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The ‘Glasgow West India interest’:
Integration, Collaboration and
Exploitation in the British Atlantic
World, 1776-1846

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Submitted in fulfillment for the requirements for the

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Abstract

This thesis aims to illuminate the economic and social world of the Glasgow-West India merchants, planters and the temporary economic migrants who travelled across the Atlantic during the period, 1776-1846. The city of Glasgow and her satellite ports was the premier Scottish transatlantic hub with connections across the British Atlantic world. This thesis has focused on the period after the American War of Independence ended the city of Glasgow's tobacco monopoly. Thus, the rise to prominence of the city's West India elite is assessed as well as the social, political, financial and commercial networks that underpinned their rise. This thesis offers new insights on religious affiliations of the merchants of Glasgow and traces the exportation of Presbyterianism to Jamaica in 1814.

This thesis has implications for other aspects of the incipient Scottish-Atlantic historiography. In particular it contributes to T.M. Devine's recent view that Caribbean slavery made Scotia great. However, this thesis is deliberately placed into a British-Atlantic context. Although this research demonstrates how a distinctly Caledonian operation promoted the flow of capital to Scotland, the 'Glasgow West India interest' themselves were part of a wider international network which in turn dictates the scope of this thesis and the historiography with which it engages.

Specifically, this body of research traces direct investments of capital by West India merchants into Scottish industry and land, thus providing qualified support for Eric Williams' main thesis in *Capitalism and Slavery*. However, this work goes significantly beyond the work of Williams to trace the connections between commerce and banking institutions in Scotland and the plantations of the West Indies. This thesis has examined in some detail the political activities of the Glasgow West India Association from inception in 1807 up to 1834. The Association's sophisticated operations at a national and regional level supported the exploitative activities of the Glasgow-West India elite. Indeed, this research demonstrates that the members of the Association collected the bulk of the compensation awarded to individuals resident in Glasgow on the emancipation of slavery in 1834.

This thesis has adopted a transatlantic approach that connects Scotland and the West Indies. In particular, these connections are illuminated through the prism of the careers of the young Scotsmen who sojourned to Jamaica and Grenada in particular. This thesis suggests there were increasing levels of emigration to the West Indies in this period and the skilled and educated young men sought economic opportunities not available at home. By examining wealth repatriation in life and post-mortem property transmission strategies, this thesis offers a revision on the view that such young men struggled to repatriate colonial profits. This has implications for the work of Alan Karras and others. The transatlantic approach is developed in case study examinations of Glasgow-West India merchant houses. This connects Scottish banks, commerce and industry with the British Parliament and the planters of the West Indies.

The world of Scottish planters, merchants and sojourners is now becoming increasingly well known. The life, wealth and legacy of the Glasgow West India elite traced here provide innovative insights into their living conditions and material culture. It is further argued that a West India career could propel even those of modest means into the British super-wealthy. Finally, this thesis recognises the contribution of enslaved peoples to the economic development of Scotland which will hopefully stimulate further research in a Scottish-Atlantic context.

Contents

Abstract	i
Contents	ii
List of Tables in Appendix.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. Review of Literature	6
Chapter 2. The Emergence of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’	31
Chapter 3. The financial and commercial networks of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’	53
Chapter 4. ‘Wanted, to serve in the West Indies’: Scots in the plantation economy	83
Chapter 5. The social and political networks of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’	112
Chapter 6. The Glasgow-West India Merchant House of Archibald Smith of Jordanhill	147
Chapter 7. The ‘Glasgow West India interest’ - Life, Wealth and Legacy.....	171
Conclusion.....	196
Appendices	202
Bibliography.....	223

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List of Tables in Appendix

Appendix 1: Transatlantic commodities imported to the Clyde Ports, 1790, 1800 and 1805.....	203
Appendix 2: Analysis of claims for slave compensation from individuals ‘associated’ with Glasgow, 1834–1838.....	204
Appendix 3: Voyages of the Clyde-Caribbean Fleet, 1806-1834.....	205
Appendix 4: Estimated sojourners to the West Indies from the Clyde, 1806-1834.....	206
Appendix 5: Analysis of inventories of 45 Scots in Jamaica, 1776-1838 showing occupational breakdown and capital on death	207
Appendix 6: Analysis of inventories of of 21 Scots in Grenada and Carriacou, 1776-1838 showing occupational breakdown and capital on death	208
Appendix 7: Family residence of Scots in the West Indies, 1776-1838	209
Appendix 8: The Clubs of Glasgow and the ‘West India interest’	210
Appendix 9: Glasgow Chamber of Commerce membership, 1783	211
Appendix 10: Chamber of Commerce membership and ‘Glasgow West India interest’, 1783 and 1806.....	212
Appendix 11: Office Bearers of the Glasgow West India Association (1807-1838) named as Tories	213
Appendix 12: Recorded meetings between Colin Dunlop Donald and Archibald Campbell of Blythswood, 1812-1832	214
Appendix 13: Leitch & Smith investments in the West Indies, 1800-1821	215
Appendix 14: J&A Smith, investments in the West Indies 1827-1866	216
Appendix 15: Overall and average wealth of sixty eight subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association, by decade of death.....	217
Appendix 16: Range of inventories of sixty-eight subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association who died 1807-1884.....	218
Appendix 17: Investments of sixty eight subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association	219
Appendix 18: Investments in merchant firms of twenty eight subscribers to the Glasgow-West India Association, by decade of death.....	220
Appendix 19: Investments in industry of fourteen subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association, 1807-1884.....	221
Appendix 20: Valuation of landed estates owned by subscribers of the Glasgow-West India Association, 1807-1834	222

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Introduction

In his classic text *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), Eric Williams forever altered how historians' view the relationship between Great Britain and her colonies in the West Indies.¹ Indeed by tracing an exploitative global relationship, Williams argued that the profits from the slave colonies provided one of the main streams of accumulation of capital that powered the British industrial revolution. There has been considerable debate about the impact of New World slavery on Great Britain since, a debate that has focused on the effects of the slave trade and colonial trade. However, even detractors now partially accept the main Williams thesis that profits from New World slavery assisted in the industrial development of Great Britain.²

The historiographical legacy of Eric Williams looms large over any study of Glasgow-West India merchants, plantation owners and economic migrants in the colonial period. Although *Capitalism and Slavery* mainly described English connections with the Caribbean, there was a distinctly Caledonian dimension to the thesis. Indeed, although Williams often used the terms England and Great Britain interchangeably, the survey also extended to Scotland. In particular, Williams' case study of Glasgow provided a leading example of a 'great seaport town' that developed on the back of New World slavery. Sugar planters, returned economic migrants and merchants of the city – such as William McDowall - feature prominently in the text. Whilst much of *Capitalism and Slavery* focused on the eighteenth century, Williams commented on Glasgow's long connections with the New World over two hundred years:

Sugar and tobacco underlay the prosperity of the town...colonial commerce stimulated the growth of new industries in the eighteenth century...sugar refining continued as an important industry in the Clyde Valley until the eclipse of the West Indian islands in the middle of the nineteenth century.³

Thus, by citing pre-American Revolutionary Virginia tobacco traders in support of his case regarding Glasgow, Williams pointed to the impact of a wider New World slavery nexus on local industry and commerce particularly sugar refineries and the embryonic banking system.⁴ This thesis outlines focuses on one aspect of this: the direct investments made by the West India entrepreneurs of Glasgow.

Whatever the exact date and causes of the decline of the West India economy in the colonial period, the review of literature demonstrates Glasgow's connections with the West

¹ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Billing and Sons, 1981 edn.).

² For example, see D. Eltis and S. L. Engerman, 'The importance of Slavery and the Slave Trade to Industrializing Britain', *Journal of Economic History*, 60 (2000), pp. 123–144.

³ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, pp.60-64.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.101-102.

Indies were most pronounced towards the end of Caribbean slavery. Indeed, the city's 'West India interest' managed to squeeze vast sugar coated fortunes from the slave colonies long after 1783, some of which was invested across the region. As the dependence on profits from Caribbean slavery decreased, investments in Britain provided new avenues of wealth: landed estates, urban property, manufactories, insurance companies, banks and British railways.

However, this was but a small flow. For many historians, the indirect, multiplier effects of slavery based trades had a more profound impact on British industry and commerce than direct investments. In this thesis, connections with West India merchants and local banking institutions have been traced. Taken together with direct investments, the evidence adds to the existing case that West India commerce contributed to the agricultural and industrial improvement of Glasgow and the surrounding region. This thesis and other historiography should act as a platform for further research into the indirect effects on commerce and finance.

This study, however, is not restricted to an examination of economic investments. Indeed, the social world of the West India elite in Glasgow is also illuminated. The emergence and regeneration of this group - described here as the 'Glasgow West India interest' - will be traced in chapter two. The identities and nature of the merchants, planters and colonial agents who comprised this group will be established. Furthermore, the role and activities of women in this absentee economy - associated with inheritance and marriage strategies - is a key aspect of this thesis and case studies point to a wider involvement than has previously been understood. The social networks and political activities of the 'Glasgow India interest' will be outlined as well as commercial connections. These linkages allowed the rapid accumulation of colonial fortunes which provides the finale of this thesis.

The third chapter explores the legal and economic resources of the 'Glasgow West India interest', and how these were deployed in order to enhance the city's prominent role in the West Indies and increase profits. The implications of Scots law for Glasgow merchant firms are discussed as well as the numbers of firms active during the period 1807 to 1834. Furthermore, the training of West India merchants through commercial education and apprenticeships in the counting houses of the 'Merchant City' will be examined. These processes created a large professional class primed for a mercantile career and the knowledge and skills were also transferable to the plantation economy. Trade connections and communications and networks of credit in the West Indies that underpinned the trades are also mapped. This chapter utilises sources from banking institutions and merchant

brokerage and letter books and supports the view that the rise of banking in the city was inextricably connected with the colonial trades.

The fourth chapter extends this transatlantic approach to trace the artisans and professionals – usually young men described in modern historiography as sojourners – who temporarily left Scotland for the West Indies. This chapter establishes Glasgow as the main Scottish transatlantic trade hub in which the ports of the Clyde acted as the gateway to the West Indies. Estimates of both shipping as well as numbers of sojourners leaving from these ports are provided. New insights into a Glasgow-West India economy are gleaned through an examination of job advertisements in newspapers. These open advertisements suggest that certain skills and experience gained in Scotland – particularly in farming and carpentry – were in great demand in the plantation economy. Merchant firms also recruited individuals from family and friendship networks for positions related to finance. The process of transporting sojourners to the West Indies is traced as well as the indenture system which thirled many young men to plantations on arrival. An examination of Scots who worked, lived and died on two slave islands, Jamaica and Grenada, provides evidence of occupations, wealth generating activities and estimates of accumulated fortunes. Some of this wealth was repatriated in life and sometimes after death through executors.

Chapter five of this thesis reveals the political activities of the ‘Glasgow-West India interest’ and uncovers various layers of conspiracy and collaboration at both regional and national levels. Firstly, the associational culture of social clubs of Glasgow is illuminated. These social networks facilitated close relationships with West India merchants and planters and other prominent individuals in the local community such as bankers and MPs. This thesis also locates the activities of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ into a wider pro-slavery network across the British Atlantic. The Glasgow merchants and planters communicated and collaborated with associates in Bristol, Liverpool and London principally through the powerful lobbying group, the Glasgow West India Association, and colonial agents such as James MacQueen. This thesis also explores the nuances of ‘Glasgow West India interest’ collusion in regional politics. It will be argued that there was a mutually beneficial alliance with the Tory MP for Glasgow, Sir Archibald Campbell of Blythswood, which was consolidated through the secretary of the Glasgow West India Association, Colin Dunlop Donald. This chapter is based upon Association records as well as the private diaries of Dunlop Donald. The alliance between commerce and politics is traced through case studies of specific episodes including the Reform Act of 1832 and the campaign to secure compensation on the emancipation of slavery in 1834.

Chapter six provides a case study examination of the operations of the Glasgow-West India merchant house of the Smiths of Jordanhill. Successive generations were involved with the West Indies trades which underpinned the rise of the family to elite status in Glasgow. The family firm, Leitch & Smith, and their commercial successors, J&A Smith, were involved with commerce in Jamaica and Grenada from 1779 into the 1860s. This chapter demonstrates an integrated transatlantic connection between commerce in the Caribbean and wealth accumulation and industry in Scotland.

Chapter seven examines the life, wealth and legacy of a group of subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association, 1807-1838. In particular, levels of wealth on death will be examined which is placed in a Scottish and British context. Going beyond an examination of industrial investments, this research delves deeper to examine the standard of living and material culture of the Glasgow-West India elite through a case study of Richard Dennistoun in his Kelvingrove mansion which is placed into comparative context by examining household goods of other merchants. This chapter also examines the compensation claims made by the subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association and argues that this group collected the majority of compensation money awarded to individuals in the city. This level of award reveals a prime reason why the vested interests of the Association campaigned so vociferously for compensation in the 1830s. Finally, property transmission strategies will be examined particularly through marriage and inheritance. Indeed, in some cases, great West India fortunes percolated down the generations to rest with elite families who had no connections to the colonies.

This thesis is a history of the Glasgow men who made the West India trades possible and the processes supporting transatlantic commerce and wealth repatriation. Furthermore, it is a regional case study that establishes Glasgow and Clyde ports as the premier Scottish West Indies hub. Although this study makes suggestions of a wider impact on Scotland, it does not offer conclusions on the economic impact of Caribbean slavery on Scotland at a national level. Further quantitative work on trade between Scotland and the West Indies after 1790 should add greater understanding about the true impact. Research already underway on the Highlands will provide comparisons. But what this study makes abundantly clear is that Glasgow was deeply enmeshed in the plantation economies of the British West Indies and that the profits generated by this trade contributed to the commercial and social development of the city and the west of Scotland more generally during the period 1776-1846.

The larger commercial themes come alive by humanising the ‘Glasgow West India interest’, delineating the lives and actions of the men and women who were merchants,

planters, slave-owners and beneficiaries. The exploitation of chattel slaves in the West Indies represents the basis of this study, and indeed the foundation of Scottish economic development in this period, yet both the West Indian slaves and the Glaswegians who owned or profited from their labour remain an almost unseen presence in the city's history. There is very little here about the unknown numbers of men, women and children who laboured on the plantations which allowed merchants and planters to become rich. However, the lynchpin of this study is an acknowledgement of the contribution of enslaved peoples to the development of Scotland.

Chapter 1. Review of Literature

When Adam Smith, Professor of logic and moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow, stated that Britain's colonies represented 'mere loss instead of profit' in *Wealth of Nations*, he could hardly have known he was starting a debate that would continue for over two centuries.¹ Published in 1776 and based on discussions with the great Glasgow 'tobacco lord' Andrew Cochrane, Smith criticised the closed mercantile system that created a mutual monopoly between Great Britain and its colonies in the Americas. For Smith, a portion of the wealth was repatriated by merchants who became rich from trade with the sugar plantations in the West Indies, which he stated were the most profitable of all. However, it was credit that sustained the system as 'the prosperity of the English sugar colonies has been, in a great measure, owing to the great riches of England, of which a part has over-flowed, if one may say so, upon those colonies'.² By contrast, Edmund Burke (after demonstrating commerce with Jamaica had reached unprecedented levels) was unequivocal about the importance of empire. For Burke: 'This colony intercourse is a new world of commerce in a manner created; it stands upon principles of its own; principles hardly worth endangering for any little consideration of extorted revenue'.³ According to Adam Smith, however, the profits were subsidised by the British government and import duties did not fully reimburse the administrative costs and naval investment on which the colonies depended. Thus, whilst West India profits made elite individuals wealthy, it came at a cost to the nation overall.

Karl Marx examined the impact of colonial trade on the metropolis in *Capital* (1867) and described the connection with Empire and British industry. Moreover, he was unequivocal that state sponsored colonial expansion from c.1600 was fundamental to the rise of capitalism in Great Britain:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment of the aboriginal population in mines, the beginning of the conquest and the looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of 'black skins', signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation...They [England] arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g., the colonial system. But, they all employ the power of the State, the concentrated and organised force of society, to hasten, hot-house fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is

¹ A. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998 edn), p.464.

² Ibid., p. 350

³ Edmund Burke, quoted in R. B. Sheridan, 'The Wealth of Jamaica in the Eighteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, 18, 2 (1965), pp. 292–311.

the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power.⁴

This abstract colonial debate between three great philosophers provides an analytical framework with which to assess the historiography of the connections between the West Indies and Great Britain. In spite of over two centuries of examination since, there is no definitive conclusion about the benefits of Empire to the mother country. How did it begin?

The voyages of discovery in the New World initiated an era of expansionist conflict between the dominant European powers of Spain, Portugal, The Netherlands, France and England. Although relative latecomers to the Americas, England eventually established control over a range of colonies which had become known as the 'British Empire' by 1708.⁵ In North America, colonies were established in Virginia (1606), Newfoundland (1610), Bermuda (1611) and New England (1620).⁶ Further south, the tropic of Cancer defined the edge of the European peace treaties which allowed open conflict in the frontier 'beyond the line'. In turn, the Caribbean became a crucible of European maritime wars as the English took advantage of the declining strength of The Netherlands and especially Spain.

For B.W. Higman, the British West Indies were created in three phases of colonial expansion and shaped by voyages of settlement, emigration and trade in conjunction with colonial spoils of war.⁷ In the first phase of the English colonisation, the islands of Barbados (1625) and Jamaica (1655) were settled mainly by English colonists although bolstered with Scots adventurers and indentures who also swept into Leeward Islands of St Kitts (1623), Nevis (1620), Antigua (1632) and Montserrat (1632). For Scots on the make, the second phase colonies were unrestricted after Union in 1707 and opportunities increased after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and especially after the Seven Years War (1756-63). Great Britain gained control of Grenada, Dominica, St Vincent and Tobago (The 'Ceded Islands'), and Trinidad, St Lucia and Demerara were added after victories in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815). The third phase colonies of

⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, (England: Penguin, 1990 edn.), pp.915-6.

⁵ John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America*, 2 vols., (London: 1708).

⁶ Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History: Volume 1: Settlements*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), pp.1-141.

⁷ B.W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, (Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 1995), pp.43-4.

Berbice and Essequibo merged with Demerara in 1831 to become British Guiana and this attracted significant British investment capital at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁸

The colonies themselves were established by diverse interests such as private commercial companies, religious dissenters and state intervention. In his classic account *The Colonial Period of American History*, C.M. Andrews traced the development of English colonies which began as proprietary ventures (commercial organisations exporting individual colonists for profit) and evolved into a defined colonial policy (state sponsored commercial expansion).⁹ For Andrews, the colonial policy of the English crown was set in the aftermath of the Western Design and the expropriation of Jamaica in 1655.¹⁰ Andrew's account was distinct as he viewed the colonies in the Americas as an inter-connected extension of the English world. Andrews also traced the related rise of English mercantilism which he defined as a post-hoc *modus operandi* designed to supply the developing metropolis with goods from pre-existing colonies:

Mercantilism, as this commercial policy came to be called, was not a theory but a condition, an expression in practical form of the experience of those concerned directly with trade and commerce, and indirectly with coinage, credit, interest, and exchange, with banks, customs, and excise, with the naturalization of aliens and the treatment of the poor, the vagrant and the criminal, that is, with all that had to do with the agricultural, commercial, financial and social life of the realm. It was the inevitable accompaniment of a state of society in which foreign trade and commerce were rapidly attaining an ascendancy and were determining the attitude of statesman and merchant alike toward the other material interests of the nation.¹²

Thus, mercantilism shaped the subservient relationship between the colonies and the metropolis and this was enforced through transatlantic legislation.

The Navigation Acts were a legislative framework which governed and regulated the English colonial trade. The acts have sometimes been referred to as the 'pure expression' of mercantilism as a series of related assumptions were reflected in the clauses.¹³ Principally, it was assumed that state power, both political and military, derived from the accumulation of gold and silver bullion. Further, as it was believed global wealth was finite, a positive 'balance of trade' with rival nations was necessary. However, in the

⁸J. R. Ward, 'The British West Indies in the Age of Abolition, 1748-1815' in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 2, ed. P.J. Marshall, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.415.

⁹ Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History: vol. 2, The Settlements*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p.200.

¹⁰ Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History: vol. 3, The Settlements*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p.7.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

¹³ Russell R. Menard, 'Plantation Empire: How Sugar and Tobacco Planters Built their Industries and Raised an Empire', *Agricultural History*, 81/3, (2007), p.316.

early seventeenth century England was importing more manufactured goods than it exported resulting in a loss of bullion which was perceived to strengthen rival states.¹⁴ As such, the first Navigation Act in August 1650 closed off the colonies to foreign traders. A further act, known as the Navigation Ordinance, was passed on 9 October 1651 with the specific aim to drive Dutch merchants out of the colonial carrying trades.¹⁵ After Restoration, it was rescinded although the main characteristics were retained in the Navigation Act of 1660.

National and mercantile interests merged in the Navigation acts from 1660 onwards and they can be broadly defined under four main articles of legislation: (1) maritime laws concerning crew nationality and ownership of ships transporting produce; (2) statutes which defined the destination of ships and colonial produce; (3) laws which encouraged domestic industries and re-exports through a complex system of drawbacks, import and export bounties and export taxes; (4) prohibition of industries in the colonies that would be in direct competition with English industry. In practical terms, the maritime laws were designed to create a mutual trade monopoly between English colonies and the metropolis. Thus, merchants from foreign nations such as The Netherlands (and Scotland at the time) were barred from the carrying trades. Furthermore, by defining destinations of ships, the monopoly ensured that England became the main entrepot for the trade of colonial commodities to Europe (which had implications for Scotland post-Union). All enumerated commodities, which included tobacco from Virginia and sugar from Barbados, had to pass through English ports first which generated revenue through import duties. The outward trade was also regulated; foreign shipping was barred from the English colonies and European goods had to travel via English ports and shipping. The commodity clauses therefore created a huge, regulated export market which encouraged national industry through the export of manufactured goods that were required by colonists, such as clothing.¹⁶

The Navigation Acts defined the maritime trading relationship between merchants and planters. A complementary transatlantic legislative framework evolved which stratified conditions on the plantations and ensured slave labour became the foundation stone on which the British Empire rested. Although slavery had been practiced since *c.* 1636, chattel slavery, an English concept, was given its first legal code in the colony of Barbados in 1661, when 'An act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes' was passed. This

¹⁴ Andrews, *Colonial Period of American History: vol. 4*, pp.318-367.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.36-37.

¹⁶ R.P. Thomas, 'A Quantitative Approach to the Study of the Effects of British Imperial Policy Upon Colonial Welfare: Some Preliminary Findings', *The Journal of Economic History*, 25/4, (December 1965), pp.615-638.

Act was intended to protect slaves from cruel masters and to control slaves. Instead, it provided legal foundation for a hierarchical system where black slaves were classed as property with no right to life. This nefarious act had political blessing from the metropolis as the English Parliament passed a complimentary ‘Act to regulate the Negroes on the Plantations’ in 1667. Simon Newman has recently traced the transition from indentured servitude to chattel slavery in Barbados and argued the early development of the plantation economy was dependent on the exportation of vagrants and the poor as well as criminals and political and religious exiles. Thus, the labour force of the embryonic tobacco and sugar plantations was created by forced and voluntary emigration from Scotland, England and Ireland.¹⁷ White indentured servitude was eventually superseded by African slavery from the 1630s which became entrenched in the colonial legal system. Chattel slavery subsequently developed into a hierarchical system of exploitation initially based on class and subsequently race which evolved into the most lethal form of slavery known to mankind.

The slave codes which followed reflected the planters’ own prejudices as well as the pragmatic economic needs of the plantation system.¹⁸ Black slaves were seen as lazy, child-like and stupid, yet required instruction and physical punishment in order to ensure they worked the sugar fields. Moreover, they were classified as the property of the white master. The slaves were listed as such in plantation inventories next to cattle, with names such as Fido, Caesar and Jumper.¹⁹ The Uterine law meant the offspring of slaves were born into the status of their mother, thus perpetuating the cycle. Mutilation as a punishment was permitted as was murder by hanging, slow burning and starvation in gibbets. Legislation controlled the working and social life of slaves and defined them as sub-human chattel. Slave codes in the British West Indies followed a similar pattern, although with some variation.²⁰ In the longer term, this concept introduced a new dimension of exploitation across the world; Jamaica and Antigua, South Carolina, Virginia and Maryland all adopted slave codes based on the Barbados Act of 1661. Thus, a harsh system of forced labour regulated the production of commodities in the West Indies whilst the Navigation Acts maintained the flow to the metropolis.

The impact of English mercantilism on the colonies has promoted vigorous academic debate, particularly in the context of the American War of Independence. Two

¹⁷ Simon P. Newman, *A New World of Labour: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

¹⁸ Michael Craton, ‘Slavery and Slave Society in the British Caribbean’, in *The Slavery Reader* eds. James Walvin, Gad Heuman, (London: Routledge, 2003), p.105

¹⁹ Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, (London: Verso, 1998), p.324.

²⁰ Craton, ‘Slave Society’, p.104-5

schools of thought have emerged; the Imperial School viewed the system as benign, although the Progressive School termed the relationship as inherently exploitative.²¹ Russell Menard has argued that the Navigation Acts integrated the colonies into the English Atlantic world creating a dynamic economy with a mutually beneficial monopoly. Whilst manufactured goods were forced upon colonists, these were usually the best quality and cheapest available. In short, the development of the English West Indies was not inhibited by the mercantilist tariff system and the colonies ‘grew rapidly’ after 1660,²² although this view is disputed for the later eighteenth century. This is connected to a wider debate that remains controversial today: how profitable was the British West India trade, and what was the impact on the development of Great Britain?

A historiographical debate about the profitability of the British West Indies has been contested for nearly half-century. R.B. Sheridan examined the wealth of Jamaica on the eve of the American Revolution and, by drawing up a ‘balance sheet of empire’, he estimated profits of trade. He concluded that the aggregate wealth of the West Indies was £30 million, with Jamaica comprising sixty per cent (£18 million) of that in 1775. Sheridan concluded the lucrative West India trade contributed as much as ten per cent of British national income in this period, and Jamaica in particular ‘yielded an economic surplus which contributed in no small way to the growth of the metropolitan economy’.²³ This initiated a debate with R. P. Thomas regarding the extent of West India wealth and profits.²⁴ Thomas took up Adam Smith’s hypothesis that the colonies were an economic drain, and adopted a counter-factual approach to argue that the capital deployed in the Caribbean could have produced more profits at less cost elsewhere. For Thomas, whilst the West India trades created vast private wealth, the colonies were not profitable to Great Britain as a whole, given how they were administered.²⁵ Trevor Burnard later estimated wealth estimates of planters in Jamaica. Although he refrained from defining the extent of trade, he revised Sheridan’s estimate of capital stock upwards thus demonstrating Jamaica was the wealthiest British colony on the eve of the American Revolution.²⁶

Philip Coelho added a detailed quantitative analysis to the debate as he measured the costs and benefits of the British West India colonies and trade under the mercantilist

²¹ Larry Sawyers, ‘The Navigation Acts Revisited’, *The Economic History Review*, 45/2, (March 1992), pp.262-284.

²² Menard, ‘Plantation Empire’, p.315.

²³ Sheridan, ‘Wealth of Jamaica’, p. 311.

²⁴ R. B. Sheridan, ‘The Wealth of Jamaica in the Eighteenth Century: A Rejoinder’, *The Economic History Review*, 21, 1 (1968), pp.46–61.

²⁵ R. P. Thomas, ‘The Sugar Colonies of the Old Empire: Profit or Loss for Great Britain?’, *The Economic History Review*, 21, 1 (1968), pp. 30–45.

²⁶ Trevor Burnard, ‘Prodigious Riches: the wealth of Jamaica before the American Revolution’, *The Economic History Review*, 54/3, (August 2001), pp.506-524.

system, which he compared to a counterfactual free trade economy. Whilst Sheridan outlined the colonies were marginally profitable and Thomas marginally unprofitable, Coelho argued they came at a net cost of £1 million per annum during 1768-1772. These findings are consistent with the view of Adam Smith that the British government subsidised the West India trades, which were underwritten by high sugar prices paid by consumers and the taxpayer. Coelho argued the real ‘winners’ were the merchants and planters who organised themselves in powerful lobbying groups in order to maintain the accumulation of vast private fortunes.²⁷

Studies of these merchants and planters have traced the accumulation of West India fortunes that were sometimes invested in Britain. Richard Pares initially agreed that colonisation was dependant on metropolitan capital. In 1937, he stated that ‘since the colonies absorbed as much capital as they could get, they cannot have done much to build up capital in England and thereby to promote the Industrial Revolution...the planters themselves seem to have been recipients of capital rather than sources’.²⁸ However, in 1960, at the end of a pre-eminent research career, Pares radically shifted position as he argued that the Caribbean plantations generated their own wealth:

The profits of the plantations were the source which fed the indebtedness charged upon the plantations themselves. In this sense, Adam Smith was wrong: the wealth of the British West Indies did not all proceed from the mother country; after some initial loans in the earliest period which merely primed the pump, the wealth of the West Indies was created out of the profits of the West Indies themselves, and, with some assistance from the British taxpayer, much of it found a permanent home in Great Britain.²⁹

The work that perhaps initiated the shift in the Pares interpretation was *A West India Fortune* (1950), a magisterial account of the Pinney family of Bristol.³⁰ Pares traced the long term involvement of the Pinneys, who first went to the West Indies as traders in 1685, became plantation owners in Nevis, before returning to open a merchant house in Bristol after 1783. Pares outlined the establishment of a family firm, their involvement with West India shipping, finance and repatriation of capital. In the early nineteenth century, the main income of the Pinney merchant house came from interest from loans to planters in St Kitts and Nevis as the extension of credit underwrote their sugar trading.³¹ In this sense, they

²⁷ P. Coelho, ‘The Profitability of Imperialism: The British Experience in the West Indies, 1768-1772’, *Explorations in Economic History*, 10, 3 (1973), pp. 253–80.

²⁸ Richard Pares, ‘The Economic Factors in the History of Empire’, in *The Historian’s Business and other essays*, by Richard Pares, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p.61.

²⁹ Richard Pares, ‘Merchants and Planters’, *Economic History Review Supplement*, No.4, (Cambridge: 1960), p.50.

³⁰ Richard Pares, *A West India Fortune*, (Bristol: Longmans, Green and Co., 1950).

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.239.

were principally merchant financiers in the colonies as well sugar traders and plantation owners. The text also highlights the elusive nature of tracing fortunes in the early modern period; profits that indirectly seeped into the commercial infrastructure such as insurance schemes and financial institutions are difficult to trace and the multiplier effects are probably impossible to measure. However, private wealth was directly repatriated by landed families, merchants and sojourners and invested in land, industry and agricultural schemes. Transatlantic merchants facilitated the transfer of capital into neighbouring manufactories through vertical integration; they combined colonial trades, sugar works, shipping, banking, insurance, cotton, and eventually heavy industry.

Richard Pares also examined the papers of the Lascelles merchant dynasty. Eventually published in 1957, *A London West India Merchant House* traced the activities of the family mainstay, Henry Lascelles, who was in Barbados as a merchant and controller of customs in 1698. On his return home, he remained an absentee planter although concentrated on mercantile activities with interests in shipping, insurance, manufactured goods for export and sugar imports. They also accepted bills of exchange and loaned mortgages to correspondents. Henry Lascelles was ultimately a successful colonist who invested in land and public funds; he left a will of £284,000 in 1753, much of which was passed to his sons.³² In this way, the West India merchants integrated the plantations in the Caribbean with the British economy. S.D. Smith has recently re-visited the House of the Lascelles in a broader approach. Smith partly based the wider study on a database of mortgages laid out by the Lascelles in the Caribbean and subsequently disputed the Pares interpretation.³³ Smith followed this up with a thorough examination of the available material on the Lascelles, whom he termed ‘gentry capitalists’, aristocrats who specialised in landed estates in Britain as well as Caribbean plantations.³⁵

But what was the impact on the metropolis?

At the beginning of the twentieth century, historians in the British imperial school adopted a romantic view of colonial policy and the historiography of empire reflected this. The establishment of the British West Indies was viewed as an unfortunate era that resulted in a drain on European capital which was consistent with the authority of Adam Smith. In this ‘Eurocentric’ view, British imperialism was essentially a civilising mission, exemplified by

³² Richard Pares, ‘A London West India Merchant House, 1740-1769’, in *The Historian’s Business and other essays*, by Richard Pares, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp.198-226.

³³ S.D. Smith, ‘Merchants and Planters revisited’, *The Economic History Review*, 55/3, (2002), pp.434-465.

³⁵ S.D. Smith, *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: the world of the Lascelles, 1648-1834*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

colonial liberating ‘achievements’ and economic loss.³⁶ The abolition of slavery was viewed as the crowning achievement of Great Britain’s moral imperialism and the rise of humanitarian forces was accepted to have ended the nefarious system. The publication of *Capitalism and Slavery* by Eric Williams in 1944 however, initiated a long term debate which altered historians’ views towards British imperialism and particularly the relationship between New World slavery and industrialisation.³⁷

Eric Williams, with his mentor C.L.R. James (both Trinidadians educated in England) were the first historians to approach Caribbean slavery from a Marxist perspective. In particular, Williams defined an exploitative global relationship in which the slave colonies were crucial to the development of Great Britain. This placed them in their rightful place at the heart of transatlantic imperialism in the Americas,³⁸ which has remained an important field in early modern American studies for over a generation.³⁹ Subsequently, the dominant modern view is consistent with government administrators in the colonial period who also viewed the British West Indies and British North America as the same polity.⁴⁰

Williams had four main theses: racism was a consequence of slavery, not the cause; that the slave trade and commerce with the slave economies fuelled the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain; that the slave economies went into terminal decline after the American Revolution ended in 1783; and that the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and the abolition of slavery in 1833 was based on economic motivations as opposed to the rise of humanitarian agitation. Taken together, Williams’ arguments were both revolutionary and controversial as he ‘struck a vital nerve at the ideological core of Western historiography’.⁴¹ Whilst the text was immediately criticised and has been continually attacked since due to methodology, lack of systematic data and perceived exaggerations, the book retains some historiographical importance.⁴² This study of Glasgow West India merchants and sojourners in the British transatlantic world has implications for the second Williams thesis.

³⁶ Selwyn H.H. Carrington, ‘Capitalism and Slavery and Caribbean Historiography: An Evaluation’, *The Journal of African American History*, 88/3 (2003), pp.304-312.

³⁷ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (London: Billing and Sons, 1981 edn.).

³⁸ Russell R. Menard, ‘Reckoning with Williams: Capitalism and Slavery and the Reconstruction of Early American History’, *Callaloo*, 20/4, (1997), p.791.

³⁹ Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).

⁴⁰ Burnard, ‘Prodigious Riches’, p.508.

⁴¹ Cedric J. Robinson, ‘Capitalism, Slavery and Bourgeois Historiography’, *History Workshop*, 23, (1987), p.128.

⁴² Carrington, ‘Capitalism and Slavery and Caribbean Historiography’, p.304.

The platform for Williams' argument was that slavery was 'colour-blind' and based in labour requirements of the burgeoning plantations. As evidence, he traced the development of the early colonial system that exploited brown Amerindians, white indentured servants from Scotland, England and Ireland and finally black chattel slaves from Africa.⁴³ Early colonists struggled to develop a profitable system of agriculture in the 1630s and subsequently constructed a coerced system of labour which stratified black Africans as sub-human property thirled to the plantation for life. The racial hierarchy of chattel slavery rationalised the forced system of economic exploitation. Subsequently, the second thesis radically altered the heroic narrative of British industrialisation. Williams was clear that both the slave trade and associated commerce boosted the Industrial Revolution:

By 1750, there was hardly a trading or manufacturing town in England which was not in some way connected with the triangular or direct colonial trade. The profits provided one of the main streams of accumulation of capital in England which financed the Industrial Revolution.⁴⁴

However, Williams did not view Caribbean slavery as the causal factor: 'it must not be inferred that the triangular trade was solely and entirely responsible for the economic development. The growth of the internal market in England, the ploughing-in of profits from industry to generate still further capital and achieve greater expansion, played a large part'.⁴⁵ In the third thesis, (which has become known as the 'decline thesis') Williams followed in the footsteps of his mentor Lowell Ragatz, as he maintained that Caribbean slavery was unprofitable due to over-production and debt after 1783. Indeed, Ragatz maintained in *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean* that the colonies were a drain on the British economy after this period.⁴⁶ As causal factors, Ragatz outlined inefficient agricultural practices on sugar plantations, planter debt and diminishing profits in Great Britain due to a glut in sugar production after the addition of the Ceded Islands of Grenada, St Vincent and Tobago. This had significant implications for the planters and merchants who operated in a closed monopoly, especially after the American colonies broke free of British mercantilist chains in 1783 which in turn closed several export markets.⁴⁷ The fourth Williams thesis followed from the 'decline thesis' and proposed that the abolition of the slave trade and slavery itself were economically motivated decisions by

⁴³ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, pp.3-29.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.52.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.105-6.

