic and traced the investments of returned sojourners in the Highlands of Scotland in Tain Academy and elsewhere.<sup>19</sup> S. Karly Kehoe has recently extended this approach by tracing the investments of Scots – mainly residents of Grenada and Carriacou – in charitable enterprise in the Highlands, especially educational academies and hospitals. Thus, according to Kehoe, the impact of individual Scots in the Caribbean can be measured using different levels of analysis. Firstly, historians can examine Caribbean adventurers of modest means who improved their own status and that of their families at home. Secondly, the paths can be traced of those with more substantial fortunes who often reshaped regional economies and societies.<sup>20</sup>

The present article adds nuance to the Caribbean aspect of the Kehoe analysis. Ideally, social backgrounds of individuals should be examined to ascertain if, and how, fortunes were actually made in the plantation economy. It is only in some cases, however, that the origins and activities of such individuals can be traced through, for example, legal and parliamentary sources or correspondence. Fortunes should be measured across the duration of the period spent in the colonies and this task is made easier if the individuals died testate. In terms of repatriation, confirmation inventories lodged in Scotland reveal specific methods of property transmission to beneficiaries or institutions, although they are not without their deficiencies. Such inventories do not include the value of heritable property in Scotland or the Caribbean, which of course for the latter region usually meant enslaved people and sugar estates. But in this case, at least, the evidence reveals that the penniless John Lamont left Scotland for Trinidad to begin a career as an overseer and eventually became a wealthy planter. He epitomised the ‘successful’ emigrant and in tracing his story, this article adds to a developing economic turn in the historiography of Scotland and the Caribbean in the colonial period.

### **‘A Frugal Independence’**

John Lamont of Cedar Grove and Benmore (1782–1850) was born in Argyllshire in 1782, the son of a local gentry laird and a woman of ‘inferior station’, whose opposing social backgrounds prohibited their marriage.<sup>21</sup> Lamont was registered and baptised the same year as the ‘natural son’ (that is, a recognised child born out of wedlock) of James Lamont of Knockdow and Isabel Clerk, daughter of Duncan Clerk (or Clark).<sup>22</sup> Whilst illegitimacy was not unknown in the Western Highlands, it was less common than in many urban centres in late eighteenth-century Scotland, perhaps due to the influence of Church discipline.<sup>23</sup> Because of this premarital union, Isabel Clerk may have faced ostracisation in the local

village. There were implications for John Lamont as he grew into manhood too. Although the eldest son, there seems to have been no support from his father during childhood. As a shunned illegitimate without the appropriate respectability of descent, he had no legal claim to the family estate and would not have been accepted into the same circles his paternal family frequented.

Lamont's far-from-privileged start in life provided ample motivation to pursue his fortune in the West Indies. Aged twenty in 1802, he departed Scotland – most likely from Port Glasgow or Greenock – for Trinidad.<sup>24</sup> Correspondence printed in a family history suggests this was elective migration due to economic hardship. 'I had no other choice at the time circumstances favoured me. I only aimed at frugal independence', John Lamont later revealed in December 1816.<sup>25</sup> However, as it turned out, in forty-eight years in Trinidad, he accumulated colonial wealth that would have ranked him amongst the wealthy elite in Scotland.

With the loss of the Virginia tobacco trade in the aftermath of the War of American Independence, the merchants of Glasgow shifted commercial focus to the Caribbean and the late 1780s marked the beginning of the city's 'golden age' of sugar. In this period, the British state pursued expansionist policies in the Caribbean and South American mainland, although according to Lowell Ragatz and others the West India economy by this point was already on the wane.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of the exact specifics of when the plantation economies entered economic decline, great fortunes were still on offer in certain colonies. Trevor Burnard argues such wealth was rare in nineteenth-century Jamaica and Barbados but that fortunes were still available on newly settled estates in Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo.<sup>27</sup> With Trinidad, these new colonies in the southeastern Caribbean – recently described as the 'last frontier' – offered lucrative opportunities to merchants and planters, including free coloured people.<sup>28</sup> These observations have implications for the study of economic connections between Scotland and the Caribbean. As new colonies were subsumed into the British Empire after the Union, Scots took full advantage of imperial opportunities in fertile colonies now legally open after 1707. The settlement of Trinidad, therefore, offers historians the opportunity to examine the activities of Scots and fortunes accumulated towards the end of Caribbean slavery.

Trinidad was captured from the Spanish in 1797 and ceded to Great Britain under a secret clause of the Treaty of Amiens in March 1802. However, trade between Scotland and Trinidad was opened up whilst the island was under Spanish control. From 1795, a regular Leeward Island fleet departed and arrived on the river Clyde – the premier departure point for the New World in Scotland – and regular trade was therefore established just as Glasgow's 'golden age' of sugar began.<sup>29</sup> The opportunistic West India merchants of Glasgow invested in sugar estates on the island in the early 1800s, which explains a later rise in shipping.<sup>30</sup> Advertisements in the *Glasgow Herald* reveal just over 200 ships departed from Clyde ports for Trinidad in the years 1806 to 1834, meaning it was the third most important destination (after Jamaica and Demerara). The advertisements suggest

around eight voyages to Trinidad per year, although there was a dramatic rise across the period: the six voyages between 1806 and 1810 increased to fifty-three between 1811 and 1820. The voyages doubled in the next decade with 112 shipping advertisements in the period 1821–1830. A further forty-seven ships left in the three-year period, 1831–1834.<sup>31</sup> Many of the voyages were operated by elite merchant firms in Glasgow such as Wighton, Gray & Co., Dennistoun, McGregor & Co., George Cole, Campbell, Rivers & Co., although the elite firm Robert Eccles & Co. was the most prolific of all.

As well as mercantile shippers, West India firms also acted as selling agents, recruiters and employers. There were several sugar estates advertised for sale in Glasgow in this period although, for less wealthy adventurers without the means to purchase directly, Trinidad also offered the prospect of lucrative careers.<sup>32</sup> For example, the firm Campbell, Rivers & Co. advertised in the *Glasgow Herald* looking for ‘A YOUNG MAN as an OVERSEER for an Estate in a healthy situation in Trinidad’ offering ‘freight and passage’ from Port Glasgow.<sup>33</sup> Thus, there were regular voyages from the Clyde offering sometimes assisted passage. Leaving in 1802, John Lamont was amongst the first waves of Scots pioneers to Trinidad. He had connections with two elite Glasgow merchant firms, networks which no doubt assisted his rise in the plantation economy. In the 1810s, he was an overseer on the Eccles’ plantations and a cousin-in-law of George Cole, who eventually operated Lamont’s sugar business in the late 1820s. For adventurers with influential connections, the Caribbean must have seemed like a route to wealth.

### **John Lamont in Trinidad: Overseer, Attorney, Planter**

The environmental conditions of Trinidad and prospects of fortunes attracted many colonial risk takers. The island was a sugar planter’s dream. The benefits were clear: the soil was rich and fertile—unlike older colonies such as Jamaica—and the land was offered at low cost to pioneering settlers.<sup>34</sup> Scottish newspapers of the period described a colony of ‘great extent, of uncommon fertility, the most healthy of West India islands, neither exposed to fevers or hurricane, capable of immense improvement in British hands, already adding considerably to our revenue’.<sup>35</sup> However, risks and costs were great too. The capital required to settle new plantations was immense, especially as there was a shortage of enslaved labour in contrast to mature plantation economies. As the British Parliament abolished the transatlantic slave trade just five years after Trinidad was finally ceded, the price of slaves was high in the early years of the colony and remained so up to emancipation in 1834. Indeed, in the 1820s, costs were the third-highest in the British West Indies. The major start-up costs usually involved the taking on of debts and mortgages on an island where there was a constant fear of invasion by the French and Spanish.<sup>36</sup>

It is impossible to ascertain how many Scots adventurers travelled to the British West Indies. However, from over 200 *Glasgow Herald* advertisements of ships departing Clyde ports for Trinidad from 1806 to 1834 (with five to nine individuals per ship), perhaps between 1,000 and 1,900 Scots may have been on these ships—although probably closer to the lower estimate.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, based on population statistics, it is unlikely there was ever a pervasive Caledonian presence in the ethnically diverse society.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, Lamont's story shows that despite the risks, the financial rewards for Scots could be immense.

