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Rethinking Runaways in the British Atlantic World:
Britain, the Caribbean, West Africa and North America
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Abstract:

This essay utilises four case studies to explore the various causes, experiences and results of escape from slavery in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century British Atlantic World. These are: Johnny Beckles in Barbados, Jamie Montgomery in Scotland, Castle Slaves at Cape Coast Castle on the West African Gold Coast; and Harriet and Beverly Hemings in Virginia. This essay argues that while some sought escape from slavery and even their race, others sought sanctuary within slave society and even on plantations, while others used escape as a means of pressuring for changes in their lives and work as enslaved people.

Key words:

runaways

Barbados

Scotland

Cape Coast Castle

Virginia

What did it mean for an enslaved person to run away in the eighteenth-century? The answer may appear fairly obvious to historians of British North America. A good deal of excellent scholarship has focused on the advertisements placed in North American newspapers by slave-owners eager to recapture their property. The life experiences and the motivations of long-forgotten enslaved men, women and children speak loudly through the angry words of those who pursued them, and even the biases of slave-owners reveal a great deal about the identity and the agency of their human property. American historians have used runaway advertisements in order to develop our understanding of the nature of slavery and resistance in the slave-holding states, and the attempted journeys to freedom undertaken by a few of those held in bondage.¹

The surviving narratives of escaped slaves have enhanced our understanding of this journey from slavery to freedom. Harriet Tubman recalled that by running away she had ‘crossed the line’ from enslavement to freedom, while Frederick Douglass wrote of his transition from bondage to ‘free life’ as ‘a *free man*’ in the Northern states. Indeed, Tubman’s iconic status as a heroic bound woman who resisted her enslavement was recognised by Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew when he announced that her struggle for liberty made Tubman the most appropriate American woman to grace a newly designed \$20 bill.² Building on the words of these runaways and the newspaper advertisements placed by many thousands of runaway slave owners, historians have tended to present escape as ‘a dramatic form of resistance’ by means of which ‘many runaways were seeking personal freedom while some worked against the system of slavery itself.’³ Historians, myself included, have sought out examples of running away as embodying a resistance to slavery that pervaded and delineated the community of the

enslaved. In this light running away is an implicitly politicized act, a defiant assertion of individual liberty.

Yet freedom and liberty are necessarily abstract and historically contingent concepts, and what they meant and how they functioned two or three centuries ago in North America, in the Caribbean, in West Africa and in the British Isles may have varied considerably. Did all runaways seek to exchange bondage for liberty in the manner of Dougless and Tubman? By defining the quest for freedom as a rebellious political act, we may risk de-historicizing slavery and losing sight of enslavement as a remarkably malleable labor form, exercised, experienced and escaped in extraordinarily different ways across the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century British Atlantic World.

The history of the enslaved is much more than a story of the winners who resisted successfully in the manner of Douglass and Tubman and the losers who did not, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the history of runaways in the British Atlantic World. Running away from slavery was a more complicated and a more varied act than we have often realized, in part because slavery was a far more multifaceted form and experience of labor than we may have imagined.⁴

In this essay I will explore four case studies of runaway slaves in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century British Atlantic World, in order to illuminate the very different forms that running away might take, its varied causes, and the dramatically different objectives of those who ran. Not all sought freedom in the ways and terms that we might expect, and not all were resisting slavery in the manner that we might assume. I hope to deploy these disparate acts of running away to reveal how different racial slavery

could be in all of the places in which the British utilized it, and how different were the lives and experiences of the enslaved themselves.

* * *

Barbados

I shall begin with Barbados, England's first large-scale slave society, and the island on which modern, integrated plantations were first developed. The surviving records do not reveal when Johnny Beckles ran away from his Barbados master. He most likely eloped during the 1770s when still a teenager, and young and courageous enough to try to escape from – and into – perhaps the most densely populated plantation society in the Americas. For by the time that Beckles eloped, Barbadian integrated sugar plantations had been in place for well over a century, and the island had become a small and densely populated hell. Between 1627 and 1808 over 600,000 enslaved Africans disembarked on the island, over four times the number of enslaved Africans taken to the far larger Chesapeake colonies during the same period.⁵

Runaways were rarely a significant problem for Bajan planters. The small size of Barbados, the lack of suitable terrain for the development of Maroon communities and the difficulty of either leaving the island or remaining concealed all made long-term escape even more difficult than it would have been elsewhere in British America. Barbados was an island of only 166 square miles, smaller than the combined boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens in present-day New York City. There were no mountains, no forests and no significant caves on Barbados, nowhere in short for runaways to seek

permanent refuge. Escape off the island was all but impossible, and most of the enslaved who abandoned their posts did so only temporarily, absconding to see friends and family and to temporarily escape the back-breaking labour of sugar agriculture and manufacture. Masters rarely advertised for these short-term absentees, and appear to have accepted ‘petite marronage’ as a safety valve and a cost of business. Few indeed were the runaways who could escape altogether, and this knowledge must have made it even more difficult for the enslaved in Barbados to contemplate long-term escape.⁶

Johnny Beckles was different, however, for he sought to escape his owner and plantation forever. And, for what must have seemed like a lifetime, he succeeded, melting away into British America’s most densely populated plantation society. He ran away ‘many years before the storm of 1780,’ and was not recaptured until 1805. For at least a quarter-century, Johnny eluded his master, and the young slave who eloped when at the peak of his physical powers was about forty-five years old when he was finally recaptured. Johnny Beckles may have evaded capture for so long because although he was a runaway, he did not escape from plantation slavery to freedom, at least not in the way we might expect. When Johnny was finally discovered he was living in the slave quarters on the Pool Plantation in St. John Parish. The white man who discovered Johnny reported that ‘from the best information I can collect, [Beckles] has been living in the Pool Negro-yard’ for two or more decades, and possibly since the day he ran away.⁷

Why would an enslaved youth run away, permanently, from one plantation in order to take up residence on another? His goal appears not to have been liberty *per se*, although Beckles may have sought to escape from a particularly harsh master or overseer. Perhaps he sought a more permanent version of the temporary familial reunions of short-

term runaways, for it is possible that his closest family members were on the Pool Plantation, or perhaps in the years after his escape Beckles may have formed a family on the Pool Plantation. By this point Barbados was home to an increasingly creolised society in which slave births were finally beginning to outnumber slave deaths, and especially when compared with Jamaica or South Carolina fewer of Beckles' fellow slaves had been born in Africa.⁸ Consequently, the island's enslaved black majority were developing a more stable culture in which they sought to live and enjoy life as best they could. By the late-eighteenth century there was the potential to enjoy a materially, socially and culturally better life in Barbados than had been enjoyed by the enslaved of a half-century or a century earlier.

The advertisements placed by Bajan slave-owners eager to recapture their escaped slaves make clear that many believed the runaways to have secreted themselves on or near other plantations. When an enslaved mason named Gregory escaped from Joseph Best, the master concluded that the runaway was 'harboured by people of his own profession, and the watchmen in plantations.' Best's casual observation reveals the ways in which runaways might secure sanctuary and protection amongst friends, family and co-workers on other plantations. Ann Archer believed that her runaway Arch was 'harboured at the place of his late owner'; Mary and her daughter Bella-Ann were, their owner believed, harboured either on Perry's Estate or Joe's River Plantation, and eighteen-year old Bella-Ann managed to remain concealed for at least five months; Phibah, who was three months pregnant when she escaped, was thought by her owner to be 'harboured in the parish of St Philip' at one of several different estates including those owned or operated by John Serjeant, James Griffin, Samuel Batsan, or Mary Wiltshire.