⁴⁶ Lowell Ragatz, *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763-1833*, (New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1928).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.111-203.

the policy makers in the British Government. The humanitarian movement was but a minor influence. As the profits of Caribbean slavery declined towards the middle of the nineteenth century they were replaced with the industrial wealth. In short, New World slavery and mercantilism assisted with the development of industrial capitalism which then destroyed the system on which it was based.

The view that the slave economy was crucial to the development of Great Britain has generated a significant historiography, particularly the impact of the maritime trade in slaves. Williams, of course, stated that the profits of the slave trade represented one of the 'main streams of accumulation' that financed the Industrial Revolution.⁴⁸ The most damaging critique of Ragatz-Williams 'decline thesis' was the work of Seymour Drescher, who argued there was no economic basis for the abolition of the slave trade or slavery and in fact both were still highly profitable in 1807. Thus, by adopting a detailed statistical argument Drescher described the humanitarian triumph as *Econocide*.⁴⁹ Other micro-studies supported this argument, including J.R. Ward, who examined a sample of twenty British controlled plantations in the period 1650-1834.⁵⁰

Recent works have interpreted the main Williams thesis with a wider lens and it has gained support in recent years. David Beck Ryden has revised the 'decline thesis' in a detailed prosopographical account of the London Society of West India Planters and Merchants. Whilst he argued that Williams was wrong on a number of points, this did not take away from his key argument that economic decline based on the over-supply of sugar was a key factor in the abolition of the slave trade. However, whilst Williams suggested this was due to long term structural inefficiencies, Beck Ryden has argued this was due to the 'collapse of a speculative mania'.⁵¹

There is now a mature - yet inconclusive - historiography regarding the impact on English industrialisation,⁵² although at least a 'weak' version of the principal Williams thesis (that slavery had a vital impact on industrialising Britain) is now accepted by detractors. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman hypothesised that chattel slavery could have contributed to British economic development in three ways. The first, extreme position – which not even Eric Williams adhered to – suggests the nation would not have

⁴⁸ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p.52.

⁴⁹ Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

⁵⁰ J.R. Ward, 'The Profitability of Sugar Planting in the British West Indies, 1650-1834', *The Economic History Review*, 31/2, (1978), pp.210-213.

⁵¹ David Beck Ryden, *West India Slavery and British Abolition, 1783-1807*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.18.

⁵² Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic trade and the British Economy, 1600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

industrialised without contact with the slave economies. The opposite hypothesis is Great Britain would have industrialised in the same manner and during the same period in any case. The ‘middle ground’ suggests that whilst slavery was not fundamental to British industrialisation, trades based upon it were more important to the economy than domestic industries or other foreign sectors between 1750 and 1830. Eltis and Engerman examined the sugar trade in order to test the middle position and concluded that whilst it was a key part of the British economy, it was not more important than others. Furthermore, the role of sugar as an ‘engine of economic growth’ was not comparable to other domestic industries which had a powerful impact on the industrialisation process. Nonetheless, they conceded at least a ‘weak’ version of the middle position that, whilst slavery was not the cause of the British industrial revolution, ‘It certainly “helped” that Revolution along, but its role was no more than that of many other economic activities, and in the absence of any one of these it is hard to believe that the Industrial Revolution would not have occurred anyway’.⁵³ By contrast, in a detailed body of quantitative evidence, Joseph Inikori powerfully reinforced the Williams thesis that slavery and overseas trade were the principal influence on a ‘commercial revolution’ in England. For Inikori, commerce with slave-based economies in an Atlantic system dependant on chattel slavery – including Spain and Portugal – had significant multiplier effects not only on English industrialisation but also shipping and the commercial and financial infrastructure.⁵⁴

There have been many criticisms of the Inikori text, however, particularly a roundtable in 2003. He was criticised for methodology and for positioning slavery as a causal factor in early British industrialisation. One critic, John Singleton argued the cotton industry would have developed in the absence of slavery, perhaps through a counterfactual relationship with India.⁵⁵ However, Pat Hudson provided some support by pointing to the importance of regional dynamics. She has recently elaborated on views put forward in her earlier work, *The Industrial Revolution*. After evaluating the impact of both the direct profits and the indirect effects of slavery on regional industrialisation from the 1780s to the 1830s and beyond, Hudson concludes that ‘slave-enhanced profits, together with the multiplier effects of slave-related activities and the capital and the credit that they

⁵³ D. Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman, ‘The importance of Slavery and the Slave Trade to Industrializing Britain’, *Journal of Economic History*, 60 (2000), pp. 123–144.

⁵⁴ Joseph Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁵⁵ Inikori, Behrendt et al, ‘Roundtable’, *Journal of International Maritime History*, 15 (2003), pp.279-361.

generated, formed a very significant impetus in the expansion of the British economy'.⁵⁶ Evidently, the debate has some way to go.

The unresolved English debate sets a number of questions for the incipient historiography of the integrated Scottish Atlantic. Who were the real 'winners' of the Scottish-West India trades? And would Scotland – with a smaller and less diverse economy than England – have developed at the same rate or within the same timescale in the absence of contact with the new world? The concept of 'The Scottish Empire' was introduced by the Nationalist leader Andrew Dewar Gibb in 1937 as he outlined the extensive imperial involvement of Scots. Gibb argued that whilst England profited, Scottish involvement limited national development as it prohibited more lucrative investment and trading opportunities in Europe.⁵⁷ Thus, he put forward a counterfactual hypothesis that the Scottish Empire actually retarded national growth. From 1937 until around the 1970s, however, there was minimal research on the Scottish involvement in the colonies and the debate about Empire was forgotten, perhaps in part due to 'an acute sense of imperial amnesia'.⁵⁸

The imperial amnesia has obscured the Scottish involvement in plantation slavery, the very foundation of colonialism. This aspect of the national colonial past remains a contentious issue. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and the *asiento* (settlement) opened up slaving opportunities in the Spanish colonies to Scots, although this is under-researched. It is now accepted that Scots had a limited role in the transatlantic slave trade, with only 31 recorded voyages directly involved in the period 1706-1766. It should also be noted that 'tramping voyages' were common, where ships travelled to Europe could later become a slave voyage. Whilst the number of direct Scottish slave voyages is probably underestimated, other circumstantial evidence supports the view that it was a low scale enterprise.⁵⁹

Although the total is insignificant compared to the English ports, the limited Scottish role in the direct trade has meant the impact of the plantation economy has been disregarded. The detached nature of what was essentially a trading relationship based on the exploitation of forced labour means that the contribution of the slaves has typically

⁵⁶ Pat Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1992); 'Slavery, the slave trade and economic growth: a contribution to the debate', in *Emancipation and the remaking of the British Imperial world*, ed. by Catherine Hall, Nick Draper, Keith McClelland, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p.51.

⁵⁷ Andrew Dewar Gibb, *The Scottish Empire*, (London: Alexander MacLehose, 1937).

⁵⁸ T.M. Devine, 'Imperial Scotland', in *Scotland and the Union 1707-2007*, ed. T.M. Devine, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p.113.

⁵⁹ Mark Duffill, 'The Africa trade from the ports of Scotland, 1706–66', *Slavery & Abolition*. 25/3, (2004), pp.102-122.

been omitted. For example, the Glasgow-Virginia tobacco trade was described as: ‘a self-contained matter of purchase and re-export, but it stimulated the growth of financial institutions and local industry. It was a well-deserved success story’.⁶⁰ Similarly, it was common in late twentieth century historiography to view Scottish economic development and societal changes during the ‘great leap forward’ from 1750 in isolation from imperial activities.

Nevertheless, historians are now approaching this area in a far more systematic fashion. Yet, it was American scholars who ensured the study of Scots in the Caribbean came back in vogue. Whilst Richard Sheridan, Alan Karras and David Hancock documented the activities of Scots in the Caribbean, Scottish historians almost disregarded this past. In 1977, Richard Sheridan identified a pervasive Scottish presence across the West Indies where young men took up positions as bookkeepers, overseers, merchants, planters, doctors and local officeholders.⁶¹ Alan Karras also examined Scots in the West Indies in his seminal text *Sojourners in the Sun*.⁶² In 1997, David Hancock focused on London Scots with Caribbean connections. David Hancock documented the activities of Richard Oswald and his Scottish associates in London in the period 1735-1785. In *Citizens of the World*, Hancock outlined how Richard Oswald and other Scottish merchants were at the ‘commanding heights’ of the British slave trade when they owned Bance Island, a slave trade entrepot off the coast of Sierra Leone. More crucially in the terms of this thesis, Hancock explained how merchants on the ‘periphery’ of the metropolis integrated the Atlantic economy, leading to the eventual improvement of Scotland. After making his fortune in London, Oswald retired to Auchincruive in Ayrshire and built a huge mansion house as well as improving the transport system.⁶³

With research already underway on Scots in the Caribbean, two books published in the early years of the new millennium marked a shift in academic interest. Michael Fry revived the concept of *The Scottish Empire* in 2001. In his mainly unreferenced narrative, Fry argued that specialist industries developed from 1700 onwards to process slave-grown commodities, tobacco, sugar and cotton.⁶⁴ T.M. Devine followed with *Scotland’s Empire*. He outlined various benefits of the colonial trade, although admitted the true relationship with the economy of eighteenth century Scotland remains unclear.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, he

⁶⁰ Rosalind Mitchison, *A History of Scotland*, (Guildford: Routledge, 2002), p.328

⁶¹ Richard B. Sheridan, ‘The Role of Scots in the Economy and Society of the West Indies’, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 292, (1977), p.98.

⁶² Allan Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun*, (USA, Cornell Press, 1992)

⁶³ David Hancock, *Citizens of the world: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735-1785*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁶⁴ Michael Fry, *The Scottish Empire*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), p.72.

⁶⁵ T.M. Devine, *Scotland’s Empire 1680-1815*, (London: Penguin, 2004), p.326.

argued that imperialism and its economic foundation, chattel slavery, was not only privately profitable but was a significant contributor to economic and agricultural development. As such, modern historiography continues to undermine Adam Smith.

The new transatlantic approach amongst Scottish historians is perhaps exemplified by the career of T.M. Devine who recently apologised: ‘Mea Culpa, Mea Maxima Culpa’ for the omission of chattel slavery in his landmark study *The Tobacco Lords*, first published in 1975.⁶⁶ Whilst Devine subsequently acknowledged that slave plantations provided the basis for the West India trade in his study of Glasgow West India merchants, his later work on the Scottish involvement in slavery represented a shift in focus.⁶⁷ Indeed, Devine recently posed the far from rhetorical question ‘did slavery make Scotia great?’ He now argues that Scotland ‘could provide more fertile ground’, for historians in the Williams school who seek to establish that slavery had a profound impact on Scottish industrialisation, as it was a relatively poor society in 1750 which underwent rapid growth whilst dependent on slave economies for raw materials such as sugar and cotton, external markets for exports and capital transfers to the burgeoning industries in manufacturing, mining and agriculture. At the same time, Devine concedes his question is based on limited evidence and in particular, Scottish connections with the slave plantations in the West Indies have received limited examination.⁶⁸

Whilst Scottish-West India connections have received scant attention from historians, an existing body of research provides context. There is an established historiography on the Scottish merchant fraternity before the Union particularly in the premier Atlantic port of Glasgow. Foreign trade was long seen as an economic panacea, which perhaps promoted an entrepreneurial mind-set in the city. Glasgow was granted Royal Burgh status by the King in 1611 and the legal framework served to confirm pre-existing trade privileges.⁶⁹ There was an organisation of traders in Glasgow from 1605, when a Letter of the Guildry set out the constitution of the Merchants House. The privileged status of burgher and guild brother carried great social distinction and entry was strictly regulated, not least through nepotism.⁷⁰ Whilst sons of registered merchants were allowed to join, apprentices were recruited from family networks. Moreover, high entry fees and the seven year duration of apprenticeship meant opportunities were closed for

⁶⁶ T.M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords: a study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities, 1740-1790*, (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1975), p.52.

⁶⁷ T.M. Devine ‘An Eighteenth Century Business Elite, 1740-1815’, *Scottish Historical Review*, (1978), p.44.

⁶⁸ T.M. Devine, ‘Did Slavery Make Scotia Great?’, *Britain and the World*, 4/1, (2011), p.40-64.

⁶⁹ T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People*, (London: Fontana, 1972), p.147

⁷⁰ T.M. Devine, ‘The Scottish Merchant Community, 1680-1740’, in *The Origin and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, eds. R.H Campbell, A.S Skinner, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), p.29.

most. Probably the greatest barriers were initial capital requirements and reputation: only those merchants with finance, experience as well as contacts in the Americas could undertake high risk transatlantic voyages which were usually funded with the assistance of credit.⁷¹ It is no surprise then that colonial merchants were an elite group within an elite sector; of the 500 merchants in Glasgow in 1680, only 125 were devoted to overseas trade.⁷² This was viewed as a long term venture by many and the development of Port Glasgow ensured the city became the principal embarkation point for the New World.

There was some Scottish settlement in the Americas prior to the Union of 1707. For example, there was a distinctly ‘British’ character to the proprietary settlement of the Leewards and especially Barbados from 1629, exemplified by the ‘Scotland’ district on the island.⁷³ From 1650 however, the nature of Scottish settlement changed as political exiles, criminals and indentured servants were banished or sold in the colonies. Nonetheless, there was also a commercial element to this involvement as the Scottish Privy Council approved this type of emigration as it transplanted Scots into the plantation economy of Antigua and especially Jamaica after 1655.⁷⁴ At the same time, Scotland was at once nominally part of an embryonic English Atlantic world with some trading privileges, yet the nation was denied unrestricted access. Despite sharing the same monarch from 1603, Scotland was effectively classed as a ‘foreign nation’ from 1660. The maritime regulations of the Navigation Acts stipulated three quarters of ship crews had to be English born whilst Scottish ports were excluded from landing produce.⁷⁵ Issues of security in the context of European wars and the involvement of ‘foreign’ Scots in the colonies added to the growing constitutional conflict between Scotland and England. In negotiations leading up the Incorporating Union of 1707, Scotland was offered free trade in return for surrendering its sovereignty.

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 invited King William III to the throne of England and Scotland. This opened up Empire which initiated great economic and societal change. For Allan Macinnes, the Union gave Scots access to the largest common market in history up to then and opened a dazzling array of opportunities for Scots in war, manufactures (both materials and markets) and trade in the established English Empire.⁷⁷ In the

⁷¹T.M. Devine, ‘The Merchant Class of the Larger Scottish Towns in the Later Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries’, in *Exploring the Scottish Past*, (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1995), p.18-23.

⁷²T.C. Smout, ‘The Glasgow Merchant Community in the Seventeenth Century’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 47/143 (1968). pp.53-70.

⁷³ Allan I. Macinnes, *Union and Empire: The Making of the United Kingdom in 1707*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.147.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.152-3.

⁷⁵ Eric Graham, *A Maritime History of Scotland 1650-1790*, (England: Tuckwell Press, 2002), p.14.

⁷⁷ Macinnes, *Union and Empire*, p.325.

Caribbean, Scots adventurers built on long term connections in the first phase colonies. Sugar was the mainstay of the economy although the merchant class shifted commercial focus to the Chesapeake and tobacco after 1740. T.M. Devine's *The Tobacco Lords* remains an important account of colonial merchants and their impact on regional development. Devine adopted a prosopographical approach to examine a group of merchants in Glasgow who traded with the colonial planter class in the Chesapeake region, 1740-1790. Elite merchants monopolised the trade of tobacco in the British Atlantic world, and indeed cornered the global market during the period known as Glasgow's 'golden age'. Devine outlined how a newly formed 'plantocracy class' based their commercial success on landed enterprise at home as well as colonial trading, which in turn led to investments in Scottish industry and agriculture.⁷⁸

The 'tobacco lords' based their commercial success on a sharp set of business practices known as the 'store system'. This system was in contrast to the methods utilised by the larger English West India merchant houses such as the Lascelles in Barbados and the English tobacco traders in the Chesapeake region. Principally, the commission method involved the planters employing established merchants in the colonies to deliver their plantation produce to Great Britain for sale. The transatlantic merchants took commission on the sales of produce, and the profits were reimbursed to the planter or more typically used to pay off debts on a cash account, which was carried over on an annual basis. The key point is that the produce was owned by the planters until sale in the British market; therefore, the burden of risk, insurance and freight costs as well as port duties lay solely with the planter class. By contrast, the store system involved the direct purchase of plantation produce in the colonies, usually to pay for manufactured goods, which brought further profits for the merchant. At the end of the long growing cycle of the tobacco plant, the indebted planters had little option but to sell their produce to the store in order to address the debt.⁷⁹ For Phillip Rossner, this was a 'sophisticated and innovative forward purchasing system' which allowed Glasgow merchants to set purchasing prices of tobacco in Virginia as well as the price of manufactured goods made in Scotland.⁸⁰

The 'store system' then, was more suited to merchants who did not like to lay out large scale cash credit to planters. Moreover, arriviste Scottish merchants faced other barriers when they gained legal access to the thriving English colonies after 1707; in addition to their 'alien' ethnicity, they had no established mercantile reputation with the

⁷⁸ Devine, *Tobacco Lords*, pp.18-34.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.55-6.

⁸⁰ T.M. Devine, Phillip R. Rossner, 'Scots in the Atlantic Economy, 1600-1800', in *Scotland and the British Empire*, eds. John MacKenzie, T.M. Devine, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.39-40.

wealthy tobacco planters who were already tied into agreements with the larger English merchant houses. The Scottish merchants, therefore, adopted innovative methods to gain control of the lucrative Virginia tobacco trade. Principally, they built large stores in the rural hinterlands of the Chesapeake region in order to reach the smaller planters and access the best tobacco at source. Whilst they sometimes purchased produce with cash to attract new business, they paid higher prices to those who accepted the barter of goods.⁸¹ The exchange of goods promoted an urban economy in Glasgow that developed solely to serve the needs of the planter class. Indeed, around ninety new factories producing goods such as rope, sail-cloth, leather, glass, textiles as well as brewers and pottery works were established near the Trongate by Glasgow colonial merchants in the period 1700-1815.⁸² Through the extension of the 'store system', Glasgow's tobacco merchants came to dominate the global trade of tobacco.⁸³ Following the American War of Independence however, the Virginia tobacco imports declined as the colonials took control of their own trade. In turn, the Scottish 'plantocracy' class consolidated their existing Caribbean interests.

There was increasing Scottish emigration to the West Indies in the period 1750-1800, although there remains controversy over estimated numbers. This will be examined in chapter four of this thesis. There is some historiography of Scots in first phase English colonies, especially Jamaica. The Clan Campbell established a huge patronage network by infiltrating the island after the Darien scheme collapsed although the Argyll colony was not fully established until after the Treaty of Utrecht. The most important text is Alan Karras' classic *Sojourners in the Sun*, which began as a case study of Alexander Johnston a doctor who emigrated from Aberdeen to Jamaica in 1763.⁸⁴ Karras estimated that 10 per cent of landowners in Jamaica in 1754 were Scottish on the basis of surnames.⁸⁵ From the same source held at Kew, Richard Sheridan estimated the proportion was as high as 25 per cent.⁸⁶ The Sheridan figure is consistent with the view of contemporary commentators, especially Edward Long who famously quantified the sheer prevalence of Scots in 1774.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Devine, *Tobacco Lords*, p.58.

⁸² T.M. Devine, 'Colonial commerce and the Scottish economy, c. 1730-1815' in *Comparative aspects of Scottish and Irish economic and social history, 1600-1900*, eds. L.M. Cullen, T.C. Smout, (Edinburgh, 1977) p.178.

⁸³ T.M. Devine, 'Industrialisation', in *The Transformation of Scotland: The Economy since 1700*, ed. by T.M. Devine, C.H. Lee, G.C. Peden, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p.53.

⁸⁴ Alan Karras, 'The World of Alexander Johnston: The Creolization of Ambition, 1762-1787', *The Historical Journal*, 30/1 (1987), pp. 53-76

⁸⁵ Karras, *Sojourners*, p.54.

⁸⁶ Richard Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, (U.S.: Canoe Press, 2000), p.369-70.

⁸⁷ Edward Long, *A History of Jamaica* vol. 2, (London: 1774), p.287.

There are some documented Scottish plantation owners in Jamaica in 1774. Through marriage to a rich widow in 1734, Robert Hamilton of the Hamiltons of Clongall, Ayrshire, took control of Rozelle in Thomas in the Vale and Pemberton Valley in St Mary's. Across a long lifecycle of ownership past emancipation in 1834, the plantations fuelled the improvement of Ayrshire estates. Similarly, Dr Patrick Douglas owned Ayr Mount in Portland, which was Robert Burns' intended destination before his poetry became commercially successful and he travelled to Edinburgh instead of Jamaica.⁸⁸ Karras examined Robert Stirling, a scion of the Stirlings of Keir and Cawder, who sojourned to Jamaica in 1748 to become a plantation owner. Karras' implicit argument is the plantations were unprofitable over the longer term mainly due to the difficulties of converting West India property (land and slaves) into capital that could be repatriated to Scotland.⁸⁹

However, as will be shown in chapter three, the West India merchant houses in Glasgow were perfectly situated to profit and did so irrespective of plantation profitability. By focusing on trade in imports and exports, they maintained a 'hands-off' role that allowed them to accumulate colonial capital without the costs, risks and labour associated with plantation management. An examination of the associates in West India merchant houses will therefore identify significant streams of capital. Indeed, it has been possible to trace individual co-partners resident in Scotland and sojourners who returned home from the West Indies.

Sugar planting in Jamaica was but one method of capital accumulation; the wider economy offered other opportunities. Karras argues that a career in the plantation economy was equally profitable and certainly more secure which explains why younger sons of the gentry without prospects of a landed estate temporarily emigrated.⁹⁰ However, whilst they hoped to accumulate wealth as quickly as possible before returning to purchase their own country mansion, not all succeeded. Scots sojourners were employed as professionals servicing the sugar economy; merchant, doctors, attorneys and planters. Sojourners with a lower educational standard became apprentices, book-keepers and over-seers.⁹¹ The ultimate aim for many was to purchase land and slaves and become an absentee plantation owner.⁹² B.W. Higman has recently argued that there was a hierarchy of wage earning, although attorneys occupied a privileged position: successful types might accumulate

⁸⁸ Eric Graham, *Burns and the Sugar Plantocracy of Ayrshire*, (Ayr: Ayrshire Monographs, 2009).

⁸⁹ Karras, *Sojourners*, p.76-7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.76-7.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.10-11.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.58-60.

£10,000 a year through wages and commissions. Many moved through a career from overseer, attorney and eventually plantation owner.⁹³

Scots in Jamaica sometimes adopted several roles simultaneously. Allan Macinnes traced the activities of the Malcolms of Poltalloch in Jamaica. They operated as absentee plantation owners, rentiers of slaves and store keepers from 1750. The improvement of their estates in Argyll, Scotland can be directly linked to profits from the West Indies in the 1770s. Macinnes has argued they undertook a range of entrepreneurial activities in a 'store system', similar to the tobacco merchants in the Chesapeake. Nonetheless, it is apparent the Malcolms were involved not only in plantation management and the barter of sugar, rum and goods; they also loaned mortgages and advanced credit to other plantation owners. They even expanded across Central America to the Honduras as well as Caribbean expansion in Tobago and Antigua.⁹⁴

Similar to the Jamaica settlement, Scots established themselves in other first phase colonies. St Kitts was settled in 1623, and there was an established 'Scots Lot' from 1644 which provided employment for sojourners such as Robert Cunningham.⁹⁵ He arrived in 1685 and worked as a book-keeper before expanding into plantation management.⁹⁶ Other Scottish residents included William McDowall and James Milliken who travelled to St Kitts and Nevis in the 1690s. McDowall took various roles in the slave economies: he was an overseer, merchant, attorney and eventually plantation owner. After returning to Glasgow, the family merchant house evolved into Alexander Houston and Co., the pre-eminent sugar merchants in Scotland in 1800.⁹⁷ In this way, the repatriation of West India wealth can be traced by following the path of successful sojourners.

A recent study has added new insights into activities in the first phase Leewards, Antigua and Montserrat. Natalie Zacek has challenged the view that white settler societies in the initial colonies failed. She has approached the settlement of the islands from the perspective of the white ruling class - including the Irish on Montserrat and 'marginal' Scots on Antigua - who adopted a powerful role despite their ethnicity. Zacek argued that Scots overcame their modest status to exert disproportionate influence, assisted by a

⁹³ B.W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy*, (Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2008), p.83-4.

⁹⁴ Allan I. Macinnes, 'Scottish Gaeldom from Clanship to Commercial Landlordism, c.1600-1850', in *Scottish Power Centres from the Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, eds. A.I. Macinnes, S.M. Foster, R.K. MacInnes, (Glasgow: Cruithne Press, 1998), pp.162-90.

⁹⁵ Tom Barclay, Eric Graham, *The Early Transatlantic Trade of Ayr 1640-1730* (Wiltshire: Cromwell Press, 2005), p.13

⁹⁶ Graham, *Burns and the Sugar Plantocracy*, pp.72-93.

⁹⁷ Stuart Nisbet, 'That Nefarious Commerce – St Kitts Slavery and the West of Scotland', *Proceedings of Caribbean Studies Conference*, (2008), pp.1-19.

‘marked tendency’ to find employment and opportunities for acquaintances and kin.⁹⁸ Indeed, Scots eventually dominated the medical profession as well as Antiguan society; there were thirteen great families of Scottish descent in Antigua between 1707 and 1786.⁹⁹

After the Seven Years War ended in 1763, Scots flooded into the second phase colonies of Grenada, Dominica, St Vincent and Tobago as well as Trinidad. The most important work is Douglas Hamilton’s *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750-1820*. Heavily influenced by the work of Karras, the text similarly examined the West Indies through the prism of the careers of Scottish sojourners. For Hamilton, commercial networks provided opportunities in the form of jobs and advancement, as well as economic security which facilitated credit through partnerships:

In utilising the kinship and local connections, Scots on the plantations extended their links throughout the West Indies, purchasing land, engaging attorneys, managers, overseers and bookkeepers, and welcoming new arrivals... The networks almost uniformly, were based on pre-existing bonds.¹⁰⁰

Thus, the waves of emigration bolstered an established Scottish presence in the West Indies which, in turn, increased the capital flow across the Atlantic to Scotland.

The south east Caribbean was one of the most popular destinations for Scots after 1750, particularly Grenada. Previously settled by French colonists, the colony was formally ceded to Britain after the Treaty of Paris. Subsequently, the British Government implemented a settlement policy designed to fortify the island with loyal subjects and more importantly to increase tax revenue. Douglas Hamilton illuminated the commercial networks in Grenada of both Alexander Houston and Co. as well as the Baillies of Dochfour, which evolved from Checkland’s paper on the respective bankruptcies of Alexander Houston and Co. in 1801 and Evan Baillie and Co. in 1806.¹⁰² Hamilton followed this up with a study of the Caribbean operations of the premier Glasgow West India merchant firm of Alexander Houston and Co. in Grenada. In 1796, the firm were owed as much as £343,935, probably from planters in the Windward Islands, although they went bankrupt in 1800 mainly due to the illiquidity of West India capital. Hamilton suggested that the Houstons operated a ‘store system’ similar to the tobacco traders in the

⁹⁸Natalie Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands 1670-1776*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.129.

⁹⁹ R.B. Sheridan, ‘Letters from a Sugar Plantation in Antigua, 1739-1758’, *Agricultural History*, 31/3, (1957), pp.3-23; ‘The Rise of the Colonial Gentry: A Case Study of Antigua, 1730-1775’, *The Economic History Review*, 13/3, (1961), pp.342-357.

¹⁰⁰ Douglas Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750-1820*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.78.

¹⁰²S.G. Checkland, ‘Two Scottish West Indian Liquidations after 1793’, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 4 (1957), p.127–143.

Chesapeake, and they folded with debts of over £500,000.¹⁰⁵ There is a developing historiography regarding Scots in Grenada, although they seem to have focused on individuals or firms who failed, sometimes tragically. Mark Quintanilla has detailed the trading network and commercial demise of Alexander Bartlet and Co. in 1778,¹⁰⁶ and also added understanding about the mercantile empire of Alexander Campbell prior to his murder in 1795.¹⁰⁷

In a detailed micro-study of the Johnstones of Dumfriesshire and their imperial careers, Emma Rothschild has documented the lifecycle of ownership of Westerhall plantation in Grenada across three generations. In an example of successful 'economic lives', Alexander Johnstone was the largest owner of slaves and most prosperous absentee landowner on Grenada in 1779, whilst ownership passed to his brother James in 1783.¹⁰⁸ Harold Gordon Slade examined the family papers of the Urquharts of Aberdeenshire and traced the history of two plantations, Craigston and Meldrum, on Carriacou, a dependency of Grenada in the period.¹⁰⁹ David Lambert has adopted a historical geographical approach to sojourners and documented the imperial career of James MacQueen, later famous as the demagogic editor of the pro-slavery newspaper, the *Glasgow Courier*. MacQueen was in Grenada in 1797, employed as overseer on Westerhall the plantation owned by the Johnstones of Dumfries.¹¹⁰

There is limited historiography concerning Dominica, St Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, although the documented examples follow the same pattern; Scots were large scale landowners and also exerted disproportionate influence in local politics.¹¹¹ There were well-established Scottish cliques in the Assemblies and Councils of Dominica, St Vincent and especially Tobago. In addition to local politics, there are other examples of Scots medical sojourners. Richard Sheridan demonstrated in *Doctors and Slaves* that the University of Edinburgh was amongst the leading European medical schools in the late eighteenth century, and many graduates ended up in the West Indies.¹¹² Doctors destined

¹⁰⁵ Douglas Hamilton, 'Scottish Trading in the Caribbean: The Rise and Fall of Houston & Co.', in *Nation and Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600-1800*, ed. by Ned C. Landsman, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001), pp.94-126.

¹⁰⁶ Mark Quintanilla, 'Mercantile Communities in the Ceded Islands: the Alexander Bartlet and George Campbell Company', *International Social Science Review*, 79, (2004).

¹⁰⁷ Mark Quintanilla, 'The World of Alexander Campbell: An Eighteenth Century Grenadian Planter', *Albion, A Quarterly Journal with British Studies*, 35/2, (2003), pp.229-256.

¹⁰⁸ Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth Century History*, (U.K.: Princeton University Press, 2011), p.166.

¹⁰⁹ H.G. Slade, 'Craigston and Meldrum Estates, Carriacou 1769-1841', *The Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (1984), pp.481-537.

¹¹⁰ David Lambert, 'The Glasgow King of Billingsgate: James MacQueen and an Atlantic Pro-Slavery Network', *Slavery and Abolition*, 29/3, (2008), p.389-413.

¹¹¹ Sheridan, 'The Role of Scots', p.98.

¹¹² Richard Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.56-61.

for the colonies also matriculated at Aberdeen University, including Dr Jonathon Troup who emigrated from Aberdeen to Dominica in 1789. Troup went into employment with another Scot, Dr Andrew Fillan, the largest medical practitioner on in the capital, Roseau. Troup and Fillan had a highly lucrative business which involved treating slaves across several plantations.¹¹³

The third phase colonies attracted Scottish investment capital at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1796, Britain gained *de facto* control of the three territories which became British Guiana. Essequibo had previously merged with Demerara in 1792 as one colony with the administration zone located in Berbice. The colonies were formally ceded to Britain in 1814 and they merged in 1831 to become British Guiana. In Demerara in 1832, approximately one third of over 180 estates were owned by planters with Scottish surnames.¹¹⁴ Berbice was essentially the frontier of the British Empire and whilst it did not attract the floods of emigration that the Caribbean islands did, there was also a large Scottish presence. David Alston has outlined how Lord Seaforth, Governor of Barbados in 1801-6, joined mainly with other Scots to purchase 3000 acres of land for £36,000 in Berbice in 1801. Whilst Guyana capital was repatriated to the Highlands, the Seaforth venture was ultimately unprofitable as the ‘very rapid and splendid fortunes’ did not materialise,¹¹⁶ perhaps due to falling cotton prices from 1803.¹¹⁷

A recent study, *The Price of Emancipation* has radically transformed understanding of Scottish slave ownership on the Abolition of Slavery in the British Colonies in 1834.¹¹⁸ The overall dataset was gathered mainly from a ‘Parliamentary Return’ which lists all the awards that were finalised by 1838, when 93% of the total compensation of £20 million had been distributed.¹¹⁹ As such, it represents a census of British slave ownership on 1 August 1834. In his analysis, Draper demonstrated that Scots comprised just 10% of the total British population, yet those resident in Scotland represented around 15% of all British absentee slave owners in the compensation list.¹²⁰ It has been estimated the Scotland received £2million of the overall compensation total, and this was the ‘high point of Scottish slave ownership’, according to the on-going project at University College

¹¹³ Ibid., pp.302-5.

¹¹⁴ David Alston, ‘Very rapid and splendid fortunes?- Highland Scots in Berbice (Guyana) in the early nineteenth century’, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, LXIII (2002-2004), pp.208-236.

¹¹⁶ Alston, ‘Very rapid and splendid fortunes?’, pp.213-6.

¹¹⁷ Finlay McKichan, ‘Lord Seaforth: Highland Proprietor, Caribbean Governor and Slave owner’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, XC/2, 230, (2011), p.219.

¹¹⁸ Nicholas Draper, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹¹⁹ PP 1837-38, (215) 48, *Slavery Abolition Act: an account of all sums of money awarded by the Commissioners of Slavery Compensation*.

¹²⁰ Nicholas Draper, ‘Possessing Slaves: Ownership, Compensation and Metropolitan Society in Britain at the time of Emancipation 1834-1840’, *History Workshop Journal*, 64 (2007) p.92.

London. The transatlantic entrepreneurs in Glasgow represented one of the largest regional groups of claimants in Britain. In the context of the large scale Scottish emigration in the late eighteenth century, it is unsurprising that the majority of compensation claims from individuals associated with Glasgow were made for slaves resident in popular destinations Jamaica, British Guiana, Grenada and Trinidad.

These claims offer possibilities for further research. For example, the level of compensations claims made by slave-owners in Glasgow for slaves in Trinidad suggests a prominent Scottish presence, yet there is a limited historiography of Scots in that colony. Moreover, there are over 200 claimants ‘associated with Glasgow’; this offers a sample of individuals which can be compared with the Glasgow West India Association lists from 1807-1834. Whilst the initial data concerning Scotland has facilitated a diachronous analysis of slave owners in Glasgow,¹²¹ there has been a gradual modification and refinement as the project has evolved.¹²² According to Draper’s preliminary data (released in 2010), over 200 individuals ‘associated with Glasgow’ claimed over £460,000 in compensation for around 14,000 slaves.¹²³ Yet, this figure of ‘Glasgow claimants’ has now been significantly reduced as further work has been undertaken on residences across Scotland, which has come to light with the launch of the ‘Legacies of British Slave-ownership’ database in late February 2013.¹²⁴ In the updated database, the project has also defined the complexities of legal claims on the enslaved in the colonies although this study will focus on networks as opposed to the legal process.

One group of compensation claimants have been traced and this offers a methodological framework for this Ph.D. thesis.¹²⁵ As will be examined in more detail in chapter six, Leitch & Smith was a Glasgow West India merchant house operating in Grenada and Jamaica, where they utilised a commission system similar to the larger English merchant houses. They sent out young men based on kinship networks who operated the store in St George’s, Grenada, which facilitated the transportation of sugar, rum and cotton to Scotland. However, much like the Lascelles and other large English firms, they aggressively gained control of the trade from large plantations by loaning long term mortgages to resident planters. In this way, the Glasgow firm successfully implemented a quadripartite revenue system which brought profits from commission on

¹²¹ ‘Scotland and Slave-Ownership’, *Legacies of British Slave Ownership*, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/regionalworkshops/scotland> [Accessed: 15 November 2012].

