'All Likely Young Lads': Free Men of Colour, the defence of Jamaica, and subjecthood during the American War for Independence

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The American War for Independence provided opportunities across the British Americas for people of African descent to embrace military service as a means of enhancing their rights. In Jamaica wartime disagreements between imperial officials and the planter elite gave free men of colour an opportunity to lay claim to fairer treatment and the rights of subjecthood through military service. By examining a series of unique and unprecedented petitions and recruiting proclamations, this article reconstructs the creation of the *Jamaica Rangers* in 1782 and reveals how free men challenged the racial hierarchies of the island and coalesced politically a decade before scholars have previously recognised the emergence of community mobilisation.

Keywords: Free people of colour; military recruitment; Jamaica; subjecthood; American War for Independence

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Introduction

The American War for Independence provided opportunities across the British Americas for people of African descent to embrace military service as a means of enhancing their rights.[1] When France and Spain entered the conflict, the threat of defeat and in some cases conquest by the Franco-American alliance required imperial subjects – and the government that ruled them – to deliberate on the status and rights of non-white peoples within the empire who might help defend British rule of far-flung colonies. In regions where white Protestants were a minority, the British state began to respond to the claims by increasingly salient marginal constituencies that their role in the defence of the empire entitled them to just consideration and even equal treatment.

Documentary evidence from Jamaica – including a series of remarkable recruiting advertisements and an illuminating petition penned by free soldiers of colour – allows us to reconstruct how the island's free men of colour expressed their rights as militarily-capable subjects and how white officials responded to these claims for recognition with increasing sympathy. These sources are unique and comprise the earliest known recruiting proclamations aimed specifically at free people of colour in the British Atlantic World. They tell a complicated story of racial hierarchy in Jamaica and point to the ambiguities of such hierarchies for free men of colour. They also allow us to analyse the language of service and subjecthood for free people of colour at a critical time in Caribbean history, from both free peoples' and white perspectives. In the very heart of Britain's plantation complex – where the inequalities of empire were devastatingly obvious and unambiguously harsh – came some of the most remarkable innovations seen in the revolutionary Atlantic. In Jamaica, British officials and a small number of white planters acknowledged the value of black military service, establishing an alliance with free people of colour that resulted, in 1782, in the

creation of an unprecedented British provincial regiment composed entirely of free people of colour.

Jamaica was not the only site of radical innovation during the American war; nor did the recruitment of free men of colour originate in 1775. The Seven Years' War had witnessed efforts to recruit both enslaved and free men of colour – including from Jamaica (see below) – in a period that Maria Alessandra Bollettino has called 'a moment of experimentation'.[2] Moreover, during the American Revolution, some of the most provocative changes took place in St. Lucia – captured from the French in late 1778 – where local commanders such as General Edward Mathew could ignore the protests of French plantation owners over the issue of black recruitment. Mathew was instrumental in establishing the first permanent black regiment in the British West Indies.[3] Yet even when compared with contemporaneous developments, Jamaica's innovations may be regarded as unprecedented. The Jamaican case differed from that of St. Lucia in two respects: 1. It took place in the context of a British island with a representative assembly, and 2. It involved the active recruitment of free men – as opposed to the purchase of enslaved men as in St. Lucia. For these reasons, and because of the existence of sources that speak directly to the military recruitment of free men, the Jamaican case is worthy of examination. In fact, it offers a unique opportunity to understand multi-racial dialogue in the British West Indies.[4]

Jamaica's importance centres on quickly evolving definitions of subjecthood within the British empire. Subjecthood took on profound significance as Britons found themselves at the centre of a vast and multi-ethnic territorial empire after 1763. As white subjects attempted to circumscribe the limits of Britishness, the new peoples of the empire responded by deploying more expansive definitions of subjecthood to stake a claim in the new system. While there was rarely agreement on what rights subjecthood entailed, marginalised peoples understood their presence within the imperial system could be leveraged to demand

previously unobtainable privileges and fairer treatment. They understood that subjecthood consisted of reciprocal bonds of belonging between the sovereign and the subject and were keen to leverage this reciprocity to their much needed ends.[5] In Jamaica, free people of colour lacked many of the rights associated with British subjecthood, including the right to own, inherit, and dispose of property and to defend their rights in court or by voting, sitting on juries, or serving in representational assemblies.[6] Their ability to obtain these rights was also coming under increased pressure.[7] But the outbreak of the American rebellion challenged assumed notions of loyalty among transplanted white Anglo-Protestants. The demands of fighting a global war on multiple fronts increased the threat of invasion and gave free men of colour significant leverage as they negotiated subjecthood within the British Empire.

This essay examines how wartime conditions in Jamaica created opportunities for dialogue between imperial officials and free people of colour and engaged them in new debates on the nature of subjecthood. The importance of military service by free people of colour has been identified in previous scholarship, particularly in French and Spanish contexts.[8] The existence of recruiting broadsides aimed explicitly at free people of colour in the British Atlantic World is, however, unique and allows us to investigate in detail the language and rhetoric of appeals to and from men in a liminal position between whites and enslaved blacks. As free people of colour combined to declare their participation within the imperial project as a valuable and distinct set of subjects distinguished from their enslaved neighbours, they established themselves as a significant community within Jamaica meriting greater thought and consideration from white administrators.

The American War of Independence advanced this process in ways that have been neglected by historians, who have traditionally identified free coloured community cohesion as resulting from the French and Haitian revolutions.[9] The recruiting advertisements and the

petitions did not promise or secure full legal rights of subjecthood but they forced imperial officials to recognise the claims of free men of colour and, perhaps more significantly, helped establish free men of colour as a constituent community within the British Empire a decade before scholars have traditionally identified the beginning of this process. Much as it did in other corners and for other communities of the British Atlantic, the American Revolution presaged a fundamental change for free men of colour in Jamaica.

Free People of Colour and Revolutionary Jamaica

Free people of colour had long suffered legal restrictions that prevented them from participating in politics and limited their economic and social advancement. Their mixed heritage kept them legally distinct from white Jamaicans, from freed people of purely African ancestry, and from the enslaved majority. They were denied the franchise and barred from holding public office, and, due to restrictions on their employment, many were poor and worked as petty artisans, tradesmen, shopkeepers, tavern keepers, sailors, servants, and labourers in Kingston, Spanish Town, and the other urban centres of the island.[10] A 1733 law defined as white those free people of colour who were three generations removed from their African ancestor but this would take multiple generations to have an effect.

The dramatic growth of Jamaica's free coloured population over the course of the eighteenth century heightened elite white concerns about their status at the top of the island's social, economic, and racial hierarchy. Jamaica's population of free people of colour steadily increased from just over 1,000 in 1730 to more than 3,400 by 1762, and 7,065 by 1788, by which time they represented three per cent of the Jamaican population and almost one-third of the combined free population of people of both European and African descent, though enslaved people still outnumbered white by fifteen to one.[11]

Augmenting white Jamaicans' concerns about the growing free coloured population was what this growth signified to Britons about white Jamaicans' status within the empire. To many Britons the promiscuous mingling of whites and blacks against the backdrop of an enervating tropical climate and a brutal form of racial slavery combined to render Jamaica and other Caribbean islands as less than fully British.[12] White colonists in Jamaica responded to doubts concerning their Britishness by working to emphasise and protect the whiteness that they shared with metropolitan Britons. The island's ruling elite attempted to equate Britishness with whiteness by proscribing the paths that free Jamaicans of colour had previously pursued to assume the status and privileges of British subjects.[13]

The primary avenue to subjecthood were private privilege bills passed by the Assembly which exempted an individual from several and very occasionally all of the legal restrictions faced by free people of colour.[14] Daniel Livesay has identified roughly 700 such bills passed between 1733 and 1826. For the Assembly, bills provided a means of augmenting the numbers of settlers with political rights and resulted in a two-tiered population of free people of colour: those with special privileges – though usually without full rights – and those without.[15] Wealthy black and coloured women and their children constituted the vast majority of the recipients of such bills – each bill cost as much as three slaves to purchase – and they emphasised their education and Christianity and thus how different they were from both poor free people of colour and the enslaved.[16]

Even the relatively narrow route to subjectood that private privilege bills had offered was being foreclosed as an option by the late eighteenth century. An investigation performed at the request of the Assembly in 1761 revealed to Jamaican whites that the very small number of private privilege bills had helped to consolidate a system wherein free people of colour had inherited from white testators real and personal property worth £370,209 in island currency. At this point the Assembly moved to limit the amount of money and property that

free people of colour might inherit from whites, as well as requiring that they be four rather than three generations removed from an African ancestor before being eligible for the rights and privileges of British subjects. In the words of Daniel Livesay, 'the space of toleration in which [free people of colour] … operated was dwindling rapidly'. Scholars point to these laws as evidence of the rise of 'a new racial order in Jamaica' by the mid 1760s.[17]

The scope for poorer free men of colour to achieve some recognition of rights had been traditionally more limited than that for wealthy women and children and it had revolved predominantly around martial service.[18] Neither race nor enslavement had proved any significant barrier to the arming of free men of colour in the island's militia, or the temporary conscription of a few trusted enslaved men as military auxiliaries. In addition to serving in officially organised militia companies, for which they donned uniforms and attended regular drills, armed free people of colour served alongside whites and enslaved men in ad hoc units that pursued enslaved runaways and rebels in times of crisis.[19] In the wake of the wartime slave unrest of 1760 that historians know as Tacky's Revolt the island's Assembly renewed legislation requiring free men of colour to serve in the militia and to protect the island against slave rebellions.[20] More innovatively, it became commonplace for Jamaica to recruit men of African descent for offensive campaigns. At the behest of metropolitan officials, Jamaica had furnished Britain's expeditions against Spain during the War of Jenkins' Ear and the Seven Years' War with contingents of enslaved pioneers as well as corps of armed free men of colour.[21] These mid-century wars produced a legacy of increased reliance on recruits of African descent to sustain British authority across the Atlantic World.