Whilst the contextual background to migration from Scotland to the Caribbean is necessarily based upon anecdotal evidence, other sources provide empirical evidence of Lamont's rise. Whilst in the West Indies, he testified before a Parliamentary Inquiry which allows the historian to recreate his rapid trajectory to elite planter. Lamont's evidence of March 1825 was delivered to a Committee of Council appointed in Trinidad 'for the purpose of obtaining a more correct knowledge of the Negro Character, as exhibited in this Colony, in the state of both slavery and of freedom'. Lamont recounted a spectacular rise in the planting business: first as overseer, then as manager (or attorney) and eventually plantation owner in his own right. By 1825, Lamont was proprietor of two sugar estates and continued to operate as an attorney who supervised estates for other Scots.<sup>39</sup> One of these sugar plantations was Oteheite located in Oropouche, southern Trinidad, which Lamont managed for the Glasgow merchants Robert, William & James Eccles.<sup>40</sup> Other sources provide further information on his character whilst employed as an overseer and attorney.

The history of Maria Jones (as documented in publications by Rev. George Cowen and Rev. John Law of the Baptist Missionary Society) provides a rare account of the life and experience of an enslaved woman in Africa and the West Indies.<sup>41</sup> The publications traced Maria's journey from Africa to St. Vincent in the West Indies at the age of seven before she was sold to a planter in Trinidad. She was subsequently put to work on Palmiste estate, which was supervised by a Scots attorney. According to Brinsley Samaroo,<sup>42</sup> the attorney was none other than John Lamont and evidence from slave registers seems to support this.<sup>43</sup> Maria recounted how this 'young Scotchman' was 'just commencing his career as a planter' having risen 'from the humblest beginning . . . to possess several valuable sugar plantations'. This attorney saw in Maria a 'noble independence of character not often found in oppressed slaves' and she felt he 'was not very cruel'. However, Maria Jones contrasted her position in life with the fortunes of Lamont: 'I am more rich than he for a' dat; he, poor, blind buckra sinner, while Father make me rich for over'.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps Lamont showed a degree of humanity to the enslaved woman under his control, although others were not so lucky. He was accused (around 1816) of 'violating the person of a young negro girl on the Diamond estate'. Although 'the evidence of a medical man proved the injury', the public authorities 'took no notice' of Lamont, who was by then Deputy Commandant of South Naparima.<sup>45</sup>

After a complaint by the free-people of colour on Trinidad, the Governor Ralph J. Woodward refused to believe the 'contradictory statements' of the enslaved woman and exonerated Lamont, describing the episode as a most 'improbable tale'.<sup>46</sup> However, whilst a later address by 'a free mulatto' to Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, perceptively noted 'every species of criminality is lost in the blaze and glare of whiteness', there were reputational consequences. After members of the local militia refused to serve with Lamont due to his crime, he challenged one of his accusers – whom he described as 'men in buckram suits' – to a duel for slighting his honour.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the sources provide a rare glimpse of the Scottish planter's personality: compassionate to one enslaved woman, the rapist of another. Other sources – colonial, parliamentary, legal records and family correspondence – are silent on Lamont's cruelties although they do testify to his exploitative methods in the plantation economy.

In 1809, seven years after arriving in Trinidad, John Lamont became the owner of a sugar plantation.<sup>48</sup> This was Cedar Grove in San Fernando, South Naporima, and it remained his property until his death in 1850.<sup>49</sup> At first he was part-owner of the estate (with John Corrie) and forty-six resident slaves.<sup>50</sup> The Trinidad Land Register suggests that Corrie's part share was transferred to Lamont on 23 November 1819.<sup>51</sup> John Lamont was also a personal slave-owner and substantially increased his chattel property through the inter-colonial slave trade. In 1822, he owned ten personal slaves (eight male, two female) not attached to any of his estates.<sup>52</sup> This group was purchased in Trinidad by Lamont or imported from nearby islands such as Grenada.<sup>53</sup> The increase of his 'personal slaves, being his property' to ninety-one in the triennial return of 1825 suggests he had embarked on a slave acquisition policy in the preceding three years. Lamont owned families of enslaved people, like that of Betty Hallinan Coromantee (evidently named after an assumed African origin). The matriarch of the family, Betty, aged 57, was a nurse, whilst her son Cudjoe, aged 31, was a labourer. Both mother and son were described as African Coromantees born in Africa. Betty's daughter, Dutchess, aged 24, also a labourer, was a Creole born in Trinidad revealing her mother had been on the island for at least a quarter of a century. Dutchess had first given birth aged sixteen and had three children. Her two daughters, Elmina and Quartoba, aged eight and four, were part of the 'small gang', who would have undertaken less arduous tasks on Lamont's plantations such as weeding the canes. Dutchess' youngest child, her only son, MacLean, aged two, was spared from the brutalities of forced labour (although not for long given Quartoba's promotion to the 'small gang' by the age of four). And they were fortunate to survive at all: child mortality of slaves on Trinidad estates was extremely high at almost fifty percent.<sup>54</sup> All family members had been directly purchased except MacLean, who was born when Lamont owned his mother. Thus, he had purchased the extended family probably in late 1822.<sup>55</sup>

Other job classifications reveal the complex tasks required for the operation of a sugar estate. Redford, a driver, supervised and disciplined fellow enslaved

people in the sugar fields, whilst the ironically named Puncheon was a cooper who built the hogsheads to store the sugar and rum. John, a sailor, would have transported the produce from the coast onto return ships destined for the Clyde. However, the majority of Lamont's slaves were adult labourers or children in the small gang, suggesting they would have been deployed across his estates or hired out for jobbing work.<sup>56</sup>

By 1825, Lamont was an experienced planter who had worked on sugar plantations for over twenty years. His testimony to the Committee of Council that year illustrates his opinions on the character of the enslaved, his personal experiences of plantation management as well as general agricultural practices in Trinidad. In what might be regarded as the typically prejudiced views of someone in his position, Lamont declared planters did not expect 'to find honesty in a negro', and although stealing amongst the enslaved community was socially unacceptable, slaves would not inform on others who stole from the master. Lamont also provided a hierarchy of honesty: he regarded the Creole population as having 'more pride which prevented their stealing openly' although they were also more 'crafty'. He also trusted African slaves more than the 'lower class of people in the manufacturing towns of Great Britain'. Nevertheless, he employed watchmen armed with guns and cutlasses to guard the provision fields in his estates.<sup>57</sup> By this point then, Lamont viewed himself above the lower class at home and, as a white man, he was regarded as superior to the enslaved in the nefarious, racialised hierarchy of the West Indies.