¹²² *Legacies of British Slave Ownership Database*, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/> [Accessed: 28 February 2013].

¹²³ Draper, *Scotland and Glasgow in the Records of Slave Compensation*.

¹²⁴ A search for individuals with the address of ‘Glasgow’ returns only 72 individuals, see ‘Legacies of British Slave-ownership database’, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/search/> [Accessed: 11 March 2013].

¹²⁵ Stephen Mullen, ‘A Glasgow West India Merchant House and the Imperial Dividend for Scotland, 1768-1846’, (Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011).

imports of produce and exports of manufactured goods, as well as interest on both long term mortgages and shorter bills of exchange. As collateral on mortgages they took plantations and slaves, which was to prove important on emancipation in 1834. The Smiths of Jordanhill were amongst the largest claimants of compensation in Glasgow. The firm integrated the Atlantic economy with interests in cotton, banking, insurance as well as landed estates. This suggests there was variety of opportunities in the West India slave economies for individuals and organisations which facilitated the transfer of capital to Scotland via Glasgow.

Chapter 2. The Emergence of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’

This chapter will trace the emergence of ‘Glasgow West India interest’ in the city’s golden age of sugar, 1775-1850.¹ Firstly, the importance of the Caribbean trades to the Scottish-Atlantic economy will be assessed followed by a biographical re-appraisal of the merchants and planters who made the trades possible. In particular, it will be argued that whilst they were celebrated in the contemporary period, their status and economic importance to the west of Scotland has been under-recognised in the historiography. This chapter identifies Glasgow as the premier West India port in Scotland and a city dominated by colonial entrepreneurs who maintained control across the mercantile age.

The accumulation of wealth based on the Atlantic trades created a new commercial class and the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ rose to the social position previously occupied by the ‘tobacco lords’ after 1783.² The commercial section of the ‘interest’ was comprised of merchants and planters as well as sugar refiners. A more professional section of the ‘interest’ included financiers, lawyers, politicians and colonial agents who had national connections especially in London, Bristol and Liverpool. The pull of the transatlantic hub attracted individuals who travelled to take up West India careers whilst local landed or established mercantile families diversified into the Caribbean trades.³

Thus, there was a degree of both social and geographical mobility and several mechanisms were utilised to regenerate the colonial class. The institutions of the family and marriage led to the interlocking of West India firms based on kinship networks, whilst religion reinforced these connections. Moreover, elite west India clubs and civic institutions were not only a way of proclaiming one’s class status but also provided social capital by reinforcing reputation and trust in networks that included parliamentarians. The commercial ‘interest’ sought to acquire property in the West Indies and Glasgow - as well as the shipping to make transatlantic connections - which generated public wealth and created vast private fortunes. Professionals serviced the West India economy in Glasgow

¹ During the early-nineteenth century, the term ‘West India interest’ was sometimes used to describe an alliance of planters in Glasgow who attempted to influence Government policy. See ‘The West India Interest’, *The Scots Times*, Vol.V, 275, 25 May 1830.

² The term ‘interest’ was used during this period ‘simultaneously [as] an accepted mode of understanding social and economic groupings, and a legitimate impulse to political action’. Anna Gambles, *Protection and Politics: Conservative Economic Discourse, 1815-1852*, (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1999), pp.8-9. Thus, this study adopts the term ‘Glasgow West India interest’ to analyse the alliance of individuals who were commercially involved with the Caribbean trades in Glasgow, including merchants, planters and those individuals with whom they maintained professional relationships to advance vested interests, principally lawyers, colonial agents and MPs.

³ In her study of seventeenth century London, Nuala Zahedieh elaborates upon a city’s role as a global ‘hub’ of imperial exchanges. See *Capital and the Colonies: London and the Atlantic Economy, 1660-1700*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

by facilitating the accumulation of property as well as protecting the trade monopoly. This chapter traces the emergence of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’.

Glorious representations of the Glasgow-West India trades

When the historian and inheritor of a West India fortune, John Guthrie Smith, (F.S.A. Scot.), majestically surveyed the west of Scotland in *The Old Country Houses of the Old Glasgow Gentry* in 1878, he harked back to the glory days of sugar and the trade which improved many of the estates, including his own:

A modern frequenter of the [Royal] Exchange could hardly realize how important the sugar trade, then exclusively a West Indian one, was reckoned within the memory of many living, nor how high the West India magnates held their heads. Its palmy days were from the troubles with the American Colonies to the Abolition of Slavery, or say the last third of last, and the first third of this century.⁴

Similarly, the West India merchants and planters were celebrated not only in contemporary histories but also in the national press. With the imminent transfer of the Glasgow West India Association’s key operations to Greenock on 1 June 1883, the *Glasgow Herald* reminisced with a sense of pride about the moral values of the city’s traders:

The other great sugar ports were London, Bristol, and Liverpool, and it is to Glasgow’s lasting honour that while Bristol and Liverpool were up to their elbows in the slave trade Glasgow kept out of it. The reproach can never be levelled at our city, as it was at Liverpool, that there was not a stone in her streets that was not cemented with the blood of a slave.

Whilst completely disregarding the impact of the plantation economy on Glasgow, the article placed successive generations of colonial entrepreneurs on equal standing and mourned the passing of the great men involved in a global trade that touched three continents. Indeed, the article included a roll call of names of the by then mostly deceased sugar aristocracy; Bogle, Eccles, Gordon, Campbell, Ewing, Connall, Dennistoun *et al*, which was followed with *sic transit gloria mundi* (thus passes the glory of the world).⁵

And yet, Glasgow’s golden mercantile age has become almost exclusively identified with the tobacco trade. In the context of Glasgow’s monopoly of tobacco imports and the wealth it generated, this is perhaps unsurprising. Indeed, Jacob Price’s seminal work outlined that Glasgow was the premier tobacco port in Europe. In one year, 1769, the city’s merchants landed more tobacco than all other British ports together including

⁴ John Guthrie Smith, John Oswald Mitchell, ‘Possil’, *The Old Country Houses of the old Glasgow Gentry*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1878).

⁵ ‘The West India Association in Glasgow’, *Glasgow Herald*, June 1, 1883.

London.⁶ Subsequently, the historiography that followed minimised the importance of the Caribbean trades. However, West India connections (imports, exports and capital in-flow) were the mainstay of the Scottish-Atlantic economy at least from 1660 into the 1880s. If viewed with this longer chronological lens, the fifty year tobacco monopoly pales into comparison.

Whilst John Guthrie Smith was referring to the spectacular rise and the dramatic fall of the halcyon period of sugar (1776-1838) which will be surveyed in this study, there were transatlantic merchants based in Glasgow in the 1650s. Subsequently, a maritime infrastructure was constructed in 1667 to allow large sea-going vessels to dock and Port Glasgow later became the busiest port in Great Britain. In the confine of the boundaries of Glasgow, the Broomielaw harbour was built to take the small gabbart boats laden with sugar, cotton and tobacco which had been landed further up the River Clyde in the deeper water. New manufactories were established in the 1660s that were either dependent on colonial imports or intended for the export market.⁷

The 'golden age' of sugar in the West Indies, according to the traditional view, occurred in the seventeenth century and entrepreneurs in Glasgow took advantage in the 'first phase' colonies in spite of having restricted access.⁸ Several sugar houses were constructed and the first industrial fortunes were made by such traders in the 1670s.⁹ However, at this point, the overall trade was small scale as the tax duties and privileges conferred on the select few allowed monopolisation of a lucrative industry.¹⁰ After the Union of 1707, the markets opened up as Scotland was incorporated within the English Navigation Acts. Even at the height of the tobacco trade in Glasgow, sugar traders took advantage of the 'second phase' colonies acquired after the Peace of Paris in 1763. Richard Pares famously described this period up to the American War in 1775 as the 'silver age of sugar'.¹¹ It has recently been argued the post war era was a 'bronze or even lead age' for

⁶ Jacob M. Price, 'The Rise of Glasgow in the Chesapeake Tobacco Trade, 1707-1775', *The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series*, Vol. 11, No. 2, (1954), pp.179-199.

⁷ T.C. Smout, 'The Development and Enterprise of Glasgow 1556-1707', *The Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 6/3 (1959), pp.194-212.

⁸ David Beck Ryden, *West India Slavery and British Abolition, 1783-1807*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.8.

⁹ T.C. Smout, 'The Early Scottish Sugar Houses, 1660-1720', *The Economic History Review*, 14/2 (1961).

¹⁰ John Hutcheson, *Notes on the Sugar Industry*, (Glasgow: James McKelvie, 1901), pp.32-80.

¹¹ Richard Pares, 'Merchants and Planters', *Economic History Review Supplement*, No.4, (Cambridge: 1960), p.40.

resident sugar planters,¹² although the view that the West Indies were in decline from this point remains contentious.¹³

In any case, merchants in Glasgow profited not only from colonial imports but also from investments in local manufactories. And by transferring their focus after the American War,¹⁴ and taking advantage of well-established mercantile networks, maritime routes and colonial operations, the late 1780s marked the beginning of the 'golden age of the Clyde-Caribbean trade'.¹⁵ The rise of the Caribbean trades is demonstrated when considering that the Clyde ports imported and exported more tonnage in 1790 from the West Indies (especially Jamaica, Barbados and Grenada) than from either Europe or America. In particular, export tonnage to the West Indies in 1790 (26% of overall trade) was around fifty percent greater than to either America (17%) or Europe (18%), which Gordon Jackson attributes to merchants shipping out manufactured goods such as textiles to the slave islands.¹⁶ An examination of commodities landed illustrates the sharp decline of the tobacco trade and the dramatic rise of sugar and cotton imports, although rum¹⁷ initially rose then fell from 1800-1805 (see Appendix 1). By 1806, the conjoined ports of Glasgow and Greenock had overtaken Bristol as the third largest sugar importer in Great Britain, behind London and Liverpool.¹⁸

In this period, exports to the West Indies - particularly textiles - dominated Scottish commerce.¹⁹ In 1810, exports of British goods from Scotland were officially valued at £4.1 million of which almost half by value was shipped to the West Indies, including printed cottons and especially linen.²⁰ Jamaica was the key outlet although merchants in Glasgow

¹² Beck Ryden, *West India Slavery*, p.8.

¹³ Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman, 'British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams: An Introduction', in *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams*, eds. Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.12-17.

¹⁴ M.L. Robertson, 'Scottish Commerce and the American War of Independence', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1956), pp. 123-131

¹⁵ T.M. Devine, 'Transport Problems of Glasgow West India Merchants during the American War of Independence, 1775-83', *Transport History*, 4/3, (1971), p.294.

¹⁶ Gordon Jackson, 'New Horizons', in *Glasgow, Volume I, Beginnings to 1830*, eds. T. M. Devine and G. Jackson, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp.217-219.

¹⁷ The initial increase reflects the closing off of America and the focus on British markets after 1783. Richard Pares examined this trade in *Yankees and Creoles: The Trade Between North America and the West Indies before the American Revolution*, (London: Longmans, 1956). However, rum was classed as 'finished goods' that did not create jobs in Great Britain (unlike unrefined muscovado sugar), and therefore did not qualify for the low tax duties to protect from foreign competition (especially French brandy). Rum imports also fluctuated as the non-perishable alcohol could be stored long term (in contrast to sugar) in order to take advantage of higher prices in British markets. See Beck Ryden, *West India Slavery*, pp.105-116.

¹⁸ Parliamentary Papers 1808 (178), *Report from the Committee on the Distillation of Sugar and Molasses*, pp.244-5.

¹⁹ Anthony Cooke provides an analysis of the connections with the Scottish linen and cotton industry and the West Indies, see 'An Elite Revisited: Glasgow West India Merchants, 1783-1877', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 32/2 (2012), pp.144-5.

²⁰ R. H. Campbell, 'The Making of the Industrial City', in *Glasgow, Volume I, Beginnings to 1830*, eds. T. M. Devine and G. Jackson, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 202-3.

also provided capital in new colonies to establish fresh markets, such as Trinidad and British Guiana.²¹ Grenada and Trinidad were outlets for the exportation of Scottish manufactured goods to resident planters, as well as Spanish colonists under the Free Port trade after 1783 (see chapter six). The boom period, however, was short-lived. Great Britain briefly dominated the global trade in sugar after the Haitian Revolution in 1791, although prices declined exacerbated by a glut in production. The rise of the cotton industry replaced some of this trade and created new profits, although Britain failed to establish a global monopoly of tropical commodities again.

The 'Glasgow West India interest' obscured

In spite of their obvious economic impact over two centuries and their prominent status in the contemporary period, there has been little examination of the 'Glasgow West India interest'. There is however a developed historiography of colonial merchants in Glasgow. T.M. Devine's landmark study *The Tobacco Lords* established the Virginia traders as global leaders of the tobacco trades and the city's colonial history has become almost synonymous with them.²² Devine, however, acknowledged the West India trades formed an important part of tobacco commerce and that some of the entrepreneurs were focused on the Caribbean.²³ Nonetheless, whilst the seminal account of tobacco traders spawned many related studies, Glasgow's long term connections with sugar and the West Indies have received scant attention.

Indeed, almost all studies of the city's West India traders finish at 1820 or before.²⁴ In his pioneering article in 1978, T.M. Devine identified 78 elite merchants who attained co-partner status in merchant firms and also registered as Burgess and Guild Brethren in Glasgow. He made conclusions about their extent, social origins, financial interests and political strength. However, this was a narrow sample that underestimated the true strength of the 'Glasgow West India interest'. More recently, Anthony Cooke has re-visited the elite Caribbean merchants of Glasgow and by examining wills and confirmation inventories of a revised Devine sample, he outlined mercantile investments after 1838.²⁵

²¹ Nicholas Draper, 'The rise of a new planter class? Some countercurrents from British Guiana and Trinidad, 1807-33', *Atlantic Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (March 2012), pp.65-83.

²² T.M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords: a study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities, 1740-1790*, (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1975).

²³ T.M. Devine subsequently published a study of the city's West India merchants, see 'An Eighteenth Century Business Elite: Glasgow-West India Merchants, 1750-1815', *Scottish Historical Review*, 57/ 163 (1978), pp.53-67.

²⁴ For example, Douglas Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750-1820*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005).

²⁵ Anthony Cooke, 'An Elite Revisited: Glasgow West India Merchants, 1783-1877', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 32/2 (2012), pp.127-165.

However, both studies not only based conclusions on elite males but also adopted a Glasgow-centric approach meaning there was limited examination of Caribbean activities. Thus, there are various degrees of obscurity surrounding the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ as well as the true source of their wealth.

Instead, this study will adopt a transatlantic approach to ascertain the true influence at home as well as their connections in the Caribbean. In doing so, the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ will be restored to their correct status, 1775-1838. The growth of the Glasgow-West India economy after the American War of Independence (1775-1783) saw connected individuals became increasingly organised not only in the trade, but also in formal bodies and social clubs. This study has identified relevant individuals in the immediate post American War period through membership lists of a West India Club,²⁶ as well as ‘The Pig Club’, the members of which Strang described as the ‘Sugar Aristocracy’.²⁷ More important were the record of the Glasgow West India Association, a formal lobbying group established to protect the interests of merchants and planters in the city on 22 October 1807, just months after the abolition of the slave trade. By 1809, twenty nine firms and sixty three individuals had subscribed.²⁸ Detailed examination of the Abstract of Minutes and original Minutes of the Association has identified another thirty three individuals who attended meetings.²⁹ The first conclusion in this study is that in identifying 174 Glasgow-West India merchants, planters and legal professionals in the period 1783-1834, this is a far higher number than has previously been understood.

This study will also include an examination of less successful colonial entrepreneurs, such as bankrupted planters or merchants and lower scale sojourners, an approach which has recently been advocated by Sheryllyne Haggerty in order to illuminate connections and networks that would not be discovered if solely using well-known sources linked to elite merchants.³⁰ The group in this study is further increased by examining slave compensation claimants connected with Glasgow based on Nicholas Draper’s online data which was the basis of *The Price of Emancipation*.³¹ It is apparent the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ was far larger than has previously been recorded. Firstly, this

²⁶Nathaniel Jones, *Reprint of Jones’s Directory for the Year 1787*, (Glasgow: William Love, 1868), p.6; John Mennons, *Jones’s Directory for the Year 1789*, p.68; *Jones’s Directory, for the Year 1790 and 1791*, (Glasgow: Joseph Galbraith), p.69.

²⁷ John Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, (Glasgow: Richard Griffin & Company, 1857), p.212.

²⁸ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the Glasgow West India Association (GWIA)’, pp.6-8.

²⁹ GCA, TD1683/1/1-2, ‘Abstract’, 1807-1833; TD1683/1/2, ‘Minutes’, 1832-1853.

³⁰ Sheryllyne Haggerty, *‘Merely for Money’? Business Culture in the British Atlantic, 1750-1815*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), p.5.

³¹ Nicholas Draper, *Scotland and Glasgow in the Records of Slave Compensation*, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/scottishdata.pdf> [Accessed 6 November 2012].

study will examine the rise of the commercial West India class through a distinctive methodology.

Methodology and commercial taxonomy

Various printed, digital and archival sources were used to establish characteristics of individuals. Biographical details were initially culled from family accounts and nineteenth century histories.³² Family trees were developed for the larger merchant families in an attempt to limit ambiguity. In some cases, the printed matriculation albums of Old College provided detailed information.³³ From this foundation, the commercial rank of individuals in Glasgow was established by examining the printed subscription lists of the Merchant House as well as Burgess and Guild Brethren registrations.³⁴ Trade and Post Office Directories of Glasgow allowed identification of residency status and in many cases provided names of firms that merchants were associated with. From this starting point, business interests in the colonies were ascertained by examining newspapers and in particular shipping advertisements in the *Glasgow Herald* and *Caledonian Mercury*. More specifically focused were the *London Gazette* and *Edinburgh Gazette*, the preferred broadsheet of the mercantile class. Further analysis of individuals, firms and colonial activities was enabled by examination of annually printed collections of Scottish Court cases.³⁵ Wealth and remaining investments on death (as well as family relationships) have been established by examining wills and confirmation inventories generated on death of individuals.

There is an established historiography of occupational classifications in Glasgow in the period. In a comparative study of British towns and cities, Penny Corfield detailed the economic structure of Glasgow which was overwhelmingly based on the mercantile trades and manufacturing in the period. Corfield made conclusions based on *John Tait's Directory for the City of Glasgow 1783-84*, and developed useful taxonomy of

³² Key sources were John Guthrie Smith, *The Parish of Strathblane and its inhabitants from early times*, (Glasgow: 1886); J.W. Dennistoun et al, *Some Account of the Family of Dennistoun of Dennistoun and Colgrain*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1906); William Fraser, *The Stirlings of Keir and their Family Papers*, (Edinburgh: 1858); John Guthrie Smith, John Oswald Mitchell, *The Old Country Houses of the old Glasgow Gentry*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1878); James MacLehose, *Memoirs and portraits of 100 Glasgow Men*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1886); George Stewart, *Curiosities of Glasgow Citizenship, as exhibited chiefly in the Business Career of its Old Commercial Aristocracy*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1881).

³³ W. Innes Addison, *The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow, From 1728 to 1858*, (Glasgow: James Maclehorse and Sons, 1913).

³⁴ *A List of Matriculated Members of the Merchant's House, From 3d October 1768, to 5th October 1857*, (Glasgow: James McNab, 1858); James Anderson, ed., *The Burgesses and Guild Brethren of Glasgow, 1751-1846*, (Edinburgh: J. Skinner and Co., 1935).

³⁵ For example, *The Scottish Jurist*, vol. I, 1829 - vol. XII, 1840 (Edinburgh: Michael Anderson) provides reports of cases from the Court of Session.

occupational sectors.³⁶ Although this provides the foundation to analyse occupations in this study, some modification is required to examine colonial trades.³⁷

This study will implement a more sensitive analysis of the transatlantic entrepreneurs based on two contemporary sources. As master of the Mercantile Academy at Glasgow in the early nineteenth century, James Morrison was at the pinnacle of both commercial teaching and publishing in the city, with his books sold across Great Britain. Of particular importance was *A Complete Treatise of Practical Book-Keeping*, first published in 1808, which can be considered a rare manual for the Glasgow-West India trades. In the third edition, Morrison included a *Dissertation on the Business of the Counting House*, which defined various types of merchant:

Merchants, properly so called, are of two descriptions, such as are *General Merchants*, do business in all parts, and indiscriminately in every article in gross, and such as deal only in one article or into one country; thus there are *West India Merchants, Russia, Turkey, Spanish and American Merchants, & c.*³⁸

Thus, the merchants were defined principally by the location of their commercial focus instead of the commodity they traded in. This study will further analyse the West India commercial class based on a petition by Colin Dunlop Donald, a lawyer specialising in colonial business and secretary of the Glasgow West India Association for over forty years. On 21 March 1838, the Association petitioned the House of Lords regarding the emancipation of apprenticed labourers. In neat legalese, Donald addressed the petition from ‘merchants and planters of the city of Glasgow’, before further defining the exact role of absentees as ‘exclusive proprietors of estates and plantations’ or as ‘owners or mortgagees’.⁴⁰ The Corfield study as well as the Morrison dissertation and the Dunlop Donald petition provide the basis for a commercial taxonomy of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ and their fathers in this study. This study has identified 162 individuals commercially connected with the West India trades and a further twelve who can be considered professionals associated with the ‘Glasgow West India interest’.

In terms of the commercial ‘West India interest’ (the group of 162), some were colonial merchants who continued to import from both America and the West Indies after the Revolutionary war in 1783, such as Robert Findlay. However, the majority of

³⁶ Penelope J. Corfield, ‘Business leaders and town gentry in early industrial Britain: specialist occupations and shared urbanism’, *Urban History*, 39/1, (2012), p.42; Penelope J. Corfield with Serena Kelly, “Giving Directions to the Town”: The Early Town Directories’, *Urban History Yearbook, 1984* (1984), pp.22-34.

³⁷ In the database of the occupational structure in Glasgow in 1783, West India and Virginia merchants are ambiguously listed with the occupation of ‘merchant’ in the trade of ‘dealing/unspecified’.

³⁸ James Morrison, *A Complete Treatise of Practical Book-Keeping*, 3rd Edn., (London: Longman, 1820), p.xiv.

⁴⁰ GCA, TD1683/1/2, ‘Minutes of the GWIA’, 31 March 1838, pp.99-100.

individuals identified for this study traded mainly in sugar, rum and cotton imported from the West Indies. Whilst this means this study is mainly focused on transatlantic merchants, some absentee owners of West India plantations have been identified. Others maintained a dual role as West India merchants with interests in plantations and at least one sugar refiner, James Storrie, maintained cordial relations with their trade adversaries, the merchants and planters.

Professionals connected with the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ included colonial agents such as A.G. Milne and Mr Richardson who facilitated communication with London and conducted legal business there on behalf of the Glasgow West India Association. The most prominent was James MacQueen (1778-1870), sometime editor of the *Glasgow Courier*. Some professionals provided legal services, including writers such as Colin Dunlop Donald of the Association. Others provided financial services including the son of the ‘tobacco lord’ John Glassford, Henry Glassford, MP, lawyer and rector of the University of Glasgow, and financier of two Jamaican plantations, Iter Boreale and Heywood Hall.⁴¹ There were at least seven politicians who had connections to the plantation economy or the Association and some even lobbied Parliament on their behalf. Some of these had the ear of Henry Dundas in the 1810s, as well as Henry Monteith, Lord Provost of Glasgow and Member of Parliament for Linlithgow. Other associated MPs included John Buchanan of Ardoch, Robert Wallace and especially Archibald Campbell of Blythswood, who petitioned Parliament on West India matters in the 1820s. The merchant-manufacturer and MP Kirkman Finlay was initially an ally of the ‘West India interest’ in Glasgow and supported some measures in Parliament (perhaps influenced by business dealings with West India merchants) but by 1830 he was known as an ‘enemy’ due to his opposition to chattel slavery and promotion of free trade.⁴² The political lobbying activities of Colin Dunlop Donald, James MacQueen and Archibald Campbell of Blythswood will be examined in chapter three.

Migration, social background and re-generation of the West India elite

Occupation was linked to class and status in Glasgow in the 1830s with established West India families at the pinnacle of high society in the city. Sir Archibald Alison, the Sheriff of Lanarkshire (himself a claimant of slave compensation) noted after he arrived in Glasgow in February 1835 that:

⁴¹ GCA TD1/1081/11. ‘Affairs of Henry Glassford’, 1820.

⁴² ‘Election for Glasgow Burghs’, *Glasgow Herald*, 27 August 1830.

The West India merchants then took the lead, and considered themselves as the best society in the city: five or six families of that class lived almost exclusively with each other, and rigidly confined themselves to visiting within their own circle. They had in consequence acquired the sobriquet of the “Sugar Aristocracy.”

Next on Alison’s social scale came the ‘cotton magnates’, including Kirkman Finlay, followed by the calico printers and iron and coal masters. At the same time, he scathingly referred to the vulgarity of the *parvenu* mercantile class which he attributed to a high degree of social mobility facilitated by the rapid accumulation of fortunes over a thirty year period. According to Alison, whilst individuals previously at the ‘shuttle, the forge or in the printfield’ rose in local society due to their new found mercantile wealth, this did not translate into ‘respectability of descent’.⁴³ The known occupations of fathers of those involved in the West India trades in Glasgow offers a new approach to test Alison’s view on social mobility, as well as the entry barriers (or lack thereof) to commerce in the transatlantic hub. The data in this chapter suggests the West India trades in Glasgow were not a closed system whilst chapter seven supports Alison’s view that there was a conspicuous West India *nouveaux-riche* in the city.

Glasgow underwent a demographic explosion in the late eighteenth century due to the pull of opportunities in commerce and industry. Indeed, the period 1755-1821 saw the population rise sharply from 31,700 to 147,000.⁴⁴ The evidence in this thesis suggests that many individuals came to Glasgow to take up West India occupations although the method used to estimate this is far from perfect.⁴⁵ The data suggests most individuals hailed from west central Scotland, especially Glasgow and surrounding regions such as Port Glasgow, Greenock, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Renfrewshire. Others came from further afield such as Fife, Edinburgh, Ross and Cromarty and even the West Indies. William Frederick Burnley was the son of W.H. Burnley, a merchant from Virginia based in Trinidad.⁴⁶ Burnley was connected to the Glasgow based merchants, the Eccles (themselves sons of an Irish merchant based in the West Indies) through marriage and it is likely this connection

⁴³ Sir Archibald Alison, *Some Account of my Life and Writings: An Autobiography*, vol.1, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1883), pp.344-347.

⁴⁴ T.M. Devine, ‘The Development of Glasgow to 1830: Medieval Burgh to Industrial City’ in *Glasgow, vol.1, Beginnings to 1830*, eds. T.M. Devine, Gordon Jackson, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p.10.

⁴⁵ Of the 162 individuals identified in this study as being involved with the West India trades, a high proportion of residency status of their fathers has been identified (128 known or 79%). The data has mainly been gathered from the subscriptions of the Merchants House and registrations of Burgess and Guild Brethren. The highest percentage of known fathers residencies were in Glasgow (67 or 41% of the overall sample). However, this means that around the same total were from outside Glasgow, mostly from central Scotland.

⁴⁶ *Merchants House matriculation list*, p.9.

brought him to Glasgow, where he joined the West India Association and became a senior partner in William Eccles and Co.⁴⁷

There were opportunities for those unconnected with Glasgow, or indeed, transatlantic commerce. Many of the individuals identified as West India traders hailed from a 'middling' background such as agricultural, military or legal as well as the Church. However, it is also apparent the established colonial class in Glasgow retained involvement over successive generations with a shifting commercial focus across generations in some cases. Indeed, at least eleven fathers have been identified as having involvement in the American trades. Some have previously been identified as 'tobacco lords' such as James Dennistoun of Colgrain whose three sons, James, Robert and Richard became leading West India merchants in Glasgow.⁴⁸ The material culture and living conditions of Richard Dennistoun in his Kelvingrove mansion will be illuminated in chapter seven.

Of far more importance was the transfer of knowledge, skills and capital from fathers involved in the West India trades. Families such as the Stirlings of Keir or the Bogles of Daldowie were 'gentry capitalists', previously landed families who increased their already significant wealth and status through long term collaboration and exploitation in the Caribbean.⁴⁹ Other individuals eventually married into landed elites after they established sugar dynasties and some *arriviste* merchant families such the Smiths of Jordanhill had a spectacular transformation in wealth and status that coincided with involvement with the West Indies.

Stana Nenadic has argued the institutions of marriage and family were utilised to regenerate middle class status, as well as reinforcing business networks and partnerships.⁵⁰ In many cases, control of the firm was passed to younger male relatives, especially sons. Although family and kinship were a far more secure method of transferring power, marriage was also an important mechanism and merchants were matched with ladies of the correct sort. Indeed, the marital status of local gentry women was a hot topic of conversation in the various mercantile clubs. The Hodge Podge was a prominent literary club frequented by 'tobacco lords' and West India merchants.⁵¹ There was an annual tradition of toasting 'unmarried females' or 'fair widows' at the club, no doubt announcing to the mercantile elite their eligibility for marriage or other liaisons.⁵³ The ladies had to be

⁴⁷ *Glasgow Herald*, 19 September 1859.

⁴⁸ Dennistoun, *Some Account of the Family of Dennistoun*, pp.30-2.

⁴⁹ S.D. Smith, *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of the Lascelles, 1648-1834*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.9.

⁵⁰ Stana Nenadic, 'The Rise of the Urban Middle Class', in *People and Society in Scotland*, vol. 1, 1760-1830, ed. by T.M. Devine, Rosalind Mitchison, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1994), p.117.

⁵¹ Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, pp.30-55.

⁵³ T.F. Donald, *The Hodge Podge Club 1752-1900*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1900), p.46.

approved as worthy by club members and were required to meet what were later described as ‘obligations’, which appear to have been a form of social control over the men they were matched with.⁵⁵ There were around fifty separate toasts between 1790 and 1794 with some women appearing more than once. Cecilia Douglas (1771-1862) was described as a fashionable ‘Glasgow belle’ of the period,⁵⁶ and her brothers ran the prominent Glasgow-West India firm, J.T. & A. Douglas. After reaching her majority in 1792, her eligibility was toasted at the Hodge Podge twice in the next year.⁵⁷ She subsequently married Gilbert Douglas (1749-1807) in January 1794 and although he was not a member of the Hodge Podge, he was an elite planter almost twice her age.⁵⁸

This type of union was lampooned in 1826 in a poem in the *Glasgow Herald* that took the form of fictional dialogue between a marriage fixer and an eligible young woman. After the woman rejected a soldier and a local laird, the author *Pyrrhus* extolled the stereotypical virtues of the philanthropic estate owner:

Then take Mr Traffic, the West India planter,
And don't [mind] *his* penchant with such bagatelles banter;
He's an excellent soul, very kind to the poor;-
That your pin-money's handsome, I'll warrant you sure,
For he's liberal in heart, as man ever can be-
'*Stop Sir, I'm but eighteen, while he's sixty three*'.⁵⁹

Although not quite the age gap between Cecilia and Gilbert Douglas, he did own a cotton plantation named Fairfield in Demerara and had formerly lived in St Vincent, probably on his sugar estate Mount Pleasant. Thus, in some cases, marriage connected merchant firms in Glasgow and plantations in the Caribbean: Gilbert Douglas had business connections with J.T.A. Douglas & Co in 1801.⁶⁰ Katie Barclay has outlined the importance of economic resources to the selection of potential spouses in this period and argued elite families expected the marrying off of sons and daughters should be mutually beneficial for both sides.⁶¹ Evidently, in these examples, the benefits were both social and economic consolidating the existing class structure and adding a transatlantic dimension which joined Caribbean plantations through marriage to the merchants who imported the produce to Scotland. Thus, whilst it was far from a closed caste, there was a high degree of intermarriage amongst the West India elite.

⁵⁵ T.F. Donald, *The Hodge Podge Club*, p.45.

⁵⁶ Senex, *Glasgow: Past and Present*, Vol. III, (Glasgow: David Robertson & Co., 1884), p.380.

⁵⁷ T.F. Donald, *The Hodge Podge Club*, pp.67-79.

⁵⁸ *Glasgow Herald*, 11 August 1862.

⁵⁹ ‘The Lady and Her Lovers’, *Glasgow Herald*, 27 October 1826.

⁶⁰ NRS, CS96/4901, ‘Gilbert Douglas Ledgers’, 1801-1812, pp.12-15.

⁶¹ Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p.80.

This chapter has taken a focused approach to examine the marriage connections of co-partners of the elite merchant house of John Campbell, senior, & Co. John Campbell's sons were matched with daughters from several notable families. Alexander married Harriet, daughter of Donald McLachlan, Advocate of Argyllshire, also a co-partner in the firm between 1801 and 1808. Other sons established connections with elite merchant houses. Colin married Janet Millar, the daughter of Provost John Hamilton of North Park, an extensive West India merchant connected to the Bogles. James married Elizabeth Bogle, the youngest daughter of Robert Bogle of Gilmorehill. Thomas Campbell's first wife was Agnes Finlay, daughter of Kirkman Finlay. Mungo Nutter Campbell perhaps exemplifies the almost incestuous relationships amongst the sugar aristocracy. He was son of Alexander Campbell of Dallingburn, Collector of Customs at Port Glasgow. Campbell of Dallingburn was a cousin of John Campbell, and brother in law, as he was married to his sister Elizabeth. Mungo Nutter Campbell married John's daughter, Helen. From 1806, Mungo Nutter was therefore at once John Campbell's co-partner, his nephew, his son-in-law and his cousin's son.⁶² The interrelated marriages of the Campbells meant by 1828 the firm was at the centre of the sugar aristocracy with family ties connecting five prominent Glasgow-West India firms as well as an influential wider network.

Religion was another important tie that connected individuals in the transatlantic trades. In the colonies, confidence could be created and maintained amongst co-religionists involved in commerce.⁶³ In Glasgow, registration as Burgess and Guild brethren included religious considerations based on Presbyterianism which was regulated by peer monitoring. When Archibald Smith registered in 1779 before Alexander McCaull, Dean of Guild, and 'brothers of council' who sat in judgement, he professed 'before God' in 'the True Religion' not to deal in 'unfreeman's goods', and also renounced the 'Roman Religion called Papestry'.⁶⁴ In practice however, adherence to Presbyterianism was not a requirement to join the institution or to enter into a West India career. Indeed, detailed examination of the records of St Andrews by the Green Episcopal Chapel and the roll books of the Church of Scotland St George's West Parish Kirk (latterly known as St Georges Tron) further supports the view that the 'Glasgow West India interest' were not a religiously homogenous group.

⁶² Guthrie Smith, Oswald Mitchell, 'Possil', *Old Country Houses of the old Glasgow Gentry*.

⁶³ Nuala Zahedieh, 'Credit, risk, and reputation in late seventeenth century colonial trade', in *Merchant organization and maritime trade in the North Atlantic, 1660–1815*, ed. O.U. Janzen, (St John's, Newfoundland: Research in Maritime History, 1998), pp. 53–74; Albane Forestier, 'Risk, kinship and personal relationships in late eighteenth-century West Indian trade: The commercial network of Tobin & Pinney', *Business History*, 52/6, (2010), p.913.

⁶⁴ GCA, TD1/1246/1, 'Archd Smith Burgess Ticket of Glasgow', 1779.

By 1780, there were twenty five Churches in Glasgow; mainly of the Established Church of Scotland and Churches of Presbyterian dissent.⁶⁵ Moreover, there was a significant Episcopalian presence after the establishment of the first ‘English Qualified’ chapel, St Andrews-by-the-Green, in 1750-51. The membership was comprised mainly of the ‘respectable middle class’ including West India merchants and planters in the 1780s.⁶⁶ Indeed, Patrick Colquhoun, the future Lord Provost, and William McDowall were managers in this period.⁶⁷ This involvement facilitated transatlantic ecclesiastical exchanges through baptism and marriage. Returned sojourner Robert McIndoe had his natural daughter Nancy baptised in September 1775, the infant had evidently made the journey from Jamaica leaving her mother who was a ‘black woman in the County of Middlesex in that island’.⁶⁸ However, it is unlikely that many of the ‘West India interest’ attended St Andrews by the Green. Although the pew records are limited for the purposes of this study, analysis of the years 1817 to 1837 (at five year intervals) suggest only a prominent minority actively worshipped.⁶⁹ James Fyffe and Charles Stirling of Cadder – both shareholders in Stirling, Gordon & Co. – were Episcopalian and it is possible they shared the same pew in 1827.⁷⁰ However, the absence of widespread involvement indicates the Caribbean entrepreneurs tended to their spiritual needs elsewhere. Indeed, St George’s West Parish Kirk on Buchanan Street was the favoured Church of the Presbyterian ‘Glasgow West India interest’.