While Alexander Purchase did not know where Phibah was, he was sure she was concealed on another plantation.⁹

Barbados newspapers contain many such assertions by owners of their belief that those who had escaped were ‘harboured’ or ‘concealed’ on other plantations. James Hackett re-advertised for two long-term runaways when he received new information about where they might be concealed. Phibba has likely runaway before, for Hackett’s initials were branded on each of her cheeks, yet she had been able to avoid recapture for at least fifteen years during which time she had raised several children, while Hazard had been absent for six months. Hackett had thought that Hazard had been ‘harboured by the Slaves belonging to the Estate of Col. John Jones, deceased, and Mrs. Elizabeth Bushell’. However,

from some late Intelligence, the Subscriber has been informed that the Woman and her Children, together with the Fellow, Hazard, are harboured by the Slaves belonging to the Estate called the Guinea, the Property of the Hon. George Walker, Esq.¹⁰

Even on a small island like Barbados, it was clearly possible for some long-term runaway to live on or near other plantations for extended periods, raising families and living life under slavery but in a location and with people of their own choosing.

Other Barbados runaway advertisements provide evidence that family members often provided refuge and a desired destination for enslaved runaways who sought longer term escape. Anthony, ‘a thin young man’ who bore his owner Thomas Hurst’s initials on his cheek, was supposed ‘to be harboured among his relations, and has been seen with them at the estate of Mr. Jacob Lewis’. Abel Hinds was unsure where twenty-nine-year-

old George had run to: a skilled musician, George might – his owner thought – be with his wife Jubah on Lancaster Plantation, with another wife in Speightstown; or with his mother Hester, another runaway thought to be with her daughters at yet another plantation. Gumm had come to Barbados from Grenada, and so was less familiar with his new home: when Gumm escaped his owner Samuel Scott thought it likely that the runaway would make his way to relatives ‘at the Belle Plantation, & another at the Pyne.’ William Butler believed it quite likely that forty-year –old Affey was secreted on the plantation of Sir William Fitzherbert, ‘as she has children by the black driver on said estate named Exeter’. This advertisement appeared regularly over the ensuing six-weeks, after which Affey was recaptured or Butler tired of the expense of advertising for her. Similarly Peter was ‘supposed to be harboured at Mr. John Roach’s, where he has a wife’.¹¹ Reunion with family members was a clear and persistent motive for escape, and slave owners were convinced that escapees could be successfully harboured and concealed on plantations, often for extended periods.

As property the enslaved could be stolen, and it is possible that an owner or overseer of Pool Plantation had colluded in Beckles’ escape from his owner. Was Beckles really able to remain in the slave quarters on Pool Plantation for more than a quarter-century without the knowledge of the plantation’s managers? A surprisingly large number of Caribbean runaway advertisements indicate an area or even a specific plantation on which the owner believed a runaway might be concealed. There could be any number of reasons for such white complicity in slave escape. For example, if Beckles did have close family, friends and community on the Pool Plantation, allowing him to remain present may have created a more stable family and community at his destination

whose other members were themselves less likely to escape, and thus less likely to disrupt the plantation economy. Or he may have brought a valuable skill. Beckles almost certainly lived the best years of his life on the Pool Plantation, and whether directly or indirectly the plantation's owners likely derived significant benefits from the presence of a slave they did not own, even he if he did not actually labour for them, or live and work independently from the slave quarters without their knowledge.

On occasion other Bajan owners of enslaved people who had absconded made clear that they believed that free blacks or whites had aided, were concealing or were illegally benefitting from the work of runaways. Pothenah had good reason to escape, given that her owner John Fayerman described her as bearing a permanent 'mark from the lash of a whip across her stomach, and two others on one of her sides'. Fayerman described Pothenah as 'an excellent good washer as well as field negro', and he related that the runaway was 'supposed to be employed by some free person' in the Scotland district of Barbados. When the carpenter Grigg eloped in the spring of 1783, the runaway's well-known carpentry skills, as well as 'some other reasons', led his owner John Moltsey to suspect a conspiracy. Moltsey believed that Grigg 'has been seduced by some ill-disposed person or other to absent' himself, be taken into custody, and then sold to the white or free black person with whom he had conspired. The advertisement ended with the offer of a significant reward of half Grigg's value to be awarded to anyone who 'can fairly prove that he has been, or shall be employed... by any white person, free negro, or mulatto'. Similarly Sam, who was African-born with filed teeth and who spoke 'broken English' escaped from his owner Sarah Gittens in 1789. He had run away from her at least once before, five years previously, and Gittens believed that Sam was both

'harboured and employed in St. Philip's parish at a place near the estate called Brancker's.'¹²

For Johnny Beckles, running away had not meant an escape from plantation slavery. Having successfully escaped from one master, Beckles quite possibly went on to do much the same kind of work on the Pool Plantation that he would have done under his legal owner. It is even possible that he may have been stung by the overseer's lash, been verbally and physically abused, and had his body weakened by the incredibly arduous work of planting, fertilising, harvesting and processing sugar cane. Alternatively, he may have succeeded in living in secret in or near the plantation's slave quarters while avoiding plantation labor, perhaps doing other work and perhaps even passing as a free man off the plantation, and contributing to family and the enslaved community in which he lived. Either way, Beckles had chosen the place and the community of enslaved in which he would live much and perhaps even most of his life. Perhaps his parents, and perhaps too a family that he then formed were on Pool Plantation. Thus Beckles did not run away from slavery, and he did not challenge the institution of slavery. He ran not from slavery to freedom as we usually understand it, but from his own enslavement to a liminal status within an enslaved community very similar to the one from which he had escaped.

Beith, Ayrshire, Scotland

Virginia-born Jamie Montgomery escaped from enslavement in Port Glasgow in south-western Scotland in late April of 1756. We know a great deal more about this case than many others because Montgomery's escape and eventual recapture resulted in a lawsuit which preserved the words of runaway and master alike. This will enable me to

recount his story in more detail and at greater length than is possible with most runaways.

Montgomery's owner, Robert Shedden, had lived and worked at the heart of the expanding tobacco frontier in western Virginia as one of an expanding cohort of Scottish merchants.¹³ Operating in Fredericksburg, the fast growing seat of Spotsylvania County on the Rappahannock River, Shedden had purchased the young enslaved teenaged boy named Jamie from Joseph Hawkins, one of the county's more successful planters, and a 'gentleman' and captain of the militia cavalry company.¹⁴ No record of Jamie or his family appears to have survived in Virginia, and we know of this transaction only because the original bill of sale – the legal proof of ownership – is today held by the National Archives of Scotland. Other documents in this archive confirm that Jamie was Virginia-born, and it appears likely that he was the son of an enslaved woman owned by Hawkins. Given the massive forced migration of enslaved Africans to Virginia during the mid-eighteenth century it is quite possible that one or even both of Jamie's parents had been born in Africa. We do not know exactly how old Jamie was, but he was most likely a young teenager, a boy who had grown up in a fairly large community of enslaved Africans working on the Spotsylvania County tobacco plantations of Joseph Hawkins.