Though the British state had made overtures to free men of colour before, the War for American Independence significantly altered the relationship between imperial officials, Jamaican planters, and free people of colour. The hardships produced by the war, the threat of foreign invasion after the entry of France and Spain into the conflict in 1778 and 1779, and

the poor relationship between the royal governor and the legislative assembly all combined to enhance the military potential of free men of colour. The recruiting proclamations and petitions produced during the war rested upon foundations for martial service established at mid-century, but they were given meaning by the American War for Independence.

The outbreak of the American rebellion was potentially disastrous for Jamaica. As Andrew O'Shaughnessy shows, in spite of a petition in favour of the American cause presented to George III in 1774, the primary interest of Jamaican planters was the continued economic connection with Britain. The war put this at risk. The profitability of sugar plantations in Jamaica fell by more than two-thirds during the war.[22] Planters were dependent upon the Royal Navy and British Army for security against both domestic insurrection and foreign invasion, as well as the protection of the shipping necessary for export of the island's produce and for the supply of foodstuffs essential for the survival of the enslaved population.[23] But these forces proved unable to defend planters against all that threatened them. The discovery in 1776 of a planned slave rebellion in Hanover parish made clear to white Jamaicans how vulnerable they were, and resulted in the torture and savage execution of suspected ringleaders as well as martial law, redeployment of defensive forces, and a temporary embargo on shipping.[24]

Environmental factors exacerbated Jamaica's wartime vulnerability. Hurricanes were devastating and could leave the island reliant on food imports. Such was the case after the Hurricane of 1780, which severely damaged the western portion of the island and began a cycle of five hurricanes in seven years. Some forty-two per cent of Jamaican estates were sold up for debt or taken out of operation between 1772 and 1791, in some measure due to the effects of these storms. The 1780 hurricane destabilised the social hierarchy as well as the economy. The vestry of Westmoreland stated in a letter to the military that the enslaved had

become ‘exceedingly turbulent & daring’ in the knowledge that many whites were dead and their magazines destroyed, increasing fears of slave rebellions.[25]

The entry of France into the war in 1778 transformed a colonial rebellion into a Caribbean and indeed global war. France challenged Britain’s customary naval supremacy in the West Indies and the interruption in trade brought some of the British islands to the brink of starvation. In the Leeward Islands in particular, severe food shortages, malnutrition and disease took the lives of many hundreds of enslaved Africans. Insufficient naval forces and regular troops spread far too thinly between the British islands left weakened colonists ill-defended and vulnerable to attack, a situation illustrated by the French capture of Dominica in September of 1778.[26] Although Britain captured St. Lucia three months later, the French regained the initiative in the middle of 1779 by capturing first St. Vincent and then Grenada, the latter the largest British producer of sugar after Jamaica. Spanish entry into the war in 1779 and then Dutch entry in 1780 broadened the Caribbean conflict still further. By 1781, Spanish forces were driving British garrisons from forts along the Gulf Coast, eventually taking Pensacola and all of West Florida by the spring of 1781.

As Britain lost more and more ground the larger British islands appeared increasingly imperilled. Jamaica endured three major invasion threats between 1778 and 1782. The first in August and September 1778 marked the entry of France into the war but it passed when Comte de D’Estaing’s French fleet deployed to North America in a failed effort to re-take Georgia, though not before Sir Henry Clinton had sent 4,000 reinforcements to Jamaica from New York. The second in August 1779 had been sparked by D’Estaing’s victory at the battle of Grenada (6 July) and involved five weeks of martial law that granted the governor command over the militia, established military jurisdiction over civil society, confiscated property including slaves, and cost as much as £20,000 per week. But these threats palled in insignificance to the threat in Spring 1782. The defeat of Cornwallis’ army at Yorktown in

October 1781 permitted French Admiral Comte de Grasse to turn his attention to the West Indies where he captured St. Kitts in February 1782 before preparing for an invasion of Jamaica in April. Defeat in North America had been disastrous, but by early 1782 the British faced a situation that was truly unthinkable – the loss of all of their territories in the Greater Caribbean.[27]

Jamaica's position was not helped by tensions between the Assembly and the royal governor, John Dalling. The defence of Jamaica was the responsibility of the Governor, working in conjunction with the island's Assembly. Dalling served as acting governor of Jamaica between 1772 and 1774 before becoming governor in the summer of 1777. Dalling, a serving army officer, had been resident on the island since 1762 and was married to Elizabeth Pinnock, the daughter of a prominent Jamaican planter, yet his deteriorating relationship with the Assembly made it difficult for him to secure funding and manpower for the island's defences.[28] The Assembly and Governor Dalling quarrelled over taxes, the constitution, the nature and extent of the powers of Councils of War, control of the island's militia, and – most controversially – Dalling's assault on Nicaragua, which ended in defeat, appallingly high casualties, and Dalling's eventual fall from power.[29]

Enlisting Free People of Colour

On Saturday 8 April 1780, a supplement to *The Royal Gazette* – the source of official communiqués on Jamaica – carried a novel and unprecedented advertisement. 'To the Free People of Colour throughout the Island of Jamaica' was a recruiting advertisement aimed solely at free men of colour and is the first known document of its kind in the British Atlantic World. It was intended to recruit a regiment for service in Nicaragua which, at that time, was making progress up the San Juan River to Lake Nicaragua. The advertisement was published almost every week for a three month period between April and July.[30] Two thousand copies

of the recruiting advertisement were printed as broadsides, although none of these appear to have survived.[31]

To create this regiment, imperial authorities drew free men into established processes of military recruitment, albeit with a racial twist. Having announced to its audience the potential for reaping 'the glory of an EXPEDITION', the advertisement's material benefits such as clothing, armaments, pay, subsistence, and prize money echoed those offered to white volunteers in Jamaica.[32] In emphasising the material benefits of military service, the writers appealed to a discourse of individual materialism common throughout British recruiting proclamations. It served to recognise the agency and interest of free people and situated them as human actors with whom dialogue was essential. But its title differentiated these recruits as a different class – people of colour – and deserving of the same material benefits as white volunteers.

Indeed, the materials benefits offered to free people were more advantageous than those offered to white recruits. The authors appear to have been seeking to learn from past difficulties by ensuring adequate material rewards for enlisting. William Henry Lyttelton, a former governor, had attributed free Jamaicans' pronounced lack of interest in serving in the 1762 expedition against Havana to the fact that 'most of them have beneficial Trades and find a Comfortable maintenance here with their Wives & families'.[33] Plans to recruit free people of colour in 1779 had initially proposed that since many free men were 'tradesmen' they should be granted four-month furloughs to continue their trades 'as an Inducement for Inlisting'.[34] When the recruiting advertisement appeared in the Spring of 1780, it included a £5 enlistment bounty that did not appear in any of the surviving materials related to white volunteers.[35] Concern with the remuneration offered to free men continued as they were deployed to Nicaragua. Officers on the expedition were warned to 'use them gently, and promise after the first service is over that they shall be employed in their own Line … they

must be kindly treated for fear that we should not be able to raise more'.[36] Officers also encouraged the issue of rewards of sugar, coffee, cheese and tobacco, 'particularly [to] the Black People, to exert themselves in carrying on the public Service'.[37]

'To the Free People of Colour throughout the Island of Jamaica' was part of an emerging dialogue between free people of colour and British officials on the island. By 1780, free people of colour had already begun to capitalise on white inertia by increasing their martial contributions. While every able-bodied white or free coloured male between the ages of fifteen and sixty was required to serve in the militia, the numbers embodied fluctuated wildly. Free men of colour constituted a growing proportion of the Jamaican militia: between 1778 and 1783, the number of white militiamen fell from 6,132 to 5,500 while the number of free soldiers of colour rose from 1,478 to around 2,500.[38] Increasingly, free men served at higher rates than did white men; less than a quarter of the free population, free people of colour comprised almost a third of Jamaica's 7,600-strong militia in 1778.[39] Moreover, the island's free soldiers earned a reputation for being steadfast and skilled. One observer remarked in 1778 that the Westmoreland militia – which included a newly-formed company of 'Brown infantry' – was 'well arm'd & accouter'd and equal in point of Discipline to any Regulars on the Island'.[40]

Responding to the activities and service of these free men of colour some British officials and a few white Jamaicans became convinced of the reliability, the military utility, and the overall necessity of Jamaican free soldiers of colour. William Henry Ricketts, a planter from Westmoreland, served as Captain of the 'Brown infantry' militia unit raised in 1778. Ricketts petitioned the Assembly in October 1778, commending his militiamen for the 'extraordinary alertness of their military manoeuvres' and suggesting that they be formed into a regiment of the British Army 'and put under British pay, and the discipline of regular troops'.[41] British officers concurred, suggesting that the island's coloured militiamen, who by

1778 ‘were in general excellent, & only wanted good officers’, were in even better shape by 1783.[42] These men began to think about converting some of these militia companies into a provincial army regiment composed solely of free men of colour. Provincial units, unlike the militia, consisted of full-time paid soldiers. They were not permanent formations and were recruited by short-term enlistments, often of two to five years, but they were disciplined like the regulars and, crucially, fell under the Governor’s authority rather than that of the Jamaican Assembly. Military officials preferred provincial to militia soldiers both because they considered them to be more reliable and because, unlike militiamen, they could be deployed off the island.[43]

In May 1779, Ricketts and his fellow militia officers William Lewis and Nathaniel Beckford secured Dalling’s support for the creation of a regiment of free men of colour, but the proposal faced substantial opposition from Jamaica’s planters.[44] Significant recruitment had already begun when orders arrived from London calling a halt to the plans. The abortive Jamaican slave rebellion of 1776, the weakening of plantation slavery in North America, and the difficulties Britain faced in defending Jamaica were compounded by Jamaican planters’ profound dislike of Dalling, making Jamaican planters and absentees in Britain even more wary than usual of the recruitment of free men of colour. The West India lobby and their London agent Stephen Fuller argued that planter opposition was ‘unanimous’ and convinced Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to call a halt to the project.[45] Fuller couched this opposition in the racialised view that free people of colour were ‘the most idle, debauched distempered, profligate Wretches upon Earth’ and ‘little to be depended upon’. He concluded that ‘the free Negroes and Mulattoes are not to be trusted in Corps composed of themselves alone’, and the racism of Jamaican whites meant that an integrated force ‘will not be endured’.[46] Germain, aware that the alienation of colonial assemblies had already sparked open rebellion in North America, conceded to Fuller’s arguments.