In terms of plantation management, Lamont operated a sugar monoculture system on his estates simply because 'no crops ... pay so well as sugar, even in these times'.<sup>58</sup> He employed Scots on his plantations although not always in a mutually agreeable manner. The ill-fated Robert Stirling was appointed as an attorney on one of Lamont's smaller estates but left his employment 'in consequence of the bad behaviour of that personage'.<sup>59</sup> Lamont also employed free labourers such as peons—whom he described as 'very expert axemen'—to cut forest trees and clear land. Lamont divided his gangs of field-slaves into three classes which apportioned labour to the strength of individuals. He implemented a task-system for fieldwork on his plantation, a practice typical to South Naparima. According to Lamont, the task-system meant the work was finished sooner as it afforded the 'industrious part of the gang more time to themselves' although it required more supervision than the alternative gang-work as there was a natural tendency to 'to hurry over the work as quickly as possible'. He also deployed gangs of enslaved people to cut sugar canes as they were seemingly much more careful during harvest time (no doubt enforced by a harsher punishment regime than could be meted out to hired labourers). The enslaved peoples' careful work ensured a second growth of canes after the first harvest, a process known as ratooning. In his testimony, he stated it was 'most advantageous' for a sugar planter to operate two cattle mills and two small sets of sugar works on different parts of the estate. The cane was carried from the fields by mule to the mill to be

processed. Ideally, a distillery should be adjoined one of the sugar works as it saved labour in the transportation of cane refuse and distilled cane juice.<sup>60</sup> Lamont preferred traditional planting methods such as the cattle-mill, which he viewed as more efficient and cost-effective than the steam engine in 1825. It is likely that Lamont exported the sugar and rum to the Clyde via ships owned by the Eccles' merchant firm, his first employers in Trinidad. However, reconciliation with his father's family led to expansion in Trinidad and shifting of his transatlantic business model.

### **Remittance of produce and fortunes to Scotland**

As the illegitimate son of James Lamont of Knockdow, John Lamont seems to have been shunned by the family from birth. However, in 1816 his half-brothers, Alexander and Boyden, established contact. Whether they had heard of his success through correspondence or via returned Scots is unknown, but the illegitimacy of the rich planter was by then of no concern to the family. News of their elder half-brother had reached Argyll by 1816 and John Lamont's success attracted much interest. That year, he received a 'truly fraternal' letter from younger half-brother Alexander. His reply hints at his unhappiness as an unwanted child and his joy at being accepted into the family fold:

I often felt I was alone in the world—a consequent degree of melancholy has been my constant attendant from youth upwards; but the frank generous manner in which so many estimably brothers correspond with me, has given me a new and much more pleasing turn to my feelings. . . I am charmed of your description of the happy party assembled at Kilmichael. How delighted I should be to make one of the numbers.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, the Lamonts of Knockdow reached out to him after fourteen years in Trinidad and he subsequently promoted their interests on the island. In 1816, John Lamont offered to provide his sibling with a start, in the process revealing the privileged route for a Scot with the appropriate connections on the island:

If [our brother] Boyden is inclined to try his fortune here, I can be of service to him by placing him in one of the most respectable [merchant] houses here, and where I could obtain for him a share of an extensive and lucrative concern after twelve months, which is necessary to understand things here.<sup>62</sup>

Boyden Lamont travelled to Trinidad around 1817 and became part of the planter class when John Lamont transferred legal ownership of Canaan Estate on 1 March 1823.<sup>63</sup> The reconciliation with his paternal side was complete when the wealthy planter made a triumphant return to Scotland in 1828.<sup>64</sup> Whilst visiting in October that year, he met his ailing father and also rearranged his mercantile connections in Glasgow. As he intended 'going abroad again' in December that year, Lamont registered a deed in Edinburgh that appointed his half-brother

Alexander Lamont, the future Laird of Knockdow and writer to the signet in Edinburgh, and George Cole, merchant in Glasgow, as ‘proper persons’ for the management of his affairs in Great Britain.<sup>65</sup> An Englishman, Cole was related to John Lamont through marriage to his cousin, Ann Campbell.<sup>66</sup> Cole was previously a partner in the prominent Glasgow firm, Wm. & Jas. Eccles, although he retired from this business on 31 December 1822.<sup>67</sup> It is probable that Lamont’s sugar was imported to Glasgow by the Eccles’ firms prior to this and afterwards, and he most likely worked directly on the Lamont account. In October 1829, Cole sold sugars—probably imported from Lamont’s plantations in Trinidad—in the New Sample Room in the Royal Exchange in Glasgow, which was by then the home of the pro-slavery lobbying group, the Glasgow West India Association.<sup>68</sup> Afterwards Cole assumed a prominent role in the Association when he was appointed Director on 16 January 1833, a position he retained for at least two years. John Lamont was, therefore, in partnership with a mercantile factor with connections to Glasgow’s elite sugar aristocracy.

John Lamont’s business model had therefore evolved across the lifecycle of his career. He rose from overseer to attorney then planter and afterwards advocated a sugar monoculture system on estates worked by task gangs, an operation which he closely supervised on a daily basis. He oversaw production up to the 1820s but remained dependent on merchant firms who profited from commission on imports of his produce from Trinidad to Glasgow and exports of goods in return. However, after appointing Cole and others as factors, he was able to control supply too.<sup>69</sup> By 1829, Cole worked out of a counting house on 107 Buchanan Street and his firm operated at least fifteen voyages between Greenock and Trinidad from January 1829 to October 1834.<sup>70</sup> This forward integration stood in stark contrast to the West India merchants and planters of nineteenth-century Glasgow. James Ewing of Strathleven and other merchant-proprietors usually took ownership of plantations after owners defaulted on loans. Ewing in particular was a classic absentee and probably never visited his sugar estates in Jamaica. By contrast, Lamont was a proprietor-merchant who worked his way up from overseer to planter and chose to remain *in situ*, harking back to an earlier age of colonisation when settler-planters cultivated their estates. When he became commercially successful, his operations remained in the West Indies whilst he established a factor in Glasgow to deal with court proceedings, finance, sales and distribution.

Whilst this was exceptional for the Glasgow mercantile community, it may not have been in colonial Trinidad. On the basis of compensation awards on the emancipation of slavery in 1834, Nicholas Draper has noted that the percentage of absentee claimants was lower in Trinidad than in other British West India islands (particularly British Guiana and Jamaica).<sup>71</sup> Although it remains to be seen if transient Scots followed this pattern, in general settler-planters tended to permanently reside on sugar estates on Trinidad, perhaps personally supervising the integrated plantation which in turn limited mismanagement or dishonesty of attorneys. The personal approach and vertical integration no doubt contributed

to the size of Lamont's huge fortune as did large compensation claims on the emancipation of plantation slavery.

After the British Government abolished slavery in the British West Indies on 1 August 1834, John Lamont collected around £17,000 for almost 400 enslaved people.<sup>72</sup> This large-scale award was on a par with elite Glasgow-West India merchants such as the Smiths of Jordanhill.<sup>73</sup> He managed the post-emancipation transition by importing indentured labourers to work on his estates. With his friend William Hardin Burnley – the *de facto* first 'Prime Minister' of Trinidad and active promoter of immigrant labour – they imported African labourers from Sierra Leone, which had been established as a British settlement for free black people and former slaves in 1787. In a letter to his brother in 1841, Lamont described these African labourers as 'the most valuable lot of immigrants . . . yet received'. According to Lamont, the African joint-scheme was the leading venture in 'all the Colonies in these seas' due to Burnley's efforts and 'indomitable perseverance'. Ironically, they hoped it would 'strike boldly at the very root of the African slave-trade, by redeeming the captive before embarkation from his native shore, and bringing him hither a free labourer'. Thus, Lamont and Burnley's scheme of taking African labourers from their homeland to be indentured in Trinidad was represented as their version of 'salvation'. After 1845, Lamont also took advantage of 'coolie' labour (imported from India). In November that year, he described his workers on Cedar Grove estates as 'steady' although he was unimpressed with such labour in general, alleging that workers wandered about 'neglecting their work'.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the Lamont fortune that arrived in Scotland was built on successive eras of exploitation of labour from across the globe: African, Creole and Indian.