After it was founded in 1807, St George's Kirk was part of the Established Church of Scotland. Subsequently, the Rev Dr John Smyth – former assistant to Dr Thomas Chalmers - was ordained as Minister in 1823.⁷¹ Examination of the communicants’ roll book of the Church in the years 1818 and 1823 demonstrates the commercial class were prominent in the congregation members.⁷² However, whilst inclusion on the roll book implies adherence to the specific denomination, it does not imply residency in the parish. Indeed, communicants in this period were mainly non-parishioners and some only attended

⁶⁵ Callum G. Brown, ‘Religion and the Development of an Urban Society 1780-1914’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1981), p.182.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.109.

⁶⁷ GCA, TD423/1/1, ‘St Andrew’s Minute Book’, 1750-1805, p.27.

⁶⁸ GCA, TD423/2/1, ‘Register of Baptisms’, 11 September, 1775.

⁶⁹ Pew Rental records do not include occupational status and sometimes only include surnames. By corroborating pew records with baptismal registers, it has been possible to identify eight members of the ‘interest’ who were Episcopalian. See GCA, TD423/8/1-2, ‘St Andrew’s Pew rent books’, 1817-1835; 1836-45.

⁷⁰ GCA, TD423/8/1, St Andrew’s Pew rent books’, p.92.

⁷¹ Hew Scott, *Fastie Ecclesiae Scoticae*, New Edn., Vol III, (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1920), p.443.

⁷² This type of evidence has been described as the ‘ideal source’ to analyse congregation membership. See Peter Hillis, ‘Presbyterianism and Social Class in Mid Nineteenth Century Glasgow: a Study of Nine Churches’, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 32, (1981), p.49.

in winter when they were not ‘in the country’ or at ‘sea-bathing quarters’.⁷³ Thus, St Georges was frequented by the wealthy merchant elite, some of whom temporarily relocated to estates in the summer.

The roll books of St Georges demonstrate prominent merchant-manufacturers were members of the congregation, including Kirkman Finlay and Henry Monteith. Moreover, over thirty West India merchants and planters were also recorded, including the hierarchy of the Glasgow West India Association: John Gordon, James Ewing, Colin McLachlan, James Connell, William Eccles, Colin Campbell, Archibald Bogle *et al.* It should also be noted that some Episcopalians - such as James Fyffe – were also included in the communicants roll book although the reasons for this are unclear.⁷⁴ Thus, the evidence suggests the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ were mainly affiliated with the Established Church of Scotland with an Episcopalian minority, a pattern of religious affiliation also identified in a study of their commercial predecessors.⁷⁵ The ‘tobacco lords’ established St Andrews Parish Church (St Andrews in the Square) in 1756 and worshipped there, although there was an urban move westwards by the mercantile elite in the late eighteenth century. It seems this was followed by an ecclesiastical resettlement to St Georges Kirk after 1807. Some members subsequently exported Scottish Presbyterianism across the Atlantic.

Merchants from Glasgow were involved in a range of commercial and ecclesiastical activities in Jamaica. St Andrews Scots Kirk in downtown Kingston was founded in early 1814 after a group of Scottish Presbyterians petitioned the Mayor and Aldermen to request the establishment of a ‘Presbyterian place of worship...to accommodate so numerous a community’. The Scots recognised the ‘importance of religious and moral education...to promote...strict observance of good order and decorum and respect for the laws’. Evidently, they aimed to create a controlled labour force through the ‘good effects’ of ‘Presbyterian discipline’. Over two hundred individuals subsequently subscribed - raising the ‘considerable sum’ of over £8000 - and some of the highest contributors were from Glasgow. One of the city’s most prominent firms, Bogle & Co., contributed £200. Robert Hamilton and his brother George William Hamilton, nephews of the Bogle family and their representatives in Jamaica, also subscribed individually. John Miller and George Scheviz - one of the initial subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association - were also large donors; both became leading influences in the Scots Kirk’s

⁷³ Of the c.1000 communicants in 1837, 800 were non-parishioners. See *Second Report of Commissioners of Religious Instruction in Scotland*, Appendix III, (Edinburgh, W&A.K. Johnson, 1837), p.200.

⁷⁴ GCA, CH2/818/11-12, ‘St George’s Roll Books’, 1818, 1823.

⁷⁵ Peters, ‘Glasgow’s Tobacco Lords’, p.380.

early development and were named on the first committee.⁷⁶ Other merchants of Glasgow promoted their faith through investment at home.

Several West India merchants who were part of St Georges congregation – such as Colin Campbell of Jura - donated to the Evangelical Dr Thomas Chalmers' scheme for Church extension in 1835.⁸⁰ Indeed, the mercantile community of Glasgow 'made as large a contribution to the architecture of our scheme as all the heritors of Scotland put together'.⁸¹ James Ewing was perhaps the most prominent subscriber, and as a staunch Evangelical he cultivated political support amongst other adherents during his election as MP in 1832 before joining the Free Church after the disruption of 1843.⁸² Thus, religion, marriage and family were important mechanisms to re-generate the colonial class and reinforce commercial connections.

The commercial trades were also regulated by a civic framework which promoted trade and commerce.⁸³ The rank of burgess and guild brethren (B.G.B.) was a privileged position which not only carried great social distinction, but conferred the right to trade. After 1605, when a Letter of the Guildry set out the constitution of the Merchants House and established their prominent position, there were two distinct classes of burgess with protected privileges and related political and judicial powers; the merchant rank and craft rank.⁸⁴ Entrance requirements for a merchant burgess was especially rigorous, as fines (or fees) were payable at each stage of admission and although they varied over time, they were usually beyond the means of the working poor.⁸⁵

Furthermore, the suitability of individuals as a 'Burgess Freeman' in the Royal Burgh was controlled by the Dean of Guild of the Merchants House, who decided worthiness based on their wealth, mercantile training and moral reputation.⁸⁶ Individuals had to demonstrate they were worth at least '500 merks' in 'land, heritage and moveable

⁷⁶ Jamaica Archives (hereafter JA), 5/20/2/1, 'St Andrews Scots Kirk, Minutes', 1814, n.p.

⁸⁰ There were various names of 'Glasgow merchants' as subscribers, inferring they practised in the Church of Scotland. For example, James Campbell, Archibald Campbell, William Brown, James Ewing, Henry Dunlop, William Leckie Ewing, William Mathieson, Colin Campbell of Jura and Archibald Bogle, See, Thomas Chalmers, *Fifth Report of the Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Church Extension*, (Edinburgh: John Waugh, 1839), p.38-41.

⁸¹ Thomas Chalmers, *Seventh Report of the Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on Church Extension.*, (Edinburgh: William Whyte & Co, 1841), p.18.

⁸² Irene Maver, 'Power and Politics in the Scottish City: Town Council in the Nineteenth Century', in *Scottish Elites*, ed., T.M. Devine, (Edinburgh, 1994), pp.104-5.

⁸³ Glasgow was granted Royal Burgh status in the 17th century and even as an ecclesiastical burgh under the nominal control of the bishops, the city had engaged in overseas trade facilitated by the trading privileges that encouraged both domestic and foreign commerce. See T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People*, (London: Fontana, 1972), p.147

⁸⁴ James Ewing, *View of the History, Constitution, & Funds of the Guildry and Merchants House of Glasgow*, (Glasgow: James Hedderwick, 1817), pp.1-12.

⁸⁵ Anderson, *Burgesses and Guild Brethren of Glasgow, 1751-1846*, p.iv.

⁸⁶ T.C. Smout, 'The Glasgow Merchant Community in the Seventeenth Century', *The Scottish Historical Review*, (1968), p.58.

gear', which was double the value set for craftsmen.⁸⁷ The most common means of entrance for this group studied here was as 'son of a registered burgher and guild brethren', followed 'by purchase'. This suggests that incomers could rise to mercantile class in spite of the strict entrance regulations and financial barriers although there was also a degree of continuity in established families in Glasgow. Several others also took up privileges after marrying daughters of registered burghers, others 'by apprenticeship', 'nomination' or in the case of Patrick Colqhoun, as an 'Honorary Burgher'.⁸⁸ Whilst the majority of individuals in this sample did register and it represented an important qualification, in practice it was not an essential pre-requisite for a commercial career by the 1790s.⁸⁹

The Merchants House was also a commercial organisation with responsibilities in important areas of civic life in Glasgow. The seminal history (written by absentee Jamaican plantation owner, James Ewing) stated the organisation acted in three roles: as an elective body voting on the influential position of Dean of Guild, as a charitable association (especially for retired merchants) and as an Assembly that addressed petitions to the Crown and Parliament. Prior to 1747, burghers of the merchant rank as automatically assumed membership although an entrance fee of £4 sterling was introduced in 1773.⁹⁰ The Merchants House retained some importance in the period, and over 100 individuals in the overall sample of 174 registered. The majority of these were merchants although legal professionals such as Colin Dunlop Donald joined suggesting subscription was also about prestige.

The young merchant who managed to overcome the restricted entry barriers embarked on a career which opened up a transatlantic sphere of operations. The risks were great, but the rewards for the successful merchant could be huge. The aim was clear: the accumulation of wealth, which in all cases was based on private property in Glasgow and the colonies. Whilst the previous surveys of the city's West India merchants have detailed holdings in land and industry in Scotland, there have been few attempts to detail commercial connections between Glasgow and her Caribbean outposts.

The commercial accumulation and legal liquidation of West India property

The private ownership of West India property connected two groups of individuals involved in the 'Glasgow West India interest': a) mainly (but not exclusively) male

⁸⁷ Anderson, *Burghers and Guild Brethren of Glasgow, 1751-1846*, p.iv.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.69.

⁸⁹ Irene Maver has argued the great economic and social changes in eighteenth century Glasgow meant that the Burgher qualification was anachronistic by 1810 and became a mark of social distinction instead of an occupational classification. See Maver, 'Power and Politics', p.125.

⁹⁰ Ewing, *View of the Merchants House of Glasgow*, p.13-18.

individuals commercially involved with the accumulation of West India property, 1783-1834 and 2) male and female individuals connected with the liquidation of Glasgow-West India property, 1834-1838. The concept of chattel slavery in the West Indies established the view of enslaved peoples and their offspring as real property to be bought, sold and passed on as inheritance bequests. At the same time, the notion of the enslaved as property remained a hotly contested issue in the law courts across Great Britain, such as in the infamous Zong case in 1783 that commoditised enslaved people. There were also celebrated legal decisions that freed slaves in England in 1772 and the Joseph Knight case in Scotland in 1778.⁹¹ These decisions were heavily qualified however, as many of the enslaved previously brought to the metropolis remained in domestic servitude beyond this point. More significantly, slave owners across Great Britain both owned and held securities over the enslaved in the colonies in the nineteenth century. In spite of this transatlantic ambiguity, the position of lobbying groups in the 1820s such as the Glasgow West India Association was clear: the enslaved were legal property acquired within an approved system and protected by the laws of Great Britain. On emancipation in 1834, the British Government agreed that slaves were legal property yet also abolished the principle and awarded compensation for the loss at the same time.

West India property was acquired either in the colonies or in the metropolis. At the colonial end, tangible property came in the form of plantations with the enslaved attached. Unattached individuals or gangs of slaves were also bought and sold and attracted rental from their labour as jobbing gangs on plantations. At the metropolis end, intangible property came in the form of commission agreements and mortgage security. Several Glasgow-West India firms provided mortgage capital to plantation owners and took the enslaved as collateral, although there were difficulties in converting this to capital in Scotland in the short term. On emancipation, the merchants, as creditors, simply appropriated the compensation award, a process that Nicholas Draper has termed 'mercantile interception'.⁹² This type of process will be traced in a case study of the merchant house of Archibald Smith of Jordanhill in chapter six. Whilst there are numerous documented examples of males sojourning to the Caribbean, the role of women has featured less in the historiography. Nonetheless, women played a vital role in the plantation economy as 'creditors, slave holders, property owners' and the marrying off of daughters and widows amongst the 'plantocracy' in the colonies represented a path into

⁹¹ See John W. Cairns, 'After Somerset: The Scottish Experience', *The Journal of Legal History*, 33/3, (2012), pp.291-312.

⁹² Nicholas Draper, 'Possessing Slaves: Ownership, Compensation and Metropolitan Society in Britain at the time of Emancipation 1834-1840', *History Workshop Journal*, 64 (2007) p.84.

slave-ownership. Women also inherited plantation property as annuitants and legacies left by male relatives.⁹³

Glasgow in the Compensation List

The extensive involvement of individuals associated with Glasgow in the compensation process on the emancipation of slavery in 1834 reflects the city's pervasive connections with the plantation economy. The city was part of an international system of maritime commerce based on exploitation and collaboration in the colonies which was underpinned by credit. This connected many individuals and firms in Glasgow with others across Scotland, but also created long term links with London and Liverpool as well as the West Indies. This overall relationship might be regarded as a 'spider web' network, instead of a classic 'hub and spoke' model.⁹⁴ This chapter will now examine the claimants resident in Glasgow and the trace some of the wider connections of the transatlantic hub.

A recent study, *The Price of Emancipation*, has transformed understanding about Scottish connections with the Caribbean on 1 August 1834.⁹⁵ Individuals connected with Glasgow were involved in claims of over £460,000 in compensation for approximately 14,000 slaves.⁹⁶ This was amongst the most concentrated regional group of claimants in Great Britain. Analysis reveals that slave ownership was mainly in Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana and Grenada (see Appendix 2). There is a significant differential between claims, numbers of slaves and actual compensation awarded. For example, there were twenty-two claims (approximately twenty per cent of the total) for 3,591 slaves (approximately twenty-five per cent) in British Guiana although over £193,000 was paid in compensation (approximately forty-two per cent). This monetary anomaly is explained by taking the Compensation Commission's 'ad valorem' award system into consideration. The compensation was awarded on the basis of the average value of slave prices from 1822–30. As British Guiana came fully under British control after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, slave prices were inflated in the 1820s due to limited stocks and the inter-colony slave trade.⁹⁷

⁹³ Kathleen Mary Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation: Jamaica & Barbados, 1823-1843*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p.92.

⁹⁴ The 'spider web' analogy has been advocated by David Hancock, '“A Revolution in the Trade”: Wine Distribution and the Development of the Infrastructure of the Atlantic Market Economy', in *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, ed. by John J. McCusker, Kenneth Morgan, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.105-153.

⁹⁵ Draper, *Price of Emancipation*.

⁹⁶ *Scotland and Glasgow in the Records of Slave Compensation*.

⁹⁷ Butler, *Economics of Emancipation*, p. 27–9.

At this stage, it is useful to establish that the majority of compensation went to males connected to merchant firms. A focused examination of the compensation claims from subscribers of elite Glasgow West India Association will be undertaken in detail in chapter seven. Yet, it was not just male entrepreneurs who made claims and this section will provide a gendered dimension. Across Great Britain, female slave ownership was more ubiquitous than has previously been documented: Nicholas Draper suggests that of the 45,000 individual claims for 800,000 enslaved, between 40 and 45% of these claims were actually made by women.⁹⁸ However, according to Draper, women were mainly small-scale owners of individual slaves or annuities served upon them.⁹⁹ So, whilst they were over-represented in terms of claims made, it was men who were the largest recipients of the finance. Given the extent of intermarriage amongst the West India elites, it is unsurprising this provided a route into slave-ownership for women, resulting in compensation claims. One example of a Glasgow-West India matriarch who claimed compensation is Anne Penelope Dennistoun nee Campbell.¹⁰⁰ There were other women resident out-with Glasgow but with close links to the city, including Cecilia Douglas, the ‘Glasgow belle’ who married Gilbert Douglas in 1793. When he died without issue in 1807, the widow Douglas inherited his Scottish estates in Douglas Park and Boggs in Lanarkshire, before purchasing nearby Orbiston.¹⁰¹ She also inherited his part share of the sugar plantation Mount Pleasant in St Vincent and claimed over £3000 for slaves on emancipation in 1834. Cecilia subsequently became a fashionable socialite and also made several investments in British industry.¹⁰³

It is evident that the initial UCL data which identified over 200 compensation claimants ‘associated with Glasgow’ was representative of a wider ‘*Scottish West India interest*’ comprised of individuals with connections in the transatlantic hub. Indeed, there were also male slave-owners who had commercial interests or provided related services in Glasgow but resided out with its boundaries. This illustrates how colonial capital seeped out to outlying areas such as Lanarkshire, Perth and Greenock. Unsurprisingly, as the

⁹⁸ Nicholas Draper ‘Possessing People: absentee slave-owners within British society’, in *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, ed. by Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.36.

⁹⁹ Draper, *The Price of Emancipation*, pp.204-5.

¹⁰⁰ Anne Penelope Campbell’s kinship networks interlocked several merchant firms: she was the sister of Colin Campbell of Jura (Campbell, Rivers & Co.) and sister in law of Alexander Campell of Hallyards (John Campbell senior & Co.). In 1797, Anne Penelope married Robert Dennistoun, one of the first five directors of the West India Association, and co-partner in G&R Dennistoun & Co. Dennistoun was also a plantation owner in Trinidad. His wife and son subsequently claimed over £12,500 in compensation for 253 slaves on three estates, Friendship, Belvidere and Exchange.

¹⁰¹ Guthrie Smith, Oswald Mitchell, ‘Orbiston House’, *Old Country Houses of the old Glasgow Gentry*.

¹⁰³ Cecilia Douglas left moveable property of £40,365 when she died. She had investments in Scottish and English railways, an investment pattern consistent with the male Glasgow-West India elite in the same period. See NRS, SC36/48/49, ‘Inventory of Cecilia Douglas’, 13 December 1862, pp.248-255.

financial centre and the home of legal institutions, Edinburgh had several individuals who made claims for plantation owners resident in the west of Scotland, some of whom imported produce through Glasgow-West India merchant houses. In one example John Dundas and Alexander Pearson, both Writers of the Signet based in Edinburgh, made claims for the Stirlings of Keir in Perth and the Cunninghames of Craighends in Renfrewshire respectively, both landed families who imported sugar from their plantations in Jamaica via Glasgow.

Capital networks also connected Glasgow with Scotland and the major Atlantic ports in England. Evidently, long term commercial and financial connections existed with Liverpool and especially London. For example, Aeneas Barkly and Henry Davidson were originally from Ross and Cromarty and operated a London-West India merchant house. They claimed compensation for slaves on Mountraven estate in Grenada, previously owned by the Bogles who operated a Glasgow-London-Grenada business in the 1770s before bankruptcy. There were also prominent Glasgow-Liverpool connections, exemplified by the Charles Stewart Parker mercantile network of Sandbach, Tinne & Co. Thus, whilst Glasgow was a key Atlantic port with connections across Scotland and in London, Bristol and Liverpool, the true source of the wealth were the colonies in the British West Indies.

Some individuals with connections to Glasgow were resident in the West Indies in this period. There were many joint claims for slaves and individuals in the colonies and some were from agents, correspondents or debtors of Glasgow firms. Jamaica and Grenada also featured prominently in the list of claims. There were far less residents in the 'first phase' colonies and the Leewards featured less, although the prominence of Antigua perhaps reflects the long term presence of Scots in that colony. The transatlantic residences of individuals associated with Glasgow evidently reflect the city's role as both creditor and debtor across the British Atlantic world as well as the legacy of such dealings.

Concluding thoughts and plan

The first section of this chapter has documented a commercial and political West India Interest, 1783-1834 leading into the legal claims for compensation after the abolition of slavery in 1834. By adopting a broad taxonomy of the 'Glasgow West India interest', including absentee planters, elite and less well known merchants, as well as politicians and colonial agents, it is evident this group were both larger in size and more influential than has previously been documented. Moreover, it has also been shown the institutions of marriage and family were utilised to reinforce commercial connections. At the same time, this chapter has established Glasgow as the premier Atlantic port in Scotland and also

represents the first step in restoring the ‘West India interest’ to their place at the peak of Scottish economy and regional society after 1783. This chapter not only documents through case studies the process of compensation and illuminates several female beneficiaries, but also lays the foundations for future chapters: financial and commercial networks; Scots in the plantation economy; social and political networks in the British Atlantic world; a case study of a Glasgow-West India merchant house and finally a chapter on the life, wealth and legacy of the West India elite in Glasgow

Chapter 3. The financial and commercial networks of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’

As chairman of the Glasgow West India Association in 1825, Charles Stewart Parker was at the commanding heights of the city’s ‘West India interest’. He was senior partner in the firm McInroy, Parker & Co. that carried on business at Liverpool, Demerara and Glasgow. A legal case concerning Parker offers insights into the daily movements of the successful West India elite as well as business practices.¹ In 1827, Parker lived with his family in Glasgow for seven months of the year in the Barony parish on a rented farm which he managed himself. In the summer, he resided in his mansion in Fairlie on the coast of Ayrshire, travelling to Glasgow once a fortnight. He also visited Liverpool three times a year on company business. The merchant house of McInroy & Parker in Glasgow was supervised by Parker and his co-partner James McInroy with the assistance of two clerks. During the seven months he lived in the Barony, he attended his counting house in the Virginia Buildings five days in each a week, spending two or three hours a day at work.² In the summer months, Parker was in personal attendance at the counting house for just three or four hours every fortnight. The counting house was in the bustling commercial district and Parker was within walking distance of maritime facilities and financial institutions such as the Broomielaw harbour, the Tontine Rooms, the mail-coach office and the Royal Bank at Royal Exchange Square. This example illustrates that the global Glasgow-West India trades were businesses undertaken by partners in firms based in counting houses in the area now known as the Merchant City.

This chapter focuses on the structures and connections that made the Glasgow-West India trade possible including the merchant firms themselves, education, trade, communications, commercial links with banks and credit in the colonies. Although classic texts have noted the importance of Atlantic merchant enterprise in a British context, there has been surprisingly little written about the domestic operations of Glasgow-West India firms in the golden age of the Clyde-Caribbean trade.³ However, S.D. Checkland has examined the respective bankruptcies of Alexander Houston and Co. in 1801 and Evan Baillie and Co. in 1806.⁴ T.M. Devine followed this and outlined that an elite group of partnerships – including Houston & Co. – dominated Clyde-Caribbean commerce in the

¹ *Cases Decided in the Court of Session 1826-1827*, Vol. V, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1827), p.389

² *The Glasgow Directory*, (Glasgow: W. Lang, 1826), p.154.

³ Stanley Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain: From the Industrial Revolution to World War 1*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁴ S.G. Checkland, ‘Two Scottish West Indian Liquidations after 1793’, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 4 (1957), p.127–143.

late eighteenth century. Devine also detailed the partnership structures of nineteen West India firms who operated in Glasgow between 1750 and 1815.⁵ Although neither article elaborated on the legal basis for partnerships, complementary articles focused on the tobacco trades provided context on partnership law and Scots firms albeit in an American trading context.⁶

Other studies have focused on colonial operations. Douglas Hamilton illuminated the commercial networks of Alexander Houston and Co. in Grenada, the premier Glasgow West India merchant firm in the late eighteenth century.⁷ Thus, existing studies have mainly concentrated on the merchants themselves or taken a case study approach to each firm's colonial activities. This chapter therefore represents the first overall survey of Glasgow-West India merchant firms that holistically examines operations in Scotland and the Caribbean in the nineteenth century.

West India Merchant houses, Scots Law and partnerships

As discussed in the previous chapter, James Morrison defined West India merchants and their firms principally by geographical focus rather than the commodities in which they traded.⁸ This section will focus on a clearly defined group of firms with the strongest connection to the region: the firms who registered with the Glasgow West India Association between 1807 and 1834, that is, between the abolition of the slave trade and the emancipation of plantation slavery.

On the establishment of the Association in 1807, the Directors agreed that elite merchant firms should annually subscribe £52 to a 'pecuniary fund', which was double that required of the smaller firms. Thus, the top seven firms in Glasgow were Stirling, Gordon & Co., John Campbell, senior, & Co., George and Robt. Dennistoun and Co., Leitch & Smith, Buchanan, Steven & Co., David & James Connell and Robert Bogle Junr & Co.⁹ This thesis examines two of these firms in detail. This chapter will provide a shorter case study of John Campbell, senior, & Co. based on their business records while chapter five

⁵ T.M. Devine 'An Eighteenth Century Business Elite: Glasgow-West India Merchants, 1750-1815', *Scottish Historical Review*, 57/ 163 (1978), pp.53-67.

⁶ T.M. Devine, 'Sources of Capital for the Glasgow Tobacco Trade, c. 1740-1780', *Business History*, 16/2, (1974), pp.113-129; T.M. Devine, 'Glasgow Merchants and the Collapse of the Tobacco Trade 1775-1783', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 52/153/1 (Apr., 1973), pp.50-74.

⁷ Douglas Hamilton, 'Scottish Trading in the Caribbean: The Rise and Fall of Houston & Co.', in *Nation and Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600-1800*, ed. by Ned C. Landsman, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001), pp.94-126.

⁸ James Morrison, *A Complete Treatise of Practical Book-Keeping, Third Edn.*, (London: Longman, 1820), p.xiv.

⁹ Glasgow City Archives (hereafter GCA), TD1683/1/1, 'Abstract of Minutes of the Glasgow West India Association (GWIA)', p.6.

will examine the merchant house of Leitch & Smith.¹⁰ Other firms such as Buchanan, Steven & Co. (which evolved into Dennistoun, Buchanan & Co.), will be used for comparison.¹¹ These will be contrasted with the records of MacNeill, Stewart & Co, a lesser firm which did not register with the Association.¹² Records of some of these firms will be complemented with legal sources and banking records. Colonial records and correspondence with associates in the West Indies – including agents and plantation owners – illustrate Caribbean activities.¹³

The legal basis for a Glasgow-West India merchant firm was a private partnership, which was defined by in a landmark text in 1826 by George Joseph Bell, a Scottish advocate and Professor of Law at the University of Edinburgh. Persons of ‘sound mind’ (i.e. above twenty one and sane) were entitled to enter into a legal contract that established a firm which was given a ‘social name’. The firm, recognised as a separate person in Scots law, bestowed upon the creditors (or partners) a preferable right to the funds or stock of the company which was deemed common property in a trust held by all partners. Lastly, the personal credit of each partner was pledged in the name of the company. In the specific context of West India merchants, many Glasgow firms established separate establishments in the colonies (usually under similar but different names) which could then transact on their own terms.¹⁴ In practice, this meant that firms managed by Scots in the West Indies could not be pursued in Scottish courts by creditors (such as manufacturers who consigned goods on credit) even if the main partners resided in Scotland. For example, in 1814, Reid & McCall pursued the partners of J.T.A. Douglas & Co. for debts owed by Douglas, Reid & Company, their sister firm in Demerara. However, it was decreed that the ‘co-partnery...is entirely distinct from the individuals who compose it’ and the case was dismissed on the basis that creditors must make a claim against the company in that jurisdiction.¹⁵

Scots law added other layers of protection for colonial firms. T.M. Devine noted it was common for Scottish tobacco concerns to have six to nine partners which was more

¹⁰ GCA TD1696, ‘Campbell of Hallyards Papers’.

¹¹ University of Glasgow, Special Collections (hereafter GUSP), MS Murray 605, ‘Minute book of Dennistoun, Buchanan, & Co. Glasgow, 1806-42’.

¹² National Records of Scotland (hereafter NRS), CS96/966, ‘William MacNeill of Hayfield, Cash registers and letter books, 1806-1808’; GCA B1/18/1-12, ‘MacNeill & Stewart, Brokerage books’.

¹³ For example, the letterbook of George Oliphant, NRS GD1/8/36. More significant were the plantation records of the Urquhart’s of Craigston and Meldrum, who consigned cotton to John Campbell, senior, & Co, see National Register of Archives in Scotland, 2570 (hereafter NRAS).

¹⁴ George Joseph Bell, *Commentaries on the Laws of Scotland and on the Principles of Mercantile Jurisprudence*, 5th Edn., Vol II, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1826), pp.621-627

¹⁵ *Decisions of the First and Second Divisions of the Court of Session, November 1812-1814*, (Edinburgh: Manners and Miller, 1815), p.644.

than their English counterparts.¹⁶ Consistent with the opinion of Bell on the legal basis of firms, Devine suggested large concerns were made possible in Scotland as they were legally defined as separate entities from co-partners – in contrast to English law – and thus able to raise legal action as well as regulating rights of co-partners.¹⁷ Thus, large Scottish West India firms provided security for partners by spreading risk which also promoted the accumulation of capital and increased credit rating. David Hancock did not subscribe to the risk spreading thesis but instead argued a shortage of Scottish specie facilitated larger partnerships.¹⁸ In his study of the Glasgow-West India firm of Alexander Houston & Co., Douglas Hamilton commented on these issues. He analysed Devine's sample of nineteen West India firms active between 1750 and 1815 and demonstrated they had just over four co-partners on average.¹⁹ Hamilton compared this with Richard Sheridan's sample of leading West India firms in London which averaged just over two partners per firm.²⁰ Whatever the exact reasons, it is reasonable to conclude that the typically large partnerships in Scottish merchant firms allowed the accumulation of capital stock and the spreading of risk.

Partnership structures have been identified for fourteen merchant houses which registered with the Glasgow West India Association and were active between 1807 and 1828.²¹ These were long term concerns and the partnership size ranged from three to eight partners. The median was both eight and three, meaning smaller firms were as common as larger ones. However, the average co-partnership size was 5.5 although for elite firms this rose to 6.3. Thus, it seems that partnership sizes of such firms slightly increased into the nineteenth century. This small increase might be partially attributed to the rise of the family firm as Glasgow's 'golden age' of sugar progressed.

Peter Mathias noted that consanguineous transfer of power in early modern enterprise limited various risks. Promotion of younger sons and relatives into the family firm retained ownership of the concern which ostensibly preserved fortunes. Further, the dangers inherent in establishing new businesses were minimised as succession through kinship relations meant younger male relatives retained existing contacts, customers and

¹⁶ Devine, 'Glasgow Merchants and the Collapse of the Tobacco Trade', p.69.

¹⁷ Devine, 'Sources of Capital for the Glasgow Tobacco Trade', p.122.

¹⁸ David Hancock, *Citizens of the world: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735-1785*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.104-108.

¹⁹ Hamilton, 'Scottish Trading in the Caribbean', p.120.

²⁰ Richard Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, (U.S.: Canoe Press, 2000), p.299.

²¹ Partnership groupings were identified in co-partner agreements as well as the *London and Edinburgh Gazette* and printed Court of Session papers. The fourteen firms were Dennistoun, Buchanan & Co., Campbell, Rivers & Co., Campbell, Fraser & Co., D&J Connell, Eason, Alston & Co., Edgar, Lyon & Co., Francis Garden & Sons., G&R Dennistoun, Haddow & Dale, John Campbell, senior, & Co., Leitch & Smith, Robert Eccles & Co, Stirling, Gordon & Co., Wighton, Gray & Co.

suppliers built up over several years. Thus, elite merchant firms recruited from within the direct 'family matrix' and wider familial networks in order to minimise risk.²² In Glasgow, all seven of the elite merchant houses had at least two co-partners from the same family. Five of them were dominated by mercantile patriarchs who introduced at least one son into the family firm. Two firms within this elite group introduced at least three sons into the family West India business.

The rise of the merchant house of John Campbell, senior, & Co. was similar to that of contemporaries Leitch & Smith (see chapter six). Both firms were established by younger sons from cadet branches of minor gentry families resident outside Glasgow. John Campbell and Archibald Smith had previously been involved with the Virginia trades but both shifted commercial focus to sugar and the Caribbean after Glasgow's tobacco monopoly in Virginia was ended after American independence in 1783. Both groomed younger sons and male relatives to take over the firm. Similar to Leitch & Smith, the partnership structure of John Campbell, senior, & Co. was based on kinship networks which provided the firm with capital, skills and colonial connections. Indeed, of the fifteen co-partners in the firm's business contracts between 1790 and 1848, all but one were men from the same family.

The founder John Campbell senior (c.1735-1808) was the third son of Alexander Campbell of Kinloch. Other co-partners in 1790 included John's brother Colin Campbell of Park and their cousin, Alexander Campbell of Hallyards (1768-1817), also known as 'Business Sandy' due to his work ethic.²³ Like Leitch & Smith, the firm had a focus on the second phase British colony of Grenada from the outset. The other co-partners were John Campbell's other brother Thomas, who was 'present in Grenada' in 1790 with their nephew, Alexander Campbell of Haylodge and Marran (d.1835).²⁴ Although not a partner in the firm, another brother, Mungo Campbell of Hundleshope and Kailzie (d. 1793), owned a sugar estate, Marran, in the parish of St John. His son Alexander Campbell of Haylodge, who later become a partner in the firm, inherited the plantation on his death and took the nickname 'Marran'.

As individuals died or retired, they were replaced by younger family members and the number of co-partners remained almost constant throughout the lifecycle of the firm. There were five between 1790 and 1812, six up to 1828 and seven up to 1841. The sharp

²² Peter Mathias, 'Risk, Credit and Kinship in Early Modern Enterprise', in *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, ed. by John McCusker, Kenneth Morgan, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.16-17.

²³ John Guthrie Smith, John Oswald Mitchell, 'Possil', *The Old Country Houses of the old Glasgow Gentry*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1878).

²⁴ GCA TD1696, 'Contract of Co-partnership', 1790, p.1.

increase in levels of capital stock underwrote the dramatic rise of the firm: a total of £40,000 was invested in 1790, peaking at £180,000 (amongst seven partners) in 1828 and declining to £50,000 (amongst five partners) in 1841.²⁵ The partnership structure, capital stock and share price of John Campbell, senior, & Co. suggest it was typical of elite firms in Glasgow. For example, in 1806, Dennistoun, Buchanan & Co. had eight co-partners with a capital stock of £175,000. The cost of a share in this firm was just over £2000.²⁶

Five of John Campbell's sons became co-partners: John Murdoch Campbell, Colin (later of Colgrain), Alexander (later of Possil), Thomas, James as well as a grandson, Colin, 2nd of Colgrain. Marran recruited his son 'Black' Mungo Campbell, whilst the son of Alexander Campbell of Hallyards, 'White' Mungo Campbell (1805-1866) also joined. Another nephew, Mungo Nutter Campbell (1785-1862) took up a partnership and had a prominent role over many years. Thus, there was a direct transfer of colonial capital as younger male relatives of established West India merchants were groomed for commercial careers. In some cases, patrimonial inheritance was distributed before death which provided younger sons with interest free start-up capital. This process is illustrated in a deed of settlement drawn up by John Campbell in 1802. His two young sons were to be bequeathed £10,000 on his death after deducting: 'any sums of money...for the purpose of putting them in business or advancing them in the world and which I may enter as debts against them in my Books'.²⁷

This passage of rites was sometimes dependant on reputation and behaviour. As a nineteen year old in 1801, Colin Campbell of Colgrain was warned that the attainment of a co-partnership in the family firm was conditional on his father being 'of opinion that the said Colin Campbell's conduct continues to deserve such transfer being made in his favour'.²⁸ He evidently behaved himself and inherited four shares worth £4000 (£1000 per share) on 27 January 1803, three weeks after reaching twenty one, the 'age of majority'. Some of this capital had previously been advanced to his brother, John Murdoch Campbell who died in 1802.²⁹ On John Campbell's death in 1808, he left Colin a further £6000 stock of trade in the family firm.³⁰

However, one recommendation to the firm John Campbell, senior, & Co. in 1789 from a correspondent William Urquhart of Craigston - who owned a cotton plantation in

²⁵ See 'Contracts of co-partnership' 1790-1841 held in GCA, 1696, 'Campbell of Hallyards' papers.

²⁶ GUSP, MS Murray 605, 'Minute book of Dennistoun, Buchanan', p.4.

²⁷ NRS, SC36/48/3, 'Inventory of John Campbell senior', 3 October 1808, p.59.