This defeat did not last long, however, and Dalling soon rehabilitated the scheme to support his Nicaraguan venture, which led to the advertisement in *The Royal Gazette*.[47] Planter opposition remained strong. White Jamaicans' opposition to the regiment of free men of colour may have been as much about the fear of losing control over the island's labour as it was the product of racial antipathy.[48] The loss of free men deprived the island of skilled labour while it also appeared to encourage the escape of enslaved men and women who were eager to associate themselves with this new military unit. Runaway advertisements in the island's newspapers included reports of enslaved men who had escaped and, perhaps due to their own mixed heritage, passed as free men in order to join the expedition. An enslaved boy named George King was suspected by his master Jacob De Castro of 'going on the Expedition'. Another, named Jack but passing as free with the name John Tucker, had 'been enlisted in Kingston since he absconded, and carried down to the Musquito-Shore'.[49] In the minds of white planters, military service provided a new and dangerous means by which members of the enslaved labour force could escape their bondage. But the planters were unable to end the policy completely given Germain's support for Dalling's expedition. It was only the near destruction of the army on the San Juan River and Dalling's removal from office in late 1781 that spelled the end of enlistment.

Dalling's replacement was the Lieutenant Governor, Archibald Campbell of Inverneil. Campbell proved the inverse of Dalling; whereas Dalling had been an unpopular failure, Campbell was an effective and popular military governor.[50] He brought with him to Jamaica not just a good military record but also more experience than many senior British officers of the utility of free coloured and enslaved black people in wartime, including as combatants. Campbell had witnessed the contribution that such soldiers had made to the British conquest of Guadeloupe during the Seven Years' War, and he clearly had this precedent in mind at the onset of the American War when he penned a long letter to Lord Germain suggesting that by

raising a large body of 'stout active Negroes' from the sugar islands Britain might quickly crush the American rebellion and inspire the desertion of significant numbers of American-owned slaves.[51]

Campbell was far from an opponent of slavery and he saw it as his duty to protect Britain's empire and property, including the enslaved people owned by British subjects. But he recognised the significant role that free men, and perhaps even enslaved men might play in this conflict. Moreover, Campbell knew all too well how many British soldiers died or were incapacitated by diseases following their arrival in the Caribbean, and he was persuaded that the deployment of creolised coloured troops 'will be attended with many advantages to His Majesty's service, by saving the lives of Regulars'.[52] As a result of his experience of warfare in the West Indies Campbell was one of a number of senior British military officers who were prepared to go beyond the recruitment and mobilisation of free coloured militiamen to elevating them into the British Army.

Successful recruitment of colonial soldiers generally required a careful balancing act between recruits, military leaders, and local colonial officials. Unlike his predecessor, Campbell was able to combine military expertise with political skill and formalise good relations with the Assembly and planters. After being sworn in Campbell gave a conciliatory speech and he continued to work with, rather than against, the island's ruling class. He ensured that the Assembly passed laws to revive the militia and eradicate their 'habits of Indolence'.[53] His approach worked, and Campbell delightedly reported to Lord Germain that 'From these marks of Harmony, and the good Temper of the Assembly towards me, I am in hopes I shall enjoy ease and Satisfaction in my Government'.[54]

Free Peoples' Claims

Campbell's rapprochement with the Assembly was not a panacea and, as the war dragged on, the hardships of the war and the threat of invasion only increased. If 1779 and 1780 had seen determined resistance to the idea of regimenting free people of colour outside of the militia, the period between October 1780 and April 1782 brought with it devastation in the form of a series of massive hurricanes and the 1782 invasion scare as the defeat in North America freed up French forces for a descent on Jamaica. Just as free men of colour had capitalised on the deadlock between Dalling and the Assembly to increase the value of their martial service, so too did they recognise the opportunities for collective bargaining that these dangers entailed.

Bargaining was all the more crucial in light of the Hurricane of 1780 which left thousands dead and 'the external face of the earth, so much alter'd'. Thomas Thistlewood reported that in the west of the island people were staring famine 'full in the face'.[55] The disaster was compounded by the uneven distribution of public relief to people of colour. On 16 April 1782, Campbell presented the Assembly with the petition of 'the brown infantry, and the other people of colour, of the parish of Westmoreland' which he recommended to the attention of the assemblymen. Again it was military service that provided the basis of free men's appeal to island authorities. The petition's authors vehemently protested the 'contemptuous manner, aggravated by insult' with which they had been treated by officials and demanded the respect and support they felt was their due as loyal guardians of the island.[56] Britain's Parliament had provided Jamaica with £40,000 to be distributed by local officials to those inhabitants who had already faced famine as a result of wartime disruptions of trade.[57] According to free men of colour, however, Jamaican officials had privileged the white population, allegedly declaring that 'the mulattoes were not to have anything'.[58] Westmoreland's free militiamen found particularly galling the fact that they were denied access to 'the shoes sent down by his excellency governor Dalling, for the use of those troops that were at head-quarters, in 1779', which they understood to be 'a present from his most

excellent majesty (out of his privy purse) for the militia'. Westmoreland's 'Brown infantry', acting as representatives of 'the other people of colour, of the parish', appealed directly to Campbell for relief from officials' discourtesy and scorn.[59]

The 1782 petitioners made clear that the military service of free men was contingent upon fair treatment. They emphasised the 'zeal and loyalty' with which they had guarded Jamaica from impending invasion, noting their willingness 'to hazard their lives in defence of the island' and the 'considerable expense' they had borne in order to do so. The petitioners informed Campbell that they had 'lost all' as a result of the hurricane and now found themselves 'destitute of the means to equip themselves with the proper and necessary apparel' of militiamen. They then intimated that without governmental assistance, they would be unable to abide by their 'orders to hold themselves in readiness to march', which would imperil the island just as it faced the threat of invasion from France and Spain. The petitioners contended that their martial service 'should have intitled them to some relief from the parliamentary donation' and warned that without such relief and without the recognition that they were deserving of such aid, their military service 'on which the safety of the island depends' would not be forthcoming.[60]

Free people of colour deployed various rhetorical strategies to at once integrate themselves with white British subjects and distinguish themselves from them. They underscored their devotion to both Jamaica and the British Empire as a whole, proclaiming that 'none exceeds them in loyalty and attachment to his most excellent majesty and government'. At the same time, the 'Brown infantry' contrasted their honourable and steadfast fidelity with the alleged corruption and moral degradation of Jamaica's white officials who had allotted aid to 'some few favourite women of colour' but had afforded nothing to the men of colour upon whom the security of the island depended.[61] The petitioners implied that the island's white commissioners had put their private sexual desires

before the public good, thereby undermining Britain's hold on its most lucrative colony. This was an astute appeal to Britons increasingly concerned about the undermining of white British identity in the Caribbean through miscegenation, but this time the appeal was made on their own behalf by the very products of such liaisons, namely free men of colour. As Brooke Newman has demonstrated, Britons believed that white Jamaican men's sexual relations with black and coloured women was 'a font of contagion responsible for polluting British national identity and destabilising its real and symbolic power on the world stage'.[62] The 1782 petition makes clear that free men of colour were familiar with these concerns and employed them to impugn the island's white elite and to present themselves as suitable replacements for those white colonists in whom imperial officials had lost confidence. With their 1782 petition the 'Brown infantry' of Westmoreland claimed that they and the larger community of people of colour that they represented were the principled, faithful, and reliable subjects that the British Empire so desperately needed to ensure that Jamaica remained British.

In all of this, the petitioners followed the general format of petitions in this era, including assertions of loyalty, an outline of their contributions to the island, and a specific set of grievances they expected to be addressed. Claims to subjecthood were primarily made through petitioning, which was a crucial right of all non-enslaved subjects regardless of the rights to which they were entitled. They operated at two levels: first, as a declaration of loyalty in anticipation of future privileges and, second, as a means of establishing co-equal status with other subject peoples throughout the empire.[63] This was a period in which petitioning was 'omnipresent' as subjects from Canada and the Caribbean to Minorca and South Asia sought to stake a claim in the empire. As Hannah Weiss Muller has demonstrated, the inheritance of a vastly expanded territorial empire replete with new and diverse peoples after 1763 was met by efforts to expand definitions of subjecthood in ways that challenged the ethnic exclusivity of the 'rights of Englishmen'.[64] By appealing for redress in this fashion

the free men were implicitly asserting their right to be acknowledged and treated as British subjects, echoing similar appeals by myriad subjects spread across the empire.