Boyden Lamont also collected compensation but his planting career was cut short. On 21 March 1836, he was awarded almost £4,000 for 78 enslaved people on Canaan Estate, but he died soon afterwards in August 1837 on Trinidad.<sup>75</sup> Boyden Lamont's last will – lodged in Scotland – reveals a sophisticated risk management strategy implemented by elite Scots in the Caribbean, whilst his confirmation inventory outlines the extent and nature of his wealth. Steve Murdoch has noted that many Scots in early modern Europe settled their affairs before departure as the distance added complications to recovering inheritance in the event of early decease.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, some fortunes were simply forfeited or assets abroad sold as some family members did not have the appropriate foreign networks to administer estates or the means to pursue costly legal action. Similarly, West India colonies presented such issues, although the Lamont examples demonstrate how wealthy planters crossed the Atlantic in order to settle their affairs to ensure the smooth transition of property in Scotland.

In late 1832, having been in Trinidad for around fifteen years, Boyden Lamont returned to Scotland to settle his affairs and 'to prevent misunderstandings' on the event of his decease. His last will and testament prioritised certain family members and allocated landed property and wealth. Firstly, he ensured that the

Canaan Estate would be transferred back to John Lamont. Secondly, he named as executors his brothers John Lamont, Alexander Lamont, writer to the signet in Edinburgh, James Lamont of the Royal Navy, and George Cole (although the latter eventually refused the role). Executors in the colonies were notoriously dishonest,<sup>77</sup> and by choosing executors from the direct family matrix based in Scotland and Trinidad, Boyden increased the chances of a smooth post-mortem transmission of property across the Atlantic.<sup>78</sup> John Lamont stood to inherit or dispose of his brother's colonial property including land, slaves and ships. In Glasgow, Lamont's preferred West India merchant, George Cole, would disperse funds held in the merchant house. His other brother, Alexander Lamont, a prominent lawyer, would supervise all of this in Edinburgh. Thus, by drawing up the will in Scotland (instead of dying intestate abroad) Boyden Lamont ensured the fortune and its executors came under the jurisdiction of the Scottish legal system.

As succession and legacy was governed by the 'law of the domicile', by settling his affairs in Scotland Boyden Lamont seemingly affirmed his status as a temporary economic migrant to the Caribbean (although his brother's case—which will be examined in turn—led to a legal challenge).<sup>79</sup> In practical terms, this meant court proceedings could be lodged in Scotland against executors (in the event of dishonesty, for example) and the Crown was also entitled to legacy duty from the deceased's estate. Boyden Lamont left a personal fortune of over £26,000 in Great Britain, including almost £20,000 in the Ship Bank of Glasgow.<sup>80</sup> If it is accepted that sugar planting had been his principal source of income since 1817, this allows a tentative estimate of the level of profits acquired by one Scot in twenty years in the plantation economy of Trinidad. Naturally, his brothers were the main beneficiaries of the fortune.

John Lamont enjoyed the lifestyle of a gentleman-planter in Trinidad up to and beyond emancipation. Soon after arriving in Port of Spain in 1825, Dr James McTear, a physician trained at the University of Glasgow, dined with his fellow Scot who was said to be amongst the 'upper class of company in Trinidad'.<sup>81</sup> Lamont's elevated standing in colonial society was both enabled and confirmed by a succession of official appointments. By the 1830s, he had been Acting Commandant and Commandant (equivalent to Lord Lieutenant in Scotland) in South Naporima for twenty years. In 1836, he was nominated to the management committee of 'The Trinidad Presbyterian Association'.<sup>82</sup> Lamont also donated land to The Mico Charity, a non-denominational charity (although 'Protestant in tone') which was established by the British Government for the education of ex-slaves after emancipation.<sup>83</sup> In 1837, the charity constructed a school-house, a day-school and a Sunday school.<sup>84</sup> Although based permanently in Trinidad, Lamont retained strong connections with Scotland. He imported freestone and slates to construct colonial residences as well as foodstuffs like haggis, minced collops, hotchpotch, white pudding, Scotch sausage and barrels of ale.<sup>85</sup> He made frequent transatlantic journeys including annual trips to Scotland, England and

continental Europe.<sup>86</sup> Around this time, Lamont modified his business model (probably after the retirement of George Cole around 1834), which involved renting a premises and employing a clerk to conduct his sugar importing business in Glasgow, probably located on 39 Nile Street.<sup>87</sup> During his frequent trips to Scotland, Lamont frequented the elite Western Club in Glasgow—a favourite haunt of West India merchants and local gentry—which was founded in 1825. The clubhouse in St Vincent Place, Glasgow was opened in 1842 and Lamont resided there (or in a local hotel) when in Scotland.<sup>88</sup> It is unknown if he discussed Trinidad whilst dining with the gentlemen of the Western Club, although other members hailing from the same Highland plantocracy class—such as Mungo Campbell—would surely have been an interested audience.<sup>89</sup> Thus, based on a West India fortune, Lamont enjoyed a status befitting Scottish elites, a privilege that would most likely have been closed to him had he remained with his mother's family in Argyll. The purchase of a landed estate (discussed below) seemingly completed the gentrification process, although he did not intend to retire to the south-west Highlands of Scotland.

#### **A fortune accumulated by the 'strictest integrity'**

In late 1848, John Lamont made plans to purchase the Highland estate of Benmore, near Dunoon, for £13,000. The mansion house was set in over 3,000 imperial acres of arable and grazing land and there were angling opportunities in the nearby rivers Echaig and Messan as well as in Loch Eck.<sup>90</sup> The purchase was finally completed in January 1849 and although the existing house was said to be in good repair, Lamont began construction of a new mansion that befitted his wealth and status. The Scottish estate was to provide 'employment and occupation' for John Lamont's nephew (and heir) James Lamont, who spent five months with his uncle in Trinidad in 1848.<sup>91</sup> Despite the purchase, John Lamont revealed to his brother Alexander that he had no intention of retirement in Scotland: 'you will never make me a Scotch laird'.<sup>92</sup> Thus, the almost sixty-year-old Highland emigrant did not wish to become an absentee in Scotland, making him a prominent exception to the sojourning mind-set identified for many other Scots in the Caribbean in the colonial period (although probably typical of settlers in Trinidad). Aged sixty-nine, Lamont died in his home at Casa De Diego Martin in Trinidad on 21 November 1850, thus fulfilling his wish to 'die in harness'.<sup>93</sup> He was buried next to his brother Boyden in Canaan Estate, San Fernando. A local obituary described him as 'one of the most distinguished members of our Island circle [in Trinidad] . . . where he had accumulated a very large fortune, by care, perseverance, and intelligence, accompanied by the strictest integrity; and marked by honour in all his transactions'.<sup>94</sup> But exactly how large was this fortune?