²⁸ GCA, TD1696, 'Contract of co-partnership', 1801, pp.4-5.

²⁹ GCA, TD1696, 'John Campbell senior & Co., Minute book', 27 January 1803, p.3.

³⁰ NRS, SC36/48/3, 'Inventory of John Campbell senior', 3 October 1808, p.58.

Carriacou - suggests that on occasion individuals outside the family matrix could attain a partnership in Glasgow:

Mr Willm Cumine...has been regularly bred to Business when he was a very young man, he first went out to Mr Glassford's Stores in Virginia...he afterwards went out to Jamaica as a Clerk...he has made something considerable during his stay in Jamaica where he was well known & universally esteemed, but as he did not keep his health so well there he wishes...to form some safe connection in Business in this Country and for that purpose he goes to Glasgow to see if he can do anything with his Capital or form any profitable partnership there...I therefore take the liberty of introducing him to you & recommending him to your good offices if you should hear or know of anything that should fall in with his plans. I shall only add that if I did not thoroughly know his worth, integrity & honour, I would not have presumed to recommend him to your services.³¹

Although unable to employ the budding West India merchant on this occasion, John Campbell's amiable response that Cumine (probably from Aberdeen) was 'very deserving' suggests that the right individual could attain a partnership in a West India merchant house in Glasgow if they had the appropriate recommendations as well as education, experience and capital.³² The firms themselves were located in establishments in the commercial centre.

Counting Houses in the Merchant City

The typical counting house was a hub that connected the employees with the plantation economy of the West Indies and various institutions in Scotland. The counting houses in Glasgow were mainly congregated on or near the Trongate, particularly Argyll Street, the Tontine Buildings, Candleriggs, the Gallowgate and Miller Street.³³ An inventory lodged on the sequestration of one merchant allows the historian to recreate one such business place.

In 1837, Daniel Ross' outstanding debts in Glasgow and London exceeded his assets, meaning the firm was wound up. It is possible the supply of credit was stopped post-emancipation although other firms, such as John Campbell, senior & Co., reacted well to such conditions. In Ross's case, the bankruptcy led to an appraiser evaluating his property for sale in order to appease creditors. In 1837, Daniel Ross was based at Royal Bank place, a prestigious location in the lane between Buchanan Street and the Royal Exchange.³⁴ This commercial building was set over three levels. The cellar was sparse containing only empty boxes, tables and shelving. Up on the ground floor, the warehouse

³¹ NRAS 2570/120, 'Letter from William Urquhart', 16 October 1789.

³² NRAS 2570/122, 'Letter from John Campbell senior', 16 March 1790.

³³ *The Glasgow Directory, 1806-1808*, (Glasgow: Niven, Napier and Khuill, 1806).

³⁴ *The Post Office Annual Directory from 1836-1837*, (Glasgow: John Graham, 1836), p.188

had perhaps been cleared of valuable items. The office was relatively luxurious compared to the other rooms. In more prosperous times – before Ross travelled to the West Indies to escape his debts - he may have sat on the Venetian chair at the mahogany table and looked out to the Royal Exchange. Many commercial discussions could have taken place in this office with merchants keen to discuss commerce with associates in Grenada and Demerara.

The inventory of the adjoining room described as the ‘counting house’ illustrates how such business was undertaken. The two desk stools and a mahogany double desk were undoubtedly reserved for apprentices and clerks. These young men might have warmed themselves at the fire before getting to work on both inward and outward correspondence. The recording of this information into the journal was just as important as calculating figures for the ledger book. Mail either destined for or newly arrived from the West Indies was placed in the letter box. A desk knife was used to open inward mail whilst the pewter inkstand held a steady supply for the quill pens used by clerks. The ready reckoner allowed the young apprentices to make quick calculations on discounts and charges whilst the Thomson’s interest table illustrates just how much their world was based on credit and commission. The padlocked box might have contained bills of exchange for safekeeping. Before the young men walked along to the mail office on 64 Trongate or the Royal Bank of Scotland at the west end of Royal Exchange Square, they might have taken an umbrella from the stand to keep out the Glasgow drizzle.³⁵

Whilst this inventory hints at a functional, commercial space for senior merchants and junior associates, other sources outline such establishments acted not only as the office but also as training academies. It is worth considering the transition from schoolboy to apprentice merchant in universities, commercial academies and the counting house.

Preparation for a career in a transatlantic sphere of operations

In the transatlantic hub of Glasgow, the availability of education, commercial training and apprenticeships attracted many young men who were destined for a career in the West India trades. The close knit mercantile community around the Trongate established strong connections with Old College (now the University of Glasgow) on nearby High Street. Many colonial entrepreneurs sent their sons to Old College. A Parliamentary Commission in the 1820s suggested that young men were ‘sent for one or more years to College in order to carry their education further than that of schools’ before they engaged in commercial pursuits.³⁶ However, existing historiographical evidence suggests the links between the

³⁵ NRS, CS96/4291, ‘Daniel Ross and Company, Sederunt book’, 1837-38.

³⁶ Parliamentary Papers 1830, *General Report of the Commissioners Appointed to visit the Universities and Colleges of Scotland*, p.263.

‘Glasgow West India interest’ and Old College were relatively slight. Around 50% of matriculated students in the period 1800-1839 had fathers whose primary occupation was ‘industry and commerce’,³⁷ whilst only 12% of matriculated students were subsequently employed in the same area.³⁸

However, of the 162 individuals defined as the commercial ‘Glasgow West India interest’ in this study, fifty two (32%) matriculated at Old College. The majority of these were sons of fathers involved with the colonial trades in Glasgow. It is possible to trace some paths. West India merchant James Ewing attended the High School in Glasgow before he matriculated at the age of twelve at Old College. He read Latin, Greek and philosophy, and then went into the West India trade with his father and uncles.³⁹ Thus, Old College retained some prestige.

However, the institution also attracted strong criticism in this period, particularly in 1761 from the Rev. William Thom, Minister of Govan, who called for a public academy in Glasgow in a series of influential tracts.⁴⁰ Merchants in the city also voiced similar critiques about the unsuitability of an Arts curriculum as a preparation for commerce.⁴¹ Subsequently, former Old College Professor John Anderson laid out a vision for an institution providing useful learning in his will of 1796.⁴² This legacy established Andersons University (now the University of Strathclyde) which provided a place for vocational learning and specifically in ‘mechanic, Arts...Health or Commerce’, which was covered in the initial four colleges: Arts, Medicine, Law and Theology.⁴³ Anderson set out positions for eighty one trustees across nine classes including the ‘fourth class’ merchant-manufacturers. Patrick Colquhoun was one of the initial trustees in 1796 although resident in London by this point.⁴⁴ Other West India merchants such as John Riddell were appointed later that year and another trustee for over twenty years, William MacNeill was

³⁷ W.M. Mathew, ‘The Origins and Occupations of Glasgow students 1740-1839’, *Past and Present*, 33, (1966), p.77.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.85.

³⁹ Macintosh Mackay, *Memoir of James Ewing Esq., of Strathleven*, (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1866), p.18-20.

⁴⁰ William Thom, *The Works of the Rev. William Thom, Late Minister of Govan, Consisting of Sermons, Tracts, Letters*, (Glasgow: James Dymock, 1799), pp.263-302; Donald J. Withrington ‘Education and Society in the Eighteenth Century’ in *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, ed. by N.T. Phillipson, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p.181.

⁴¹ GUSP, MS Gen, 520/58, ‘Samuel Rose Papers’, 24 February, 1784; for context see Richard B. Sher, ‘Commerce, Religion and the Enlightenment’, in *Glasgow, Volume 1, Beginnings to 1830*, eds. T. M. Devine and G. Jackson, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.350.

⁴² University of Strathclyde Archives (hereafter SUA), GB 249 OB/1/1/1, ‘Andersons Institution, minutes, 1796-1799’, p.1

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.11-12.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.3-6.

a partner in West India firm MacNeill, Stewart & Co.⁴⁵ However, there is no evidence with which to ascertain if merchants and planters attended in significant numbers as there are no matriculation lists before 1835.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, it seems unlikely there was widespread attendance in what was initially a small scale institution. There is no mention of commercial training in the initial classes⁴⁷ although a Mathematical Academy taught practical mathematics, including navigation, in 1816.⁴⁸ Thus, whilst Anderson's University eventually emerged as a real alternative to Old College, the 'West India interest' of Glasgow probably received commercial education elsewhere.⁴⁹

The universities were not the only way into a colonial career and there was an excellent standard of commercial learning in the city. In the 1760s, William Gordon and James Scruton provided such training,⁵⁰ and this can be considered part of the same movement for 'useful knowledge' adopted in the Andersonian.⁵¹ In a later essay of 1770, William Gordon – master of an academy in Glasgow – published *The education of a young gentleman intended for the counting house*. This work set out his views on the deficiencies of a University education and the theoretical skills deemed pre-requisite for entry to the counting house as well as the practical skills gained in an apprenticeship. Since he was promoting his own private academy, it is unsurprising that Gordon suggested that a mercantile apprenticeship on its own was inadequate as it mainly consisted of copying letters, delivering messages and waiting on communications at the Port Office. Furthermore, 'the business [of the counting house]...is of such importance, and every moment so precious to the master...he hath no time for attending to the instruction of an apprentice'.⁵² The limited time spent by Charles Stewart Parker at his counting house in Virginia Street seems to support this view.

At the outset, Gordon stated that 'commerce is not a game of chance, but a science; in which he who is most skilled bids fairest' before he set out his vision of the ideal mercantile training. The ability to read English as well as Latin and Greek was the foundation. Further, 'rhetoric and composition' was taught to budding young merchants so that they might 'speak and write with freedom' whilst a course in philosophy would instil 'self-love and benevolence'. As merchants viewed themselves as 'secondary legislators'

⁴⁵ MacNeill was involved from 1796 at least to 1814, See University of Strathclyde Archives, GB 249 OB/1/1/3, 'Andersons Institution and Andersons University Minutes, 1810-1830', p.52.

⁴⁶ SUA, 'Evening Classes', GB 249 OB/9/1.

⁴⁷ SUA, GB 249 OB/1/1/1, 'Andersons Institution, minutes, 1796-1799', pp.91-92.

⁴⁸ SUA, GB 249 OB/7/1/4, 'Mathematical Academy', 26 October 1816.

⁴⁹ Sher, 'Commerce, Religion and the Enlightenment', pp.349-50.

⁵⁰ Withrington 'Education and Society in the Eighteenth Century', pp.197-8.

⁵¹ Sher, 'Commerce, Religion and the Enlightenment', p.350.

⁵² William Gordon, *The Universal Accountant and Complete Merchant*, 3rd edn., Vol.1, (Edinburgh: Alexander Donaldson, 1770), pp.2-3.

who were consulted on relevant legislation, the principles of law and government were desirable subjects to be taught in any curriculum. The French language was also deemed essential before entry to the counting house and the capacity to translate, speak and write the language ‘should...be one of the first objects of instruction’. Arithmetic was described as the ‘the most necessary to the mercantile profession’ as well as geometry and algebra to accustom the apprentices to ‘close and demonstrative reasoning’. Navigation and geography, including the ‘use of maps, the situation, extent, produce, manufactures, ports, politics, and regulations, with respect to trade, of all nations of the world’, should follow. Ideally, these skills should be learned before entry to the counting house and once there, ‘the *arcana mercatorum* (merchant’s secrets) be exposed to view’.

For Gordon, theoretical knowledge should be complemented by practical expertise, particularly arithmetic skills which must be taught with everyday cases that ‘occur to the merchant, the banker, the custom-house and insurance office... which will serve to illustrate the use of examples in that particular branch of business’. Letter writing should also be taught through epistolary correspondence amongst the students to teach them to ‘think, write and act like men before they come up on the real stage of action’. Finally, ‘last but not the least’, bookkeeping was also to be taught with the use of practical examples. Thus, after this mercantile passage of rites, young men:

Will, in a short time, be so expert in every business of the counting-house, and be able to form such a judgement of everything he sees transacted, that when he comes to act for himself, every advantage in trade will lie open to him: his knowledge, skill and address will carry him through all obstacles to his advancement; his talents will supply the places of a large capital; and when the beaten track of business becomes less advantageous, by being in too many hands, he will strike out new paths for himself, and thus bring a balance of wealth, not only to himself but to the community with which he is connected.⁵³

Despite his vested interest, Gordon set out a very convincing argument that the best preparation for apprentice merchants was a period in grammar school followed by commercial training and a counting house apprenticeship (which sometimes attracted high entry fees).

It is also evident this type of training did not restrict individuals to a mercantile career in Glasgow as it opened up a career in the plantation economy. Correspondence between George Oliphant in Jamaica and James Somervell of the firm Somervell, Connell & Co. in Glasgow (the mercantile antecedent of Stirling, Gordon & Co.) described relevant skills required for young Scottish sojourners who wished to follow the planting line:

⁵³ Gordon, *The Universal Accountant*, pp.2-15.

You may give him proper advice, he ought to be put to schooll immediately to Learn writing, arithmetik, bookkeeping & Navigation. If he drops the seafaring life he will go to Jamaica to learn the planting business if you chuse it. I will write my brother to take him under his direction.⁵⁴

Thus, a commercial education provided skills which could also be adapted for maritime or planting careers in the West Indies.

Commercial training in Glasgow evolved into a large scale enterprise after 1818 with seven new mercantile academies opening after this date. By 1838, there were at least nine around the centre of Glasgow - perhaps the highest number in any city in Scotland - and the curriculum was similar: writing, arithmetic, as well as mercantile accounts and book-keeping. Between 1836 and 1838, the nine academies trained over 1600 pupils, although not all would have been subsequently employed in commerce.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, mercantile professionals were available for transatlantic employment on an annual basis and some of the academies had connections with local firms. Merchants in the city inspected one institution, whilst another teacher had been in 'various mercantile houses in Glasgow' for ten years before opening up his school in 1829.⁵⁶ Whilst there is little quantifiable evidence of West India merchants entering private commercial schools in Glasgow, it was arguably the most suitable grounding.

The private training was complemented with the publication of specialist textbooks designed for use in Glasgow. In particular, books authored by James Morrison were illustrated with examples of transatlantic commerce conducted from the city.⁵⁷ In his important text, *A Complete Treatise of Practical Book-Keeping*, he outlined the operations of a Glasgow-West India commission business undertaken by three partners in the city. According to Morrison:

Every Merchant should be acquainted with the following branches of Commercial Learning. He should write with ease and correctness; understand Figures and Accounts, and be able to examine Invoices, Accounts - Current, Charter Parties, Polices of Insurance, Bills of Lading, and Bills of Exchange.⁵⁸

And in particular, he suggested West India merchants should precisely understand their commodity, including quality, as well as the nature of the trade such as the intricacies of

⁵⁴ NRS, GD1/8/36 'Letterbook of George Oliphant', 20 August 1773, pp.23-4.

⁵⁵ There were at least 1612 pupils taught in the 'Mercantile Academies' in Glasgow in 1836-37, comprising 1068 males and 544 females.

⁵⁶ PP 1841 (64) *Answers made by schoolmasters in Scotland to queries circulated in 1838, by order of the Select Committee on Education in Scotland*, p.520-540.

⁵⁷ See for example, James Morrison, *The Elements of Book Keeping, by single and double entry*, (London: Longman, 1813).

⁵⁸ Morrison, *A Complete Treatise of Practical Book-Keeping*, p.xiv.

insurance and risk of natural disasters including ‘dangerous Navigation, West India hurricanes, enterprizes of the Enemy’.⁵⁹ However, whilst there was a high standard of training in the city – for those that could pay – at least twenty individuals in the group identified as the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ sojourned to the colonies to gain experience of a more practical nature. Virginia was a popular destination, which is unsurprising given Glasgow’s tobacco monopoly before 1775. In general, however, the West Indies were the most popular region, especially the islands of Grenada and Jamaica. However, the relatively small number of individuals that sojourned as youths suggests this wasn’t a pre-requisite to a West India career, in contrast to Virginia merchants.⁶⁰ Chapter four examines the temporary economic migrants from Scotland to the Caribbean in more detail. This section demonstrates that contacts, practical experience, commercial education and apprenticeships provided a means of entry to the West India trades and, for the successful entrepreneur, upward social mobility.

Trade and Communications in the Scottish Atlantic

Throughout the golden age of the Clyde-Caribbean trade, Glasgow was a commercial hub at the very centre of the ‘Scottish-Atlantic’.⁶¹ The city’s satellite ports at Port Glasgow and Greenock not only enabled connections with transatlantic commerce and Scottish manufacturing, but also facilitated a two way flow of communications, migration and ideas between Scotland the West Indies. Thus, the merchant houses were much more than legal entities that facilitated wealth creation. They served as communication hubs, mercantile academies and lodgings as well as prestige employers and exporters of people. However, their main function was to facilitate the maritime carrying trades and the business of transporting commodities back and forth across the Atlantic.

Some firms in Glasgow operated essentially as shipping agents who took commission on carriage and sales of produce from the West Indies. A case study of one such firm - based on their ledger book - provides new insights. The firm of MacNeill, Stewart & Co. was located in St Andrews Square whilst the main co-partner, William, had merchant lodgings in Charlotte Street.⁶² The firm’s ledger book reveals the firm commissioned 183 voyages between 1800 and 1809, an average of 18 per year, although they made sixty-six voyages in the peak year of 1802.⁶³ The Treaty of Amiens in 1802 -

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.xxvii.

⁶⁰ Devine, *Tobacco Lords*, p.9.

⁶¹ This concept has been adapted from Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁶² *Jones’s Directory*, (Glasgow: Joseph Galbraith, 1790), p.44.

⁶³ GCA, B1/18/1, ‘Brokerage Book of MacNeill, Stewart & Co.’, 1801-1812.

which brought a temporary cease of hostilities with France and the ceding of Trinidad to Britain - may explain the rise in voyages that year. Certainly, MacNeill & Stewart were shipping agents who transported produce across the Atlantic - principally from the West Indies - to Great Britain to be sold by themselves or by brokers. In return, they exported goods from manufacturers in Scotland.

The firm's imports during the period 1800 to 1809 were worth more than £180,000.⁶⁴ The firm traded mainly in sugar (c.£76k) although cotton (c.£56k), coffee (c.£15k) and rum (c.£7k) were also high value commodities. Their highest value commodity shipped in one year to Great Britain was £38,000 worth of cotton. By means of comparison it was around one tenth of the value of all cotton shipped to Scotland from America and the West Indies the previous year.⁶⁵ The firm shipped sugar and rum from Jamaica (accounting for 36% of all voyages across the Atlantic) including for London firm, Alexander Henry and Co., who operated in Jamaica as Henry West & Co. However, they also shipped sugar from Trinidad (21% of all voyages) for firms like Mitchell and Bryce. MacNeill & Stewart shipped sugar from Demerara (20% of all voyages), mainly from plantations Aurora and Makeshift. However, they also made shipping runs from Charleston (15% of all voyages) principally trading in cotton.

The firm landed produce in Scotland, England, Germany and Ireland both in their own ships and in ships owned by others. The most popular destination was the Clyde. In Glasgow, MacNeill and Stewart used brokers to sell the produce to consumers or sometimes to other merchants such as Aitchison & Co. On occasion, coffee and sugar was re-exported to Hamburg in Germany. One example illustrates the scope of their operations. In October 1804, MacNeill & Stewart shipped three hogsheads and twenty seven tierces of sugar from Jamaica to the Clyde aboard the *Pomona* which was also used by Leitch & Smith. The sugar was sold by brokers in Glasgow raising £1300. From these proceeds, MacNeill & Stewart charged 2% commission as well as duty, freight, landing and delivery charges, interest, brokerage and insurance. The balance of £648 was due to Francis King in Jamaica by 27 February 1805. Thus, MacNeill & Stewart also had responsibility to remit the proceeds back across the Atlantic.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ This case study has been influenced by an unreferenced, preliminary analysis of the MacNeill, Stewart brokerage ledger contained in a directory held in Glasgow City Archives. However, the anonymous author has sometimes taken values of sales in sterling when they were recorded in the currency of Hamburg (ducats, reichstalers, thalers or marks) which were around 10% of British values. See GCA, AGN 171.

⁶⁵ A total of 7,542,260 lbs of cotton (worth £376,662) was shipped to Scotland from America and the West Indies in 1801. See H. Hamilton, *An Economic History of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), Appendix VII.

⁶⁶ GCA, B1/18/1, 'Brokerage Book of MacNeill, Stewart & Co.', f.21, f.77, f.160.

Although the firm mainly shipped to Scotland, the ports of London and Liverpool were also important destinations. MacNeill & Stewart were partners in London and Jamaica with Alexander Henry & Co. although the partners from Glasgow terminated their co-partnership agreement on 28 October 1805.⁶⁷ Much of the cotton MacNeill & Stewart imported from Charleston and Demerara was landed at Liverpool and was subsequently sold to manufacturing firms in Manchester such as Samuel Mather & Co.⁶⁸ Thus some firms in Glasgow facilitated transatlantic connections between the cotton plantations of the Americas and industrial heartlands of northern England.

The larger merchant houses in Glasgow operated more expansive operations which involved diversification into the supply of produce from the plantations of the Caribbean. Some of these houses extended capital and export supplies on credit which sustained the plantation system and tied resident planters to long-term consignment plans. These methods were similar to prominent English firms and in contrast to the preferred 'store system' of Glasgow's colonial – especially Virginia - merchants before 1790. The authors of studies of the Scottish West India merchants, Houston and Co. and the Malcolms of Poltalloch, have argued that these firms operated the store system in Grenada and Jamaica respectively.⁷² Both trading methods depended on young men conducting business in the colonies although, in contrast, under the commission system the produce was owned by the planters until sold on the British market. Thus, the burden of risk as well as costs lay solely with the planter class. However, it could involve a large outlay of mortgage capital from the merchants to planters and the system required sophisticated communications between colony and metropole.⁷³ In effect, West India merchants took the role as bankers in the plantation economy. These commission agreements became a form of intangible property consisting of trading rights, which established a revenue system based on interest on long term mortgages and short term bills of exchange, as well as the profits from export goods and commission on imports such as sugar and cotton and freight, insurance, customs and port duties.

It seems that during the nineteenth century the elite West India firms of Glasgow mainly operated under the commission system. This may have been a direct result of the bankruptcy of Alexander Houston and Co. in 1800 and the perceived failure of the 'store

⁶⁷ *London Gazette*, 19 November 1805, p. 1456.

⁶⁸ GCA, B1/18/1, 'Brokerage Book of MacNeill, Stewart & Co.', f.106.

⁷² Hamilton, 'Scottish Trading in the Caribbean', pp. 94–126; A. I. Macinnes, 'Landownership, Land Use and Elite Enterprise in Scottish Gaeldom: From Clanship to Clearance in Argyllshire, 1688-c.1858', in *Communities in European History: Representations, Jurisdictions, Conflicts*, ed. by J. Pan-Montojo and F. Pedersen (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2007), p. 51.

⁷³ K. G. Davies, 'The Origins of the Commission System in the West India Trade', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5/2 (1952), pp. 89–107.

system'. Douglas Hamilton has suggested that the Houston's operated a 'store system' similar to the tobacco traders in the Chesapeake, leading to an overextension of credit and a lack of liquid capital. In any case, by 1807, at least two of the top company subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association operated under the commission system.

Like mercantile contemporaries, Leitch & Smith, the firm of John Campbell, senior, & Co. took commission on imported produce from plantation owners and shipped supplies in return. They also provided short and long term credit in the form of mortgages as well bond loans. However, John Campbell, senior, & Co. operated on a larger scale both in Great Britain and abroad. Whilst the Smiths traded mainly in Grenada and Jamaica, the Campbells had a diversity of interests in Demerara, Trinidad, Grenada and St Vincent which they retained after emancipation. Furthermore, they also diversified into the supply side by adopting a strategy of plantation purchase in British Guiana.⁷⁴

The transatlantic commerce and credit exchanges were underpinned by a sophisticated communications system which the merchants themselves improved in the colonial period. Examination of the correspondence between West India merchants in Glasgow and absentee planters in Scotland provides a glimpse into this process. Official letters with signatures of individual co-partners offered an early form of authentication on correspondence as well as on methods of payments such as bills of exchange. This was important in terms of securing and advancing credit.⁷⁵ John Campbell, senior, & Co. adopted a policy of personally notifying planter correspondents in Scotland when younger relatives assumed co-partnership status in the firm. On 30 April 1806, a letter was sent to John Urquhart of Craigston which contained the signature of 'our relation Mungo Campbell, a partner in our business',⁷⁶ the same day as Mungo attained co-partnership status in the firm.⁷⁷ This process was repeated when Thomas Campbell, son of John Campbell senior became a co-partner in 1812.⁷⁸ This ensured a smooth transition into the commercial network and would have prevented any suspicion amongst correspondents when younger partners eventually took over the firm.

There was also a two-way flow of information between Britain and the colonies. In 1800, newspapers and letters from the sugar islands came via Liverpool and were delivered to a waiting scrum of merchants in the Tontine Rooms.⁷⁹ Daily newspapers also printed the

⁷⁴ GCA, TD 1696, 'John Campbell, senior, & Co. Minute Book', 1842'.

⁷⁵ Bell, *Commentaries on the Laws of Scotland*, p.624.

⁷⁶ NRAS 2570/40, 'John Campbell senior to John Urquhart', 30 April 1806.

⁷⁷ GCA, 1696 'Co-partnership agreement', 30 April 1806.

⁷⁸ GCA, 1696 'Co-partnership agreement' 30 April 1812; NRAS 2570/40, 'John Campbell senior to John Urquhart', 23 September 1812.

⁷⁹ J. Wilson Hyde, *A Hundred Years by Post: A Jubilee Retrospect*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, 1891).

Tontine List, which listed mercantile information including arrivals and departures of ships on the Clyde.⁸⁰ Personal correspondence was one means of delivering information to the islands as when Mr Dow, a mason, travelled to Carriacou looking for employment in early 1787 taking with him letters from home.⁸¹ However, the official postal service to and from the Caribbean was limited. In 1800, the Glasgow-West India mail service was a monthly occurrence although it seems that this improved to fortnightly by 1809.⁸² That year, the Glasgow West India Association lobbied the secretary of the post office about the Falmouth packet service – deemed to be slower than the London route - and argued that delays in transmitting important commercial information might lead to financial losses.⁸³ The merchant firms subsequently established their own service. In 1824, the Glasgow agent firm John Cree & Co. collaborated with elite merchant firms in the city to establish the Kingston packet from the Clyde. This efficient arrangement – which connected with the Falmouth packet that left from Jamaica - meant several ships sailed together from Clyde ports at designated times guaranteeing regular freight and mail between Glasgow and Jamaica.⁸⁴

In 1830, members of the Glasgow West India Association gave evidence at a Parliamentary Inquiry into Post-Office Revenue. James MacQueen suggested the official service remained inefficient and that merchant shipping remained the best method of communication. He testified the Falmouth packet provided the principal means of communication between Glasgow and the West Indies. MacQueen added that Glasgow ships that left British ports carried correspondence with their goods, although this was an expensive service, especially to the Leeward Islands.⁸⁵ Incoming mail from these islands to Glasgow could contain detailed commercial information concerning the American market, rum supplies and crop reports.⁸⁶ Thus, the Glasgow-West India merchant firms - specialists in transatlantic commerce and credit exchanges – also strived to improve the communications system on which their business was based.

⁸⁰ For example, John Campbell senior's ship, Fanny, arrived from St Vincent on the Clyde in early February 1820. See 'Glasgow Tontine List', *Glasgow Herald*, 4 February 1820.

⁸¹ NRAS, 2570/120, 'John Campbell senior to William Urquhart', 1 May 1787.

⁸² Senex, *Glasgow: Past and Present*, Vol. III, p.109; *The Glasgow Directory*, (Glasgow: Archibald Napier, 1809), p.146.

⁸³ GCA, TD1683/1/1, 'Abstract of the GWIA', pp.59b-61.

⁸⁴ 'Line of Packets', *Glasgow Herald*, 1 November 1824, p.3.

⁸⁵ PP 1830 (63) *Twentieth report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into Post-Office revenue*, Vol. III, Scotland, p.361.

⁸⁶ 'Letters by a Leeward Island Mail', *The Scotsman*, 7 January 1824.

The Glasgow West India Trades and Banking Institutions

In *Africans and the Industrial Revolution*, Joseph Inikori pointed to the importance of the slave economy to the development of British financial institutions. Indeed, he argued that banking and discount houses as well as early stock exchanges were dependant on a provincial credit market that was dominated by bills of exchange that originated from overseas.⁸⁷ However, this was an English-centric approach and the financial operations that underpinned the Scottish-West India trades have received limited historiographical attention. Nevertheless, in 1958, S.G. Checkland laid the foundation for this chapter when he argued a transatlantic financial system connected the colonies and Great Britain through the use of 'West India paper'. This paper was used by resident planters as currency to pay merchants and it was drawn on London West India acceptance houses which guaranteed payment. The capital 'stood at the centre of this web of trade' and linked firms in the outports of Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow.⁸⁸ The merchants then shipped the produce to Great Britain and the proceeds were used to reduce planters debts. Whilst Checkland referred to Glasgow (and specifically the merchant firm Houston & Co.), his study was mainly focused on London. This section will illuminate financial operations in the transatlantic hub of Glasgow and particularly the credit relationship with merchant houses and the Scottish banking system.

There is a well-developed historiography of Scottish banking in this period. S.G. Checkland noted that the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) in Glasgow provided finance for speculation in the Americas whilst the West India magnates relied heavily on the bank for discounts on bills of exchange.⁸⁹ Richard Saville noted the Bank of Scotland was the second largest discounter of bills in the west of Scotland.⁹⁰ Thus, it seems the RBS had the strongest connections with West India commerce in Glasgow, a relationship that was acknowledged by the bank historian and briefly outlined in an anonymous article in 1961 (almost certainly by an employee who acted as unofficial archivist) in the *Three Banks Review*, an in-house publication.⁹¹ This section will more systematically explore these connections.

⁸⁷ Joseph E. Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution- A Study in International Development*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.360.

⁸⁸ S.G. Checkland, 'Finance for the West Indies, 1780-1815', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1958), p. 467.

⁸⁹ S.G. Checkland, *Scottish Banking: A history, 1695-1973*, (Glasgow: Collins, 1975), p.229-230.

⁹⁰ Richard Saville, *Bank of Scotland: A History, 1695-1995*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p.187

⁹¹ Neil Munro, *The History of the Royal Bank of Scotland*, (Edinburgh: R&R Clark, 1928), p.149; Anon., 'The Rise of Glasgow's West Indian Trade, 1793-1818', *Three Banks Review*, 51, (Sep. 1961), pp.34-44.

Glasgow-West India traders became a dominant economic force after 1775 due to the decline of the tobacco trade with the mainland American colonies during and after the American War. This transition came during a period in which the influence of provincial and public banks was increasing in the city. The Royal Bank of Scotland sought to take some of the commercial business of Glasgow and opened their first branch in 1783. In this period, the bank was located in the commercial centre, near the Tontine Rooms, although the branch eventually relocated to Queen Street. One historian claimed it was the busiest branch outside of London by the 1830s⁹⁴ and Charles Munn speculated that customer demands for capital on loan were one reason for the spectacular success.⁹⁵ The Glasgow-West India entrepreneurs had credit facilities with the RBS from its inception through the discounting of bills of exchange but especially through cash credit accounts, which are analogous to modern overdrafts except they required personal guarantees and had to be ratified by the head office in Edinburgh.⁹⁶

Examination of these Directors minute books demonstrates that West India merchants and related firms were provided with cash accounts and loans of up to £79,000 between 1783 and 1833.⁹⁷ The status of firms was an important factor; five of the top seven ranking firms in the Glasgow West India Association in 1807 were funded. John Campbell, senior, & Co. had a cash credit of £1000 in 1789 although the firm of Geo. & Robt. Dennistoun & Co. received £20,000 in a promissory note in January 1821.⁹⁸ However, this higher level of finance seems to have been exceptional and the majority of identified connections were for relatively small cash accounts of up to £5,000, probably for short term credit facilities. Indeed, a committee in 1818 concluded it was mainly manufacturers – not West India merchants - who used the high value cash accounts of between £50,000 and £300,000 per annum.⁹⁹

Commercial reputation was an important indicator of creditworthiness and the bank implemented a sophisticated intelligence gathering system. The Royal Bank branch in Glasgow collected information about the ‘good credit’ of potential customers in the city, which was sent to Gilbert Innes of Stow, a director in Edinburgh.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, personal obligations – effectively a guarantee to the bank by another individual thus acting as an

⁹⁴ Munro, *Royal Bank of Scotland*, p.150.

⁹⁵ Charles Munn, *The Scottish Provincial Banking Companies, 1747-1864*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1981) p.48.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.115-121.

⁹⁷ The analysis here is based on The Royal Bank of Scotland Group Archives (hereafter RB), ‘Directors Minutes’ 1780-1833, RB/12/Vols. 13-21.

⁹⁸ RB/12/14, ‘Directors Minutes, 1786- 1800’, f.168; RB/12/18, ‘Directors Minutes, 1820 -1824’, f.38.

⁹⁹ RB/12/17, ‘Directors Minutes, 1817 -1820’, f.136.

¹⁰⁰ NRS, GD113/5/19c/23, ‘Glasgow copartnery with N. Morris’, December 1810.

assurance of financial health – were required to attain credit. In the group of merchants examined here, these personal obligations were provided by other West India merchants. This is consistent with the view that such obligations had more authority if potential applicants were recommended by others of the same commercial class as they had detailed knowledge of their status.¹⁰¹ Thus, existing capital and commercial networks facilitated access to credit. Many of the merchants, such as the Smiths of Jordanhill, relied upon family networks to sign these bonds, whilst others, such as Haddow & Dale preferred to rely upon business associates. The credit relationship could extend to the colonies; in March 1829, ‘Robert Bogle Merchant in Jamaica’ was provided with credit of £2000 (which could be accessed by business associates in Glasgow) after an obligation by Hugh Bogle of Calderbank.¹⁰²

The system of discounting bills of exchange also increased the purchasing power of West India merchants.¹⁰³ Munn noted bills of exchange were ubiquitous in eighteenth century finance and acted as both a ‘document of debt’ and ‘instrument of credit’.¹⁰⁴ A seller of goods drew up a bill of exchange payable on a certain date (e.g. 90 days) which was signed (accepted) by the purchaser and retained by the seller. The purchaser would then sell goods in that period, giving time to credit an account and pay the bill when presented. The practice of discounting bills acted as another form of credit for West India merchants. The bank discounted (or ‘bought’) bills of exchange before they were mature for which they paid the value of the bills minus interest and commission. For example, in 1831, MacQueen, McDonnell & Co. discounted bills to a value of £10,000.¹⁰⁵

When ready for payment, the bank presented the bills (sometimes in London or Edinburgh) allowing three days for payment. If the bill went unpaid, it was ‘protested’ which was the legal process required to ensure payment. In one case in 1810, the Royal Bank of Scotland ‘employed’ the West India firm of Campbell, Rivers & Co. to ‘recover payment and interest on Bill of Exch^e’ drawn by L. Nicholls of Trinidad, which subsequently went unpaid. The sum was settled by shipping six hogshead of sugar to Scotland.¹⁰⁶ The bills of exchange also provided collateral for further loans and sometimes the bills were ‘renewed’, that is, the bank did not call in payment on the payment deadline

¹⁰¹ Munn, *Scottish Provincial Banking Companies*, p.117.

¹⁰² RB/12/20, ‘Directors Minutes’, 1827-1830, f.125.

¹⁰³ For a discussion of the impact of bills of exchange on regional development, see Pat Hudson, ‘Slavery, the slave trade and economic growth: a contribution to the debate’, in *Emancipation and the remaking of the British Imperial world*, ed. by Catherine Hall, Nick Draper, Keith McClelland, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp.40-49.

¹⁰⁴ Munn, *Scottish Provincial Banking Companies*, pp.121-2.

¹⁰⁵ RB/12/21, ‘Directors Minutes’, 1830-1833, f.45.

¹⁰⁶ NRS, GD113/5/19c/19, ‘Memo of L. Nicholl, Trinidad Debt to Royal Bank’, September 1810.

which provided an extra credit period for the purchaser.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the system of bills increased the fluid capital in the city in general and of the West India merchants in particular.