This was not the first time free men had petitioned to advance their status in Jamaica on the basis of military service. In April 1761, five 'free mulattoes and negroes' informed the Jamaica Assembly that they had spent four months serving alongside some fifty other free coloured soldiers under Captain William Hynes's command until the 'negroes, then in rebellion . . . were totally reduced and taken'. They bemoaned the fact that their 'long absence . . . from their own private affairs' had resulted in 'great loss', such that they found themselves 'now reduced to the lowest state of poverty'.[65] By petitioning Jamaica's free men of colour utilized a common form of political declaration that bound them to the imperial project. But in 1761, with slave unrest all but suppressed and unprecedented numbers of naval vessels and regular soldiers stationed in the Caribbean, the Jamaican Assembly was confident enough to ignore the petition and it came to nothing.[66]

By 1782, however, such confidence had evaporated and, as they called upon greater demonstrations of martial skill from free people of colour, Jamaica's officials were forced to confront the fact that free people understood the reciprocal nature of loyalty and subjecthood and could deploy sophisticated and multilevel petitions into order to advance their rights. The claims advanced by the 'Brown Infantry' struck a chord with British officials and provided them with a weapon to wield as they worked to expand the militarisation of the island's free men. The adjutant general of Jamaica, Alexander Dirom, who was a key ally of Campbell and later served under him in India, was sympathetic to the plight of free people and argued that 'Justice, and a due Regard to the Rights of Mankind' dictated that men who risked their lives for their country, to the detriment of their own trades, should be 'amply' provided for.[67]

With the petition of the 'Brown Infantry' in hand, Campbell began to position himself for a decisive assault on planter resistance to regimenting free men of colour. At the

beginning of March 1782, he requested that the Assembly consider the recruitment of enslaved men into the military. Campbell was well aware that the recruitment of slaves would be rejected by the Assembly, but by raising this spectre he made recruitment of free men of colour appear more palatable. The Assembly rejected Campbell's proposal that should the enemy appear off the coast he be empowered 'to strengthen our defence by the reception of a certain number of Slaves, into actual Service'. '[E]mbodying confidential Slaves', the Assembly concluded, was an 'expedient of too dangerous a nature', an attitude that may not have been helped by the adjutant general's insistence that enslaved men should be granted their freedom in return for their enlistment in the militia.[68] The committee appointed by the Assembly to consider this issue, however, consisted of William Henry Ricketts, William Lewis and Thomas Bourke and, within weeks, Ricketts and Lewis revived their proposal of May 1779 to raise two battalions of free soldiers.[69]

As white Jamaican planters who themselves depended on enslaved African labour, Ricketts and Lewis championed the recruitment of free coloured soldiers into provincial units not to weaken but rather to strengthen the defence of Jamaica, slavery, and their own wealth and status.[70] Ricketts had already commanded the 'Brown Infantry' two years earlier, and he and Lewis had supported the recruitment of free men for the Nicaragua expedition, so both appear to have been more open to free men's military service than many of the island's other planters. If their proposed battalions were established, both men would receive prestigious provincial commissions in the British military, and the status these ranks bestowed, as well as potential financial rewards. Ricketts was a member of the Assembly while Lewis was a member of the Governor's Council, and they may have been optimistic that having Campbell as their ally in 1782 would ensure their proposals the success they had been denied in 1779.

Campbell encouraged the Assembly in their consideration of the Ricketts and Lewis proposal. When Campbell communicated to the Assembly 'The Memorial of William Henry

Ricketts and William Lewis' proposing the recruitment of free men of colour into the provincials, he adroitly sent along with it a letter from Admiral Sir George Brydges Rodney about the delayed arrival of British reinforcements and the fact that enemy invasion forces 'seem to be near ready'. But the memorial's success in 1782 was due to the political manoeuvring of free men of colour as well as of Campbell. The memorial of 1782 emphasised the benefits of staffing battalions with 'disciplined' 'men inured by nature to this climate, and having the most intimate knowledge of the woods and defiles of this country', who could secure Jamaica from 'depredations on the coast' and stand 'in readiness' as 'the fittest body, to quell intestine troubles and the insurrections of slaves'.[71] Such arguments no doubt resonated with the members of the Assembly, who had only the day before considered the Westmoreland petition of the 'Brown infantry'.

In April 1782, noting 'that, at this juncture, the proposition of the memorialists is worthy of attention and encouragement', the Jamaican Assembly approved the establishment of a provincial regiment of free soldiers of colour.[72] Compared to the Governor's plan to arm their enslaved workforce, the militarisation of the island's free coloured men in a provincial regiment appeared far less dangerous to the planter class, not least because the Assembly could maintain some control in the appointment of officers. But it was no less significant for that. For the first time in Britain's New World colonies the elected assembly of a plantation colony recommended that the king raise a regiment of coloured troops for the British Army.

Campbell immediately sent the memorial to Lord Germain and the king with an enthusiastic endorsement. He foresaw many advantages to the raising of 'two Battalions of Free Mulattoes and Blacks ... by such respectable Men'.[73] Campbell remained convinced that the long-term security of the British Caribbean required coloured troops. Even after Admiral Rodney's victory over the French fleet at the Battle of the Saintes had reduced the risk of an immediate invasion of Jamaica, Campbell wrote to Baron Welbore Ellis, the newly appointed

Secretary of State for the Colonies, resending the Ricketts and Lewis Memorial 'which has received the approbation of the Assembly' and 'will be attended by many advantages to His Majesty's service'.[74] But it was three months before Campbell received a letter from Home Secretary Thomas Townshend noting 'His Majesty's pleasure has been signified that You should accept the offer made … for raising two Battalions of Free Mulattoes and Blacks'. Townshend than added that it was 'his Majesty's pleasure that you accept the Offer of a third Corps to be raised … on the same footing'.[75]

The Army's Appeal

On 14 November 1782, the recruiting advertisement for one of these new battalions of Jamaican troops appeared in *The Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, and was reprinted in the following two issues of the weekly newspaper. Published in Jamaica's capital by Alexander Aikman, the official printer for the Assembly and Governor, the *Gazette* was at this time the island's most important and widely distributed newspaper. The advertisement quite likely appeared in other island newspapers, as well as in thousands of broadsides spread all over the island, just like those produced for the 1779-1780 recruiting drive, but these have not survived.[76] The advertisement was addressed to 'ALL SPIRITED LIKELY YOUNG LADS OF COLOUR' and sought recruits for the 2nd Battalion of *Jamaican Rangers*, to be commanded by Lewis, and potential recruits were instructed to report to officers in Spanish Town, Kingston, Saint Elizabeth, St. Ann and Westmoreland parishes, covering the main population areas on the southern side and the central northern coast of the island. The 1st Battalion was to be led by Ricketts and it is likely that this unit had its own separate recruiting drive, but these advertisements have also not survived. Ricketts and Lewis were to be supported by Major Robert Brownrigg, a seasoned British Army officer who had just arrived in Jamaica having served with the forces occupying New York City.[77]

At first glance, this appeal to free Jamaican men appears very similar to formulaic British recruiting broadsides of the period. It was common for the authors of such appeals to flatter potential recruits as fine physical specimens, possessed of honour and a sense of duty to king and country. Besides bounties, decent pay and conditions, recruiters promised new soldiers and sailors additional rewards following the defeat of Britain's enemies, and they extolled military service as an honourable calling. Thus, when officers of the Royal Navy sought to recruit new sailors in Jamaica in late December 1782, their advertisement in the *Gazette* addressed 'all ABLE BODIED SEAMEN', hoping that 'all honest TARS' would avail themselves of the 'opportunity of meeting success' in His Majesty's service.[78] A recruitment broadside in 1777 addressed Pennsylvania Loyalists as 'ALL INTREPID ABLE-BODIED HEROES' who were willing to serve the king 'in Defence of their Country, Laws and Constitution'. 'Such spirited Fellows' who availed themselves of the 'Opportunity of manifesting their Spirit' by helping quell the American rebellion would 'be rewarded at the End of the War, besides their Laurels, with 50 Acres of Land, where every gallant Hero may retire, and enjoy his Bottle and Lass'.[79]

While the 1782 recruiting advertisement for Jamaican free men of colour may appear similar to standard recruiting broadsides, there were in fact significant differences. This attempt to recruit free men must be read in the context of the society in which it appeared, where its language, message and the assumptions of authors and readers alike rendered an appeal to 'ALL SPIRITED LIKELY YOUNG LADS OF COLOUR' unique. British recruiting broadsides tended to utilise terms such as 'able-bodied', 'intrepid' and 'active young Fellows' to describe potential recruits.[80] While the word 'spirited' occasionally appeared in other British recruiting documents, or in descriptions of the martial qualities of British soldiers, the term 'likely' was unusual. The appellation 'likely' suggested that a person appeared vigorous, strong and capable, but it had distinct and racialised connotations

in Jamaica that transcended the formulaic suggestions of prowess common to other recruiting literature. The word was instantly recognisable to readers of the *Gazette* and other Jamaican newspapers, for it was an adjective commonly employed by whites in their commodification of black bodies. Indeed, one of the issues of the *Gazette* in which the recruitment notice appeared featured an advertisement for 'a likely middling sized young NEGRO' named Robin, while in an earlier issue of the newspaper there appeared notice of Richard, 'a remarkably tall, well-made, likely fellow' who had escaped from his owner, none other than Governor Dalling.[81] Readers of the *Daily Advertiser* in Kingston saw advertised for sale 'A young likely' enslaved woman together with her five children, as well as an unnamed twenty-year-old 'likely Sambo boy'.[82] The word 'likely' could signify intelligent but was coded in such a way as to suggest slyness and a mental acuity that was deemed worthy of note in an enslaved person. The term was most often used in Jamaican newspapers to describe as fit and healthy black people who either were for sale or who had eloped, in short, people who were property. Thus, even the opening appeal of this recruiting document betrayed the contradictions inherent in militarising Jamaican men of colour. The implicit racial codings embodied in the language of the island objectified potential recruits in terms of the assumed characteristics of enslaved Africans, even as this military service enabled free men of colour to assert their status as British subjects.