It was not unusual for successful Scottish factors and merchants to purchase slaves who would undertake physical labour in their trading houses, but it was not for this reason that Shedden purchased Jamie. Instead Shedden had agreed to buy the young boy from Hawkins, send him him back to Scotland where he would be apprenticed to a joiner, and then bring the skilled slave back to Virginia and sell him back to Hawkins for the same price with a bonus of one thousand pounds of tobacco.¹⁵ Quite what prompted Hawkins to have this young slave boy sent to Scotland for this training is unclear:

perhaps Shedden had revealed that his younger sister Elizabeth was married to Robert Morrice, a skilled carpenter in their home town of Beith in Ayrshire.¹⁶

It is likely that Jamie had spent much of his childhood in the company of people whose skin was the same colour as his. His parents or others in this community would have told tales of their own earlier lives in West Africa, and perhaps some had related the horrors of the Middle Passage. Jamie would have shared the food, the developing language and the culture of the emerging African American community of Virginia. But Ayrshire was a long way from Virginia. How different a small town in Scotland must have seemed to a young African American boy torn from his family and community in Virginia? Arriving late in the year the short, dark days, the food, the language, the weather, and of course white Scottish society – everything must have seemed alien to Jamie. Midway between Paisley and Ardrossan, Beith was a small but growing town surrounded by arable and dairy farmland, and in 1759 the town was home to almost 700 adult parishioners eligible for examination for admission to communion in the local church. These included a wide number of skilled craftsmen including masons, saddlers, shoemakers, smiths, coopers and carpenters, and Jamie was settled into the household of Robert and Elizabeth Morrice where he began his apprenticeship.¹⁷

While Jamie was quite possibly the only dark-skinned person in Beith, there were in fact more people of African descent in eighteenth century Britain than we might expect. By the end of the eighteenth century Africans constituted Britain's largest non-white community, and one recent estimate suggests that by 1800 some ten thousand black people lived in London alone.¹⁸ Such numbers are no more than informed guesses, but it is clear that Africans lived, worked and died throughout Georgian Britain, not least

because many planters, merchants, ships' officers, doctors and even clergymen who returned from the Americas brought black slaves with them, often taking them to rural homes and estates. Ayrshire was no exception, given the coastal county's trading links with America and its popularity as a rural retreat amongst Glasgow merchants and factors.

Robert Shedden paid Robert Morrice £40 as Jamie's apprenticeship fee and a further two shillings per week for Jamie's bed, board and clothing.¹⁹ We do not know if Jamie was Morrice's only apprentice, or if he was one of several in a larger business, but he likely lived alongside, ate his meals and slept with Morrice's apprentices or his children. It would also appear that Jamie attended church with the Morrice family, along with most residents of Beith. This was quite likely the first time Jamie had been able to attend church regularly: Virginia had fewer than one hundred clergymen, and only one church per thousand white residents: it would not be until the evangelical revivals of the later eighteenth century that enslaved Africans would begin to enjoy easy access to Christian worship.²⁰

Two years into Jamie's apprenticeship his owner Robert Shedden returned home to Scotland. Having made a good deal of money in Virginia Shedden had purchased an estate near Beith, and shortly after his return the merchant married Elizabeth Simson.²¹ For reasons that are unclear, Shedden reclaimed his human property from Robert Morrice, and Jamie was brought into Shedden's household. Jamie's subordinate status was confirmed by Shedden's apparent decision to rename him 'Shanker', almost certainly a derogatory appellation, and to take him away from his professional training and his home with the Morrice family. Jamie would later assert that Shedden employed him:

in the most slavish and servile business, his only occupation being the sawing of wood, and other laborious works, which requiring neither skill nor ingenuity, but sinews and strength, were therefore judged proper for a Person of [his] complexion, and of his unusual strength and vigour.²²

Such language clearly implies that Jamie now thought of himself as a skilled craftsman, above and better than the menial manual labour expected of many enslaved African Americans. We do not know what prompted Shedden to take Jamie away from his work as an apprentice joiner and to treat the young man in this manner. It is unlikely to have been a cost-cutting measure, since Shedden had returned from Virginia a wealthy man, and was buying property, marrying, and establishing himself both as an Ayrshire gentleman, and a burgess and guild brother of Glasgow.²³ What is perhaps more likely is that upon his return to Scotland Shedden discovered that Jamie was growing into manhood away from the violent discipline of slave society, and that living, training, working and worshipping alongside white people, Jamie was beginning to think of himself as deserving of certain rights.

A further indication of this can be found in the fact that Jamie had been baptised by John Witherspoon, minister of the church in Beith. Shedden would later testify that Jamie 'got it into his Head, that by being baptized he would become free': this concerned Shedden, who claimed to have opposed the baptism because of 'the Fancies of Freedom which it might instill into his Slave.' Beith was Witherspoon's first parish, and he had been in post just five years when Jamie arrived. Witherspoon provided Jamie with some basic religious instruction, and in April 1756 the minister provided the young black man with a certificate testifying to the bearer's good Christian conduct.²⁴ It is interesting that

Witherspoon proved ready and willing to welcome Jamie into his congregation on nominally equal terms, and to give him a certificate that recognised his independent agency as a Christian believer. According to Shedden, Jamie was ‘over and over again told’ by Witherspoon that baptism ‘by no means freed him.’²⁵ Within a few years Witherspoon would himself become a slave-owner, and just as interested in protecting the rights of slave-owners as the rights of the enslaved. In 1766 Witherspoon moved to New Jersey in order to become President of the College of New Jersey (Princeton University), and he would become a leading Patriot and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. However, like many of his New Jersey neighbours Witherspoon owned slaves, and his estate included two enslaved people at his death. Indeed, in 1790 he voted against a plan for the gradual emancipation of slaves in New Jersey.²⁶

What happened next between Robert Shedden and Jamie must be pieced together from their surviving and often contradictory accounts in the National Records of Scotland. Robert Shedden’s brother Matthew, another Virginia merchant, was due to sail to Virginia in the spring of 1756, and Robert decided to honour his agreement with Joseph Hawkins and send Jamie back to Virginia, and in the process realise a profit on Jamie’s training as a joiner. According to Shedden, Jamie went willingly to the ship at Port Glasgow, having been promised a reunion with his parents. However, Jamie would later testify that he had been forcibly taken from his bed by Shedden, his brother James and two other men. With his hands tied, Jamie was tethered to a horse and dragged from Beith to Port Glasgow during the night and early morning hours, ‘not upon the King’s high way, but thro’ muirs or lonely places, and other by-roads.’ In Port Glasgow the Virginia-bound ship was not yet ready, and Jamie was imprisoned and guarded in the

home of Robert Hunter, a butcher. On the following day, the weakened Jamie prevailed upon his captors to allow him to walk along the quay, 'which was necessary for the recovery of his health.' Jamie seized the opportunity to escape, and made his way to Edinburgh.²⁷

Whether or not Jamie had gone willingly to Port Glasgow, once there he had no intention of returning to Virginia. It was a momentous decision for the young man, for running away from Shedden and asserting his freedom made it highly unlikely that he could safely return to Virginia and see his parents, siblings, family and community. During six years in Scotland Jamie had grown from a boy to young adult, and perhaps life, work and community in Scotland had become familiar and comfortable. He no doubt remembered Virginia's slave society, and apparently he had no desire to return to a land where he would be property, where he could do few of the things that he might do in Scotland. And so, while taking exercise along the docks as the ship readied to sail, Jamie ran away.

We know this because a few weeks later Jamie's irate owner placed a runaway slave advertisement in Glasgow and Edinburgh newspapers.

RUN Away from the Subscriber, living near Beith, Shire of Ayr, ONE NEGRO MAN, aged about 22 years, five feet and a half high or thereby. He is a Virginian born Slave, speaks pretty good English; he has been five years in this country, and has served sometimes with a joiner; he has a deep Scar above one of his eyes, occasioned by a stroke of a horse; he also has got with him a Certificate, which calls him Jamie Montgomerie, signed, John Witherspoone Minister. Whoever

takes up the said Run-away, and brings him home, or secures him, and gets notice to his master, shall have two guineas reward, besides all other charges paid by me

ROB. SHEDDEN²⁸

This was the first time that Jamie appeared in any kind of public document or record. His status as ‘a Virginian born Slave’ is made manifest by Shedden, who clearly felt no shame in asserting his right of ownership of another human being in the pages of one of Scotland’s leading newspapers. A good number of Scots owned slaves, or had interests in businesses concerned with the trade in goods produced by slaves, and at this point few if any Scots were interested in campaigning to end slavery. Shedden inadvertently revealed how acclimatised Jamie has become by revealing that he had lived in Scotland for five years, spoke English well, and had apprenticed with a joiner.