These examples illustrate general practice during the golden age of the Clyde-Caribbean trade. In October 1818, an RBS committee that examined ‘Bonds, Debts and Bills lying over at Glasgow’ concluded the Glasgow branch received a ‘great mass of bills in the course of Trade’ from West India merchants.¹⁰⁸ Further information on the financial operations of Glasgow-West India commerce and the individuals who made it happen can be gleaned from correspondence between 1801 and 1807, mainly from Robert Scott Moncrieff, joint agent of the Glasgow office, to William Simpson, cashier of The Royal Bank of Scotland in Edinburgh. In 1801, Trinidad had been recently occupied by Great Britain and Glasgow was experiencing unprecedented levels of trade. After the arrival of a particularly large fleet in July of that year, Moncrieff pointed to the rise in West India commerce and related commercial transactions, although this quickly flooded the sugar market leading to a sharp decline in prices: ‘This may in part account for the increased number of Bills and increased demand for discounts - but the W. Indians...are hanging their Lugs about the price of sugar’.¹⁰⁹ As many ships of the fleet docked together, customs duties and related charges were high over short periods which necessitated the requirement for short term credit facilities. In one case, Archibald Smith was said to have a ship landed ‘that will take 10m [thousand] of duties from him’. It is little wonder that Robert Scott Moncrieff noted demands by West India merchants was greater than the Glasgow branch could provide.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the bank did provide resolute financial support for elite merchants.

The working relationship with the firm of Archibald Smith of Jordanhill provides an example of such banking practices. At the opening of the nineteenth century, Archibald Smith was part of the elite ‘sugar aristocracy’ in Glasgow. As Dean of Guild of the Merchant House and leading partner of the old established firm Leitch & Smith, his impeccable commercial reputation opened many doors. He had regular conversations with banking staff about his business affairs and received short term finance, demonstrated by Smith’s note to the Glasgow office which requested an extension of his firm’s credit facilities in late 1801:

¹⁰⁷ Munn, *Scottish Provincial Banking Companies*, pp.121-6.

¹⁰⁸ RB/12/17, ‘Directors Minutes’, 1817-1820, ff.135-145.

¹⁰⁹ RB/837/279, ‘Letter from Robert Scott Moncrieff’, 7 July 1801.

¹¹⁰ RB/837/815, ‘Letter from Robert Scott Moncrieff’, 14 September 1802.

You have the last of our London money and as we have near £5000 of sugar duty to pay between this & 13th of next month, besides we are obliged to renew the bills of some of our sugar buyers. I must ask the favour of yours extending your discounts to £1500 or £2000 & look for two or three weeks until we can get another supply of London money which we look for both from Jamaica and Grenada by first arrivals from thence.

Before forwarding on the application to Edinburgh, the agent Moncrieff added a postscript: ‘What can we do but help thru such good People as long as we can’.¹¹¹ By way of contrast, the firm of John Campbell, senior, & Co. were refused similar terms two days later: ‘we...let them know that we could discount no such sums [£1900] to them as no other asked as much even the Dean only 1500’.¹¹² Evidently, commercial status and reputation defined the extent of credit facilities.

One anecdotal history of Glasgow recounted how Archibald Smith visited the Royal Bank of Scotland branch in Glasgow to ensure his request to discount large scale bills of exchange was approved after Robert Scott Moncrieff was only prepared to discount half the sum.¹¹³ The Simpson-Moncrieff correspondence both confirms the close relationship and outlines that Smith’s extensive holdings across four firms provided commercial leeway:

Mr Arch Smith has been in with Mr More. He is in good spirits and says by the 1st November all will be right and we shall have more money than we shall know what to do with - it will not be easy to bring my mind to this View of matters – still no appearance of Smith from London - but still the other Parties here say there will be much more than sufficient in other 4 houses to pay all their engagements.¹¹⁴

Evidently, Archibald Smith headed an important firm which was represented in London by their associated merchant house, Smith & Lindsay. As a merchant-manufacturer, he also had industrial interests in Scotland as a co-partner in James Finlay & Co, cotton manufacturers. With Finlay, they applied to discount large scale bills in 1803, and this was ratified by David Dale, first agent of the RBS in Glasgow. The majority of the balance [£8000] was provided by the head office in Edinburgh:

It appears to me to be to be of such consequence to the place, and even to the Royal Bank the support of that house as far as it can be done with perfect safety that I had no hesitation in saying to them that altho we could not take it upon to us

¹¹¹ RB/837/514, ‘Letter to Robert Scott Moncrieff’, 28 December 1801.

¹¹² RB/837/519, ‘Letter to Robert Scott Moncrieff’, 30 December 1801.

¹¹³ Senex, *Old Glasgow and Its Environs*, (Glasgow: David Robertson, 1864), p.475.

¹¹⁴ RB/837/1202, ‘Letter from Robert Scott Moncrieff’, 11 July 1803.

to melt so large a Sum out of our common course, we had little doubt the paper being so unquestionable you would do it.¹¹⁵

The relationship between the Smiths of Jordanhill and RBS lasted over thirty years and encompassed several related firms. Leitch & Smith received cash credits of £1000 and £5000 in 1789 and 1817 respectively.¹¹⁶ The bank also provided investment opportunities for co-partners. In 1821, John Guthrie lodged £10,000 with the bank at four percent interest per annum.¹¹⁷ However, the main relationship was one of individuals acquiring commercial credit from the bank, a relationship which spanned successive generations of the same West India family. Archibald Smith's son, William Smith, and his firm Smith & Brown had credit facilities in the 1820s with obligations given from his brothers, James and Archibald, and uncle, John Guthrie.¹¹⁸ Similarly, James Smith and the family firm J&A Smith (successor to Leitch & Smith) had credit facilities with RBS in the same period.¹¹⁹ The inventory of Archibald Smith confirmed his cosy relationship with the Royal Bank of Scotland in Glasgow. On Smith's death in 1821, Robert Scott Moncrieff owed him £500.¹²⁰

However, the Smiths of Jordanhill had multiple sources of funding from a variety of sources. Given they were powerful merchant financiers providing large scale credit to planters in Jamaica and Grenada from 1800-1845 (see chapter six) it is possible they acquired large scale funding from London. In terms of domestic credit, Munn has argued that customers were usually required to maintain accounts with one Scottish bank only. However, it seems that both Archibald senior and James were untypical as they had credit facilities with other banks. James obtained credit from the Bank of Scotland in 1827,¹²¹ whilst Archibald obtained credit from the Thistle Bank in 1801.¹²² The Thistle Bank also seems to have had strong connections with West India traders.

The Thistle Bank was founded in Glasgow in 1761 and the original partners – including John Glassford – were involved with the tobacco trades.¹²³ The relationship with colonial traders continued after 1783. The Glasgow West India Association held an account with the bank which was administered by Colin Dunlop Donald. Merchant firms

¹¹⁵ RB/837/1116, 'Letter to Robert Scott Moncrieff', 16 May 1803.

¹¹⁶ RB/12/14, 'Directors Minutes', 1786-1800, f.169; RBS/12/17, 'Directors Minutes', 1817-1820, f.62.

¹¹⁷ RB/12/18, 'Directors Minutes', 1820-1824, f.38.

¹¹⁸ RB/12/18, 'Directors Minutes', 1820-1824, f.60; RB/12/19, 'Directors Minutes', 1824-1827, f.202.

¹¹⁹ RB/12/18, 'Directors Minutes', 1820-1824, f.170; RB/12/19, 'Directors Minutes', 1824-1827, f.37.

¹²⁰ NRS, CC10/7/4, 'Inventory and settlement of Archibald Smith', 1 October 1821, p.246.

¹²¹ GCA, TD1/75/3, 'Bond of Credit', 1827.

¹²² GCA, TD1/75/2, 'Bond', 1801.

¹²³ Devine, *Tobacco Lords*, p.93.

such as Campbell, Rivers & Co. and Stirling, Gordon & Co. also held accounts.¹²⁴ The cashier of the Thistle Bank, Archibald Graham, sold goods in Grenada via John Campbell, senior, & Co. after 1790.¹²⁵

Evidently, West India merchant firms in Glasgow had more substantial connections with local banks – especially the Royal Bank - than has previously been acknowledged and this relationship awaits detailed examination. Nevertheless, the findings presented in this thesis further undermine a recent report by the Royal Bank of Scotland into antecedent institutions and their involvement with slavery in the colonial period. After a transatlantic research process in archives in America, England and Scotland, the authors concluded: ‘There is no indication that any RBSG or Citizens predecessors ever directly invested in companies or institutions that owned slaves’.¹²⁶ By demonstrating that several banking institutions in London – now owned by the RBS Group - were recipients of compensation, Nicholas Draper thoroughly refuted the findings. However, as Scottish banks were noticeably absent from the compensation lists in 1834, Draper contrasted the London position with Glasgow and suggested that Scottish banks had a more indirect role by financing merchants who in turn financed slave-owners.¹²⁷ The findings in this thesis confirm this view and suggest the Royal Bank of Scotland had a key role in the financing of Glasgow firms involved with Caribbean slavery. These firms integrated the Atlantic economy by connecting with markets in the colonies.

Networks of Credit in the Caribbean: the Glasgow firm of John Campbell, senior, & Co.

In a recent study of risk, kinship and personal relationships and the commercial network of Tobin & Pinney in the West Indies, Albane Forestier drew upon new institutional economic thought. She defined networks as an ‘intermediate level between market and firms, which provide the infrastructure for exchange to develop and help reduce transactions costs, when these are high given the absence of information, or where its reliability is uncertain’. Forestier pointed out that a shared kinship heritage, ethnic background or religious affiliation generated a ‘mutual confidence’ amongst networks that connected firms in Great Britain with markets in the Caribbean. Peer monitoring and screening were also important aspects to this process. Thus, although agents were

¹²⁴ Lloyds Banking Group Archives, GB1830, THI/1/20, ‘Thistle Bank Cash Account Ledger’, 1836, p.51, p.104, p.359,

¹²⁵ Lloyds Banking Group Archives, Edinburgh, GB1830, THI/14/10, ‘Archibald Grahame Correspondence’, 1790-1808.

¹²⁶ Citizens Financial Group Inc. and Royal Bank of Scotland Group, ‘Historical Research Report Predecessor Institutions Research Regarding Slavery and the Slave Trade’. Available: https://www.citizensbank.com/pdf/historical_research.pdf, Accessed: 2 August 2014.

¹²⁷ Nicholas Draper, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.245-6; pp.258-60.

separated from merchant houses by the Atlantic, a shared background could generate trust amongst correspondents who were out-with the direct family matrix. This facilitated the sharing of information and increased access to capital and credit.¹²⁸ These themes will be explored in this case study.

John Campbell, senior, & Co.'s operations and networks in Grenada and Carriacou can be traced through the papers of the Urquhart's of Craigston and Meldrum, a gentry family of the north east of Scotland who owned plantations in Carriacou, a cotton island off Grenada.¹²⁹ Thomas Campbell, the brother of John Campbell, was the main influence on the early development of the merchant house across the Caribbean. Prior to the formal establishment of the firm in 1791, he was an imperial careerist¹³⁰ with interests in Grenada, Bristol, London, Liverpool and Scotland.¹³¹ Although Campbell eventually viewed the West Indies as his home, he maintained a transient lifestyle which allowed him to cultivate transatlantic networks:

I must postpone my Northern jaunt till next summer... I promise myself, much pleasure in... a long summer among my friends in the west and north of Scotland, before I return to what I call my own country between the tropics which after long use I find agrees best with me, and where also I find more employment than in this country.¹³²

Thomas Campbell had connections in Scotland which created commercial opportunities in the Caribbean. In the summer of 1786, Campbell visited William Urquhart near Aberdeen with discussions evidently focused on the cotton market at Glasgow which by then was a trade hub supplying the local textile and manufacturing industry. As Urquhart was looking for a merchant for the Glasgow market, Thomas recommended his brother John who was working with their cousin Alexander at the counting house in Argyle Street.¹³³ In order to make a formal connection, Thomas Campbell organised a letter of introduction for Urquhart who agreed: 'to establish a correspondence and to be connected with you for my Concerns in the West Indies... I believe your prices... were rather higher'.¹³⁴ Thus, personal recommendation and perhaps a shared Scottish heritage established a long term relationship between cotton plantations in Carriacou, the Aberdeen estate owner and merchant firm in Glasgow.

¹²⁸ Albane Forestier, 'Risk, kinship and personal relationships in late eighteenth-century West Indian trade: The commercial network of Tobin & Pinney', *Business History*, Vol. 52, No. 6, October 2010, pp.912-913.

¹²⁹ NRAS, 2570, 'Records of the Urquhart's of Craigston and Meldrum'.

¹³⁰ See D. Lambert and A. Lester, (eds.) *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careerers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹³¹ NRAS 2570/131, 'Thomas Campbell to William Urquhart' 17 October 1786.

¹³² NRAS 2570/131, 'Thomas Campbell, Glasgow to William Urquhart' 18 September 1790.

¹³³ Nathaniel Jones, *Reprint of Jones's Directory for the Year 1787*, (Glasgow: William Love, 1868), p.34.

¹³⁴ NRAS 2570/120. 'Thomas Campbell to John Campbell', 7 July 1786.

John Campbell's prompt reply outlined the terms of the commercial relationship. Campbell's ship was scheduled to depart for Grenada in September 1786 with 'Merchant Goods' as well as a November ship with 'Plantation Stores'. Essential goods destined for the Urquhart plantations were to be sent immediately by the first departure.¹³⁵ John Campbell also initiated a discussion regarding credit with the absentee planter: 'Any accommodation in money matters that you may happen occasionally to want, will be at your service to the extent of my abilities'.¹³⁶ He also kept Urquhart updated on ship departures as well as the movements of Thomas Campbell, who was in London by September 1786 preparing for a return to the West Indies.¹³⁷

Their first account balance sheet demonstrates the practicalities of transatlantic commerce between the merchants in Glasgow and the planter in Carriacou. The firm exported stores included herrings to feed the resident slaves on the cotton plantation.¹³⁸ The firm also charged Urquhart for goods sourced in Glasgow that were carted to the Broomielaw and then transported via lighter ships to large sea going vessels docked at Port Glasgow.¹³⁹ In return, the insured cotton was shipped to the Clyde at six monthly intervals.¹⁴⁰ On arrival, entry and landing charges were paid which allowed the unloading of the West India cargo. The cotton was subsequently carted to a nearby warehouse, which attracted further storage costs and delivery charges. At point of sale, the firm charged 2.5% commission.

Thomas Campbell formally assumed co-partnership status in John Campbell, senior, & Co. around 1790 and personally requested the Urquhart trading account be officially transferred to his brothers' firm.¹⁴¹ Thus, the informal arrangement amongst kinsmen that began with the Urquhart recommendation four years previously was ratified with a legal partnership. On 30 April 1791, William Urquhart was sent a printed letter stating the firm would hereafter be known as 'John Campbell, senior, and Co.'. The letter further informed him the firm's partnership structure had altered and included signatures of each partner.¹⁴² Thus, the firm went by its own social name and transacted on its terms in Scotland and the Caribbean.

After 1791, John Campbell, senior, & Co. embarked on an ambitious strategy of expansion across the West Indies which almost ended in bankruptcy. Much of their

¹³⁵ NRAS 2570/120, 'John Campbell senior to William Urquhart', 17 July 1786.

¹³⁶ NRAS 2570/120, 'John Campbell senior to William Urquhart', 17 July 1786.

¹³⁷ NRAS, 2570/120, 'John Campbell senior to William Urquhart', 2 September 1786.

¹³⁸ NRAS, 2570/120, 'William Urquhart Esq. Acc Current', August 1786.

¹³⁹ NRAS, 2570/120, 'Invoice of sundries Shippt.', Nov. 1789.

¹⁴⁰ NRAS, 2570/120, 'William Urquhart Esq. Acc Current', August 1786.

¹⁴¹ NRAS 2570/131, 'Thomas Campbell to William Urquhart', 17 February 1791.

¹⁴² NRAS 2570/122, 'John Campbell senior to William Urquhart', 14 May 1791

business at this point was based on financing plantations or individuals in the West Indies. Later correspondence from the firm suggested the level of finance could extend over long periods. In 1843, James Campbell described a fifty year commercial relationship with the firm and one planter in St Vincent. According to Campbell, the firm acted in the ‘capacity of Friends [rather] than merchants’ and advanced over £50,000 which allowed the owners to reduce and work off mortgage debts with other merchants.¹⁴³

A series of letters from William Arbuthnot - a nephew of the Urquhart family based in Grenada from 1787 - to the firm offers a detailed account of how credit was obtained in the colonies. In this period, he received: ‘every assurance of support, they [John Campbell, senior, & Co.] are well pleased with speculation’.¹⁴⁴ One example illustrates how this worked on a practical level. In early 1790, Arbuthnot pondered over the purchase a cotton estate in Carriacou from Messrs Robertson of Glasgow. Arbuthnot wrote to his uncle William Urquhart to request a loan, although he first consulted their preferred merchant whose firm were also prepared to finance the deal:

I would go down to Grenada & consult Mr Thomas Campbell whose knowledge in business & Experience in the World, as well as personal friendships I have upon all occasions found to be very great, & with which you are indeed well acquainted.... Should it be inconvenient for you to advance any money, Mr Campbell is so good, as say, that he will interest his brother Mr John Campbell in the business, who he is confident will give me any assistance I may wish but he would like you to write his brothers approving of what steps he may take in my favour. Mr Thomas Campbell...and his brothers are intimately acquainted with the Messrs Robertson. I should think it proper to give him full powers to make the bargain.¹⁴⁵

On the same day, Thomas Campbell also wrote to William Urquhart outlining a detailed plan of the location of the plantation in Carriacou, as well as the character of Arbuthnot’s co-partner:

I esteem them both so much & have so much reliance on the solid judgement and previous success of Dr Bell, who is much the elder planter of the two, that I did not hesitate to promise them any support in my Brothers power, provided their plan shall meet your approbation without which you may well believe your nephew will not engage in it, & of that I can scarcely doubt, knowing as I do, your great regard for him & how well he merits it... On all these considerations it seems only necessary for me to make you acquainted with the universal good character of Dr Bell for probity, sound judgement and experience as a cotton planter of all which the best test is his success from very small beginnings. I think a connection with so

¹⁴³ GCA, TD1696, ‘John Campbell, senior, & Co., Letterbook’, 1827-1847, p.137-38

¹⁴⁴ NRAS 2570/130, ‘William Arbuthnot to William Urquhart’, 14 November 1792.

¹⁴⁵ NRAS 2570/118, ‘William Arbuthnot to William Urquhart’, 3 March 1790.

good & safe a man in so distant a country a very fortunate circumstance for Mr Arbuthnot & his friends.¹⁴⁶

Thomas Campbell also wrote to his brother John in Glasgow informing him of the Bell-Arbuthnot partnership and requesting he enter negotiations with Robertson. Thus, interaction between Campbell and Arbuthnot over several years in Grenada had created trust whilst Dr Bell's success in Grenada facilitated access to a commercial network. Campbell assessed the personal qualities of budding Scottish planters in Grenada and facilitated access to credit with merchant firms in Glasgow through personal recommendations. Although they were ultimately unsuccessful in the purchase, the correspondence illustrates how a transatlantic credit relationship was established through existing networks which could lead to the financing of Caribbean plantations.¹⁴⁷

In the same period, Thomas Campbell established a foothold in the developing frontier colony of Demerara which was, at that stage, still under Dutch control. By late 1791, Campbell had made a 'considerable purchase...in the Country where a great many people have bought estates'.¹⁴⁸ He remained on the lookout for new opportunities and later compiled a dossier of commercial information on Cellsborough cotton plantation in Demerara, situated on the windward sea coast. As well as information on soil fertility and the adjoining cotton house, he noted the existing credit agreements as well as the proposed payment plan, including the purchase price £10,500.¹⁴⁹ This information was sent to William Urquhart although it is clear he eventually acquired the plantation himself.

The risky nature of transatlantic commerce and life in the colonies was illustrated by a series of events that struck the firm in this period. In June of 1793, John Campbell, senior, & Co. had to stop payments to creditors which was most likely due to short term financing difficulties exacerbated by over-speculation. William Urquhart – owed several thousand pounds - was assured that all debts would be paid in full in the event of bankruptcy.¹⁵⁰ This event must have hit the firm's reputation in Glasgow although they eventually recovered. Whilst the firm avoided commercial doom, their main colonial representative was not so lucky. By 1795, Thomas Campbell was part of the colonial council who took control of Government at the outbreak of the Fedon Rebellion on 2 March that year. Thomas quickly fled but died in Demerara on 14 May 1795.¹⁵² By this point, he was a plantation owner having acquired shares in three estates in both Grenada

¹⁴⁶ NRAS 2570/131, 'Thomas Campbell to William Urquhart', 3 March 1790.

¹⁴⁷ NRAS 2570/131, 'Thomas Campbell to William Urquhart', 18 September 1790.

¹⁴⁸ NRAS 2570/118. 'William Arbuthnot to William Urquhart', 17 September 1791.

¹⁴⁹ NRAS 2570/120. 'Thomas Campbell to William Urquhart', 15 July 1792.

¹⁵⁰ NRAS 2570/130, 'William Arbuthnot to William Urquhart', 19 June 1793.

¹⁵² *The Edinburgh Magazine or Literary Miscellany*, Vol. VI, (London: James Symington, Aug 1795), p.160.

and Demerara, including Cellsborough and Taymouth Park. His will lodged in Grenada Register Office in 1793 ensured his real and personal estate was divided amongst kinship networks in Scotland. His shares went to his John Campbell senior and Alexander Campbell who appointed attorneys 'in our names to manage the foresaid plantations...to the best advantage in Concert with the other proprietors' in 1796.¹⁵³ One of these attorneys was Thomas Cuming, a sojourner from Morayshire resident on Demerara since 1760.

The events of the mid-1790s initiated a change of mercantile strategy for John Campbell, senior, & Co. Firstly, they expanded from Grenada into the frontier colony, Demerara. Secondly, the firm not only advanced credit to individuals and plantation owners but also purchased estates directly. Thirdly, instead of sending representatives from the family matrix to the colonies, they recruited Highland sojourners based on kith networks. Thus, partners in the firm depended on known associates in the colonies who either hailed from either the same family or from the same background. This created a level of trust in the financial dealings and exchanges between the suppliers in Scotland and the markets in the Caribbean.

Conclusion

The West India merchant houses of Glasgow traded mainly with the Caribbean. At home, the structure of firms was defined by Scots law which added a layer of protection to operations across the Atlantic, particularly through defining the firm as a separate legal entity which limited the exposure of co-partners and protected them from colonial debts taken on by sister firms. The elite West India merchants of Glasgow introduced younger male family members to the firm which served a number of purposes. Mercantile patriarchs such as John Campbell peer-monitored and regulated the behaviour of their sons who became co-partners through patrimonial inheritance which in some cases was given before death. This allowed fathers to supervise the development of the family fortune across successive generations. The Glasgow-West India business was undertaken near the Trongate in counting houses that served as educational academies and mercantile offices. This area - now known as the 'Merchant City' - was a commercial hub that connected trade, communications and banking. Scottish banks, and the Royal Bank of Scotland in particular, provided short and long term finance to Glasgow West India firms. This served as fluid capital in city which flowed to local manufacturers and also assisted the Caribbean trades. The case study of John Campbell, senior, & Co and the Urquharts of Meldrum and Carriacou illuminates the process of granting credit to Scots in the West India colonies.

¹⁵³ Supreme Court Registry, St George's, Grenada, Vol. F2, 9 May 1796, pp.178-180.

These processes trace the legal mechanism and transatlantic networks which allowed the accumulation of great fortunes by West India merchants in Glasgow. Indeed, this nexus of West India merchants, local gentry, bankers, industrialists and political lobbyists – elaborated upon in chapter five - was a distinctly Scottish operation.¹⁵⁴ Individuals travelled from across Scotland to Glasgow where they could enter commercial training. They might enter with hopes of employment in a merchant house that had received credit from Scottish banks or to get an education in an academy before travelling onboard ships to the West Indies from Clyde ports. The young men who made such journeys will now be examined further.

¹⁵⁴ There is little doubt that powerful interests based in London (landed capitalists, financiers, bankers, manufacturers, industrialists, politicians) had a principal role in governing the British Empire in the nineteenth century as laid out in the influential ‘gentlemanly capitalist’ thesis. However, this thesis demonstrates that individuals in Glasgow were administering a distinctively Scottish imperial project that connected the nation with the West Indies. See P.J. Cain & A.J. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688-2000*, 2nd edn., (Singapore: Pearson, 2002).

Chapter 4. 'Wanted, to serve in the West Indies': Scots in the plantation economy¹

In November 1837, the advocate Lord Corehouse - almost at the end of a pre-eminent career spanning five decades - passed judgement in a case regarding inheritance, domicile and jurisdiction at the Court of Session in Edinburgh:

Persons going to the East or West Indies from this country, with the view of making a fortune, have for the most part a fixed intention of returning home when their fortune is made. I know but of one instance of a gentleman who realised a large fortune, and who had retired from public service, but who resolved to end his days [in the Indies].²

This learned view of the *mentalité* of Scots sojourners poses several questions for historians examining the economic development of the nation. How many of these persons travelled to the Caribbean? How much private wealth was accumulated? How many returned and what was the impact on the nation? This chapter will address some of these questions through a study of Scots in the Caribbean economy and the repatriation of capital during Glasgow's 'golden age' of sugar 1776-1838. This chapter will demonstrate Scots were recruited in Glasgow for different posts – often through advertisements placed by firms - in the plantation economy in the West Indies including farmers and skilled craftsmen. Some of these skills were taught in commercial academies whilst practical experience gained by these men in employment in Scotland was transferrable to the West Indies. Partners in merchant firms recruited from family and friend networks for employees to work in trusted roles dealing with finance and commerce. This was a professional - mainly skilled or educated - class of men who travelled to the West Indies to take up important positions in medicine, trade and commerce. Some were able to accumulate large fortunes whilst many others failed in their quest.

The Corehouse observation is consistent with other contemporary sources. For example, James Smith, a Scottish overseer on Roslin Estate in Trelawney, Jamaica, rhetorically addressed his homeland in correspondence of July 1791 which further reveals something of the *mentalité* of his compatriots in the West Indies:

I had...no word from Old Scotland – Ungrateful Country – but you gave me Birth, for that reason your Soil your Inhabitants your Climate your Religion are all dear to me. I believe sir it is the secret wish and propensity of every man who travells from his Native Land to return with the fruits of his Industry and marks of his

¹ This was the title of an advertisement placed by the firm John Campbell, senior, & Co. in a Glasgow newspaper to recruit 'several lads from the country' to serve as overseers in the West Indies. See 'For Tobago and Grenada', *Glasgow Herald*, 18 May 1812, p.3.

² *Decisions of the Court Session from 12 November 1837 to 12 July 1838*, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1839), p.81.

prudence, to close his Days amongst endearing Relations and mingle his Dust with Native ground. This is my dearest Wish and this has been the Motive for these 8 years toil and care under the scorching sun.³

Whilst it is unknown how Smith fared in Jamaica or if he returned home, this vision is representative of modern historians' views concerning the aspirations of Scots in the West Indies in the colonial period.

The Scots have long been recognised as a mobile breed prepared to travel in search of opportunities for self-advancement, especially within the British Empire. R.H. Campbell noted both 'push' factors within Scotland and 'pull' factors from the colonies which influenced migration as Scots sought to improve their position after 1707. Campbell suggested that the economic situation in both highland and lowland Scotland led to outward migration.⁴ The levels of emigration, however, remained high even with the rise of industry and domestic employment in Scotland from the 1750s which has been described as a 'paradox'.⁵ Although 'push' factors to white settler colonies such as America and Canada received detailed analysis in these surveys, both disregarded migration to the West Indies.

This oversight seems puzzling since Richard Sheridan's pioneering study in 1977 identified a pervasive Scottish presence across the West Indies.⁶ The motives of this group of male adventurers were subsequently explored in more recent studies of Scots in the Caribbean which described these temporary economic migrants as 'sojourners'. In general, West India adventurers sought to accumulate wealth before returning home, a goal shared with counterparts who travelled East.⁷ The irony is that despite being based on slave labour, West India fortunes were deemed acceptable in nineteenth-century Britain as they were based on land-ownership and natural produce whilst East India fortunes were based on 'murky sources' such as usurious speculation in shares and contracts or luxury items.⁸ Thus, instead of capital, labour and enterprise flowing to white settler communities or fortunes made from enterprise perceived as dubious, Caribbean sojourning provided an

³ Glasgow City Archives (hereafter GCA), TD1710, 'Letter from James Smith', 10 November 1791.

⁴ R.H. Campbell, 'Scotland' in *The Scots Abroad: Labour, Capital, Enterprise, 1750-1914*, ed. R.A. Cage, (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p.7-8.

⁵ T. M. Devine, 'The Paradox of Scottish Emigration', in *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society*, ed. T. M. Devine (Edinburgh, 1992), pp.1-15.

⁶ Richard B. Sheridan, 'The Role of Scots in the Economy and Society of the West Indies', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 292, (1977), p.98.

⁷ Allan Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun*, (USA, Cornell Press, 1992); Douglas Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750-1820*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005).

⁸ For a comparative case study and reactions to the returning East India nabob, see Andrew Mackillop, 'The Highlands and the returning nabob: Sir Hector Munro of Novar, 1760-1807' in *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600-2000*, ed. Marjory Harper, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.236-7.

acceptable means to accumulate wealth which subsequently enriched Scotland, at least in theory.

In his seminal study *Sojourners in the Sun*, Allan Karras attempted to trace ‘whence sojourners came, where they went, what they did after they arrived, and how they fared’, an approach subsequently extended across the West Indies by Douglas Hamilton.¹⁰ There was little analysis of remittance back across the Atlantic. However, in the final chapter of his text, Hamilton addressed this by arguing that West India capital not only allowed returning Scots to relocate to England, but was also used to purchase landed estates and stimulate the cotton industry, as well as establishing educational facilities within Scotland itself.¹¹ This chapter will answer similar questions for a group of Scottish sojourners in the West Indies, particularly Jamaica and Grenada. These two case studies were chosen due to the prevalence of Scots across colonies which were subsumed into the British Empire over a century apart, both before and after the Union of 1707. Moreover, the availability of source material was an important consideration and Jamaica in particular is recognised as holding the best archive collection in the region.¹² By examining sojourners who travelled after 1783, this chapter will chronologically extend the work of Karras and Hamilton. Moreover, this chapter will explore how much wealth was generated by the ‘average’ Scot in the Caribbean and how was it remitted home. In doing so, this analysis will revise the interpretation that capital in Jamaica - and by extension the Caribbean - was difficult to remit to Scotland.

Any study of economic migrants is much the better for an estimation of numbers. However, such a task in this context presents methodological issues. Marjory Harper noted the West Indies were not classified in Scottish port statistics before 1840 which means there are no reliable figures of passengers leaving for specific colonies. Instead, in a study of emigration from north-east Scotland, Harper relied on evidence such as newspapers which she noted were ‘irregular and impressionistic’.¹³ Voyages to the West Indies, therefore, can only be estimated from unofficial sources such as shipping advertisements and this approach defines current knowledge concerning estimates of Scots travelling to the Caribbean before 1800.

¹⁰ Karras, *Sojourners*, p.xiii.

¹¹ Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean*, pp. 195–216.

¹² James Robertson, ‘Jamaican Archival Resources for Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Atlantic History’, *Slavery & Abolition*, 22/3, (2001), pp.109-140; Kenneth E. Ingram, *Manuscript sources for the history of the West Indies*, (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 2000).

¹³ Marjory Harper, *Emigration from North-East Scotland: Willing Exiles*, vol.1, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), pp.29-30.

Allan Karras examined over 1000 advertisements of ships leaving for Jamaica and the Chesapeake from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leith and Aberdeen during the period 1750-1800. Based on the assumptions of five passengers per ship (some from English ports), he estimated 6,000 Scots travelled to Jamaica during this period.¹⁴ Based on analysis by Trevor Burnard, Douglas Hamilton revised these figures upwards and estimated up to 20,800 Scots sojourners departed for the West Indies in the period 1750-1799.¹⁵ Both Karras and Hamilton agreed that Jamaica was the main port of call for Scots to the West Indies during the period 1750-1800.¹⁶ However, whilst these historians provided estimates of sojourners travelling to first and second phase colonies of the British West Indies, there has been no analysis for the period 1800-1838. This study addresses this lacuna by adopting a similar method of examining shipping advertisements of ships departing the Clyde to colonies in the Caribbean in the nineteenth century.

The West India Fleet on the Clyde

Customs statistics confirm the Clyde's status as the premier Scottish departure port for the West Indies. In 1787, of the 77 outward voyages to the region from Scotland, 67 left from Port Glasgow and Greenock, the city's satellite ports. Of the 70 voyages landing in Scotland from the West Indies, 64 docked in the same two ports.¹⁷ Shipping to and from the region was also on the rise during this period. After the arrival of a particularly large fleet on the Clyde in July 1801, the joint agent of the Glasgow office of The Royal Bank of Scotland, Robert Scott Moncrieff described a rise in commerce with the West Indies: 'all our ships which number...26 in one fleet for Clyde is a wonderful increase in our Trade - not near so many in a whole year when I came here [i.e. 1783]'.¹⁸ Evidently, the banking

¹⁴ Karras, *Sojourners*, pp.43-5.

¹⁵ Douglas Hamilton used Alan Karras' initial estimate of 6000 to extrapolate figures of wider Scottish migration to Jamaica and the Windward islands. Using the Karras method (five passengers) as the starting point, Hamilton concluded this would mean 11,600 Scots went to the West Indies between 1750 and 1799. Trevor Burnard estimated that there were around 700 annual emigrants – mainly from Britain - to Jamaica in this period, which, for Hamilton, meant more passengers per ship (7.39) and therefore a higher figure of Scottish emigration to the West Indies of 17,090. However, Hamilton has even argued that nine passengers was normal and he revised both the Karras and Burnard upwards. See T. Burnard, 'European Migration to Jamaica, 1655 to 1780', *William & Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 53/ 4, (1996) p.774; Douglas Hamilton, 'Patronage and Profit: Scottish Networks in the British West Indies, c.1763-1807' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1999), p.36-7.

¹⁶ According to Karras, Jamaica was the main destination in the West Indies for Scots during the period 1750 to 1799. He identified 569 voyages from Glasgow, 314 from Edinburgh (and some from English ports) with an estimated 6000 Scots sojourners to the island. Hamilton had 10,800 Scots arriving in Jamaica during the period 1750-1799.

¹⁷ Parliamentary Papers 1787, *An Account Of The Quantities of Sugar, Rum, Cotton, Coffee, Cocoa, Indigo, Ginger, Aloes, and other Goods, imported into the several Ports of Great Britain, from the British Sugar Colonies, from Christmas 1786 to Christmas 1787 inclusive*, p.83.

¹⁸ The Royal Bank of Scotland Group Archives (hereafter RB), RB/837/279, 'Letter from Robert Scott Moncrieff', 7 July 1801.

fraternity maintained a professional interest in the Caribbean trades as integration with the colonies enriched Scotland.

In a period of almost continual war with America, France and Spain from 1776 to 1815, it is worth briefly considering the impact of wartime conditions on shipping from the Clyde. During the period of the American War (1776-1783), the ubiquity of American ships in the Atlantic initially prevented the development of Clyde-Caribbean commerce.¹⁹ Much of the conflict was contested in the Atlantic and the Caribbean, meaning shipping departures were restricted by the convoy system which had implications for operating costs especially insurance.²⁰ However, a cease in hostilities – such as the temporary peace with France in 1802-1803 – allowed unrestricted shipping and also opened up European export markets.²¹ A clause of the Treaty of Amiens in March 1802 also ceded Trinidad to Great Britain. Staff at the Glasgow branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland expressed surprise at the subsequent investments by merchants in the city: ‘some of our young West Indians...I hear are buying Estates in Trinidad - I know not a more hazardous ruinous business’.²² Thus, the spoils of war created opportunities for investment and the long term peace with America and France cleared the way for the development of Clyde-Caribbean commerce after 1815.