Another striking difference between this and other recruiting advertisements is the relatively muted reference to the king and the comparative lack of references to loyalty to Britain and her empire. There was no reference to England or Britain, or to the constitution, themes that were common even in the recruiting broadsides aimed at Loyalists in the colonies. Instead, the advertisement was framed explicitly in terms of Jamaica, ending with the salutation '*God save the King, and prosperity to the Island of Jamaica*'. Loyalty to the monarch and to the island was placed on an equal footing. Military service and loyalty were

framed as much in local terms as they were in defence of king, empire and constitution, as free men of colour were encouraged to distinguish 'themselves in the Defence of this Island'. This may have satisfied free men who wanted to assert their status as free subjects of the king, while simultaneously reassuring whites who did not regard free men of colour as being fully British with knowledge of, and loyalty to, British society, the constitution, or the values they represented.[83] It also no doubt reflects the changing circumstances between the recruiting proclamations of 1780 and 1782. The focus on Jamaica in 1782 reflected the difference between recruiting for a regiment to attack Nicaragua in 1780 and the existential threat to Jamaica that the French and Spanish invasion of 1782 posed.

Localism was essential to recruiting in Jamaica. In the wake of the ill-fated Nicaraguan expedition Jamaica's free people of colour, and the whites who depended upon them, were clearly opposed to their deployment off the island, which would have significantly reduced the ability of the island to police the enslaved and defend Jamaica against slave rebellion. Moreover, many free men of colour were not wealthy, and service off the island had been financially ruinous to such people in the past. It was deemed essential that recruits to 'the Battalions of Free People of Colour' be guaranteed that they were being 'raised for the service and defence of Jamaica only, and they will not on any account be taken off the island'. The result, however, was that this recruitment advertisement articulated a distinctly local and inherently Jamaican form of service in the British Army.

But localism may also have reflected a perceived political naiveté on the part of free people of colour. Recruiting advertisements written for those considered outside of conventional understandings of Britishness tended to downplay constitutional arguments in favour of material rewards and the individual dignity that came with being a soldier. Recruiters tended to neglect the ample evidence available to them that people on the British margins understood the political symbolism of an attachment to monarchy in an age of

revolution.[84] Thus, despite evidence in the Westmoreland petition that free men of colour understood the real and symbolic advantages of their 'attachment to his most excellent majesty and government', the advertisement assumed that arguments emphasising Jamaica and material gain – 'immediate pay, and … every benefit of provisions for themselves and families' – would be more effective than grander claims to British constitutionalism and the safety of the wider empire.[85]

These advertisements were written as direct appeals to free men of colour; in this, they assume that at least some of these men would have been able to read and respond to them without the intercession of local whites. To potential recruits the threat of invasion was understood less through the frame of Britain, the American War, and empire, and more as part of a Caribbean war in which constant combat had led to many islands changing hands, and a devastation of the commerce and trade on which the island economies depended.[86] Free coloured men and their families depended upon commerce as much as whites, and most lived in Jamaican towns and cities along the coast. In joining the *Rangers* recruits could protect their families, their homes, and their economic interests, while simultaneously asserting loyalty through the time-honoured demonstration of civic identity and belonging by means of service in the army.

Provincial recruits could expect reasonable rates of pay and conditions of service and the terms advertised to free men of colour were comparatively good. Surviving recruiting broadsides from similar provincial regiments in North America reveal that two years of service was common. In 1778, the 1st battalion of Pennsylvania Loyalists were asked to serve for 'only two years, or during the present rebellion in America', terms of service that were replicated for the Buck's County Light Dragoons in 1778, the King's American Regiment in Georgia in 1781, and the King's American Dragoons in New York in 1782.[87] The longer term of five years demanded of the *Jamaica Rangers* probably reflected a greater sensitivity to

Jamaica's enduring strategic vulnerabilities but the terms were still much better than those offered to white recruits of the regular army who enlisted for life.

The pecuniary benefits – the bounty money offered to encourage recruits – were also comparatively appealing.[88] The government-regulated bounty for the regular army during the American war was £3 sterling, equivalent to thirty days' paid work for a London labourer or several months pay for those labourers outside the capital.[89] The necessity of finding good quality recruits in North America saw equivalent bounties for provincial forces rise from two guineas in 1776 to six guineas by 1781.[90] The regulated £5 bounty offered to the *Jamaica Rangers* was, therefore, generally consistent with provincial bounties in North America and was higher than that offered to white regulars. The *Jamaica Rangers* were fully integrated into an existing pattern of comparatively generous terms of service for provincial forces.

Thus 'ALL SPIRITED LIKELY YOUNG LADS OF COLOUR' was a contradictory document. It was an affirmation of racial hierarchy and white superiority while also supporting the establishment of a regiment that undermined the inequitable treatment of free people by the Jamaican Assembly. Though they may have found the racialised coding of the recruitment advertisement off-putting, free men clearly found its terms appealing. Both Ricketts and Lewis' battalions soon filled up, as did a third battalion under Nathaniel Beckford recruited from formerly enslaved refugees from the Carolinas.[91] No muster lists for the *Jamaica Rangers* survive but the battalions were issued a full complement of officers and, if the 1st and 2nd battalions equalled the 300 soldiers recruited into Beckford's battalion, it is possible that over a third of the free male population of Jamaica enlisted in the *Jamaica Volunteers* of 1780 or the *Jamaica Rangers* of 1782, a mobilisation rate unmatched anywhere in the British Atlantic World.[92]

'Indispensable to the prosperity and security of Jamaica'

'To the Free People of Colour', 'The humble petition of the brown infantry', and 'All Spirited Likely Young Lads of Colour' articulated a clear connection between the government and its people, including those of colour. Officials were cognisant that the security of the empire required continued negotiation with its subjects. These documents represented a unique dialogue between mixed race subjects and the imperial state and the languages of these sources echo British writings of the period that stressed the perceived appeal of monarchical authority in upholding the rights and privileges of the empire's many constituent groups.[93] The very creation of these sources was an implicit acknowledgement that free men of colour were not only subjects of the crown but a constituency with claims to British subjecthood and the rights that this entailed.

The free men of colour who enlisted appreciated that military service made them vital to the imperial state and gave them a means by which they could insist on fairer treatment. Free men of colour began to express themselves collectively as essential defenders of the island, prompting metropolitan officials to view them as potential allies in the war against France and Spain. In the context of impending invasion white Jamaican colonists who had in 1779 opposed the creation of provincial units staffed by free men of colour were forced to accept them in 1782; white Jamaicans relied for both internal and external security on the British military and on free people in Jamaica, and these had forged a wartime alliance that undermined Jamaican whites' on-going efforts to equate whiteness with British subjecthood. Neither elite white Jamaicans in the Assembly nor imperial officials in London were able unilaterally to determine the status of free people of colour in Jamaica. Instead, military officials, a few Jamaican planters and politicians, and members of the free community themselves engaged in multilateral negotiations concerning the roles that free men would play in safeguarding Jamaica. The new level of militarisation of free men of colour

introduced a significant variable in the debates over the status of free people in Jamaica that would resonate for decades to come.

That these debates appeared in Jamaica in the context of the War for American Independence is significant. Efforts had been made to recruit free people of colour during the Seven Years' War but they were not accompanied by a consideration of the rights of free men of colour or an accommodation of their demands. The ascendant desire of white planters to associate subjecthood with whiteness in the early 1760s prevented this. But in the charged environment of revolutionary Jamaica, where economic and environmental hardship combined with the contrasting techniques of two very different governors and the threat of foreign invasion, a unique moment occurred. The idea of appealing to free men – and listening to and acknowledging their concerns – became essential and stands as a testament to the shifting grounds of identity and subjecthood in the British Caribbean. If the Seven Years' War was a 'moment of experiment', the American Revolution was a moment of inflection as the British military and some white planters were forced to realize that free people of colour were a constituency requiring of consideration.[94] The result was not simply free men's contribution in the imperial project but their active participation.

Jamaica's racial hierarchy survived the American War intact and the service of free people of colour did not change the legal rights of free people, the measure by which British subjecthood was ultimately judged. Military service did not grant the right to legal representation or the right to sit and vote in the legislature. But something had changed. Uniquely in British Caribbean history to that point, military officials and planters responded collectively to free men of colour in a manner that recognized the latter's importance and worth. The recruiting advertisements of 1780 and 1782, when read in conjunction with the Westmoreland petition, make it clear that imperial officials were willing to acknowledge free people of colour's insistence that they be regarded as devoted inhabitants of the island and

subjects of the king and that, as such, they be afforded fair treatment. Racial boundaries could never be absolute in an environment where the threat of invasion required the mobilisation of free people and, with it, the implicit acknowledgement of non-white British subjecthood. The racial cohesiveness of white planters frayed as men like Ricketts and Lewis recognized the public and private advantages of raising battalions of free people. Those in the Assembly who previously had opposed the militarisation of free people were forced to give way as Governor Campbell forged an alliance with free men of colour predicated on the military needs of the empire rather than the racial imaginings of its elite planters. The authority of white elites was thereby challenged in the heart of Britain's plantation complex.