A particularly interesting feature of the advertisement is Shedden’s statement that Jamie carried with him the certificate given him by Witherspoon ‘which calls him Jamie Montgomery.’ The battle over ownership of a human being is played out in this short sentence. Shedden had renamed Jamie as ‘Shanker’, asserting complete control over the young man not only by the act of renaming but also by the use of a name not normally applied to people. Perhaps Shedden resented the fact that Jamie had appropriated a surname: at this point most slaves in Virginia were recorded in property lists, sales and other records with only a first name: a surname gave lineage and legal identity to those whose enslaved status made such individuality impossible. We do not know why Jamie had assumed the name Montgomery, although we do know that it was a fairly common surname in Ayrshire. Who helped or perhaps even inspired the young man enough for Jamie to want to share their surname? Perhaps it was Elizabeth Montgomerie, the young

wife of John Witherspoon, in whose home Jamie likely received instruction before his baptism?²⁹

Witherspoon's certificate was another point of contention between Shedden and Montgomery. These documents were sometimes given by ministers to parishioners who were moving, to be utilised in other parishes as evidence of good Christian standing. As such they were a kind of religious passport which documented religious citizenship. By giving Montgomery such a certificate, Witherspoon had – whether intentionally or not – authenticated Montgomery's growing sense that he was more than an enslaved piece of property.

But property is what Jamie Montgomery was, at least as far as Robert Shedden was concerned. With no sense of shame Shedden would later assert that he had 'paid *L. 56 Virginia Currency*' for Montgomery, as well as 'considerable Sums for his Apprentice Fee, his Board, Clothing, and the Expence of recovering him, &c.' Consequently, Shedden claimed the 'Right to retain him.' Jamie Montgomery was not, Shedden claimed, entitled to *Habeus Corpus*, 'for by *Magna Charta* only a Freeman is intitled thereto.'³⁰

Unfortunately for Montgomery, the generous reward of two guineas plus expenses offered for his capture proved too tempting. At the bottom of the original bill of sale for Jamie Montgomery John Braidwood, an officer of the Baillie Court, wrote a receipt for £2 2s on the 13th of May 1756, which was paid to him 'for apprehending one Negro Black boy named James Montgomerie' and lodging him in the Edinburgh tollbooth.³¹ How and why had Montgomery made his way to Edinburgh? We cannot know, but what we do know is that he had been able to make full use of his training, for

he had found sanctuary and employment as a journeyman joiner in Peter Wright's workshop. Montgomery's apprenticeship had given him a skill and a professional identity, and thus a means by which to subsist.

Jamie Montgomery's story did not end well. Shedden petitioned the Bailies to have Montgomery returned to him, but the Bailies allowed Robert Gray, the procurator fiscal of their court, to act for Montgomery.³² But the Edinburgh Tolbooth was an unsavoury and disease infested place, and Jamie Montgomery died before his case could be heard.

On the face of it Jamie Montgomery appears to fit the profile of many runaway slaves in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century United States. He ran from enslavement to freedom, seeking work and sanctuary in a society all but free of enslaved people. And yet his story is rather different from most eighteenth-century North American runaways. A runaway in America during the 1750s would most likely find sanctuary far from the place of his or her enslavement, amongst communities of African Americans. Anti-slavery and the Underground Railroad did not yet exist in North America, and an escaped slave would have had few prospects for work and an independent life. In the areas to which a runaway might migrate, working alongside white craftsmen as a free and equal man, full and equal church membership, and marriage into white society were all unlikely if not illegal.

By running away on the eve of his return voyage to Virginia, Jamie Montgomery knew that he was unlikely to ever again see his African American parents and family, and that he was eschewing the opportunity to find solace within African American society and culture. Some three and a half thousand miles from his native Virginia, Montgomery

sought something entirely different in Scotland. In the rolling hills of Ayrshire he had grown into manhood, and it would appear that his experiences as an apprentice in Robert Morris's workshop and in John Witherspoon's congregation had been sufficiently welcoming for Jamie to be able to imagine a better life for himself as a joiner in Scotland. Perhaps, like the Jamaican-born slave Joseph Knight some two decades later, Jamie Montgomery had met and hoped to marry a local woman, although there is no direct evidence for this in the surviving records. Certainly, other black people in eighteenth-century Britain were able to marry white people, from Equiano and James Albert Gronniosaw to Maria Sambo.³³

Perhaps Jamie had come to covet a life in Scotland that would have been impossible in Virginia, a life in which he might live, labour, worship and perhaps even marry into white society on the basis of the rough equality of working men. Undoubtedly he would have faced some racism and discrimination in Scotland, yet it appears that the attractions of personal independence as one of a small number of black people in Scotland were greater than the appeal of his black family and community in Virginia. Even the Scottish name of Montgomery may have been an affirmation of the independence and new identity that Jamie desired. In the deed of sale the young enslaved boy purchased by Shedden was – like so many of the enslaved – referred to by only a first name, Jamie. In the runaway slave advertisement that he placed in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, Shedden had refused to acknowledge Jamie's last name, referring simply to Witherspoon's certificate 'which calls him Jamie Montgomerie.' In the way he identified himself, Jamie Montgomery was at least as Scottish when he died as he had been Virginian when he was born.

Cape Coast Castle, the Gold Coast, West Africa

On occasion enslaved Africans ran away from their owners in groups, and my third case study involves one such incident. On 19th November 1785 over one hundred enslaved men, women and children ‘agreed among themselves to abscond’ from Cape Coast Castle, the British slave-trading headquarters on the Guinea Coast. When Governor James Morgue awoke he discovered that over half of his enslaved work force had disappeared: out of a total of 205 castle slaves, some 40 male slaves along with their wives and children had eloped.³⁴ The mass escape left the castle and its slave dungeons undermanned, and rarely can a British official on the West African have felt so vulnerable. Perched on the coast with tens of thousands of Africans living within a few hundred miles, and with his Dutch rivals fewer than ten miles away, the runaway slaves had left Britain’s greatest African trading entrepôt dangerously exposed. Instead of an optimum number of sixty healthy white Company officials, soldiers and workers and some two hundred castle slaves, Morgue was left with no more than a couple of dozen healthy white Company employees and soldiers, and fewer than one-hundred mainly infirm and elderly castle slaves. This force was not sufficient to protect the mighty British fort and the valuable trade goods and slaves within.

The castle slaves who ran away from Cape Coast Castle in November 1786 included men such as the bricklayer Quamino, the carpenter Aggin, and the cooper Cudjoe, women such as the ‘labouresses’ Ambah, Abbah and Cocoah, and children such as Accoah, Sagoah and Yan.³⁵ They acted within the context of British slaveholding on the Gold Coast, a hybrid institution that merged West African forms of slavery with

British understandings of both bound and free labor. As such the castle slaves were guaranteed some rights and privileges, including the payment of a maintenance stipend in trade goods, the right to trade these with local people, and the freedom to create families and households that were seldom interfered with by the British. In many ways they were employees as much as they were enslaved property, effectively receiving salaries: during 1785 the castle slaves in Cape Coast Castle were paid with over £1,600 worth of goods, a sum that was about one-fifth of the total paid as wages to all of the British officials, soldiers, craftsmen and laborers in the fort.³⁶

And it is as paid workers that we might begin to understand why this large group of slaves absconded in November 1785. They did not run away in order to escape their enslavement. Rather, they absconded in order to protest a change in their working and domestic arrangements, and to achieve a return to the status quo. More than anything else, this mass elopement represented a mass withholding of labor, a strike, and it was successful.