As Pat Hudson has recently noted, estimating the net flow of funds from West India plantations to Great Britain is a complex undertaking. To assist in such a task, Hudson proposes a methodology that examines the fortunes of

planters themselves, the dispersal of their fortunes and their connections with creditors.<sup>95</sup> The available documentary evidence associated with the planting career of John Lamont allows the first two aspects of the Hudson methodology to be implemented here (as there seems to be no surviving records from Lamont's sugar plantations in the colonial period).<sup>96</sup> John Lamont's personal fortune on death does hint at large profits. Although there is some debate about the true extent of the fortune, by all accounts it was substantial. One legal scholar—based on now apparently lost sources stored in Knockdow house in 1938—provided an evaluation of the estate. This account suggested Lamont's personal property on death was worth £99,000 and that, added to this, he held heritable property in Scotland of £18,000 and plantations in Trinidad worth £31,000, which was said to be a third of purchase price.<sup>97</sup> If this account is accurate, John Lamont left a significant fortune of £148,000. His personal fortune (moveable property) of almost £100,000 would have placed him almost amongst the 'wealthiest of their time' as defined by William Rubinstein in his accounts of British wealth-holders.<sup>98</sup> However, Lamont's confirmation inventory on death suggests his moveable property (that is, his wealth less the value of land in Scotland and Trinidad) was worth just over £76,000.<sup>99</sup> Even this lesser sum would have been considerable in comparison with the fortunes made by elite planters, Glasgow-West India merchants and Scots in the East Indies of the same period.<sup>100</sup> Thus, the figures demonstrate that planters in Trinidad—in a period of perceived decline—were able to accumulate fortunes in the course of a planting career commensurate with those made by elite sojourners and merchants in the metropolis in the same period. How did this arrive home?

While in Trinidad, John Lamont made 'constant and large remittances' to agents in Glasgow, probably via bills of exchange to be lodged in the Western and Union Banks in Scotland.<sup>101</sup> This contrasted with methods employed by Scots in the East Indies, who remitted capital via the London-based English East India Company and through the exportation of valuables such as jewels to Scotland.<sup>102</sup> Thus, banks in Glasgow were recipients of large personal sums accrued from slavery, which could be used as interest bearing capital in loans to manufacturers and merchants across the West of Scotland. Lamont prepared a post-mortem transmission strategy designed to bequeath and dispose of his heritable and moveable property on either side of the Atlantic. Whilst in Glasgow on 10 October 1849, John Lamont had a will written up which appointed his brother Alexander Lamont, writer to the Signet, his nephew James Lamont as well as the agent James Newton as trustees and executors in Scotland. He appointed Alexander Stewart and William Eccles in Trinidad.<sup>103</sup> These trustees also had special power:

To appoint an attorney or attornies in the Island of Trinidad for realizing and managing such parts of my Estates and effects as may be situated in that island. . . to sue for uplift and receive the principal sums of the debts. . . [and]

also to sell. . . any part of the said Estates and Effects and that by Private Sale or Public Auction or Bargain upon Advertisements and such way and manner as may appear to them most advantageous.<sup>104</sup>

Lamont evidently maintained a close relationship with Alexander Stewart and William Eccles in life, which meant he entrusted them to undertake the dispersal of his estate in Trinidad after his death. There was little requirement, however, as the family retained the majority of his interests.

Alan Karras' position that Scots in Jamaica found it difficult to repatriate West India property (i.e. land and slaves) to Scotland without long legal recourse was no doubt accurate for lower orders in need of a quick departure, although his pessimistic account did not consider the remittance of large fortunes by elite planters over many years.<sup>105</sup> The remittance of the Lamont fortune could indicate that fortunes were more easily realised and repatriated from third-phase colonies of the British West Indies, or simply that Lamont was an exceptional case. Whilst the extent of the fortune was remarkable, Lamont's personal holdings were also distinctive. His confirmation inventory of 1851 outlined the vast majority of the fortune (£71,000 or over 90%) was held in bank accounts, Exchequer bills and shares in banks.<sup>106</sup> Unlike many merchants of Glasgow, he held no industrial investments in Scotland. In other words, Lamont had extricated vast profits solely from one source: the sugar plantations of Trinidad. There is some suggestion that he was involved with shipping and latterly as a merchant in his own right but, in his own words, he was primarily an every-day planter. Thus, whilst it is conceivable that some of the fortune came from other sources, it is inconceivable that the majority did not come from the expropriation of slave labour. Where did the fortune go?

Following Lamont's death, the Crown raised a court case against the executors of his estate as they disputed that John Lamont's permanent place of domicile was Trinidad, which had implications for the level of legacy duty to be paid.<sup>107</sup> The resulting court case found in favour of the family and decided that Lamont had willingly cut ties with Scotland, not least because he was an 'illegitimate son [and] the domicile of origin was not marked by those family ties and associations which tend to give it so much weight and importance'.<sup>108</sup> The irony, then, is that the Lamonts of Knockdow – who likely shunned the eldest son born out of wedlock – received the bulk of the West India fortune as well as his landed estates in Scotland and the Caribbean which allowed them to improve their own status at home. John Lamont's moveable and heritable property passed directly to family members. He had previously supported his mother's family in Argyll and after death bequeathed to relatives 'of the name of Clark . . . the sums for which they have credit on my Guarantee in the Western Bank'.<sup>109</sup> Thus, Caribbean wealth allowed a lower order family to maintain an existence in the Highlands although Lamont prioritised his father's family and they received the majority of the fortune, particularly his brother, Alexander, and nephew, James Lamont. They

were also named residuary legatees of John Lamont's fortune and inherited two thirds of the fortune after all bequests and bills had been paid.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, the Caribbean's legacy to the Highlands did not end with emancipation in 1834. As late as 1861, sales of sugar, rum and molasses attracted profits of almost £5,000 which passed to Alexander Lamont.<sup>111</sup> At least some of the West India fortune was also recycled into Knockdow estate over successive generations, beginning in 1856 when Alexander Lamont added a two-storey tower to the mansion.

The dispersal of John Lamont's fortune in Scotland can be inferred from his brother's inventory on death. Alexander Lamont died in 1861 with moveable property valued at £26,674. Similar to the Glasgow plantocracy, he invested large sums in the rail infrastructure: Caledonian Railway Company (£4,000) and the North British Railway Company (£8,000). It is possible that some of the Lamont fortune was lost in the Western Bank collapse in 1857, as Alexander's estate seemed to receive dividends after his death.<sup>112</sup> As is typical in testamentary bequests, the family were the main beneficiaries of the wealth. On attaining the slave fortune, James Lamont retired from service in the 91st Argyllshire regiment of foot. In later life, he was a pioneering Arctic yachtsman and was Liberal MP for Buteshire in 1865–8.<sup>113</sup> His son, Sir Norman Lamont, was bequeathed over £50,000 and inherited Knockdow and the Trinidad estates. Although he was MP for Buteshire from 1905 until 1910, he resided permanently in Trinidad and authored various texts on the region. He was gored to death by a bull on Cedar Grove estate (by then known as Palmiste) in late 1949.

John Lamont's family origins and the source of his wealth have been obscured in modern representations. The inheritor of the family fortune, Sir Norman Lamont FSA, was a recognised expert on tropical agriculture and the Clan Lamont. He published widely on the Caribbean, Trinidad and family history, including *Life of a West Indian Planter One Hundred Years Ago* (Trinidad, 1936) which recounted the rise of John Lamont. This pamphlet—delivered as a lecture to the Trinidad Historical Society—seems to have been a classic example of family censorship. Norman Lamont did not mention that his great-uncle was illegitimate, a fact he was undoubtedly aware of. He was then in possession of (now seemingly lost) correspondence and redacted some quotes in order to infer that John Lamont was conceived in wedlock. It was said to be natural that he and his fifteen siblings should look 'overseas in search of fortune'. His duel in Trinidad around 1816—after being accused of rape—was portrayed as a matter of honour amongst gentlemen. The fortune itself was attributed to 'thrift, skill and industry'. The irony is that whilst Norman Lamont was uncomfortable with his great-uncle's illegitimacy, he did acknowledge that the family fortune was based on chattel slavery and compensation awards, although this could have hardly have been denied in front of a Trinidadian audience.<sup>114</sup> On 6 June 2016, the present author delivered a more accurate public lecture on John Lamont in Trinidad National Library (alongside Professor Selwyn Cudjoe, who discussed Lamont's friend, William Hardin Burnley). These public acknowledgements are

not invidious retribution or anachronistic judgements to expose slave owners and their gains, but nor are they a quest for exoneration. Historians of Scotland and the Caribbean have a duty to explain the exploitative opportunities and the flow of wealth from colony to metropole which assisted national development.