More importantly, perhaps, free Jamaicans of colour capitalised upon shifting circumstances in Jamaica and the British Empire as a whole and began to coalesce politically as a group in the 1780s, a decade before scholars have previously recognised the emergence of community mobilisation.[95] By emphasizing the central role they played in the island's defence, free men, who had profited less from their relations with whites than had some black and coloured women and children, asserted a degree of equality resisted by Jamaica's white plantocracy and affirmed their right to the privileges afforded to loyal male subjects of the British Empire.[96] In doing so, they laid the groundwork for those who would follow. In 1792, the Jamaica Assembly considered another petition, this time from men purporting to speak for the island's free people of colour as a whole.[97] Citing their military service, the petitioners requested that the Jamaica Assembly remove the legal restrictions that prevented free people of colour from enjoying the same liberties as whites in the island. They observed 'with pain, that all Nations and Religions that are denominated White have every benefit of the Laws afforded them', while 'your Petitioners who are Native inhabitants of the Soil, and in all Emergencies call'd forth to its Support and Defence, and who in every respect contribute their Aid to the Maintenance of its Government are . . . barr'd and Shut out from those

benefits of Citizenship which gratitude unassisted by Philosophy loudly proclaims their Title to'.[98] Members of the Jamaican Assembly continued to resist requests for equal rights, again employing Stephen Fuller to detail planter resistance to this 'Spirit of Innovation' to the government in London.[99] But the free men of colour who had served would continue to build on the precedent of the *Jamaica Rangers* in asserting that military service entitled them to the rights of British subjects.

When the American War ended these free troops remained in the Caribbean. While Ricketts' and Lewis' battalions were disbanded in 1783, Beckford's battalion, which had been formed of liberated slaves from North America, was sent to Grenada where it provided the foundations for the *Black Corps of Dragoons, Pioneers, and Artificers or the Carolina Corps* that existed into the 1790s.[100] This corps would eventually be replaced by the West India regiments, the first units of army regulars recruited from Africans and their descendants. These regiments eventually underscored imperial authority over both the recruitment of soldiers of African descent and over the local assemblies that had resisted the Africanisation of British military power in the Caribbean.[101] But the shifting boundaries of race and slavery and the narrowing of the gulf between white and black, often attributed to the chaos of the 1790s, had appeared a decade earlier with the *Jamaica Rangers*. And they had appeared in part as a response to the agency of free men of colour themselves, and in the context of a war which threatened the very survival of British Jamaica.

It was as if the descendants of the socially dead who, by definition, were culturally, politically and socially alienated, had been brought back to life by demonstrating their identity as loyal British subjects through military service.[102] As 'British' soldiers, these free coloured Jamaicans asserted that they had reversed an inherited condition, for themselves and their families, and in the process blurred what white Jamaicans had hoped would be rigid lines between race and service and between empire and subjecthood. While white Jamaicans

continued to resist such encroachments, in the minds of the free men of colour who had served in the British army, Jamaican racial hierarchies were shifting. From this point forward, free men of colour constantly asserted that their military service demanded white recognition of their 'rights as British subjects'.[103] Eventually these arguments bore fruit, so that within a few decades even the editor of *The Jamaica Journal* acknowledged that 'either as citizens or as soldiers, in peace and in war', the free men of colour's 'industry and their valour are indispensable to the prosperity and security of Jamaica'.[104]

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[1] For recent contributions, see Robert Geake, *From Slaves to Soldiers: The 1st Rhode Island Regiment in the American Revolution* (Yardley, PA, 2016); Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York, 2014); Alan Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists: Fighting for Emancipation in the War for Independence* (Chicago, 2012); Michael A. McDonnell, *The Politics of War: Race, Class and Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007); Philip D. Morgan and Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, 'Arming Slaves in the American Revolution' in *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age*, eds. Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan (New Haven, 2006), 180-201.

[2] Maria Alessandra Bollettino, '"Of equal or of more service": Black soldiers and the British Empire in the mid-eighteenth century Caribbean', *Slavery & Abolition* 38 (2017): 512.

[3] Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 2000), 181.

[4] These sources provide a more direct route to understanding black military service than white-authored petitions that are often the closest historians can get to the thoughts of black soldiers, see Gary Sellick, 'Black Skin, Red Coat: the Carolina Corps and Nationalism in the Revolutionary British Caribbean', *Slavery & Abolition* 39 (2018): 460.

[5] Hannah Weiss Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign: Bonds of Belonging in the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (Oxford, 2017).

[6] Mark Francis, *Governors and Settlers: Images of Authority in the British Colonies, 1820-1860* (Basingstoke, 1992); Jack P. Greene, 'Introduction: Empire and Liberty' in *Exclusionary Empire: English Liberty Overseas, 1600-1900*, eds. J.P. Greene (Cambridge, 2009), 24.

[7] See, most recently, Daniel Livesay, *Children of Uncertain Fortune: Mixed-Race Jamaicans in Britain and the Atlantic Family, 1733-1833* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2018).

[8] David Sartorius, *Ever Faithful: Race, Loyalty, and the Ends of Empire in Spanish Cuba* (Durham, NC, 2013); Jane Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, MA, 2010); Laurent DuBois, 'Citizen Soldiers: Emancipation and Military Service in the Revolutionary French Caribbean' in *Arming Slaves*, 233-54; Stewart King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint Domingue* (Athens, GA, 2001); and Ben Vinson, *Bearing Arms for his Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA, 2001).

[9] Mavis Campbell, *The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society: A Sociopolitical History of the Free Coloreds of Jamaica, 1800-1865* (Ruterhford, NJ, 1976), 63; Gad Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics and the Free Coloureds in Jamaica, 1792–1865* (Westport, CT, 1981), 23.

[10] The 1715 deficiency law effectively barred free blacks and people of colour from assuming supervisory positions on plantations and necessitated that free planters of colour either employ whites or submit to a fine. Additional legislation required that all free people have their freedom certified by a magistrate and wear a blue cross on their shoulders to distinguish them from both whites and the enslaved. The free coloured population in Jamaica was predominately female, as women were manumitted more often than men, see Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 5-8.

[11] Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650-1820* (Chicago, 2015), 172-3; Meleisa Ono-George, '"Washing the Blackamoor White": Interracial Intimacy and Coloured Women's Agency in Jamaica' in *Subverting Empire: Deviance and Disorder in the British Colonial World*, eds. Will Jackson and Emily Manktelow,, 42-60; and Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 5-7.

[12] See Eliga Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000), 214 and Jack P. Greene, *Evaluating Empire and Confronting Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2013).

[13] See Trevor Burnard, 'White West Indian Identity in the Eighteenth Century' in *Assumed Identities: Race and the National Imagination in the Atlantic World*, eds. John D. Garrigus and Christopher Morris (College Station, TX, 2010), 71-87; Brooke N. Newman, 'Contesting "Black" Liberty and Subjecthood in the Anglophone Caribbean, 1730s-1780s', *Slavery & Abolition* 32 (2011): 169-83; Brooke N. Newman, 'Gender, Sexuality and the Formation of Racial Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Caribbean World', *Gender & History* 22 (2010): 585-602; Petley, '"Home" and "this country": Britishness and Creole Identity in the Letters of a Transatlantic Slaveholder', *Atlantic Studies* 6 (2009): 43-61; and Trevor Burnard and John Garrigus, *The Plantation Machine: Atlantic Capitalism in French Saint-Domingue and British Jamaica* (Philadelphia, 2016), 137-63.

[14] Ono-George, '"Washing the Blackamoor White"', 42-60; Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 6; Arnold A. Sio, 'Race, Colour, and Miscegenation: The Free Coloured of Jamaica and Barbados', *Caribbean Studies* 16 (1976): 8; Samuel J. Hurwitz and Edith F. Hurwitz, 'A Token of Freedom: Private Bill Legislation for Free Negroes in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 24 (1967): 425.

[15] Livesay, *Children of Uncertain Fortune*, 15, 42-3.

[16] Hurwitz and Hurwitz, 'Token of Freedom', 424. For a recent examination of the ways in which free women of colour made use of their property to advance the connections and interests of the free coloured community, see Erin Trahey, "Among Her Kinswomen: Legacies of Free Women of Color in Jamaica," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 76 (April 2019): 257-88.

[17] Livesay, *Children of Uncertain Fortune*, 89; Burnard and Garrigus, *The Plantation Machine*, 147, 151, 162; Newman, 'Contesting "Black" Liberty and Subjecthood', 178.

[18] White colonists in Jamaica did not hold military service in high regard and generally eschewed it if an officer's rank could not be obtained. White Britons' acceptance of free men of colour as soldiers did not in most cases reflect acceptance of them as subjects of the crown, deserving of rights and status equivalent to those afforded whites. In fact, many white officials sought to arm free people of colour in order to preserve the lives of white subjects, whose lives they treasured more. Nevertheless, military service did offer free men of colour evidence of loyalty they could deploy when seeking to claim rights. This essay acknowledges that free men of colour's military service did not in all cases lead to an amelioration of their status, but that in a particular place at a particular time – Jamaica during the American War for Independence – this came to pass as a result of a complex set of circumstances and a series of negotiations among free men of colour, British military officials, and white Jamaican colonists.

[19] See, for instance, State of the Militia, Nov. 1778, Add. MSS 12431, f. 23, British Library, London (hereafter BL). See also Jerome S. Handler, 'Freedmen and Slaves in the Barbados Militia." *Journal of Caribbean History* 19 (1984): 1-25.

[20] For recent works that examine the slave unrest scholars know as Tacky's Revolt, see Maria Alessandra Bollettino, 'Slavery, War, and Britain's Atlantic Empire: Black Soldiers, Sailors, and Rebels in the Seven Years' War' (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, 2009), 191-256; Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 129-56; Burnard and Garrigus, *The Plantation Machine*, 122-36.