Indeed, evidence – albeit anecdotal – suggests an increase in shipping after 1801. Data culled from advertisements in the *Glasgow Herald* suggests over 1700 individual voyages departed from Clyde ports for the West Indies in the period 1806 –1834, which seems to indicate a dramatic increase on the earlier figures.²³ The 615 advertised voyages to Jamaica in the twenty eight year period examined here (an average of 22 per year) exceeds Karras’ total from Clyde ports for the previous half century (see Appendix 3). However, although Jamaica was the principal port of call in this study, it is also significant that new colonies became increasingly popular destinations as the nineteenth century progressed.

West India islands were celebrated by merchant firms who picked names for ships in testament to the location they traded with. Stirling, Gordon & Co. named their ships *Jamaica* and *Trelawney* whilst John Campbell, senior, & Co named ships *Leguan* and

¹⁹ T.M. Devine, ‘Transport Problems of Glasgow West India Merchants during the American War of Independence, 1775-83’, *Transport History*, 4/3, (1971), p.268.

²⁰ For an example during the later war with America, see ‘For Jamaica’, *Glasgow Herald*, 9 October 1812. For a discussion of the restrictions of the convoy system, see Devine, ‘Transport Problems’, pp.281-283.

²¹ For example, Glasgow banker Robert Scott Moncrieff noted that sugar merchants in Glasgow hoped in January 1802 that the French would resume trade with Jamaica, thus driving up sales and probably prices. See RB/837/521, ‘Letter from Robert Scott Moncrieff’, 2 January 1802.

²² RB/837/664, ‘Letter from Robert Scott Moncrieff’, 24 May 1802.

²³ This period was chosen for analysis due to the availability of sources and it also represents an era which Glasgow’s connections with the Caribbean were most pronounced.

Grenada.²⁴ Further conclusions can be gleaned from advertised destinations of the ships. Jamaica was the principal destination in the period 1806-1834. St Thomas – then part of the Danish West Indies - was also popular which probably reflects its status as a common first landfall in the Leeward Islands. It is also worth noting the increasing importance of the second and third phase colonies in the British West Indies. There was a clear shift to new colonies, especially Demerara – the principal destination in the early 1830s - as well as Grenada and Trinidad. Voyages to the latter island more than doubled in a ten year period after 1820 (see Appendix 3). The new colonies in the southern Caribbean have recently been described as the ‘last frontier’ of this period and it is unsurprising voyages increased as they offered fresh, lucrative commercial opportunities.²⁵ Thus, as new colonies were opened up to Scots it seems shipping numbers increased compared to the previous half century, a rise that subsequently stimulated commerce. Moreover, the associated migration became a business in itself.

Recruiting for the plantation economy

B.W. Higman’s work has mapped Jamaican society and the economy in the colonial period and this thesis adopts a model set out in a seminal text. According to Higman, Jamaica - and by extension, the West Indies – were essentially agricultural based economies although fully functional plantations required diverse expertise. Tradesmen with manufacturing skills - such as joiners, engineers, blacksmiths, coopers, wheelwrights, millwrights, shipwrights – were in great demand for activities like making hogsheads for sugar as well as to service plantation equipment. Similarly, those with building skills – masons and carpenters – were required for construction.²⁶ Although Higman’s text related to the slave population, there was also a ruling class of white sojourners who adopted skilled positions and in many cases passed on their knowledge. Managerial positions – attorneys, clerks, overseers, bookkeepers, stockmen for cattle pens - were reserved for white sojourners, many of whom were Scots. The ‘Glasgow West India interest’ recruited for all of these occupations for Caribbean plantations.

Absentee plantation owners resident in Glasgow sometimes advertised for positions on their estates although merchant firms recruited far more frequently, usually at the end of the year to travel out with the October fleet.²⁷ This study has identified 136 shipping advertisements placed by merchant houses in the *Glasgow Herald* that contained details of

²⁴ *Caledonian Mercury*, 18 December 1806.

²⁵ Kit Candlin, *The Last Caribbean Frontier, 1795-1815*, (London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

²⁶ B.W. Higman, *Slave Population and economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp.18-42.

²⁷ For example, see ‘Wanted for an Estate in Tobago’, *The Glasgow Journal*, 12-19 September 1782.

around three hundred job offers in the West Indies. The likelihood is there were even less positions actually available, as advertisements for a ‘carpenter and wheelwright’ may have been aimed at one tradesman.²⁸ In the ten year period after 1806 over two hundred positions were advertised. However, such offers became increasingly rare in the 1820s and only five jobs on average were advertised each year. Young men even took to putting adverts in the newspaper looking for a ‘situation...in the West Indies’.²⁹ By 1832, no jobs were publically advertised at all. It is likely the recruitment role of merchants had become obsolete by this point. Thus by the 1830s, there were very few offers of colonial careers with merchant firms in Glasgow. However, even in the halcyon period, those who were employed were required to provide impeccable references.

Glasgow firms which recruited labour for their plantations included Stirling, Gordon & Co., Leitch and Smith and John Campbell, senior, & Co. The latter owned plantations in Demerara and Grenada and recruited for both colonies. They also recruited labour for resident planters they were in business with and shipped out Scottish sojourners for specific roles. William Arbuthnot, a nephew of the Urquhart family who owned plantations in Carriacou, was transported from the Clyde on the brig *Tivoli* which arrived in Grenada in early 1787.³⁰ In turn, Arbuthnot recruited workers from Scotland: ‘I have written to John Campbell & Co. to send out as soon as possible an indented carpenter & I shall immediately set about building a cotton house & corn house which are indeed much wanted’.³¹ Evidently, the West India merchants acted as both recruitment and shipping agents transporting young Scots across the Atlantic.

One example outlines the range of skills required as well as the preference for well recommended individuals. In September 1806, the elite firm Stirling, Gordon & Co. advertised for a carpenter, gardener, cooper as well as ‘TWO or THREE YOUNG MEN from the country acquainted with the management of Cattle, and a YOUNG MAN thoroughly acquainted with books to act as a Clerk’. Although ‘Liberal encouragement’ was promised, this was matched with the caveat - a typical feature of such advertisements - that persons need not apply ‘unless they can bring certificates of their good character’.³² Thus, individuals who were outside the usual kith and kin networks could enter the planting business if the appropriate recommendations were in place. Such endorsements of

²⁸ ‘For Demerara’, *Glasgow Herald*, 16 September 1822, p.3.

²⁹ ‘Wants a situation’, *Glasgow Herald*, 15 May 1826.

³⁰ National Register of Archives Scotland (hereafter NRAS) 2570/131, ‘Letter from Thomas Campbell’, 18 February 1787.

³¹ NRAS 2570/118, ‘Letter from William Arbuthnot’, 17 November 1791.

³² ‘For Jamaica’, *Glasgow Herald*, 29 September 1806.

reliability created trust which was crucial given the employees were soon to be left to their own devices across the Atlantic.³³

In his Ph.D. thesis Douglas Hamilton utilised a rare source book (containing shipping data from Treasury papers) that listed journeys from Scottish ports to the Americas. Based on journeys from Greenock to Jamaica in September 1774 and July 1775, Hamilton suggested that there were two main differences in the patterns of emigration to the settler mainland colonies. Firstly, he pointed out migrants to the Caribbean were mainly young, single males. Of the thirty seven passengers who travelled on these voyages, thirty-five were male. The average age was twenty - the eldest was thirty four and the youngest aged fifteen. Secondly, he argued that these skilled migrants intended to 'follow their employment'. That is, the migrants were not escaping destitution but were instead seeking more profitable opportunities in the West Indies.³⁴

The very basis of the Caribbean economy was the integrated plantation; these were essentially early modern combined farms and factories focused on sugar cultivation. Hamilton's group of thirty seven men who reached Jamaica provides some insight into the workers who entered into this environment and it is worth scrutinising the data a little deeper. The two main occupations were merchant and clerk. However, some - described as planters and farmers - had agricultural skills that would have been in great demand in the plantation economy. Others such as the mill-wright, blacksmith and land surveyor would also have been very employable. It was also striking that only a minority came from Glasgow (14%) and Edinburgh (6%). The most significant departure region was the north of Scotland particularly Aberdeen, Inverness, Rosshire, Stonehaven and Banff. Sojourners from the west of Scotland were also well represented, especially from Ayrshire.³⁵ Evidently, a transient class of young men from across Scotland with agricultural, manufacturing and commercial skills were willing to travel to Jamaica in the hope of employment.

This view is consistent with the social characteristics of personnel required in the *Glasgow Herald* advertisements for jobs across the Caribbean. The majority of advertisements recruiting for agricultural positions requested overseers and planters - no

³³ Douglas Hamilton, 'Transatlantic Ties: Scottish Migration Networks in the Caribbean, 1750-1800', in Angela McCarthy (ed.), *A Global Clan, Scottish migrant networks and identities since the Eighteenth century*, (London, Tauris, 2006), p.53.

³⁴ The sources were 'List of Passengers from this Port [Greenock] from the 8th of September 1774 inclusive to the 15th September 1774 exclusive' and 'List of Passengers from this Port [Greenock] from 7th July 1775 inclusive to the 14th July exclusive', reproduced in Viola Root Cameron, *Emigrants from Scotland to America, 1774-1775*, (Baltimore: Clearfield Publishing, 1990), pp.45-6. For the discussion, see Hamilton, 'Patronage and Profit', p.39.

³⁵ 'List of passengers', Cameron, *Emigrants from Scotland to America*, pp.45-6.

doubt destined to supervise enslaved peoples cultivating and processing the sugar cane - and for those experienced in husbandry, perhaps to work on cattle pens adjacent to many plantations. Furthermore, some firms preferred working men of more advanced years. In 1816, the firm D&J Connell advertised an indentured position in Jamaica for ‘middle-aged man of experience as an overseer on a Gentleman’s Estate in this Country, to take a similar charge in that Island’.³⁶ Evidently, these specific advertisements were designed to recruit reliable, experienced men from a farming background. Other skills could also be transferred to the plantation economy.

The building of the colonial infrastructure required tradesmen such as carpenters who were deployed in ‘the erection of Threshing machines, in the making of Carts and Wheels, and in Roofing’.³⁷ Others were to be employed as foremen in shipping yards, thus taking Scottish shipbuilding skills to the West Indies.³⁸ Manufacturing skills were in no less demand. Masons, blacksmiths, plumbers, millwrights and wheelwrights would have ensured the plantation and stock were in working order whilst the coopers produced hogsheads which facilitated the storage and transportation of the semi refined muscovado sugar. Young men ‘bred up in a distillery’ were sometimes required to serve on a ‘healthy estate’ on Jamaica, no doubt destined to learn the secrets of producing O.P. (over-proof) rum.³⁹ The advertisements also provided some insight into the increasing influence of new plantation technologies as the nineteenth century progressed. In December 1822, Robert Bogle & Co. advertised for an engineer for Trinidad, although they had to be ‘well recommended for their knowledge of Steam Engines and other Smith work’.⁴⁰ Although these positions were limited and restricted to skilled, well recommended workers, it is noticeable that advertisements of commercial positions associated with merchant firms were even rarer.

Of the three hundred jobs advertised in the *Glasgow Herald* between 1806 and 1834, only three of these - two bookkeepers and one clerk – offered an immediate start in jobs related to finance. These types of roles were instead filled by trusted individuals recruited from networks of family and friends who could be personally endorsed. This closed recruitment policy was evidently to minimise the risk of dishonest dealings across the Atlantic. As factors and agents in the West Indies dealt with accounts, the issue of trust was paramount meaning strangers – however well recommended - were unlikely to be

³⁶ ‘For Jamaica’, *Glasgow Herald*, 6 December 1816, p.4.

³⁷ ‘For Kingston’, *Glasgow Herald*, 17 February 1823, p.3

³⁸ See for example, John Campbell, senior, & Co.’s advertisement for a carpenter to act in the capacity of Foreman to a Shipyard’ in Grenada. ‘For Demerara’, *Glasgow Herald*, 11 November 1811.

³⁹ ‘For Jamaica’, *Glasgow Herald*, 18 September 1829, p.3.

⁴⁰ ‘For Trinidad’, *Glasgow Herald*, 2 December 1822, p.3.

employed in positions taking in money and goods and remitting profits. The elite merchant firms in Glasgow recruited from within the direct 'family matrix' and wider familial networks in order to minimise risk.⁴¹ As will be demonstrated in chapter six, Leitch & Smith employed James Smith - the brother of the principal co-partner - as their representative in Grenada and he had responsibility for remitting money home. Similarly, John Campbell, senior, & Co. depended on Thomas Campbell, brother of the main co-partner, to undertake their business in Grenada. Recruitment from kinship networks minimised risk in commercial dealings and kept wealth within the family at the same time. The fortunes of one such sojourner, George William Hamilton, will be examined in a later section to further elucidate these processes.

It is clear the Glasgow-West India job market was restricted in the early nineteenth century. There were limited positions available with around three hundred advertised in a twenty-eight-period, around eleven per year. In the context of the estimated numbers of sojourners in this period, this was a very small minority. These positions were filled by experienced individuals who came well recommended whilst other individuals were evidently recruited from direct kinship networks. When considering that up to 16,000 individuals travelled from the Clyde to the West Indies between 1806 and 1834 (as will be discussed in a later section), the majority of sojourners from Clyde ports would have travelled under their own accord and uncertain conditions. Furthermore, this was a small proportion of the Scottish population of just over 1.5 million in 1801.⁴² Nevertheless, this group of skilled and educated young men travelled to the slave colonies in order to acquire wealth not on offer in Scotland. Many failed. The business of shipping such sojourners will be traced next.

Transportation to the plantation economy

Both merchant firms and shipping agents advertised their voyages weeks in advance notifying the public about the availability of 'freight and passage' to specific colonies. Some made a point of referring to the 'superior accommodation both for Cabin and Steerage Passengers, who will be taken on moderate terms', no doubt hoping to entice more passengers than their rivals.⁴³ The process of transporting sojourners can be traced in merchant correspondence. In October 1810, John Campbell, senior, & Co. advertised in the *Glasgow Herald* for a 'mason, cooper, house carpenter and some overseers...who want to

⁴¹ Peter Mathias, 'Risk, Credit and Kinship in Early Modern Enterprise', in *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, ed. by John McCusker, Kenneth Morgan, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.16.

⁴² Henry Hamilton, *An Economic History of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p.395.

⁴³ 'Notice to Shippers and Passengers for Kingston', *Glasgow Herald*, 2 January 1824, p.3.

serve in the West Indies under indentures for three years', who would travel on the imminent voyage of the *Susannah* to Grenada.⁴⁴ Later that year, at the request of planter, John Urquhart, the firm arranged for Aberdeen sojourner Adam Reid to travel to Carriacou from Port Glasgow aboard the ship. Urquhart put up the initial costs of £24, 4s, 10d (to be repaid by Reid) which included £21 for steerage on the ship, £1/16s for 'sea bedding and board' and carriage expenses to Port Glasgow.⁴⁵ By means of comparison, this was around six month's wages for an adult male cotton mill spinner in Glasgow.⁴⁶ Reid seems to have had a successful career over the long term. In 1815, with a recommendation by William Robertson, an attorney on Carriacou, Reid was recruited for a managerial position on Dumfries Estate on wages worth £330 currency per year. However, Robertson noted the retention of personnel was difficult on less developed colonies such as Carriacou as the 'wages given on the small estates here are so little, that most of the young men are leaving them and going to the sugar islands'.⁴⁷

The desertion of skilled personnel was inhibited by the indenture system, an arrangement which provided sojourners with an advance on their wages to cover passage. Their importance in the colonial economy is revealed in correspondence from Spencer Mackay, a Scots merchant-planter in Demerara in the late 1790s:

The young man Mr Hill arrived here two days ago...I would never have a young man in this part of the world without indentures, I...mentioned 2-3 years. I...never intended bringing people out to the W. Indies at my risk without some security over their future services, and it mars my plans, as I wished to have one attached to the Estate that I would take some time in bringing forward, while I remained in the Country with the satisfaction of their doing the writing part when I left it.⁴⁸

These contracts were evidently a crucial part of the system. The terms of one indenture are revealed by the contract of John Barr who went to Jamaica in 1840 aged seventeen at the bequest of James Ewing & Co. Barr bound himself as an apprentice for four years with an indenture which acknowledged he was in debt to the firm. He agreed not to 'absent or withdraw himself' during that period under a penalty of two days for every day missed of indented term. Wages rose incrementally from £5 in the first year to £10 across the period. A penalty of £10 was attached to the indenture preventing either party from breaking the

⁴⁴ 'For Carriacou, St George's', *Glasgow Herald*, 19 October 1810, p.4.

⁴⁵ NRAS 2570/40, 'Letter from John Campbell senior', 15 December 1810.

⁴⁶ In a sample of twenty nine cotton mills in the Glasgow area, the average wage of adult males was around 21 shillings a week which was regarded as high remuneration (£4.4s. per month or £50 per annum). See James Cleland, *Enumeration of the inhabitants of the City of Glasgow and County of Lanark for the Government census of 1831*, 2nd Edition, (Glasgow: John Smith and Sons, 1831), p.291.

⁴⁷ NRAS 2570/96, 'William Robertson to John Urquhart', 8 May 1817.

⁴⁸ The University of the West Indies, Mona, West Indies and Special Collections, MS1798-1800, 'Journal of Spenser Mackay', 22 August 1798.

contract.⁴⁹ This effectively tied young sojourners to occupational positions in the West Indies that were advertised by merchants and plantation owners in Glasgow. Although those not indentured had control over their movements, they travelled at their own considerable expense and required good recommendations and connections to enter business quickly in the colonies. Given the high costs of passage and risks involved, perhaps the majority of the three hundred positions advertised by the merchant firms in the *Glasgow Herald* were offered as indentured contracts but only around half were explicitly advertised as such.

This thesis now enters the realm of speculative history in order to provide tentative estimates of sojourners who departed from Clyde ports to the West Indies during the period 1806-1834. The shipping advertisements in the *Glasgow Herald* suggest the main ports of departure for ships were Port Glasgow and Greenock. However, the dredging of the upper Clyde facilitated a limited number of direct voyages from the Broomielaw to Jamaica, Trinidad and Demerara after 1824.⁵⁰ Although around twenty voyages to the West Indies from other Scottish and English ports – Leith, Dundee and especially Liverpool – were advertised in the *Glasgow Herald*, they were not included in this analysis of the Clyde-Caribbean fleet as they are out-with the scope of this thesis. Thus, the total voyages from Scotland and numbers of Scots leaving from English ports in this period are probably even higher than the figures led here. Nevertheless, the shipping advertisements that have been analysed suggest a rise in the numbers of sojourners departing Scotland each year.

Based on the existing estimates of five, seven or nine sojourners per ship this thesis suggests that between 8,500 and 16,000 sojourners could have left the Clyde to the West Indies during in the period 1806-1834. Perhaps around 12,000 is the most realistic estimate (see Appendix 4). If compared by the average number of sojourners travelling per year, the estimates for the twenty eight period, 1806-1834 (435 per year) represent an increase on Hamilton's estimate of 17,000 for the period 1750-1799 (346 per year). It should be underlined that any estimates of Scottish sojourners to the West Indies are essentially speculative. As shipping advertisements dramatically increased in this period, the obvious inference is outward sojourners did too. However, not all ships would have left and some could have been empty. On the other hand, many would have been at full capacity.

The majority of ships departed the Clyde during October to December, the six week voyages clearly timed to coincide with the harvesting season in the Caribbean from

⁴⁹ GCA, TD1710, 'Indenture of Peter Barr', 2 June 1840.

⁵⁰ For example, see 'For Falmouth, Jamaica', *Glasgow Herald*, 15 October 1824, p.3. For a discussion of the development of the Broomielaw to take the large sea-going vessels, see Gordon Jackson, Charles Munn, 'Trade, Commerce and Finance', in *Glasgow, Volume II, 1830-1912*, eds. W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp.53-54.

January to May. The main departure point, Port Glasgow, had two harbours and a wet dock. The warehouses for hogsheads, including one specifically for sugars, were regarded as amongst the best in Great Britain.⁵¹ Many young Scots would have stood on these harbours – some might have discussed their background at home and hopes for the future - whilst waiting to embark for Jamaica, the Leeward and Windward Islands or the southern Caribbean. How did the Scots who actually sojourned fare? Case studies of two of the premier destinations - Jamaica and Grenada – provide some answers.

Scots in Jamaica: ‘toil and care under the scorching sun’

A West India sojourn was a risky undertaking and Scots were in some danger even before landfall. War with France during the Napoleonic and Revolutionary Wars (1793-1815) and Anglo-American War (1812-1815) meant capture by the enemy was an almost constant threat. One Scot, William McFarlane, was on his way to Jamaica in the early 1790s when the French captured his ship and he was ‘never afterwards heard of’.⁵² Nevertheless, many more reached their destination.

Jamaica was essentially a rural society with most of the population resident along the coast. Both enslaved and free workers mainly worked on sugar and coffee plantations known as estates or adjoining cattle pens that provided livestock for the plantation economy.⁵³ The north and west of Jamaica, particularly Falmouth, Savannah-Le-Mar and Montego Bay were important stopping points. However, the bustling commercial hub of Kingston was the single most popular destination by some distance.⁵⁴

On arrival in the port, Scots had many reminders of home. In lower Kingston, several Scottish merchant firms dealt with correspondents in settlements outside the city limits thus maintaining commercial connections across the Atlantic. Indeed, soon after arriving in Kingston in late 1823, one sojourner from Banff recorded how his countrymen thrived in the plantation economy: ‘the majority of the Planters here are Scotchmen’.⁵⁵ The Scottish faction established institutions and organised events with a Caledonian dimension. Frequenters of the Kingston masonic lodge, St Andrews, led the annual celebrations dedicated to the national patron saint of Scotland which included a procession down to the

⁵¹ W.H. Bartlett, J.D. Harding, T. Creswick *et al*, *The Ports, Harbours, Watering-Places and Picturesque Scenery of Great Britain, Vol. I* (London: Virtue & Co, 1840).

⁵² *Decisions of the First and Second Divisions of the Court of Session, from November 1810 to November 1812*, (Edinburgh: Manners and Miller, 1813), p.261.

⁵³ Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica: Colonial Society and Culture during the Era of Abolition* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), p.5.

⁵⁴ Of the over 600 voyages advertised to Jamaica in the *Glasgow Herald*, almost 300 were scheduled for Kingston and over almost 200 were set for Falmouth, Montego Bay and Port Antonio.

⁵⁵ The National Library of Scotland, MS 17956, ‘Journal of [unknown] of Banffshire’, 15 January 1824, p.24.

local church.⁵⁶ As previously discussed, the Presbyterian Scots Kirk was later founded in 1819 for a local group of Scots described as a ‘numerous...community’.⁵⁷ Whilst much of the finance collected for the establishment of this Kirk was donated by individuals resident in Kingston and the surrounding parish of St Andrew, subscriptions were also from St Mary and especially St Thomas in the East suggesting a strong Scottish Presbyterian community in these areas.⁵⁸ Other sources attest to a disproportionately powerful Caledonian presence.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the white population of Jamaica was around 20,000-25,000, whilst the enslaved population was 354,000.⁵⁹ The planter-historian Edward Long famously quantified the sheer prevalence of Scots in the former community in 1774:

Jamaica, indeed, is greatly indebted to North Britain, as very near one third [i.e. 6000 of 18,000] of the [white] inhabitants are either natives of that country, or descendants from those who were. Many have come...every year, less in quest of fame than of fortunes; and such is their industry and address, that few of them have been disappointed.⁶⁰

The evidence presented here suggests the Clyde-Caribbean fleet boosted this population during the early nineteenth century. The shipping advertisements suggest that over 600 voyages left the Clyde destined for Jamaica during the period 1806 and 1834, perhaps carrying 3,000-5,500 sojourners (see Appendix 4). Some of these sojourners sent correspondence back home and others left will and probate records which provide further insights into the activities of Scots on the island.

This study has identified will and probate data for fifty four males who were in Jamaica, 1790-1838.⁶¹ Firstly, volumes of wills - held in the Island Record Office in St Catherine - were examined for persons with Scottish surnames.⁶² Individual biographies were compiled if the will mentioned places names in Scotland (revealing family locations) or if a Scottish residency could be corroborated through contemporary Scottish based sources such as the *Edinburgh Magazine* which listed deaths of sojourners abroad. The wills in Jamaica provide some evidence of the mind-set of Scots sojourners – near death in some cases – as well as the process of remitting the wealth they had accumulated.

⁵⁶ J.B. Moreton, *West India Customs and Manners*, (London: J. Parson, 1793), p.34., p.64.

⁵⁷ The Jamaica Archives (hereafter JA), 5/20/2/1, ‘St Andrews Scots Kirk, Minutes’, 1814, n.p.

⁵⁸ JA, 5/20/2/1, ‘St Andrews Scots Kirk Minutes’, 1819, n.p.

⁵⁹ Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica*, p.6.

⁶⁰ Edward Long, *A History of Jamaica*, vol. 2, (London, 1774), p.287.

⁶¹ Of this group, forty eight wills were identified and forty five inventories. Complementary wills and inventories were identified for thirty seven individuals.

⁶² Island Record Office (hereafter IRO), vol. 56 (1792) up to vol. 114 (1833) were sampled for this study.

Trevor Burnard, however, has pointed out that most males in Jamaica did not leave a will and those who did hailed from the property holding population which was hardly a representative cross section of the plantation economy.⁶³ With this caveat in mind, probate inventories - held in the Jamaica Archives at Spanishtown – were identified to complement the wills. Individuals who died intestate on the island (some leaving low value estates) were included if family residence could be identified in other sources.⁶⁴ However, as noted by Christer Petley, the inventories also have weaknesses. Firstly, they are usually restricted to personal property meaning estate ownership is rarely included in any valuation. Perhaps more importantly in the context of this study, the inventories do not include individual debt.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, the inventories illustrate the occupations Scots took up across the Jamaica and allow tentative estimates of capital on death. Other Scottish based sources provide further data on Jamaica sojourners who died in Scotland.

In *Scottish-American Wills, 1650-1900*, David Dobson compiled a directory of individuals who had been resident in the Americas (including over 100 in Jamaica) but chose to have their wills or inventories registered and confirmed in Edinburgh.⁶⁶ In a sample taken from Dobson's list, some individuals died intestate on the island whilst others died testate in Great Britain. Some inventories of individuals identified in the course of this research as they left correspondence - such as Taylor Cathcart and William Dobbie – were also included in this analysis here.

The information within the biographies of the Scots in Jamaica reveals much about occupational roles and wealth levels. The prime location for the Scots in the group studied here was Kingston, which is unsurprising given the regularity of ships from the Clyde to southern Jamaica. However many others were based in Hanover and Westmoreland and some made eastern locations such as St Thomas in the East their home. The data suggests that merchant and planter were the most common occupations while merchants seemed to earn the most (see Appendix 5).⁶⁷ Contemporary sources describe the influence and

⁶³ Trevor Burnard, 'Inheritance and Independence: Women's Status in Early Colonial Jamaica', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 48/1 (Jan., 1991), p.96

⁶⁴ For example, no will could be identified for Alexander Reid, overseer on Tryall Estate in Hanover who died in 1827. However, his family residence of Banff was contained in a directory compiled by David Dobson, *Scots in the West Indies, 1707-1857*, vol.1, (Baltimore: Clearfield Publishing, 1998), p.117.

⁶⁵ Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica*, p.21.

⁶⁶ David Dobson, *Scottish-American Wills, 1650-1900*, (Baltimore: Clearfield publishing, 2010).

⁶⁷ The overall average (n=45, ave.= £8509 stg) for the small sample in this study (some of whom returned to Scotland) is in excess of recent analysis of the personal estates of free whites in early nineteenth-century Jamaica. From a sample of over 200 inventories of free whites in Jamaica from 1807 to 1834, Christer Petley estimated the mean average personal estate was c. £5000 stg. whilst the median was £870 stg. The larger Petley sample therefore provides more reliable estimates of inventoried wealth in Jamaica in this period. See Christer Petley, 'Plantations and Homes: The Material Culture of the Early Nineteenth-Century Jamaican Elite', *Slavery & Abolition*, 35/3, (2014), p.440, p.453.

background of Scottish merchants in Jamaica as well as the ideal career progression leading to slave-ownership:

There are some extensive merchants in Kingston, Spanish Town, Montego Bay, &C. a few of whom are English and Irish, but ten times the number of Scotch; they all in general live elegantly; it is not thought strange for a peasant's son from Glasgow, or Aberdeen, in the space of four or five years, to commence merchant, and in a few years afterwards to make a pretty independence; or if he enters the planting line, to succeed as well; to get possession of slaves...the Scotch are more enterprising, partial and friendly to each other than other nations; besides in general they are well educated young men; I never knew a raw lad from the country, who had not a letter of recommendation to his Excellency, or to some Mac or other; upon delivery of which he was taken notice of, and immediately put into some business.⁶⁸

Thus, according to J.B. Moreton, entrepreneurial spirit, educational standards as well as connections and patronage allowed Scots to prosper.

The inventory of Kingston merchant William McMurdo suggests large scale capital could be accumulated in a relatively short career.⁶⁹ McMurdo died in July 1795 at the age of thirty seven and assuming he arrived to the island around twenty years before, he managed to accumulate capital of over £35,000 Jamaican currency [c. £25,000 sterling] in that period.⁷⁰ At death, his property consisted mainly of debts, stock and enslaved persons. He had over £1,300 in cash, as well as over £8,000 in stock in trade. He was also owed in over £19,000 in 'good' debts.⁷¹ Other merchants such as Daniel McKenzie operated more modest operations with a store in Clarendon that sold goods such as axes, knives, masons hammers as well as carry combs and brushes. The majority of his estate (£3700 sterling) consisted of small debts owed to him by individuals to whom he clearly had advanced credit.⁷² The danger, however, is confusing capital with profits. Both of these estates consisted mainly of debts – no matter how secure they were - which would have made early flight difficult.

Although 'planters' were also prominent amongst this grouping of Scots studied here, the occupational description requires some qualification. B.W. Higman described management hierarchy on the plantation. In the absence of the plantation owner, the attorney had overall legal responsibility and managed plantation operations assisted by

⁶⁸ Moreton, *West India Customs and Manners*, p.64.

⁶⁹ It should be noted that the Jamaican inventories were recorded in island currency. The sterling value is around 70% of the total. Allan Karras inferred McMurdo's fortune was over £35,000 sterling instead of Jamaican currency. See Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun*, p.182.

⁷⁰ This study uses a conversion formula contained in a contemporary source: 'To change West India currency into Sterling multiply by five and divide by seven. For sterling to currency, multiply by seven and divide by five'. See National Library of Jamaica (hereafter NLJ), MS 132, 'Letterbook of Georgia Estate', vol.1, p.1.

⁷¹ JA, 1B/11/3/84, Inventories, 1796, f.90.

⁷² JA, 1B/11/3/84, Inventories, 1796, f.45.

overseers and bookkeepers.⁷³ Many individuals in the study here were referred to in the inventories as planters although they were clearly mere overseers with no property whilst others were rentiers of jobbing slaves. Others, however, owned large scale estates and hundreds of resident slaves. The career trajectory of George William Hamilton from overseer to attorney and eventually slave-owner provides context.

The letter-books of the Georgia Estate in Trelawney - owned by the Gordon family of Cairness – allow the recreation of the activities of Scots in the Jamaican economy. The Scots attorney of the Gordon family, Francis Graham, left the management of Georgia estate to George William Hamilton when he left for Great Britain in July 1812. The correspondence over the course of the next year illustrates the challenges faced by the young overseer. In October 1812, he took stock of the plantation and supervised the planting of the sugar crop for the coming year.⁷⁴ This was a temporary position, however, and Hamilton soon stepped up the economic ladder in the plantation economy.

By June 1817, he was the attorney for the Bogle family in Vere, Jamaica, which involved supervising groups of slaves on plantations. Deeds lodged in Kingston (signed by Colin Donald Dunlop, writer in Glasgow) outline Hamilton later became a slave owner on his own account. In September 1829, Robert Page conveyed twenty seven slaves to Hamilton which were perhaps employed afterwards in jobbing work on estates.⁷⁵ By 1830, Archibald Bogle conveyed two plantations in trust to his cousins from Glasgow then resident in Jamaica; George William Hamilton, the planter and Robert, the merchant in Kingston. The two brothers accepted the task of revitalising the fortunes of Phillipsburgh and Palmetto Valley estates – both St Thomas in the Vale – by ‘keeping down the contingencies... [and] to pay over the entire clear net proceeds’.⁷⁶

For other less well connected Scots planters, slave-ownership was also viewed as a means to acquire wealth. In July 1791, James Smith, the Scots overseer in Trelawney, wrote to a merchant in Glasgow and elaborated upon the ‘toil and care...under the scorching sun’ that allowed him to prosper. As the overseer on Roslin Castle estate, he was paid £120 currency and had recently purchased three slaves which he hired out for jobbing work. From this arrangement he estimated he would be ‘able to save 80 or 90 pounds a year’.⁷⁷ Evidently, acquiring slaves represented career progression although many others died before they accumulated fortunes. Alexander Reid from Banffshire died in Jamaica on

⁷³ B.W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850, Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy*, (Kingston, University of the West Indies Press, 2008), p.31.

⁷⁴ NLJ, MS 132, ‘Letterbook of Georgia Estate’, Vol.1, pp.122-139.

⁷⁵ IRO, Jamaica Deeds, 1829, ‘Conveyance to Uses’, Vol. 759, f.139

⁷⁶ IRO, Jamaica Deeds, 1830, ‘Conveyance of Land in Trust’, Vol. 765, ff.262-4.

⁷⁷ GCA TD1710, ‘Letter from James Smith’, 10 November 1791.

3 November 1827.⁷⁸ As the overseer on Tryall Estate in Hanover, his inventory reveals possessions required for agricultural work. He owned three horses and a riding saddle, a pair of pantaloons, a black hat as well as a red coat. He had a writing desk, a liquor case as well as a silver and gold watch. He was owed a salary of £90 currency from Tryall Estate. In total he was worth £237 currency (£169 sterling).⁷⁹ Clearly, this was a risky business and many other Scots died in even more impecunious conditions than Reid.

In his magnum opus, *A History of Jamaica*, Edward Long commented on the artificers from the north of Scotland – particularly stone masons and mill wrights – as they were ‘remarkably expert, and in general are sober, frugal and civil’. According to Long, these qualities were instilled by ‘the good education, which the poorest of them receive [which was] a great influence on their morals and behaviour’.⁸⁰ Scots tradesmen were evidently noted for their skills and industry, allowing them to attain a level of income on the island that far exceeded the available remuneration at home. Writing home to a cousin in Edinburgh, a Scots sojourner named Andrew Taylor asked about a carpenter back home: ‘I should advise him very much to come out to this country if he is not married a carpenter here can commonly get a salary of from £140 to £180 or from £100 to £120 sterling a year’.⁸¹ This was five times the wage of carpenters in Glasgow.⁸² As well as the high wages on offer, further profits were evidently made from the exploitation of slave labour.

Some of the Scots tradesmen in this study - carpenter, surveyor, shipwright and mason - made use of skilled slave labour to profit in the plantation economy. One example suggests that skills acquired by Scots at home were passed to enslaved people in Jamaica. Lauchlan McLean, a native of Coll, was a wealthy shipwright in Kingston. McLean had a number of slaves he had evidently apprenticed to work in his business; one ‘bellow-blower’ named ‘Scotland’ was worth a mere £5, no doubt due to limited productivity in his advanced years. A shipwright ‘Big Chester’ was far more important to the operation and

⁷⁸ Dobson, *Scots in the West Indies*, vol. 1, p.117.

⁷⁹ JA, 1B/11/3/144, ‘Inventories’, 1828, f.215.

⁸⁰ Long, *History of Jamaica*, vol. 2, p.288.

⁸¹ NLJ, MS 706, ‘Letter from Andrew Taylor’, 8 May 1819.