Whilst Norman Lamont consciously romanticised the family background, modern representations have also, perhaps unconsciously, indulged in glorious euphemisms that effectively obscure the brutal realities of Caribbean slavery. The built heritage associated with Lamont is extant today, although his historical connection with Benmore House was actually short. Alexander Lamont's son James, groomed to take over his uncle's estates, inherited Benmore and promptly sold it for £17,000. Subsequent lairds improved the mansion and adjoining estate. In 1862, the American owner Piers Patrick planted redwood trees to lay out an avenue that established the now world-famous Benmore Botanical Gardens. Today, Benmore House (with a tower added in 1862 and extension in 1874) is an outdoor pursuits centre. Lamont's activities have been glorified on the contemporary website: 'He found work as an apprentice overseer on a sugar plantation. *He must have applied himself well* [my italics], for within eight years he was able to buy his own plantation and went on to become a principle landowner and local dignitary on the island'.<sup>115</sup> The present article focuses on John Lamont's activities in Trinidad and reveals exactly what 'applying himself well' actually involved.

### Conclusion

John Lamont took full advantage of exploitative opportunities available to white European men in the British West Indies. Having left Argyll an illegitimate son of a servant woman, he accumulated wealth based on both landed and chattel property that would have propelled him into the ranks of the super-wealthy in Scotland had he returned. Lamont's fortune and associated status was established in Trinidad, however, and he chose to remain part of the plantocracy class on the island until his death. Whilst he died in the Caribbean, this narrative reveals the repatriation of capital, the improvement of one gentry family and ultimately their immediate locale in the southwest lower Highlands of Scotland.

A number of conclusions can be made. Firstly, Lamont's rapid trajectory from overseer to elite planter was certainly unrepresentative of the wider Scottish exodus to the West Indies. There are two dangers with this type of study. Firstly, it promotes the inaccurate assumption that great fortunes made by planters were commonplace and that they were easily repatriated home. Secondly, it emphasises a successful example of a Caribbean adventurer which infers that there was a major economic impact on Scotland. Much more research is required on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scottish regions which could illustrate the more common story of young Scotsmen dying penniless in the Caribbean. It is quite possible that the drain of labour was far more damaging than the rare flows of repatriated wealth

were beneficial. However, the unusual set of circumstances studied here do allow the historian to measure the profits from a successful planting career and how the Scots concerned repatriated them home. Boyden Lamont made a minimum profit of £26,000 in twenty years whilst John Lamont was worth at least £76,000 after forty-eight years in Trinidad. The extent of latter fortune is significant, but so are the details of where, when and how it was made. Lamont amassed a large-scale fortune in a period of perceived decline by personally supervising sugar estates in Trinidad, one of the newer colonies of the British West Indies. He was untypical in other ways too. Although he was from a gentry background, as an illegitimate son he received little or no support from his paternal family. He was, therefore, a colonial *nouveau riche* who acquired a fortune across an almost fifty-year career as an attorney, planter and overseer. Lamont's unusual emigrant *mentalité* contributed to the rise of great wealth: he spent a long period in Trinidad as a planter, personally supervising estates and accumulating annual profits. The property holdings and wealth facilitated prestigious appointments to local office and the management committee of the Presbyterian Church. Due to this prominent social status (and perhaps due to contemporary perceptions about the dishonourable nature of illegitimacy) he chose to remain in the West Indies. The sojourning mind-set is clearly of some importance to economic studies of Scotland and the Caribbean. However, the well-known importance of kinship ties means that even the few individuals who chose to remain in the West Indies after accumulating fortune – and it was so unusual in this case there were court proceedings over domicile status – means the wealth was still transmitted to Scotland.<sup>116</sup>

This study also reveals the transatlantic property transmission strategies of some elite planters. In a distinctively Scottish operation, they remitted capital to banks in Glasgow through bills of exchange. Once they acquired fortunes, they returned to Scotland to settle their affairs under the Scottish legal system which prevented disputes in the event of decease. In Lamont's case, the fortune purchased and improved a Highland estate and the wealth percolated down the family tree. In this one important aspect, John Lamont was typical. He may have died in harness in Trinidad but, based on reconciled kinship connections, his slavery fortune rested in Scotland like so many others. These almost invisible streams of capital will only be revealed by the empirical research of historians and the challenge remains to ascertain the collective impact they have had.

### Notes

1. *Cases Decided in the Court of Session, Teind Court, Court of Exchequer and House of Lords*, Vol. XIX, 1856–1857 (Edinburgh, 1857), 779–85.
2. *Ibid.*, 781–4.
3. Allan 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).

4. For recent studies see: Mario Varricchio (ed.), *Back to Caledonia: Scottish Homecomings from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (Edinburgh, 2012); Marjory Harper (ed.), *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600–2000* (Manchester, 2005).
5. R. H. Campbell, 'Scotland' in R. A. Cage (ed.), *The Scots Abroad: Labour, Capital, Enterprise, 1750–1914* (London, 1985), 7–8.
6. For example: Andrew Mackillop, 'The Highlands and the returning nabob: Sir Hector Munro of Novar, 1760–1807', in Harper (ed.), *Emigrant Homecomings*, 233–63; George McGilvary, 'Return of the Scottish Nabob, 1725–1833', in Varricchio (ed.), *Back to Caledonia*, 90–109; Eric Grant and Alastair Mutch, 'Indian wealth and agricultural improvement in Northern Scotland', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 35:1 (May 2015), 25–44.
7. Karras, *Sojourners*; Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World*.
8. Marjory Harper, *Emigration from North-East Scotland: Willing Exiles*, Vol.1 (Aberdeen, 1988), 29–30.
9. Douglas Hamilton, 'Patronage and Profit: Scottish networks in the British West Indies, c.1763–1807', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Aberdeen, 1999), 36–7.
10. For example, in a recent study of the family residences of a sample of Scots in Jamaica, Grenada and Carriacou at the end of Caribbean slavery, Argyll was the second most prominent location after Glasgow. See Stephen S. Mullen, 'The Glasgow West India Interest: Integration, collaboration and exploitation in the British Atlantic World, 1776–1846', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Glasgow, 2015), 209.
11. A. I. Macinnes, 'Landownership, land use and elite enterprise in Scottish Gaeldom: From clanship to Clearance in Argyllshire, 1688–1858', in J. Pan-Montojo and F. Pedersen (eds), *Communities in European History: Representations, Jurisdictions, Conflicts* (Pisa, 2007), 47–65.
12. Finlay McKichan, 'Lord Seaforth: Highland proprietor, Caribbean governor and slave owner', *Scottish Historical Review*, 90:2 (2011), 204–35.
13. David Alston, 'Very rapid and splendid fortunes? Highland Scots in Berbice (Guyana) in the early nineteenth century', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 63 (2002–2004), 217.
14. Alan Karras, 'The World of Alexander Johnston: The creolization of ambition, 1762–1787', *The Historical Journal*, 30:1 (1987), 53–76.
15. Mark Quintanilla, 'The World of Alexander Campbell: An eighteenth-century Grenadian planter', *Albion*, 35:2 (2003), 229–56.
16. Alston, 'Very rapid and splendid fortunes?', 208–36.
17. David Alston, 'You have only seen the fortunate few and draw conclusions accordingly': Behavioural economics and the paradox of Scottish emigration', in Angela McCarthy and John M. Mackenzie (eds), *Global Migrations: The Scottish Diaspora since 1600* (Edinburgh, 2016), 46–63.
18. Karras, *Sojourners*, 60.
19. Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World*, 195–216.
20. S. Karly Kehoe, 'From the Caribbean to the Scottish Highlands: Charitable enterprise in the Age of Improvement, c.1750–1820', *Rural History*, 27:1 (2015), 1–23. With thanks to Dr. Kehoe for a pre-publication reading of this article.
21. *Reports of Cases Decided in the Supreme Courts of Scotland, and in the House of Lords on Appeal from Scotland*, Vol. XXVIII (Edinburgh, 1856), 307.
22. Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland [NRS], Old Parish Register Births, Inverchaolain, 514/00 0010 0113, 8 February 1782.
23. Rosalind Mitchison and Leah Leneman, *Sexuality and Social Control: Scotland, 1660–1780* (Oxford, 1989), 140–4.