[21] Bollettino, '"Of equal or of more service", 510-33. Efforts to recruit free men of colour for the siege of Havana in 1762 were not met with great success. Precious few volunteers came forward; this may in part be attributed to what a post-war investigation before the Assembly termed the 'strange Management in the raising of the Corps of Free Negroes': the sale of commissions to unqualified planters for profit, see Charles Wyndham, Earl of Egremont to William Lyttelton, Jan. 1762, CO137/61, ff. 50-2, TNA; Proposed Establishment of a Regiment under the Command of Major Fuller, undated, CO117/1, f. 1, TNA; Albemarle to Egremont, 27 May 1762, CO117/1, f. 23, TNA; Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica (hereafter JAJ), 12 Aug. 1766, CO140/40, f. 622, TNA.

[22] O'Shaughnessy, *Empire Divided*, 138-45, 162.

[23] Trevor Burnard, '"Prodigious Riches": The Wealth of Jamaica Before the American Revolution', *Economic History Review* 54 (2001): 507; Michael Craton, 'Jamaican Slavery' in *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies*, eds. Stanley Engerman and Eugene Genovese (Princeton, 1975), 249-84; J.R. Ward, 'The Profitability of Sugar Planting in the British West Indies, 1650-1834', *Economic History Review* 31 (1978): 206; Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 16.

[24] Sheridan, 'Jamaican Slave Insurrection of 1776', 290-308.

[25] O'Shaughnessy, *Empire Divided*, 241; Matthew Mulcahy, *Hurricanes and Society in the British Greater Caribbean, 1624-1783* (Baltimore, 2006), 88, 97-8.

[26] Disease decimated British regulars stationed on the island, sometimes killing as many as half of newly arrived soldiers within six months and destroying entire regiments within three or four years, see John Hunter, *Observations on the Diseases of the Army in Jamaica; and on the Best Means of Preserving the Health of*

Europeans in that Climate (London, 1788), 47-9, 50-2, 54, 45-7. Hunter was superintendent of Jamaican military hospitals.

[27] O'Shaughnessy, *Empire Divided*, 160-70, 193, 208-20.

[28] Despite the hardships surrounding the war, the Jamaican Assembly continued to vote substantial sums for defense but not always for those projects suggested by the governor, see O'Shaughnessy, *Empire Divided*, 197-200.

[29] JAJ, 18 Apr. 1780, CO 140/59, f. 235, TNA. These records can also be found in *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica, Vol. VII.* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1802). For Nicaragua, see Matthew P. Dziennik, 'The Miskitu, Military Labour, and the San Juan Expedition of 1780' *Historical Journal* 61 (2018): 155-79.

[30] The week following the first publication, it was re-printed with an additional section that was published until 29 April, following which the advertisement reverted to the original version. The longer version included the statement that Governor Dalling would lead the expedition in person, something that he initially intended to do. As late as 20 May, Dalling informed the colonial secretary that he would 'either present my King with Dominion on the Continent, or lay my bones in the province of Nicaragua', see Dalling to Germain, 20 May 1780, CO137/77, ff. 140-2, TNA. Also included was a notice to planters encouraging them to hire out their slaves for the expedition.

[31] Evidence for the existence of these broadsides exists in the form of a petition by the printer Alexander Aikman for reimbursement of £20 to cover 'Printing and distributing 2000 proposals for a corps of negroes by direction of James Douglas', Journals of the House of Assembly, 10 Dec. 1779, Manuscript Collections, 1B/5/1, Volume 27, National Archives of Jamaica, Spanish Town.

[32] Proclamation for Volunteers, n.d., CO137/76, f. 160, TNA.

[33] Lyttelton to Board of Trade, 12 May 1762, CO 137/32, ff.114-16, TNA.

[34] Scheme for raising a regiment of Mulattoes, Jan. 1779, CO138/23, ff. 428-9, TNA.

[35] It is known that bounties were issued to white volunteers but Germain specifically required that these bounties were used to pay for clothing the volunteers, a standard practice in the regular army, see Germain to Dalling, 6 Sept. 1780, CO137/78, ff. 129-33, TNA.

[36] Instructions to Captain Clark, 26 Aug. 1780, CO137/78, f. 241, TNA.

[37] *The Kemble Papers: Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1884* (New York, 1885), 140.

[38] General Return of the Militia of the Island of Jamaica, 21 Oct. 1778, Add. MSS 12435, f. 12, BL; Observations on the Fortifications of Jamaica, 1783, Add. MSS 12431, f. 23, BL.

[39] State of the Militia, Nov. 1778, Add. MSS 12431, f. 23, BL.

[40] General Return of the Militia of the Island of Jamaica, 21 Oct. 1778, Add. MSS 12435, f. 12, BL; Observations on the Fortifications of Jamaica, 1783, Add. MSS 12431, f. 23, BL.

[41] JAJ, 30 Oct. 1778, CO140/59, f. 85, TNA.

[42] General Return of the Militia of the Island of Jamaica, Oct. 21, 1778, Add. MSS 12435, f. 12, BL; Observations on the Fortifications of Jamaica, 1783, Add. MSS 12431, f. 23, BL.

[43] Ricketts specifically noted in early 1780 that the advantage to converting free men's militias into provincial units would be to improve the offensive capabilities of the army in the Caribbean, see Ricketts to Dalling, Feb. 1780, CO137/77, f. 28, TNA.

[44] Petition to the House of Assembly, 30 Oct. 1778, CO140/59, f. 85, TNA.

[45] Germain to Dalling, Oct. 8, 1779, CO137/75, ff. 102-7, TNA. See also O'Shaughnessy, *Empire Divided*, 176-8.

[46] Fuller to Germain, 23 Dec. 1778, CO137/75, ff. 90-4, TNA.

[47] For the black presence in the forces that left Jamaica for the Spanish Main, see *Kemble Papers*, 125, 155; Dalling to Germain, 13 Nov. 1779, CO137/76, ff. 46-7, TNA; Lawrie to Dalling, 18 Nov. 1779, CO137/76, ff. 200-5, TNA; *New York Gazette*, 24 and 26 June 1780.

[48] Memorial of Stephen Fuller, 5 Apr. 1780, CO137/77, f. 38, TNA.

[49] Untitled runaway advertisement placed by owner Jacob De Castro, *Jamaica Mercury*, 8 Jan. 1780; Untitled runaway advertisement placed by owner William Chambers, *Jamaica Mercury,* 4 Dec. 1779; Untitled runaway advertisement placed by owner Lucius Tucker, *Jamaica Mercury*, 16 Nov. 1779.

[50] An officer in the British army since the age of nineteen, he had served with distinction in Canada and the Caribbean during the Seven Years' War, and then as Chief Engineer of the British East India Company in Bengal. Shortly after his election to Parliament in 1774, Campbell helped raise the Second Battalion of the 71st Highland Regiment of Foot and returned to America. He was immediately captured in Boston and held prisoner by the Patriots for two years before being exchanged for Ethan Allen. Thrust back into action Campbell won the Battle of Savannah, helping secure coastal Georgia for the British, and he was named provisional Royal Governor of Georgia. Campbell had already earned a reputation as an able and judicious commander, and after a brief period back in England he had in 1780 been appointed Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica with the rank of

Brigadier General, see 'Sir Archibald Campbell', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (accessed 1 May 2019).

[51] Bollettino, 'Slavery, War, and Britain's Atlantic Empire', 148-9. For similar uses of people of African descent by Campbell, see Campbell, 'Journal of an Expedition Against the Rebels of Georgia in North America Under the Orders of Archibald Campbell Esquire Lieut. Colol. of His Majesty's 71st Regiment. 1778', 54-6, Campbell of Inverneill Papers, National Trust for Scotland, Canna House, Canna.

[52] Campbell to Ellis, 3 May 1782, CO137/82, f. 234, TNA. Campbell's superiors agreed, and the Earl of Shelburne wrote to Campbell that there were many advantages of using black troops, not least 'affording a means of removing the Regular Troops to more healthy stations, by which a number of very valuable lives may be preserved', Shelburne to Campbell, 5 June 1782, CO137/82, f. 214, TNA.

[53] Campbell to Germain, 16 Nov. 1781, CO137/82, ff. 3-4, TNA.

[54] Campbell to Germain, 5 Dec. 1781, CO137/82, f. 37, TNA.

[55] Thomas Thistlewood quoted in Mulcahy, *Hurricanes and Society*, 24, 110-111.

[56] JAJ, 16 Apr. 1782, CO140/59, f. 469, TNA.

[57] Linda E. Sturtz, 'The 1780 Hurricane Donation: "Insult Offered Instead of Relief"', *Jamaican Historical Review* 21 (2011): 38, 43-5. Sturtz also offers a compelling analysis of the Westmoreland petition of the 'Brown infantry' in this article.

[58] JAJ, 16 Apr. 1782, CO140/59, f. 469, TNA. In denying support, Jamaica's commissioners may have been acting in accordance with accepted practice. In Barbados, for example, poor blacks were prohibited from receiving poor relief, see Cecily Forde-Jones, 'Mapping Racial Boundaries: Gender, Race, and Poor Relief in Barbadian Plantation Society', *Journal of Women's History* 10 (1998): 20.

[59] JAJ, 16 Apr. 1782, CO140/59, f. 469, TNA.

[60] JAJ, 16 Apr. 1782, CO140/59, f. 469, TNA.

[61] JAJ, 16 Apr. 1782, CO140/59, f. 469, TNA.