Their actions were prompted by the discovery of a large supply of shells on the seashore between Cape Coast Castle and Elmina. Shells could be used in the production of lime and thus the manufacture of cement and mortar for castle maintenance and construction. The shells were too far from Cape Coast Castle for female castle slaves to make the trip there and back on foot in one day, carrying the shells along the beach in large basins balanced upon their heads. Consequently, the castle surveyor had temporary shelters erected on the beach, and he instituted a shift system whereby twelve ‘laboresses’ and their children would spend a week on the beach preparing shells for shipment by boat to Cape Coast Castle, after which they would be relieved by another shift of laboresses

and children. However, this separation of mothers and children from fathers

did not suit the Men with whom they cohabited, they therefore on the following Sunday without making the least Complaint, agreed among themselves to abscond, and... having done all in their Power to prevail on the whole Body of the Slaves to follow them, they sett off to the Number of 40 Men, accompanied by their Women and Children.’³⁷

The slaves prepared carefully, selling and trading materials in the local community in order to procure gunpowder and arms to protect themselves (against local peoples, rather than against their British masters).³⁸

Within a few hours Governor Morgue and his officers were apprised of the location of the absent castle slaves, quite possibly by the runaways themselves. In fact the runaways welcomed British negotiators from Cape Coast Castle. Only the surveyor, whose plan had prompted their strike and desertion, felt sufficiently threatened that he remained within the castle while negotiations took place. For a month British officials traveled to and from the encampment of the absconded slaves, who ‘refused to return to their Duty, unless the Governor stipulated Terms with them, shortened their Hours of Work, and gave them a daily Allowance of Liquor.’ It was only after exerting significant pressure on local Africans, and particularly the company-paid caboceers or middle-men, that the runaways were persuaded to return, and only then when ‘a promise was given that they should not be punished’ and that the surveyor’s shell-collecting plan would be dropped. Not surprisingly, the governor justified his lengthy report to RAC officials in London by stating that his missive was intended to demonstrate ‘how unruly the slaves are grown from too great Lenity, and the necessity of making an Example to convince

them of their Dependence, which they now seem to doubt.' While the governor was enraged by his inability to enforce discipline among workers that the company owned, his and the company's weakness and the castle slaves' relative strength in determining the conditions of work and daily life were all too apparent, and none of the slaves were punished for absenting themselves from work for an extended period.³⁹

Running away as we have usually defined it would have made little sense to these castle slaves. Virtually all had been born in Senegambia or were descended from Senegambians, purchased by the British and brought some fifteen hundred miles to the Gold Coast. With very different culture, religion and language from the peoples of the Gold Coast, these castle slaves formed communities adjacent to the British forts and castles that were distinct from local West African societies. While relatively independent and enjoying the rights and liberties enjoyed by many of the enslaved who lived and worked in West Africa, the castle slaves remained anomalous and thus vulnerable. If a castle slave ran away he or she was a stranger far from home, and immediately vulnerable to kidnapping and sale for transport to the Americas. Since castle slaves helped feed, clean and exercise the thousands of poor souls who passed through the castle dungeons on their way to ships bound for the Americas, they knew enough to want to avoid this fate at all costs. For almost the entire history of the British transatlantic slave trade, castle slaves were protected from transport to the Americas, and only a small handful found guilty of capital crimes were sent westward across the Atlantic. Castle slavery thus afforded both rights and protection, and it was a form of bound labor familiar to West Africans. Those who lived and worked within this institution sought to shape and mold it

to their liking rather than to escape it. At this they were generally successful, much to the chagrin of British officials on the Gold Coast.⁴⁰

Three years later Governor Thomas Morris lamented that the castle slaves ‘have so far imbibed the Principles of Liberty (so much the Conversation now) as to be far above submitting to any Restrictions we may communicate to them...’⁴¹ During the height of the British transatlantic slave trade, the castle slaves upon whose labor this trade rested seldom sought to escape their enslavement. Instead, they regarded themselves as bound workers with rights and privileges, wholly different and separate from the enslaved bound for American plantations. Running away en masse was a form of labor negotiation rather than an attempt to escape from slavery to freedom.

Albermarle County, Virginia

In 1822 an enslaved brother and sister ran away from the Virginia plantation on which they had been born and raised. Beverly was a skilled craftsman and Harriet was a trained domestic slave with experience of working in a great plantation house, and both were in their early twenties. In his plantation account book their elderly master recorded the elopement: beside the name Beverly the planter wrote ‘run away’, while beside the name Harriet he wrote the single word ‘run.’⁴² Like most Virginia planters he was in the habit of placing runaway slave newspaper advertisements and even sending trusted slaves in pursuit of those who escaped from him, but Beverly and Harriet were among the fortunate few enslaved Africans who were not pursued and who were able to leave bondage behind them. With a white father, grandfather and great-grandfather, these enslaved Virginians were sufficiently light-skinned to be able to pass into white society,

whether in Virginia or elsewhere: the plantation manager later recalled that Harriet was ‘nearly as white as anybody, and really beautiful.’⁴³ This helps explain why they disappeared from their master’s records. It was probably the last time that he wrote down their names, and he would never again see them. Beverly and Harriet had run away.

Most of what we know about the lives of Beverly and Harriet after their elopement comes from their younger brother Madison’s short memoir, which he published a half-century later. Madison recalled that his older brother ‘went to Washington as a white man... [and] married a white woman in Maryland.’ Harriet also went to Washington DC, where she ‘married a white man in good standing... [and] raised a family of children.’ Beverly, Harriet and their children were never, Madison believed, ‘suspected of being tainted with African blood.’ They had run away from both slavery and their race. Yet the very existence of Madison’s memoir suggests that Harriet and Beverly remained in communication with enslaved family members.⁴⁴

It is common to think of running away as a defiantly individual act, an assertion of self-determination by a slave resisting definition as property. While Beverly’s and Harriet’s successful bid for freedom appears on the surface to fit this definition, the truth is rather more complicated. Beverly’s, Harriet’s and Madison’s owner was also their father, just as their maternal grandmother had been the property of the man who had fathered their mother. Although Beverly and Harriet were born and grew up as slaves, it appears very likely that running away was as much their owner’s and their enslaved mother’s plan as it was their own. Not only did their owner prepare them to elope by providing them with skills that would enable them to prosper, but he chose not to pursue them or to do anything to advertise their escape and provide for their recapture. In fact,

their owner provided his runaway children with new clothes and money on the eve of their departure, preparing them for the transition from enslavement to freedom. The plantation's manager, Edmund Bacon, would later recall that Harriet's flight was aided by the fact that 'by Mr. Jefferson's direction I paid her stage fare to Philadelphia, and gave her fifty dollars.'⁴⁵ Their mother, Sally Hemings, and their planter father Thomas Jefferson appear to have intended that their children would live most of their adult lives free, and had long planned for this very occasion. When Jefferson wrote 'run away' and 'run' by their names, he meant something altogether different from the elopement of many other enslaved people, for he was referring to the passage of his own children from dependence into independent adulthood, from enslaved African Americans to free white Americans.