24. *Reports of Cases Decided in the Supreme Courts of Scotland*, XXVIII, 307.
25. It seems the original correspondence is lost, or at least is not held in Scottish or Trinidadian archives. Norman Lamont, 'Life of a West India planter one hundred years ago', *Public Lectures, Delivered under the Auspices of the Trinidad Historical Society during the Session, 1935–6* (Trinidad and Tobago, 1936), 15.
26. Lowell Ragatz, *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763–1833* (New York, 1928).
27. Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, Slaves* (Chicago, 2015), 126.
28. Kit Candlin, *The Last Caribbean Frontier, 1795–1815* (London, 2012).
29. 'Peace', *Caledonian Mercury*, 3 October 1795, 3.
30. Royal Bank correspondence suggested that the Glasgow–West India mercantile community—many of whom the bank provided credit to—were investing in Trinidad, although they expressed concern at what were regarded as high risk ventures. Joint agent of the bank Robert Scott Moncrieff stated 'I wish some of our young West Indians may not follow [in speculation]—A number of them I hear are buying Estates in Trinidad—I know not a more hazardous ruinous business—I would not take a complement of the best estate in the island'. Edinburgh, Royal Bank of Scotland Archives, Robert Scott Moncrieff Letters, RB/837/664, 24 May 1802.
31. Mullen, 'Glasgow–West India Interest', 205.
32. For example, a detailed plan of the Friendship estate in Savanetta was advertised in late 1806 in advance of a public auction in the Tontine Tavern in Glasgow. West India merchant Robert Dennistoun acted as selling agent. See 'A Valuable West India Estate', *Caledonian Mercury*, 22 December 1806, 1.
33. 'For Trinidad', *Glasgow Herald*, 18 May 1812, 3.
34. Ragatz, *Fall of the Planter Class*, 332–3.
35. 'Caledonian Mercury', *Caledonian Mercury*, 10 October 1801.
36. Richard Sheridan notes the large capital required to settle plantations which (using figures for Antigua and Jamaica) was between £3,000 and £11,000. See *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623–1775* (Kingston, 1994 edn), 264–5; House of Commons Parliamentary Papers [PP], 1837–38, 64, *Slavery Abolition Act. Account of the averages of sales in the colonies affected by the Slave Abolition Act*.
37. For a discussion of Scots passengers per ship to the Caribbean and the assumptions behind the estimates, see Hamilton, 'Patronage and Profit', 36–7.
38. A census in 1808 documented 31,478 persons on Trinidad. Of these, 2,476 were white: British (1,147), French (781), Spanish (459), Corsican (36), German (29) and others (24). The 'free people of colour' numbered 5,450, double the white population. There were also 1,635 Amerindians and 21,895 black enslaved people. See Eric Williams, *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (New York, 1962), 67–8.
39. PP 1826–27, 479, *Trinidad Negroes. Return to an address of the Honourable House of Commons, dated 12th June 1827; for extracts from the minutes of evidence taken by the committee of the council of Trinidad, for enquiring into the negro character*, 44–7.
40. London, The National Archives [TNA], T71/515, fo. 2024, Slave Registration 1828. This data has been sourced from digitised slave registers on the Ancestry.com website: *Slave Registers of former British Colonial Dependencies, 1813–1834*. The original data is from TNA, Office of Registry of Colonial Slaves and Slave Compensation Commission: Records, T71. As the digitised sources provide original references, I shall adopt this format in all subsequent notes.
41. John Law, *Maria Jones, Her History in Africa and in the West Indies* (Trinidad, 1851). For background to the publication, see Selwyn Cudjoe, *Beyond Boundaries*:

- The Intellectual Tradition of Trinidad and Tobago in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst MA, 2003), 98.
42. Brinsley Samaroo, 'Maria Jones of Africa, St. Vincent, and Trinidad' in Judith A. Byfield, LaRay Denzer and Anthea Morrison (eds), *Gendering the African Diaspora: Women, Culture, and Historical Change in the Caribbean and Nigerian Hinterland* (Bloomington IN, 2010), 34.
  43. The register of slaves for John Lamont's Cedar Grove estate in 1813 lists a thirty-year-old African slave from the Gold Coast named 'Mary Jones', a labourer on the plantation with her infant son Robert, aged three, who was born on Trinidad. It is possible this was the same Maria Jones. TNA, T71/501, Slave Registration, 1813, 21.
  44. John Law, *Maria Jones, Her History*, 1.
  45. A Free Mulatto, *An Address to the Right Hon. Earl Bathurst, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies relative to the Claims which the Coloured Population of Trinidad have . . .* (London, 1824), 97.
  46. TNA, CO 295/63, fos 52–3, Colonial Office Dispatches: Aug-Dec. 1824.
  47. A Free Mulatto, *An Address*, 97–8, 101.
  48. *Reports of Cases Decided in the Supreme Courts of Scotland*, 307.
  49. In 1813, John Lamont was described as a 'part owner' of Cedar Grove sugar estate in South Naparima with John Corrie. TNA, T71/501, fo. 21, Slave Registration 1813. Cedar Grove was known as Palmiste by 1938. See Hector McKechnie, *The Lamont Clan 1235–1935: Seven Centuries of Clan History from Record Evidence* (Edinburgh, 1938), 447.
  50. TNA, T71/508, fo. 114305, Slave Registration 1819.
  51. Norman Lamont, *An Inventory of the Lamont Papers, 123–1897* (Edinburgh, 1914), 439.
  52. TNA, T71/501, fos 2039–40, Slave Registration, 1822.
  53. For an account of the experimental development of Trinidad as a slave plantation economy under Spanish and British rule, and the inter-colony slave trade post-1797, see Gelien Matthews, 'Trinidad: A model colony for British slave trade abolition', *Parliamentary History*, 26, Supplement (2007), 84–96.
  54. For a discussion of the plantation slaves of Trinidad in this period, including family breakdown, job classifications and child mortality, see A. Meredith John, *The Plantation Slaves of Trinidad, 1783–1816: A Mathematical and Demographic Enquiry* (Cambridge, 1988).
  55. TNA, T71/512, fo. 2220, Slave Registration 1825.
  56. TNA, T71/512, fos 2220–23, Slave Registration 1825.
  57. PP 1826–27, 479, *Trinidad Negroes*, 47.
  58. *Ibid*, 47.
  59. Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, MS Gen 1717/4/A/15/68, Letter from Robt Stirling to Duncan MacFarlan, Trinidad, 22 June 1832.
  60. PP 1826–27, 479, *Trinidad Negroes*, 44–7.
  61. This quote is from a twentieth-century history which suggests there was once correspondence from John Lamont stored in Knockdow House. See McKechnie, *The Lamont Clan*, 436. There is a much redacted version of the quote in an article by Norman Lamont. See Lamont, 'Life of a West India planter', 15.
  62. Lamont, 'Life of a West India planter', 15.
  63. Lamont, *Inventory of the Lamont Papers*, 439.
  64. *Cases Decided in the Court of Session*, 780.
  65. NRS, RD5/376, 129–32, Register of Deeds, 3rd Series.
  66. *The Edinburgh Magazine and literary miscellany*, Vol. 94 (1824), 761.
  67. *Edinburgh Gazette*, 12–16 November 1824, 1.
  68. Glasgow, Glasgow City Archives, TD1683/1/1, 551/8, Abstract of the Glasgow West India Association, 1807–1833.