[62] Newman, 'Gender, Sexuality and the Formation of Racial Identities', 592.

[63] Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, 48-9.

[64] Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, 46-7.

[65] JAJ, 3 Apr. 1761, CO140/40, ff. 255-56, TNA. For the figure of fifty-four private men in Hynes's party, see JAJ, 20 Nov. 1760, CO 140/40, f. 289, TNA. For descriptions of the four-month-long patrol, see Edward Long,

The History of Jamaica (London, 1774), II, 461; *Boston Evening-Post*, 20 April 1761; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 9 April 1761.

[66] On the British military presence in the Caribbean during the Seven Years' War, see Bollettino, "'Of equal or of more service'".

[67] Alexander Dirom, *Thoughts on the State of the Militia of Jamaica* (Kingston, 1783), 14, 24-5.

[68] JAJ, 3 Mar. 1782, CO137/82, f. 156, TNA; Dirom, *Thoughts on the State of the Militia of Jamaica*, 15.

[69] JAJ, 3 Mar. 1782, CO140/59, f. 461, TNA.

[70] Both men had regularly advertised for runaway slaves in the island's newspapers. Vulcan, for example, could be identified by Ricketts' initials, which were branded onto his body, while Plato had absconded before and had his ear 'cropt' as punishment, quite possibly on Ricketts' instructions. Adam, an African-born man with filed teeth, had William Lewis's initials branded onto his right shoulder, see Untitled runaway advertisement placed by owner William Ricketts, *Cornwall Chronicle*, 10 May 1777; Untitled runaway advertisement placed by owner William Ricketts, *Cornwall Chronicle*, 20 Mar. 1784; Untitled runaway advertisement placed by owner William Lewis, *Cornwall Chronicle*, 20 Aug. 1781.

[71] JAJ, 12 April 1782, CO140/59, ff. 467-8, TNA.

[72] JAJ, 17 Apr. 1782, CO140/59, f. 470, TNA.

[73] Memorial of Ricketts, 25 Mar. 1782, CO137/82, f. 204, TNA.

[74] Campbell to Ellis, 3 May 1782, CO 137/82, ff. 234-7, TNA.

[75] Thomas Townshend to Campbell, 14 Aug. 1782, CO137/82, f. 251, TNA.

[76] *The Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega* (Spanish Town, Jamaica), 14-21 Nov. 1782; 21-28 Nov. 1782; 28 Nov.-5 Dec. 5, 1782.

[77] Brownrigg would later serve with distinction in Europe during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, rising to the rank of Lieutenant General, and Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Ceylon, and he eventually received a knighthood. As the officers in command of the new *Jamaica Rangers*, Lewis and Brownrigg symbolised a new group of regular and militia officers who had come to agree on the utility of a military force of free Jamaicans. Seven years later, Brownrigg would marry Elizabeth Lewis, who appears to have been the sister of William Lewis, whose daughter Mary married another British army officer, Lieutenant Colonel John Whitelocke, the future colonel of the 6th West India Regiment of Foot. We can see in this the emergence of a network of imperial and colonial figures committed to expanding Britain's commitment to soldiers of African descent. *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, Dec. 15-22, 1782, 3; *Almanac and Register for*

the Island of Jamaica 1784, http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/1784al06.htm (accessed 1 May 2019); John Phillipart, *The Royal Military Calendar Containing The Services of Every General Officer, Lieutenant General, and Major General, in the British Army* (London, 1815), II, 151-2; 'Sir Robert Brownrigg', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (accessed 3 May 2019); 'John Whitelocke', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (accessed 3 May 2019).

[78] *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, 15-22 Dec. 1782.

[79] 'First Battalion of Pennsylvania Loyalists', Broadside (Philadelphia, 1777), National Army Museum (hereafter NAM), Online Collections (accessed 1 May 2019).

[80] *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, 14-21 Nov. 1782; '72nd Regiment of Foot, Or Royal Manchester Volunteers', Broadside (Manchester, 1778), NAM, Online Collections (accessed 5 May 2019); '88th Regiment of Foot', Broadside (c. 1780), NAM, Online Collections (accessed 5 May 2019).

[81] Advertisement placed by Daniel Singer, *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, 28 Nov.-5 Dec. 1782; Advertisement placed by Governor Dalling, *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, 22 Feb.-1 Mar. 1781.

[82] Advertisement placed by Ballantine & Fairlie, *The Daily Advertiser* (Kingston), 6 Aug. 1790; Advertisement placed by Henry Skerrett, *The Daily Advertiser*, 28 Aug. 1790.

[83] *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, 15-22 Dec. 1782.

[84] Military officers occasionally took issue with such oversight. James Lawrie, the superintendent of the Mosquito Shore, raised concerns in 1779 that the company of free men he raised in Honduras possessed neither drums nor colours. The lack of such items not only affected command and control but also undermined discipline by making it symbolically clear that the king did not value the contributions of his free soldiers of colour, see Lawrie to Dalling, 18 Nov. 1779, CO137/76, ff. 198-9, TNA.

[85] *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, 15-22 Dec. 1782.

[86] *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega*, 15-22 Dec. 1782.

[87] 'First Battalion of Pennsylvania Loyalists', Broadside (Philadelphia, 1777), NAM, (accessed 4 May 2019); *Royal Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 21 Apr. 1778; *Royal Georgia Gazette* (Savannah), 7 June 1781; *The Royal Gazette* (New York), 22 June 1782.

[88] It should be noted that that recruits rarely saw the bounty in full as it was recouped by recruiting officers for the purchase of uniforms and equipment or otherwise confiscated as 'off reckonings' for food and medicine.

[89] Richard Holmes, *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket* (New York, 2001), xxi.

[90] Paul H. Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats: A Study in British Revolutionary Policy* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1964), 63-78.

[91] Sellick, 'Black Skin, Red Coats', 459-78; George F. Tyson, Jr., 'The Carolina Black Corps: Legacy of Revolution (1782-1798)', *Revista/Review Ineramerica* 5 (1975):, 648-64. Most of the Black Loyalist troops evacuated from North America went to the British garrisons in St. Lucia and then at the end of the war to Grenada.

[92] Mobilisation rates in the British Isles during the American War of Independence are estimated at around one in eight of the eligible male population, including naval and home defence units, see Stephen Conway, 'British Mobilisation in the War of American Independence', *Historical Research* 72 (1999): 65-6. For some limited evidence on the numbers recruited into the Jamaica Rangers, see René Chartrand, *American Loyalist Troops, 1775-84* (Botley, 2008), 34.

[93] Keith Mason, 'Loyalism in British North America in the Age of Revolution' in *Loyalism and the Formation of the British Atlantic World*, eds. Allan Blackstock and Frank O'Gorman (Woodbridge, 2014), 163-80.

[94] Bollettino.

[95] In this light, free Jamaicans' move toward collective action may be seen as an outgrowth of local political activism, rather than simply a response to the Haitian Revolution. Gad Heuman writes, 'During most of the eighteenth century, the people of colour were barely visible in Jamaican politics. When they appealed to the Assembly for an improvement in their rights, coloureds proceeded as individuals; they were not seeking changes in the general condition of the people of colour. But the revolution in St. Domingue altered this situation', see Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 23. Mavis Campbell notes mulattos' apparent acceptance of their inferior status for nearly a century and a half without any collective effort on their part to better their condition. She contends that 'the end of the eighteenth century, however, was to see drastic changes. This was due more to the Haitian Revolution than to any other single factor, although the humanitarian movement in England, as well as the economic decline of the planters and the rising fortunes of the coloureds all contributed', see Campbell, *Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society*, 63.

[96] On this process in the nineteenth century, see Mimi Sheller, 'Acting as Free Men: Subaltern Masculinities and Citizenship in Postslavery Jamaica' in *Gender and Emancipation in the Atlantic World*, eds. Pamela Scully and Diana Paton (Durham, NC, 2005), 79-98.

[97] Gad Heuman writes that the 1792 petition was authored by a free coloured man named Dickson who died before he could present it to the Assembly. It was then taken up by others who had known him, see Heuman,

Between Black and White, 23. Mavis Campbell notes that the petition was opposed by those free people of colour who had been recipient of private privilege bills that had exempted them from the legal restrictions placed upon men of colour, see Campbell, *Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society*, 68-71.

[98] 'The Humble Address and Petition of the Free People of Colour to the Honourable the Assembly of Jamaica', 1792, Add. MSS 12431, ff. 225-28, BL. The petition was enclosed in Williamson to Dundas, 2 Dec. 1792, CO 137/91, ff. 38-9, TNA.

[99] Petition to Stephen Fuller, 5 Dec. 1792, Add. MSS 12431, ff. 223-24, BL.

[100] Campbell to Townshend, 4 Nov. 1782, CO137/82, ff. 320-3, TNA; North to Campbell, 15 June 1783, CO137/83, ff. 93-6, TNA.

[101] Roger N. Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiments, 1795-1815* (New Haven, CT, 1979).

[102] Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA, 1982). Patterson's formulation of a kind of 'social death' as the essential condition of the enslaved across space and time has not gone unchallenged, with some scholars arguing that 'allowing the condition of social death to stand for the experience of life in slavery' universalises experience and obscure as much as they reveal of the human experience of enslavement, see Vincent Brown, 'Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery', *American Historical Review* 114 (2009), 1236-7.

[103] Statement of Proceedings of the People of Colour of Jamaica, In an Intended Appeal to the House of Assembly, of 1823, for the Removal of Their Political Disabilities, 1823, CO318/76, 113 *verso*, TNA.

[104] 'On the Policy of Conferring Additional Privileges on the Free People of Colour', *The Jamaica Journal* (Kingston), 27 Sept. 1823.