Annette Gordon-Reed builds upon Madison Heming's brief memoir and a host of other sources to argue that Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson made an agreement about the fate of their children. The relationship between enslaved woman and owner began in Paris during Jefferson's residence as American ambassador to the Court of Louis XVI, and she was pregnant when he was recalled to the United States. According to Madison, Jefferson:

desired to bring my mother back to Virginia with him but she demurred. She was just beginning to understand the French language, and in France she was free, while if she returned to Virginia she would be re-enslaved. So she refused to return with him.⁴⁶

Only sixteen or seventeen years old, apparently Sally understood her situation perfectly. So too did Jefferson, who wanted to continue the relationship with the half-sister of his

late wife, and so he promised her ‘extraordinary privileges’ and ‘made a solemn pledge that her children should be freed at the age of twenty-one years.’⁴⁷

Which is more remarkable (assuming that Gordon Reed is correct), the fact that Jefferson promised Hemings that their children would be free, or that she believed him? Either way, Hemings’ son Madison believed that as a ‘consequence of his promise, on which she implicitly relied, she returned with him to Virginia.’⁴⁸ Their relationship would last for about thirty-seven years, and over the coming decades Jefferson did indeed prepare their children for adult lives as free men and women rather than as slaves. Sally’s children grew up ‘free from the dread of having to be slaves all our lives long,’ a knowledge that no doubt shaped their unusual identities. Beverly and his brothers Madison and Eston all worked as apprentices under their enslaved uncle John Hemings, a man whose great skill and craftsmanship was valued highly by Jefferson. Harriet was taught domestic crafts, for spinning, weaving and sewing were skills taught to many young white girls in Virginia as preparation for their work as wives and mothers.⁴⁹

Gordon-Reid suggests that Jefferson may have believed that his and Hemings’ children – who were only one-eighth black – had essentially become white, and that they were entitled to enjoy the full rights and citizenship of white Americans.⁵⁰ But Jefferson did not free them, perhaps because by this legal and public act he would have identified them as free blacks and perhaps even as his children. The status of free blacks would have defined and constrained Beverly and Harriet, and denied them the advantages of whiteness. However, if Beverly and Harriet ‘became free’ as Madison put it a half-century later, they could pass silently into white society. Beverly and Harriet were far from typical in their escape from enslavement in the early nineteenth century American

South, and we might even conclude that they should not be considered runaways. Yet their father was unable to fully escape from the mental world of slavery, and he drew on a fixed lexicon for the slaves on his plantations, which may help explain why he recorded that his son and daughter had ‘run’ away. Technically, legally, Jefferson was correct, and Beverly and Harriet remained his and then his heirs’ property, but a far more complicated truth was hidden beneath the familiar words ‘run away.’⁵¹

* * *

What did the running away of enslaved Africans mean in the late-eighteenth-century British Atlantic World? Legally it represented an illegal seizure of property, even if the property had, paradoxically, stolen themselves. But as the examples I have examined illustrate, running away could mean radically different things. These four instances of running away were hardly typical, yet each helps to reveal the extraordinarily diverse ways in which slavery worked and was experienced around the British Atlantic World, the range of possible motives for escape, and the varied objectives and experiences of those who eloped. Why people ran, what they ran from and what they ran to differed enormously. Although many runaways sought to escape enslavement and slave society others did not, and running away did not necessarily represent a defiant bid for freedom in the manner of Douglass or Tubman. The actions of some runaways were aimed at securing a place within a black community, whether enslaved or free. But in West Africa a slave who ran from his British masters might justifiably regard the neighboring black communities as anything but safe refuges, while Jamie Montgomery in

Scotland and Harriet and Beverly Hemings in Virginia regarded white communities as their sanctuaries, albeit in very different ways.

On both sides of the Atlantic, slavery's most essential characteristic as a form of bound labour was made clear in acts of running away that were all about the withdrawal of labour in order to pressure for changes in working conditions. Because slavery could operate in such dramatically different ways, running away from enslavement inevitably meant different things to enslaved and masters alike in these different places. Indeed, in places as different as West Africa and Barbados bound labour – and often slavery – was all but ubiquitous, and it was difficult for the enslaved to imagine living in anything other than a society of enslaved bound labourers. In Scotland, on the other hand, it may have been just as difficult for an enslaved African to imagine returning to slave society after living for years in a place where few were fully free and independent but virtually none were slaves.

In order to understand more fully the lives of the enslaved we must move beyond an assumption that early modern peoples all shared a reverence and desire for individual liberty as it was conceptualised by Enlightenment thinkers, and beyond a belief that slavery was experienced by all slaves at all times as a denial of the Enlightenment definition of freedom more than as an extremely coercive form of bound labour. This is not to say that enslaved people did not desire greater freedom in their lives, but rather that in different times and places the kind of liberty that a runaway sought could vary enormously. Perhaps it is time for us to abandon the very term 'runaway', with its connotations of law-breaking fugitives and deserters, people whose journey from bondage to freedom constituted an illicit assault against the legal property rights of slave

owners. Masters used a variety of terms to describe the actions of those who stole themselves away, including 'run away' and 'runaway', 'absented', 'eloped' and 'absconded', hinting at the complexity of motives and actions of those who had gone. But all of these are terms emanating from the assumptions of slave-owners who interpreted and categorized the actions of the enslaved according to a particular set of beliefs and values.

Perhaps we might think in terms of how trafficked people who escape bondage today often enter larger populations of refugee and migrant peoples, and many of them seek to disappear into the hidden economies of societies which are as threatening as they are liberating. Many who are enslaved in the western world have been trafficked across international borders, and if they are able to escape they are nonetheless illegal aliens, and so have little choice but to disappear into an extra-legal world of work, the so-called 'informal economy'.⁵² Immigration officers, police and law enforcement officials, courts and lawyers often treat people first and foremost as migrants, and pay less attention to the fact that some had been enslaved before successfully escaping their bondage. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and to an extent in the present) escapees from slavery were criminals, and the language describing 'runaways' is thus emblematic of a discourse created largely by slave-owners.

By focusing on the wide variety of reasons for, methods of and experiences and lives after escape, we can begin to learn more about the many different experiences of British enslavement of Africans in West Africa, the Caribbean, North America and the British Isles. Individuals' choice to remove themselves from a slave-owner and the site of their enslavement was an altogether larger and more complicated category of behaviour

that can be summarised by the owners' term 'running away', not least because many remained within plantation or slave society. In many ways enslavement can be a human experience that is directly opposed to belonging: an enslaved person cannot control their human environment for families and communities can easily be torn apart, and the only permanent sense of belonging an enslaved person could count on was inherent in the fact that they were owned by and belonged to another person.

We need to utilise runaway advertisements and accounts of those who escaped from their masters as a prism that can shed light on the extraordinary variety of experiences of enslavement in the British Atlantic World and beyond, and to acknowledge that running away meant many different things because the enslavement that men and women escaped from, and the societies in which they sought to take more control of their own lives, could vary so greatly. By escaping from this bondage, both in the past and the present, formerly enslaved people often seek to affirm membership in a family or community of their own choosing. Johnny Beckles did this without ever leaving Bajan plantation society, while Jamie Montgomery sought life and belonging within Scottish Presbyterian society as a skilled craftsman. Senegambian British-owned castle slaves on the West African Gold Coast had formed their own society between the British and local Fante and other West Africans, and sought not escape but a measure of control of their families and labour, for escape was all but impossible. Beverly and Harriet Hemings were able to pass from their race and enslaved status to membership of white society in the early American republic.