69. NRS, RD5/376, 129–32, Register of Deeds, 3rd Series.
70. *The Post Office Annual Directory for 1829–1830* (Glasgow, 1829), 70; *Glasgow Herald*, 1829–1834. See, for example, ‘Notice to Shippers and Passengers FOR TRINIDAD’, *Glasgow Herald*, 16 October 1829, 3.
71. Nicholas Draper, ‘The rise of a new planter class? Some countercurrents from British Guiana and Trinidad, 1807–33’, *Atlantic Studies*, 9:1 (2012), 70.
72. ‘John Lamont’, *Legacies of British Slaveownership website*, at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/28141> [Accessed on 24 November 2015].
73. Stephen Mullen, ‘A Glasgow–West India merchant house and the imperial dividend, 1779–1867’, *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 33:2 (2013), 196–233.
74. Lamont, ‘Life of a West India planter’, 22, 26; Selwyn R. Cudjoe, ‘Burnley, William Hardin (1780–1850)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [ODNB], at <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view/article/109518> [Accessed on 11 Dec 2016].
75. ‘Boyden Lamont’, *Legacies of British Slaveownership website*, at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/28929> [Accessed on 24 November 2015].
76. Steve Murdoch, ‘The Repatriation of capital to Scotland: A case study of seventeenth-century Dutch testaments and miscellaneous notarial instruments’, in Varricchio (ed.), *Back to Caledonia*, 36.
77. For a pessimistic view of the remittance of capital by executors in Jamaica, see Vincent Brown, *The Reapers Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge MA, 2008), 102–7. Similarly, Alan Karras outlined that when appointed executor of a small scale estate in Jamaica, Dr Alexander Johnston kept much of the proceeds himself. See Karras ‘The World of Alexander Johnston’, 70–1.
78. NRS, SC70/1/57, 294–7, Boyden Lamont’s Will and Inventory, 12 October 1838.
79. John McLaren, *The Law of Scotland in Relation to Wills and Succession*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1868), 73.
80. NRS, SC70/1/57, 294–7, Boyden Lamont’s Will and Inventory, 12 October 1838.
81. Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS20353, fo. 40, Journal of a voyage to & residence in Tobago, 1825–6.
82. Lionel M. Fraser, *History of Trinidad, from 1814 to 1839*, Vol. II (Trinidad, 1896), 336–7.
83. Carl C. Campbell, *Young Colonials: A Social History of Education in Trinidad and Tobago, 1834–1939* (Jamaica, 1996), 4–6, 56–8.
84. PP 1839, 35, *Negro Education, British Guiana and Trinidad. Copy of a report from C. J. Latrobe, Esq. on Negro education in British Guiana and Trinidad*, 26.
85. Lamont, ‘Life of a West India planter’, 24, 28.
86. *Cases Decided in the Court of Session*, 783.
87. The first mention of ‘John Lamont, merchant’, who had premises at 39 Nile Street in Glasgow, was in 1841. See *The Post-Office Glasgow Annual Directory* (Glasgow, 1841), 137.
88. *Reports of Cases Decided in the Supreme Courts of Scotland*, 307. For a study of the Western Club, see T. F. Donald, *The Western Club, 1825–1925* (Glasgow, 1924).
89. Donald, *The Western Club*, 23.
90. ‘Highland Estate for Sale’, *Glasgow Herald*, 25 September 1848.
91. *Cases Decided in the Court of Session*, 784.
92. McKechnie, *The Lamont Clan*, 441.
93. *Cases Decided in the Court of Session*, 781–4.
94. *San Fernando Gazette*, 23 November 1850.

95. Pat Hudson, 'Slavery, the slave trade and economic growth: a contribution to the debate', in Catherine Hall, Nick Draper and Keith McClelland (eds), *Emancipation and the Remaking of the British Imperial World* (Manchester, 2014), 40.
96. There are various papers associated with the plantations, although none relate to the slavery period. See Argyll Archives [AA], DR/8/8, Biggart, Baillie & Gifford, WS: Lamont of Knockdow Papers. Norman Lamont, the eventual inheritor of the plantations also left correspondence in the later nineteenth century. See National Library of Scotland, Acc. 10153, Sir Norman Lamont papers.
97. McKechnie, *The Lamont Clan*, 441.
98. William D. Rubinstein, *Who Were the Rich? A Biographical Directory of British Wealth-holders*, Vol. I, 1809–1839 (London, 2009), 13.
99. NRS, SC70/1/72, 656–661, Inventory of John Lamont, 5 May 1861.
100. William Beckford, the richest planter in Jamaica in 1774, left a total of £81,261. See Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, Slaves*, 19. George McGilvary's analysis of the inventories of 185 returned nabobs to Scotland between 1725 and 1833 noted that 42 left 'large fortunes' of over £70,000. See George McGilvary, 'Return of the Scottish Nabob, 1725–1833', in Varricchio (ed.), *Back to Caledonia*, 103. Moreover, of the 68 inventories identified for elite mercantile subscribers to the Glasgow–West India Association between 1807 and 1834, eleven left £70,000 or above. See Mullen, 'A Glasgow–West India Interest', 217.
101. *Cases Decided in the Court of Session*, 781.
102. McGilvary, 'Return of the Scottish Nabob', 94–5.
103. NRS, SC70/4/14, 901–2, Will of John Lamont, 5 May 1851.
104. *Ibid.*, 896–7.
105. Karras, *Sojourners*, 60.
106. John Lamont held a balance of £40,807 and capital stock of £23,256 in the Western Bank. He also held a balance of £1,986 and Exchequer Bills of £5,078 in the Union Bank. NRS, SC70/1/72, 655–8, Inventory of John Lamont, 5 May 1861.
107. Succession duty was paid at the rate of seven percent to the Treasury of Trinidad, whilst the Imperial Exchequer could demand ten percent. See Lamont, 'Life of a West India planter', 30.
108. *Cases Decided in the Court of Session*, 790.
109. NRS, SC70/4/14, 895, Will of John Lamont, 5 May 1851.
110. Alexander himself was bequeathed £8,000, his wife £4,000, and daughters £10,000 each. In total, Alexander's direct family members probably received over £50,000.
111. AA, DR8/8/8, Accounts and inventories of sugar from Trinidad and documents relating to Lamont's West Indian estates, 1861–1920.
112. AA, DR/8/10, Inventories of the Personal Estate of Alexander Lamont, 1862.
113. A. G. E. Jones, 'Lamont, Sir James, first baronet (1828–1913)', *ODNB*, at <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view/article/46828> [Accessed on 24 Nov 2015].
114. Lamont, 'Life of a West India planter'.
115. *Benmore Centre website*, at <http://benmorecentre.co.uk/about/of-interest> [Accessed on 11 December 2015].
116. Another Scot in the West Indies in the 1790s, Thomas Campbell, chose to remain in Grenada as he preferred the climate and found more work abroad. See Stephen Mullen, 'The Great Glasgow West India house of John Campbell, Senior and Co.', in T. M. Devine (ed.), *Recovering Scotland's Slavery Past. The Caribbean Connection* (Edinburgh, 2015).