NOTES

¹ See, for example, Gerald W. Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Philip D. Morgan, 'Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture', *Slavery and Abolition* 6 (1985): 57-78; Sharon Salinger, 'To Serve Well and Faithfully': *Labor and Indentured Servants in Pennsylvania, 1682-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Billy G. Smith and Richard Wojtowicz, eds., *Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728-1790* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); David Waldstreicher, 'Reading the Runaways: Self Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic', *William and Mary Quarterly* 56 (1999): 243-72; Daniel E. Meaders, *Dead or Alive: Fugitive Slaves and White Indentured Servants Before 1830* (New York: Garland, 1993); Freddie L. Parker, *Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1775-1840* (New York: Garland, 1993); Graham Russell Hodges and Alan Edward Brown, eds., *Pretends to Be Free: Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey* (New York: Garland, 1994); Billy G. Smith, 'Runaway Slaves in the Mid-Atlantic Region During the Revolutionary Era', in *The Transforming Hand of Revolution: Reconsidering the American Revolution as a Social Movement*, ed. Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 199-230; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Billy G. Smith, 'Black Women Who Stole Themselves in Eighteenth-Century America', in *Inequality in Early America*, ed. Carla Gardina Pestana and Sharon V. Salinger (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999), 134-59; Jonathan Prude, 'To Look upon the 'Lower Sort': Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750-1800', *Journal of American History* 78 (1991): 124-59; Michael P. Johnson, 'Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799 to 1830', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d. ser., 38 (1981): 418-41.

² Sarah H. Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* (Auburn: W.J. Moses, 1869), 20; Frederick Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, From 1817 to 1882* (London: Christian Age Office, 1882), 165, 170; An Open Letter from Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew, 20 April 2016, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0436.aspx> (accessed 22 April 2016).

³ Johnson, 'Runaway Slaves', 418; Gad Heuman, 'Introduction,' Special Issue, Out of the House of Bondage: Runaways, Resistance and Marronage in Africa and the New World', *Slavery and Abolition*, 6 (1985): 2.

⁴ The best articulation of many of these ideas remains Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). I am grateful to Justin Roberts for several conversations about our developing understanding of slavery and labor history.

⁵ Statistics on the importation of slaves into Barbados are based on the 'estimates' function of *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade* database, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> (accessed 2 August 2015). Gad Heuman, 'Runaway slaves in nineteenth-century Barbados', *Slavery and Abolition*, 6 (1985): 95-111.

⁶ Heuman, 'Runaway slaves in nineteenth-century Barbados', 95-100.

⁷ *The Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette* (Bridgetown), 11 June 1805. See also Heuman, 'Runaway slaves in nineteenth-century Barbados', 104. Ted Maris-Wolf has recently made a similar argument for early nineteenth-century Virginia, suggesting that as the Dismal Swamp was developed with fields, roads and canals, members of its small maroon community began integrating into the enslaved and free black work force who performed much of the work of development. See Ted Maris-Wolf, 'Hidden in Plain Sight: Maroon Life and Labor in Virginia's Dismal Swamp', *Slavery & Abolition*, 34 (2013): 446-464.

⁸ A survey of over 3,112 slaves in Barbados in 1788 revealed that only 429 had been born in Africa. See Barry Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 116

⁹ 'Runaway from the Subscriber, a mulatto man named GREGORY,' *The Barbados Gazette or General Intelligencer* (Bridgetown), 13 October 1787, 2; 'RUN-AWAY from the Subscriber... Arch', *The Barbados Gazette or General Intelligencer* (Bridgetown), 17 December 1788, 2; Mary and Bella-Ann, *The Barbados Gazette or General Intelligencer* (Bridgetown), 31 December 1788, 1-2; *The Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 12 April 1788, 2; 'Run away from the Subscriber... Phibah', *The Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 19 July 1783, 3.

¹⁰ 'Absented themselves from the Subscriber... Phibba', *Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 22 September 1770, 3.

¹¹ 'ONE MOIDORE REWARD FOR TAKING ANTONY...' *The Barbados Gazette or General Intelligencer* (Bridgetown), 9 July 1788, 2; 'TEN POUNDS REWARD,, George,' *The Barbados Gazette or General Intelligencer* (Bridgetown), 30 August 1788, 2; 'Run away from the Subscriber... Gumm,' *The Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 28 August 1784, 2; 'A Reward of Two Moidores... Affey,' *The Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 1 September 1787, 2; 'Absented from the Subscriber's service... Peter,' *The Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 17 June 1788, 1.

¹² 'Five Pounds Reward... Pothenhah,' *The Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 21 August 1787, 1; 'Runaway from John Moltsey... Grigg', *The Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 3 May 1783, 3; 'Absented from the Subscriber... Sam,' *The Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 5 June 1784, 3; 'Absented himself from the Subscriber... Sam,' *The Barbados Mercury* (Bridgetown), 17 January 1789, 2.

¹³ Petition of Robert Shedden to the Lords of Council and Session, 9 August 1756, NRS, CS234/S/3/12. Some of Shedden's business dealings are revealed in the records of his estate following his death in 1759: see NRS, CC9/7/64/379.

¹⁴ William G. Scroggins, *Leaves of a Stunted Shrub, Volume 6: A Geanealogy of the Scrogin-Scroggins Family* (Cockeysville, Maryland: Nativa, 2009), 161. By the end of his life in 1770 Hawkins owned at least 'EIGHTY likely Virginia born SLAVES,' which his son advertised for sale in the *Virginia Gazette*.¹⁴ This advertisement extolled the virtues of the enslaved men, women and children who were for sale, paying particular attention to those who were most valuable including carpenters and a blacksmith. Skilled craftsmen could be worth twice as much as unskilled men. Hawkins' will makes clear that he had already established his son, also named Joseph, on his own plantation. Joseph Sr. left his slaves and household goods to his daughters Lucy and Sarah. Neither had yet married, and the sale of the slaves would have provided them with sizeable dowries. See

‘Will of Joseph Hawkins, 30 March 1769, *Spotsylvania County, VA RECORDS, 1761-1772, Will Book D*, (MF Reel 27), 525; ‘To be SOLD... by Joseph Hawkins,’ *Supplement to the Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg, Virginia), 26 April 1770, 1.

¹⁵ Shedden described this arrangement in *Memorial for Robert Sheddan of Morrice-hill, late Merchant in Glasgow* (9 July 1756), 2, Advocates Library, Session Papers, Campbell’s Collection, 1.

¹⁶ The family connection is revealed in various family trees, and in the documents concern Shedden’s estate following his death, NRS, CC9/7/64/57-60. In some documents Morrice’s name is spelled as Morris.

¹⁷ John Sinclair, *The Statistic Account of Scotland. Drawn from the Communications of the Ministers of the Different Parishes. Volume Eight* (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1793), 317, 320.

¹⁸ Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 82-3.

¹⁹ *Memorial for Robert Sheddan of Morrice-hill, late Merchant in Glasgow* (9 July 1756), 2, Advocates Library, Session Papers, Campbell’s Collection, 2.

²⁰ John M. Murrin, ‘Religion and Politics in America from the First Settlements to the Civil War,’ in Mark A. Noll and Luke E. Harlow, eds., *Religion and American Politics From the Colonial Period to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 41; Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, George M. Marsden, David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Christianity in America: A Handbook* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Lion Publishing, 1983), 76.

²¹ James Dobie, *Memoir of William Wilson of Crummock* (Edinburgh, privately printed, 1896), 69; James Paterson, *History of the County of Ayr, With a Genealogical Account of the Families of Ayrshire*, I, (Ayr: John Dick, 1847), 276.

²² *Memorial for James Montgomery – Sheddan [sic]; against Robert Sheddan* (23 July 1756), 1-2. Advocates Library, Session Papers, Campbell’s Collection, V).

²³ J.R. Anderson, ed., *The Burgesses and Guild Brethren of Glasgow, 1751-1846*, Scottish Record Society, Old Ser., vol. 66 (Edinburgh: J. Skinner and Company, 1935), 28.

²⁴ Deposition by Shedden, dated Morrishill, 22 June 1756, NRS, CS 234/S/3/12.

²⁵ *Memorial for Robert Sheddan of Morrice-hill, late Merchant in Glasgow* (9 July 1756) Advocates Library, Session Papers, Campbell’s Collection, 2.

²⁶ J. Walter McGinty, ‘An Animated Son of Liberty’: *A Life of John Witherspoon* (Bury St. Edmunds: Arena Books, 2012), 6-7; L. Gordon Tait, *The Piety of John Witherspoon: Pew, Pulpit, and Public Forum* (Louisville, Kentucky: Geneva Press, 2001), 46-7; Daniel W. Howe, ‘John Witherspoon and the Transatlantic Enlightenment,’ in Susan Manning and Francis D. Cogliano, eds., *The Atlantic Enlightenment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 63. Witherspoon was not, however, an enthusiastic supporter of racial slavery in America, and he believed that the institution was dying out in New Jersey.

²⁷ *Memorial for Robert Sheddan of Morrice-hill, late Merchant in Glasgow* (9 July 1756) Advocates Library, Session Papers, Campbell’s Collection, 2; *Memorial for James Montgomery – Sheddan [sic]; against Robert Sheddan* (23 July 1756), Advocates Library, Session Papers, Campbell’s Collection, V), 2-3.

²⁸ *The Glasgow Courant*, 3-10 May 1756, 3; *Glasgow Journal*, 3 May 1756, 3; *Edinburgh Evening Courant* (Edinburgh), 4 May 1756.

- ²⁹ J. Walter McGinty, *'An Animated Son of Liberty': A Life of John Witherspoon* (Bury St. Edmunds: Arena Books, 2012), 8.
- ³⁰ *Memorial for Robert Sheddan of Morrice-hill, late Merchant in Glasgow* (9 July 1756) Advocates Library, Session Papers, Campbell's Collection, 15,17.
- ³¹ Bill of Sale, 9 March 1750 and receipt, 13 May 1756, NRS CS 234/5/3/12.
- ³² *Memorial for James Montgomery – Sheddan [sic]; against Robert Sheddan* (23 July 1756), 16-17. Advocates Library, Session Papers, Campbell's Collection, V).
- ³³ Joseph Knight, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view/article/93749?docPos=1> , (accessed 2 May 2016). See, also, John Cairns, 'After Somerset: The Scottish Experience,' *The Journal of Legal History*, 33 (2012): 291-312. For more information about relationships and marriages between blacks and whites, see Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, *Black London: Life Before Emancipation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995); Norma Myers, *Reconstructing the Black Past: Blacks in Britain 1780-1830* (London: Frank Cass, 1996); James Walvin, *Black and White: The Negro and English Society* (London: Allen Lane, 1973); Folarin Shyllon, *Black People in Britain, 1555-1833* (London: Oxford University Press for Institute of Race Relations, 1977).
- ³⁴ The company 'Day Books for the final quarter of 1785 listed 97 male and 108 female castle slaves, 52 of whom were elderly, infirm or ill. See 'Day Book for the Months of October, November and December', Accounts: Day Books Cape Coast Castle, 1785, 22-30, Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading with Africa and Successors: Records, T 70/1049, 22-30.
- ³⁵ British officials did not identify any of the runaways by name, and these names are all drawn from the 'Day Book for the Months of October, November and December', Accounts: Day Books Cape Coast Castle, 1785, 22-30, Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading with Africa and Successors: Records, T 70/1049.
- ³⁶ Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading with Africa and Successors: Records, Ledgers, Cape Coast Castle, 67. 1 January 1785 - 31 December 1785, T70/779, 29, 32. See also Klas Rönnbäck, 'Waged Slavery – Incentivizing Unfree Labor at Cape Coast Castle in the Eighteenth Century,' *Slavery & Abolition* 37, 1 (2016), 73-93; Simon P. Newman, *A New World of Labor: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 139-65.
- ³⁷ Morgue to RAC, 124.
- ³⁸ St. Clair, *The Grand Slave Emporium*, 144-145.
- ³⁹ Morgue et al. to RAC, 124, 124-125. See also St. Clair, *The Grand Slave Emporium*, 144-145.
- ⁴⁰ Newman, *A New World of Labor*, 139-65; Ty M. Reese, 'Facilitating the Slave Trade: Company Slaves at Cape Coast Castle, 1750-1807,' *Slavery & Abolition* 31, 3 (2010), 363-77.
- ⁴¹ Copy of a Letter from Thomas Norris, Governor, Cape Coast Castle, 20th November 1788, Received 20th March 1789, Inward Letter Books, C, 1781-1799, T70/33, 194.
- ⁴² Thomas Jefferson, 'Roll of the negroes according to their ages. Albemarle,' *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book. With Commentary and Relevant Extracts From Other Writings*, ed. Edwin Morris Betts (Princeton: Princeton University Library, 1953), 130.
- ⁴³ Hamilton W. Pierson, *Jefferson at Monticello: The Private Life of Thomas Jefferson, From Entirely New Materials* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1862), 110.

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- ⁴⁴ 'Life among the Lowly, No. 1', *Pike County Republican* (Ohio), 13 March 1873. Reprinted as Appendix B in Annette Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 245-8. For the most detailed and persuasive examination of the relationship between Hemings, Jefferson and their children, see Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).
- ⁴⁵ Pierson, *Jefferson at Monticello*, 110.
- ⁴⁶ 'Life among the Lowly', in Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, 246.
- ⁴⁷ 'Life among the Lowly', in Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, 246.
- ⁴⁸ 'Life among the Lowly', in Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, 246.
- ⁴⁹ Gordon Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, 596-9.
- ⁵⁰ Jefferson to Francis C. Gray, Monticello, 4 March 1815, The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series 1. General Correspondence. 1651-1827, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib021963> (accessed 16 August 2015).
- ⁵¹ 'Life among the Lowly', in Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, 246. For a discussion of Jefferson's possible beliefs about the whiteness of Sally Hemings' children, see Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, 599-600.
- ⁵² See, for example, Kevin Bales, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Kate Manzo, 'Exploiting West Africa's Children: Trafficking, Slavery and Uneven Development', *Area* 37 (2005): 393-401; Jonathan Blagbrough, 'Child Domestic Labour: A Modern Form of Slavery,' *Children and Society*, 22 (2008): 179-90; Kathryn Farr, *Sex trafficking: The global market in women and children* (New York: Worth, 2005); Beth Herzfeld, 'Slavery and Gender: Women's Double Exploitation', *Gender & Development* 10 (2002): 50-55; Emily Camastra, 'Hazardous Child Labor as a Crime against Humanity: An Investigation into the Potential Role of the International Criminal Court in Prosecuting Hazardous Child Labor as Slavery', *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy*. 15 (2008): 335-357; Noelle Quénivet, 'The Dissonance between the United Nations Zero-Tolerance Policy and the Criminalisation of Sexual Offences on the International Level', *International Criminal Law Review*. 7 (2007): 657-76; Judith Resnik, 'Law's Migration: American Exceptionalism, Silent Dialogues, and Federalism's Multiple Ports of Entry', *The Yale Law Journal* 115 (2006): 1564-1670; Jan Blommaert, 'Investigating narrative inequality: African asylum seekers' stories in Belgium', *Discourse & Society*. 12 (2001): 413-49; Hans J. Ladegaard, 'The discourse of powerlessness and repression: Identity construction in domestic helper narratives', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 16 (2012): 450-82; Joel Quirk, *The Anti-Slavery Project: From the Slave Trade to Human Trafficking* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Almas Sayeed, 'Making Political Hay of Sex and Slavery: Kansas Conservatism, Feminism and the Global Regulation of Sexual Moralities', *Feminist Review* 83 (2006): 119-131; Christien van den Anker, *The Political Economy of New Slavery* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Stephanie A. Limoncelli, *The Politics of Trafficking: The First International Movement to Combat the Sexual Exploitation of Women* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Alain Testart, 'The Extent and Significance of Debt Slavery', *Revue Française de Sociologie*. 43, Supplement (2002): 173-204.