⁸² The daily wage of joiners and house carpenters in Glasgow in 1819 was 2d or 40 shillings (£2) per month for a 10 hour day, five days a week. Thus, wages were most likely around £24 per annum. See James Cleland, *Statistical Tables Relative to the City of Glasgow*, 3rd Edn., (Glasgow: James Lumsden, 1823), p.132.

was valued as such (£140 Jamaica currency).⁸³ Masons and carpenters also utilised slaves in semi-skilled labouring gangs.⁸⁴

It was no coincidence that Scottish doctors and surgeons were prevalent across Jamaica. In *Doctors and Slaves*, Richard Sheridan argued that many of the leading European medical schools in the late eighteenth century were housed in Scottish Universities, particularly Edinburgh but also Aberdeen, St Andrews and Glasgow.⁸⁵ Alan Karras traced the careers of two medical doctors in Jamaica, Colin and Alexander MacLarty. However, Karras took a pessimistic view when considering the remittance of wealth from Jamaica to Scotland. Karras was ‘unclear how successful Colin Maclarty was’ and suggested many sojourners stayed in Jamaica as it was ‘almost impossible’ to convert capital and credit in Jamaica into profits without court action.⁸⁶ Thus, the Maclarty case seemed to support Karras’ position that wealth was difficult to repatriate. However, Nicholas Draper has recently noted that Maclarty in fact returned to Scotland and claimed compensation for slaves in 1834.⁸⁷ This research here further supports the view of Maclarty as successful sojourner who eventually acquired landed property at home. Although the Maclarty inventory suggested he was worth just £1880 on death,⁸⁸ a later court case showed he left £3000 each to his two daughters and owned the estate of Keilcolmkeill in Argyllshire, houses in Campbeltown and Chester Vale plantation in Jamaica.⁸⁹ Evidently, Maclarty enjoyed a successful career in Jamaica, the profits of which were invested in land in Scotland which passed to beneficiaries.⁹⁰

This thesis, therefore, takes a more nuanced approach to wealth repatriation from the West Indies to Scotland. There were various methods for sojourners to transfer profits in life and wealth after death. Many in this study succeeded. Newspapers advertisements in Jamaica contain advertisements from resident merchants (although their nationality was

⁸³ The inventory of Lauchlan McLean suggested he had property worth over £7100 sterling, see JA, 1B/11/3/148, Inventories, 1831-32, f.37. It is probable this was the same Lauchlan McLean who died on 15 October 1829 at the age of forty three, ‘a native of the island of Coll’ in Scotland who had a monumental inscription in Kingston Parish Church. See J.H. Lawrence Archer, *Monumental Inscriptions of the British West Indies from the Earliest Date*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1875), p.112.

⁸⁴ For example, the inventory of Roderick McKenzie, a mason in St Thomas in the East, on 8 July 1813 establishes he owned male slaves worth £1060 no doubt employed as a labouring squad. See JA, 1B/11/3/122, Inventories, 1813, f.42.

⁸⁵ Richard Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.56-61.

⁸⁶ Karras, *Sojourners*, p.60.

⁸⁷ Nicholas Draper ‘Possessing People: absentee slave-owners within British society’, in *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, ed. by Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, et al, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.44.

⁸⁸ NRS, SC51/32/4, ‘Inventory of Dr Colin MacLarty’, 28 May 1835, pp.31-38.

⁸⁹ *Cases Decided in the Court Session, July 20 1863-1864, 3s, V.II*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1863-4), p.489.

⁹⁰ Nonetheless, the implications of separate legal systems in Scotland and England in the context of the repatriation of capital from the West Indies and East Indies have yet to be explored. In any case, the sources consulted for the study establish a distinctly Scottish operation in which wealth accumulated by Scots in the Caribbean was repatriated via Glasgow merchant houses.

not defined) designed to recover money owed to them before they departed from Jamaica.⁹¹ Planters were also able to convert produce into capital; many in this study were in credit with Glasgow West India merchants – such as the Connells - demonstrating how plantation profits were transferred to Scotland. Even lower class sojourners repatriated wealth also in some cases via the merchant firms of Glasgow.

The letters from Andrew Taylor reveal much more about the repatriation of profits to Scotland and the mentality behind it. As overseer on York Estate in Trelawney in May 1819, some of his earnings were sent home to his cousin via bills of exchange which were deemed safe as they ‘cannot be lost’. In one case, he advised drawing the bill on Stirling, Gordon & Co., merchants of Glasgow, as they were the ‘most [secure] house in North Britain’.⁹² In a letter in 1827, he sent his cousin money - who by this point was economically dependent on him due to the ‘hard times’ in Scotland - and contrasted his own position in Jamaica: ‘I want for nothing’.⁹³

Taylor underwent a series of upward promotions across plantations in Trelawney and took up ‘a very healthy situation’ on Georgia Estate in 1826. At this point, he had been in Jamaica at least seven years and offered some emotional comfort – matched by an economic guarantee - to his cousin who had despaired in an earlier letter that he would not see him again:

Be assured that should anything happen to me in this Country that I have regulated my affairs so far with certain individuals which I can depend on as will let you know my end I cannot promise you a fortune but I have a little and I have no person here to leave anything too therefor I consider you most deserving of what I may leave behind. But there is no knowing the reverses of fortune & how things turn out.⁹⁴

Thus, Taylor was in Jamaica principally to improve his own position although his wealth would be naturally bequeathed to his family. In the event of his decease, trusted associates - essentially operating as executor - would send his small fortune to Scotland. However, it seems he had no requirement for this to be undertaken as he left the island in February 1832. His last letter describes a picturesque tour through the Bay of Honduras and the Gulf of Mexico up to the United States on route home to Edinburgh.⁹⁵

Some others were not so lucky. The majority of the individuals examined in this study did not make it to Scotland; twenty eight died in Jamaica, one died on the voyage

⁹¹ ‘The Subscriber’, *Jamaica Mercury*, 1 October 1779.

⁹² NLJ, MS 706, ‘Letter from Andrew Taylor’, 2 May 1827.

⁹³ NLJ, MS 706, ‘Letter from Andrew Taylor’, 1820.

⁹⁴ NLJ, MS 706, ‘Letter from Andrew Taylor’, 16 June 1826.

⁹⁵ NLJ, MS 706, ‘Letter from Andrew Taylor’, 8 April 1832.

across the Atlantic, another died in London and fourteen returned to Scotland.⁹⁶ Of those who died on Jamaica, many had large fortunes that had to be remitted across the Atlantic. This transmission of capital was facilitated by a clearly defined legal framework with some assistance from the merchants in the metropolis. It has been noted the principal historical beneficiaries of testamentary bequests are, unsurprisingly, the immediate family.⁹⁷ In the sources examined for this study, property in Jamaica – usually held in slaves and plantations - was bequeathed to family both on the island and in Scotland.

In his studies of mixed-race migration from the West Indies to Great Britain, Daniel Livesay has demonstrated the typicality of relationships between white men and women of colour. The children of such unions were often left inheritance that was sometimes disputed after the death of the testator.⁹⁸ Some of the sojourners examined did leave testamentary gifts to family that were recently enslaved. In one case, Argyll sojourner Archibald Hamilton, a resident of Kingston, left instruction in his will that his wife ‘a Negro woman slave named Mary and her four mulatto children’ were to ‘set free of and from all future slavery’ on his decease. By leaving instructions that his family should purchase slaves, he hoped to secure their economic future. His death at once freed his family from their enslaved status and transformed them into owners of other enslaved people.⁹⁹ Some benefitted from more substantial provision. Of the fifteen testamentary gifts to enslaved partners and mulatto children identified in the sources consulted, all were high value – some even included estates - except the miserly Donald McIntosh who bequeathed £3000 sterling to his brother in Inverness but left just £57 to be shared amongst his slave Nancy and three ‘reputed children’ on two other estates.¹⁰⁰ Although some former slaves profited from the system, perhaps the majority of the wealth was destined for repatriation across the Atlantic.

Planters sometimes bequeathed profits to family in Scotland in the form of annuities (a sum of money from the yearly profits) which provided an annual income long after the death of the planter concerned.¹⁰¹ Others left more substantial legacies. In 1801,

⁹⁶ As this study has relied heavily upon wills lodged in Jamaica, the data should not be viewed as representative of success rates of Scots sojourners. Individuals who lodged wills or who were inventoried on the island were close to death or already dead.

⁹⁷ Ann McCrum, ‘Inheritance and the Family: the Scottish urban experience in the 1820s’, in *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900*, ed. by Jon Stobart, Alastair Owens, (England: Ashgate, 2000), p.149.

⁹⁸ Daniel Livesay, ‘Children of Uncertain Fortune: Mixed-Race Migration from the West Indies to Britain, 1750-1820’, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 2010), p.151.

⁹⁹ IRO, ‘Wills’, 1799-80, Vol. 66, pp.43-4.

¹⁰⁰ IRO, ‘Wills’, 1802, Vol. 70, p.52.

¹⁰¹ Plantation owner Alexander Findlater died in Jamaica in 1778 and left the indebted ‘Large Estate’ to a trustee with instructions that his only child in Scotland, Rebecca, should receive an annuity until she reached

James McPherson, a planter in St George, left his plantation and resident slaves to his sister and brother in Inverness, on the condition that they were not disposed of but retained for the 'benefit and advantage' of the family'.¹⁰² This presented a number of issues as family members were subsequently responsible for an estate they most likely had no experience of running. Some planters resolved these issues by leaving instructions for associates to sell their property in Jamaica and to remit the wealth to Scotland.

Some elite sojourners in this study - planters, merchants and doctors - appointed West India merchants based in Glasgow as executor or trustee. Both roles involved the gathering and disposition of the estate, although trusteeship involved taking legal responsibility for the property. Executors were appointed merely to ensure the property was distributed based on the direct wishes of the testator.¹⁰³ One sojourner in this study, William Loch, spent many years in Westmoreland, Jamaica. Before he died in Linthouse, Scotland in August 1811, he appointed a number of executors to facilitate the 'better and more speedily disposing of my estate' including individuals in Westmoreland to 'execute all necessary deeds and conveyances' as well as D&J Connell, merchants of Glasgow. He trusted his executors to dispose of his real and personal estate 'to the best advantage' which resulted in £5700 sterling being divided up mostly amongst family in Scotland and his two 'reputed' mulatto children in Jamaica.¹⁰⁴

For holders of West India property, appointing merchants in Glasgow as executor was a logical step. In some cases, planters had open accounts with merchants whom they had built up trusted commercial relationships over many years. Furthermore, testators had estates consisting of capital (land and slaves) that was difficult to repatriate to Scotland and the merchant firms had the expertise to dispose of such property and remit profits home. It is likely that testators assumed they could rely on an honest disposition of proceeds; merchant firms who defaulted on the legal distribution of testators' estate would have damaged their commercial reputation. Glasgow merchants were known to advertise in local newspapers looking for relations of dead sojourners as much as twelve years later.¹⁰⁵ However, if executors were based in Jamaica, the distance from the source of the fortune to the beneficiary and the differing legal systems meant the risks of dishonest practices were

twenty one. See *Decisions of the First and Second Divisions of the Court of Session, from November 1810 to November 1812*, (Edinburgh: Manners and Miller, 1813), pp.129-134.

¹⁰² IRO, 'Wills', 1802, Vol. 70, p.8

¹⁰³ Alastair Owens, 'Property, Will making and Estate Disposal in an industrial town, 1800-1857', in *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900*, ed. by Jon Stobart, Alastair Owens, (England: Ashgate, 2000), p.98.

¹⁰⁴ NRS, SC70/1/14, 'Will of William Loch', 21 August 1815, pp.1-5.

¹⁰⁵ *The Glasgow Journal*, 22-29 September 1763, p.4.

far more likely.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, one bookkeeper, Benjamin McMahon, described the role of executors in his memoirs of plantation life and noted a contemporary saying: ‘WHEN A MAN DIES IN JAMAICA, HE IS RUINED FOREVER’.¹⁰⁷

A transatlantic legal case in November 1820 provides further insight into the role of an executor on the island. Excessive fees had been charged by one executor, Mr Samson, on a deceased planter’s estate meaning the beneficiary Miss Oliver of Leith, Edinburgh received far less than her due. Preparing for a legal challenge, a lawyers firm in Great Britain requested advice from Robert Hamilton - the brother of George William Hamilton – who was described as ‘a highly respected gentleman of Jamaica...now in Glasgow’. The subsequent nine point questionnaire answered by Hamilton revealed executors were entitled to six percent of the total estate before any payments were made to beneficiaries (fees which had been overcharged in the Oliver bequest). The legal firm then asked for a professional opinion of a solicitor in Kingston who was to be appointed as Power of Attorney in order to collect and remit the correct sum to Miss Oliver and other beneficiaries.¹⁰⁸ Much can be taken from this source. Firstly, it behoved any executor to gather as much as possible from the deceased’s estate in order to raise their own fee, although some were unethical and did not remit the true sum. Secondly, legal process allowed inheritors in Scotland – if they were financially in a position to do so - to pursue individuals across the Atlantic.

As well as merchant firms, some sojourners studied here left instructions that remitted proceeds to banks in Scotland for subsequent distribution to heirs. Alexander Milne, a planter who died on his Castle Gordon estate in St Thomas in the East in 1823, originally hailed from the east coast of Scotland. In his last will and testament, he left instructions that his plantation and twenty resident slaves should be sold ‘to the highest & best bidder or to the best advantage and if possible, to a good humane Master’ after his decease. The capital was to be remitted to Scotland and lodged with ‘the Royal Bank of Scotland in Edinburgh, upon interest and that on account and benefit of my sister, Sarah Milne’ in Kirkcaldy.¹⁰⁹ Taken together with the remittance of profits in life and the legal framework that transmitted wealth on death, Caribbean sojourners enriched Scotland for over a century.

¹⁰⁶ For a pessimistic view of the remittance of capital by executors in Jamaica, see Vincent Brown, *The Reapers Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*, (U.S., Harvard University Press, 2008), pp.102-107. Similarly, Alan Karras outlined that when appointed executor of a small scale estate in Jamaica, Dr Alexander Johnston kept much of the proceeds himself, See ‘The World of Alexander Johnston: The Creolization of Ambition, 1762-1787’, *The Historical Journal*, 30/1 (1987), p.70-71.

¹⁰⁷ Benjamin McMahon, *Jamaica Plantership*, (London: Effingham Wilson, 1839), p.227.

¹⁰⁸ NLJ, MS 708, ‘Questionnaire proposed to Mr R. Hamilton’, 10 November 1820.

¹⁰⁹ IRO, ‘Wills’ 1823, Vol. 103, p.111.

An examination of the inventories of fourteen Jamaica sojourners in this study that actually made it back to Scotland between 1794 and 1857 reveals their total moveable property on death was over £75,000 (avg. of just over £5300). Sometimes the fortunes of the returned Scottish sojourners were vast and were reported in the local press, as in the case of Dr James Black who was worth over £18,000 when he died in 1835.¹¹⁰ George William Hamilton managed to return home a wealthy man. On emancipation in 1834, he was a large scale claimant of compensation collecting over £11,500.¹¹¹ He died in Edinburgh in 1857, leaving a fortune of over £8700 and much of it went to his family including his wife, a free mulatto woman named Martha Hamilton of Spanishtown.¹¹² It is ironic that at least some of the fortune built up over two generations based on the West India trades in Glasgow found its way back to Jamaica. Hamilton is buried in Glasgow Necropolis.

At least two inventories referred to landed estates in Scotland; Taylor Cathcart owned Pitcairnie in Fife and John Robertson of Gartincaber in Perth. Many other individuals owned smaller properties in urban areas such as William Dobbie who owned Newbank in the Barony, Glasgow.¹¹³ Evidently, a sojourn to Jamaica could lead to wealth and property holding in Scotland although for many – perhaps even most - this represented an unachievable dream. This was a risky business and many died penniless on the island or others died before they managed to convert West India capital to profit and property in Scotland. These might be deemed as failed sojourners although this chapter has traced post-mortem systems of property transmission that has been disregarded in previous work. Was this accumulation of wealth possible in smaller islands in the Caribbean?

Grenada and Carriacou

France formally ceded Grenada to Great Britain after the Treaty of Paris ended the Seven Years War in 1763. Previously a minor colony, Grenada eventually became the third most important sugar colony in the British West Indies. The perception of riches attracted Scots adventurers and, according to Hamilton, up to 9,000 sojourned to the Windward Islands by 1800.¹¹⁴ A British land grab followed in Grenada and, by 1772, fifty-four Scots owned almost half the sugar and cotton producing land.¹¹⁵ The French recaptured Grenada in 1779

¹¹⁰ 'Dr James Black's Will', *The Reformers Gazette*, 28 February 1835.

¹¹¹ 'George William Hamilton', *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, Available: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/14412> Accessed: 23 May 2014.

¹¹² NRS, SC70/4/58, 'Deed of Settlement of George William Hamilton', 12 June 1858, pp.362-399; SC70/1/99, 'Add. Inventory', 14 December 1858, p.367.

¹¹³ GCA, TD440, 'Dobbie family of Glasgow papers'.

¹¹⁴ Hamilton, 'Patronage and Profit', p. 37.

¹¹⁵ Devine, 'Did Slavery Make Scotia Great?', p. 54.

although it was returned to Britain four years later under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. Although there are some case studies of merchant firms, there has been less focus on Scots and the repatriation of capital from Grenada in the nineteenth century. This chapter will offer a new approach.

The *Glasgow Herald* shipping advertisements suggest Grenada was the fifth most popular destination for the Clyde fleet during the period 1806-1834 (see Appendix 3). The principal destination was the capital St George's, although ships usually made landfall on Carriacou reflecting the large Scottish presence on the small cotton island thirty miles north of the larger colony. On reaching the port of St George's, the Scots would have entered into almost familiar surroundings. The warehouses at Carenage – some occupied by Glasgow merchants - were a short walk from the adjoining town which sat on a rocky peninsula. Fort George, which housed the island military, was on the isthmus overlooking the natural harbour.¹¹⁶ Perhaps indicative of the elevated status of Scots on the island, St Andrews Kirk – established by Scots with full masonic honours in November 1831 - occupied a prominent spot next to the fort.¹¹⁷

The merchant firms of John Campbell, senior, & Co. and Leitch & Smith controlled over 95 percent of the advertised voyages between Glasgow and Grenada during the period 1806 to 1834, perhaps indicating they dominated trade and the transportation of sojourners.¹¹⁸ The *Glasgow Herald* advertisements further suggest there were no more than 1000 sojourners travelling to Grenada during this period (see Appendix 4). Whilst these figures seem slight compared to the flow to Jamaica, this must have added to an already powerful Caledonian presence on a smaller island. In 1788, the white population on Grenada was just under 1000 which by 1829 had declined to around 800 - the majority of whom were males. By contrast, the enslaved population was over 23,000 in the same year. The main residence of the white population was in the capital of St George's, the commercial trade hub. There were just fifty white males on Carriacou in 1829.¹¹⁹

Contemporary surveys of Carriacou suggest the Scottish presence was disproportionately powerful amongst an even smaller community. Walter Fenner surveyed the island in the immediate aftermath of Grenada's return to British rule in 1783. The map suggests that whilst there was still a significant French presence, Scots such as John Urquhart and William Todd owned four of the top five plantations on the island including

¹¹⁶ J.E. Alexander, *Transatlantic Sketches*, (Philadelphia: Key & Biddle, 1833), p.139.

¹¹⁷ 'Masonic Ceremony', *Grenada Free Press and Public Gazette*, 30 November 1831.

¹¹⁸ Both firms were amongst the top five merchant firms in Glasgow in terms of numbers of voyages to the West Indies in this period.

¹¹⁹ R. Montgomery Martin, *The British Colonial Library, comprising a Popular and Authentic Description of all the Colonies of the British Empire*, (London: Henry Bohn, 1844), pp.267-268.

the largest sugar and cotton estates. Indeed, they dominated production of both commodities, particularly the latter; just fifteen Scots (26% of proprietors) controlled over 2800 acres of cotton producing land (c. 42% of the overall total on the island).¹²⁰

Evidently, Scots were widespread across both islands.

This study has identified will and probate data of twenty one individuals resident on Grenada and Carriacou during the period 1775-1838. Identifying a sample of Scots on these islands proved more difficult than for Jamaica and this section relies almost exclusively on will and probate records of individuals contained in Dobson's directory *Scottish-American Wills, 1650-1900*. As in the case of Jamaica, merchants and planters were the most common occupation, and although the data is extremely limited for Grenada, the evidence suggests that the former occupation also left the most wealth (see Appendix 6).

One example demonstrates that young Scots could make their way up the plantation hierarchy with the right connections. Jamie Buchanan was the son of a farrier near the Trongate at Glasgow.¹²¹ Moses Steven and James Buchanan (no relation), both partners in the firm Dennistoun, Buchanan & Co., had their horses shod at this blacksmith, thus introducing the younger son to the colonial elite of Glasgow. In 1800, young Jamie expressed a wish to travel to the West Indies and took with him a letter of recommendation to George Wilson, partner of the firm in Grenada:

Sir, by the 'Louisa', a young man goes to you, as an assistant. He is...clever; but it is a doubt whether he is to turn well or ill out. Mr Stiven is of the opinion that this namesake of mine will cut no ordinary figure in the world. He thinks he will either be the cleverest fellow, or the greatest blackguard in the West Indies; but take no notice, he is neither the one nor the other at present.

In actual events, Jamie Buchanan turned out to be a very successful merchant. After an apprenticeship in Grenada, he became the firm's managing director in Jamaica and Rio De Janeiro. When he died in 1857, he was worth well over £30,000 – perhaps even double that amount - some of which was invested in Glasgow, England and America. He left significant bequests to public institutions in Glasgow; the Merchants House, the Trades House and the Royal Infirmary.¹²² Planters could also accumulate large scale capital.

¹²⁰ The British Library (hereafter BL), Walter Fenner, *A New and Accurate Map of the Island of Carriacou in the West Indies 1784* (London, 1784). With thanks to John Angus Martin of Grenada Museum for this map and associated notes.

¹²¹ *Jones's Directory*, 1790-91, p.8.

¹²² George Crawford, *A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Trades' House of Glasgow*, (Glasgow: Bell & Bain, 1858), pp.265-269; see also NRS SC70/1/98, 'Inventory of James Buchanan', 10 July 1858, pp.82-101.

A typical example is John Brander – whose family were from Aberdeen - who owned the 101 acre cocoa and coffee estate named Cottage (formerly known by the name of Morne Francais) located in St John in the northeast of the island.¹²³ He left an inventory of over £3000 sterling, the majority of which was held in ‘negroes and cattle’ on his estate. Brander was another who ensured his mulatto children’s future in the colonies by leaving them his estate and resident slaves whilst remitting wealth home to Scotland. It was common for Scots planters in Grenada to have commercial dealings with Glasgow merchant firms and Brander had over £700 sterling in account current with John Campbell, senior, & Co.¹²⁴

The wealth generating activities of a co-partner of this firm, Thomas Campbell, have been traced in the last chapter including how his West India property passed to his brother on death. Other members of the Campbell family were able to acquire large scale capital and remit it home. Another relation of the family, James Campbell, was in Grenada and eventually Tobago before he died in 1810. John Campbell, senior, & Co. had ‘acted as Bankers for the deceased on account current’ which totalled over £3700.¹²⁵ In this way, the West India merchants of Glasgow operated as financiers which allowed Scottish sojourners to remit their profits home.

However, it was not only elite merchants and planters who managed to acquire wealth. Like Jamaica and all other plantation economies, the estates required skilled tradesmen who could accumulate great wealth. John Chapman, a sojourner from Banffshire, died at sea on the way from Grenada to Scotland in August 1825. He left an inventory of over £1100, the majority of which (£895) ‘had been remitted home at different times’ and ‘directed to be applied...for the support of his mother’ in Banff.¹²⁶ This vast sum represents over thirty five years of wages of a carpenter in Glasgow in 1819.¹²⁷ Evidently, large scale capital was available to merchants and planters in the West Indies although even tradesmen could acquire relatively high earnings which might be repatriated to Scotland.

Conclusion

The elite West India merchants and planters of Glasgow connected the Scottish ‘plantocracy’ class with the West Indies through transatlantic commercial exchanges. At

¹²³ Gavin Smith, *Reference to the plan of the Island of Grenada*, (London, 1882), p.5.

¹²⁴ NRS, CC8/11/3, ‘Testament Testor of John Brander’, 16 June 1807, pp.291-302.

¹²⁵ NRS, SC70/1/3, ‘Inventory of James Campbell’, 30 November 1810, p.253.

¹²⁶ NRS, SC70/1/34, ‘Inventory of John Chapman’, 3 May 1826, p.787.

¹²⁷ The annual wage of joiners and house carpenters in Glasgow was around £24 per annum. See Cleland, *Statistical Tables Relative to the City of Glasgow*, p.132.

the same time, thousands of workers and professionals departed from the Clyde to the plantation economies in search of fortune. It has been estimated that between 1750 and 1799, around 17,000 Scottish sojourners travelled to the West Indies. The data here suggests that around 12,000 departed on the Clyde-Caribbean fleet in the period 1806-1834. Taken with previous estimates, it is possible around 29,000 individuals departed for the Caribbean during the period 1750-99 and 1806-34.

This chapter concludes with a tentative estimate of wealth returning to Scotland from the West Indies via sojourners. The sixty-six identified inventories of Scots in this study totalled just over £500,000, an average of £7596 per sojourner. If only 20 per cent of the estimated 29,000 that departed from Scotland were similarly successful and managed to remit their profits home in life or after death, the value would be over £44million - more than double the compensation money paid to all British slave-owners on emancipation in 1834. By means of comparison - as will be demonstrated in seven - sixty eight subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association left a total of just over £2.7million on their death between 1807 and 1890.

The main point here is that whilst a comparatively few West India merchants accrued larger personal fortunes in Glasgow, the sojourners who left from Scotland were much larger in number. It therefore seems plausible to conclude that Caribbean sojourners could also have had a significant impact on the economic development of the nation – particularly after 1800. There are various reasons for their success. It was more achievable for a transient class of workers to study commercial education and secure passage to the Caribbean than it was to take up a mercantile career in Glasgow. Whilst merchants and planters accumulated large scale wealth, skilled working men - such as the carpenter who sent home almost a full career's earnings to his mother - also earned relative fortunes. The extent and impact of this private wealth remains largely unknown but it is clear any future quantitative study must consider the nuances of inheritance patterns. Some of the wealth remained in the West Indies with formerly enslaved families. However, with the assistance of executors, sometimes West India merchants, this wealth also found its way to Scotland. The *mentalité* of these sojourners - as well as instructions after death and remittance process - has been traced.

The evidence suggests that the sixty-six individuals examined in this study hailed from regions across Scotland. Of the fifty nine known family residences of the sojourners, only eleven were from Glasgow (See Appendix 7). This evidence is broadly consistent with analysis of the sample used by Douglas Hamilton which also suggested more

individuals hailed from areas outside Glasgow.¹²⁸ Together, this evidence points towards the irresistible conclusion that the economic impact of Caribbean sojourning was not confined to the Atlantic hub of Glasgow; many successful sojourners sought to repatriate their capital home which in most cases was to less developed regions across Scotland. This thesis has traced a distinctive Scottish operation in the West Indies. How did the powerful ‘West India interest’ of Glasgow advance their position at home?

¹²⁸ Hamilton, ‘Patronage and Profit’, p.39.

Chapter 5. The social and political networks of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’

At an ‘elegant dinner’ hosted by the Glasgow West India Association in the Tontine Inn on 11 September 1822, an influential group of merchants, planters, lawyers and politicians gathered to celebrate an important lobbying victory in the British Parliament.¹ The feast was held in honour of the Tory MP for Glasgow, Archibald Campbell of Blythswood, who had presented petitions from the Association in the period leading up to the passing of The West Indian and American Trade Bill on 24 June that year. Turtle was the order of the day at such banquets, followed by the famous ‘Glasgow punch’ which consisted of Jamaica and Leeward Island rum, sugar, lemon and lime. After a dinner of calipee and calipash, one can imagine the Chairman of the Association, James Ewing, thanking the secretary Colin Dunlop Donald followed by congratulations to Blythswood and a hearty toast of rum punch. The assembled group epitomised the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ and the networks that connected Caribbean commerce with Scots law and British politics.

This chapter will examine the range and nature of these networks in the period 1776 to 1838. Firstly, the chapter will identify the city’s social clubs and the associational culture which reinforced commercial, industrial and political connections. Secondly, the development of focused West India commercial bodies will be traced as well as the formation and activities of the elite Glasgow West India Association after 1807. Lobbying by the Association at both regional and national levels will be explored through specific examples, in particular the campaign to be awarded compensation when Caribbean slavery ended. This chapter will also offer a new perspective outlining the activities and influence of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ in regional politics by assessing the members’ reciprocal relationship with local politicians during the years up to the Reform Act.

There is a well-established historiography regarding the role and influence of the ‘West India interest’ before 1834, although this has been approached mainly from a London-centric perspective. In 1928, Lilian Penson used the term ‘West India interest’ to denote an influential group of traders in the capital.² In *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams developed this concept and argued that by 1780 absentee planters and merchants had joined forces. By employing colonial agents and purchasing votes and parliamentary seats in rotten boroughs, they developed a powerful ‘West India interest’ in England.³ B.W. Higman later mapped the political landscape to identify the MP’s who constituted this lobbying group in Westminster. Drawing on an earlier definition by Sir Lewis Namier,

¹ ‘Wednesday’, *Glasgow Herald*, 13 September 1822.

² L.M. Penson, ‘The London West India Interest in the Eighteenth Century’, *English Historical Review*, XXXVI, (1921), pp.373-392.

³ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Billing and Sons, 1981 edn.), pp.85-92.

Higman identified three levels of parliamentary support. The 'inner ring' was composed of MP's who had been born in the West Indies and had been members of the West India Assembly or Council, whilst the 'outer ring' was comprised of absentee planters and merchants who were returned as MPs. Although Higman's classic study focused on these two levels, he also acknowledged parliamentary support could come from a wider group of sympathetic MPs, such as colonial agents, friends and relatives of merchants as well as naval and military officers who had served in West India campaigns.⁴

Estimates of size of the membership of these 'rings' of support have varied. Namier's narrow definition of the 'inner ring' identified thirteen MPs in the House of Commons in 1761,⁵ whilst Richard Sheridan stated that seventy West Indians constituted the 'outer ring' during the period 1730-1775.⁶ More recently, Andrew J. O'Shaughnessy examined the commercial lobby during the American Revolutionary period and suggested that there may have been forty to fifty 'outer ring' MPs supporting the interest in the unreformed House of Commons in any one session, which he suggests gave them more influence than the National Farmers Union which was one of the 'largest modern day lobbies'.⁷ Recent studies focused on the awards of compensation for slaves have redefined the strength of the 'interest' in Parliament in terms of political lobbying during the 1820s and 1830s.⁸ In particular, Nicholas Draper substantially revised Higman's figures upwards by identifying over four hundred anti-abolitionist MPs in this period, many of whom were direct recipients of compensation.⁹

Despite being one of the four major Atlantic ports, there has been relatively little detailed examination of the political machinations of the 'Glasgow West India interest'. Using the familiar definition of the 'inner' and 'outer rings', Higman identified only four merchants who were returned as MPs in general elections for Glasgow between 1806 and 1833.¹⁰ However, it is now clear that several other MPs in the Clyde Burghs had

⁴ B.W. Higman, 'The West India 'interest' in Parliament, 1807-1833', *Historical Studies*, 13/49, (1967), pp.1-19.

⁵ Lewis Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, 2nd Edn., (London: MacMillan, 1961), p.235

⁶ Richard Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1974), p.60

⁷ Andrew O'Shaughnessy, 'The Formation of a Commercial Lobby: The West India Interest, British Colonial Policy and the American Revolution', *The Historical Journal*, 40/1, (1997), pp.72-74.

⁸ Kathleen Mary Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation: Jamaica & Barbados, 1823-1843*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp.1-24.

⁹ Although there is no suggestion they always agreed on the same policies or represented a homogenous group at all times, Nicholas Draper outlined that there were 458 'anti-abolitionist' MPs sitting in the House of Commons between 1820 and 1835. Of this figure, 306 individuals claimed slavery compensation and there were others whose family members claimed. This compares with Higman's figures of 165 between 1820 and 1833. See Nicholas Draper, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.279-302; Higman, 'The West India 'interest'', pp.3-4.

¹⁰ Higman, 'The West India 'interest' in Parliament', p.3.

connections with the ‘Glasgow-West India interest’ between 1790 and 1832. Moreover, it is also clear that the ‘interest’ attempted to place their own representatives in place and had links with other MPs returned at county level and in other regions. Archibald Campbell of Blythswood, for example, resolutely advanced their position in Parliament throughout the 1820s.

Some studies of Scottish West India groups have recognised the significance and political impact of the ‘interest’. Douglas Hamilton noted over fifteen Scots MPs in 1795 had West India connections, although not all were representing Scottish constituencies. Moreover, he demonstrated their important lobbying successes, notably for Exchequer loans to the ruined merchants and planters of Grenada after the Fedon Rebellion decimated the plantation economy in 1795.¹¹ The influence of the ‘interest’ has been underestimated at both regional and national levels. T.M. Devine argued that unlike the Virginia traders in the earlier period, the West India merchants did not constitute a ‘political hegemony’. Thus, after 1800 the Town Council in Glasgow did not solely represent their views or interests.¹² However, this approach disregarded their involvement at national level. The recent study by Anthony Cooke reinforced Devine’s view that the ‘interest’ were active in local politics but, according to him, were like Dundee textile manufacturers as they remained a localised elite with a modest impact on the national stage’ who were ‘no match’ for the abolitionists, failing to stop the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and emancipation in 1834. However, it was acknowledged that political lobbying paid off with the ‘handsome’ award of £20m compensation on emancipation.¹³ This chapter will offer a re-evaluation of these interpretations.

The associational culture of the ‘Glasgow-West India interest’

Whilst the importance of networks to the success of Scottish adventurers abroad is well known,¹⁴ there has been less focus on their influence at home. Nevertheless, Hamilton noted the importance of clubs in the city and how they facilitated connections between merchants, planters, politicians and local dignitaries although he did this with specific case studies.¹⁵ This chapter will broaden this approach to examine several prominent social clubs and commercial organisations in order to illuminate a powerful West India network.

¹¹ Douglas Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750-1820*, (Manchester, 2005), pp.184-5

¹² T.M. Devine ‘An Eighteenth Century Business Elite: Glasgow-West India merchants, 1750-1815’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 57:1 (1978), pp. 53-54.

¹³ Anthony Cooke, ‘An Elite Revisited: Glasgow West India Merchants, 1783-1877’, *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 32/2 (2012), pp. 138-141.

¹⁴ See chapter four.

¹⁵ Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean*, p.187.

The associational culture of Great Britain during this period was exemplified by gentlemanly social clubs, which were sometimes formed with the intention of ‘improvement’ of members or as a proclamation of national and civic identity or class formation. There was an integrative function in all clubs, however, as they took the form of organised social networks in local society.¹⁶ In Glasgow, many colonial merchants frequented clubs. Virginia merchants led an active ‘enlightened club life’ in literary and political economy societies from the 1740s onwards.¹⁷ The most prominent was the Hodge Podge Club, a literary society that was ostensibly intended to improve political debating skills of members. West India merchants and planters - such as John Orr of Barrowfield - were involved even before 1783. After the American War, however, they represented a sizeable proportion of new members indicating their increasing status as tobacco declined and sugar and cotton rose.¹⁸ Thus, as the Virginia trades and its associational culture faded, the ‘West India interest’ rose to economic and social prominence (see Appendix 8).

According to Strang’s *Glasgow and Its Clubs* (1856), the Pig Club was frequented by the ‘Sugar Aristocracy’ between 1798 until 1807, when it was superseded by the Glasgow West India Association. The membership was limited to twenty at any one time and included luminaries such as John Gordon, Archibald Smith and Henry Glassford. Strang’s account – apparently based on now lost minutes – outlined the ways in which the members socialised, which included games of whist and extravagant dinners which included turtle soup and rum punch.¹⁹ The later establishment of the Western Club in January 1825 further demonstrates the prominent status of the ‘interest’ in local society.²⁰ Members of the club commissioned a mansion (subsequently opened in 1842) to be used for social purposes.²¹ Although invitations were later extended to the landed gentry across the west of Scotland, almost half of the initial members had West India connections in the city.²² Several of the ‘interest’ were on the first committee, including treasurer Colin Dunlop Donald and President, Mungo Nutter Campbell.²³ He was a member of the elite Highland family associated with the firm John Campbell, senior, & Co. The increasing

¹⁶ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁷ T.M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords*, p.9; Andrew Hook, Richard Sher, ‘Introduction: Glasgow and the Enlightenment’ in *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1995), p.5.

¹⁸ Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, p.40; T.F. Donald (ed), *The Hodge Podge Club 1752-1900: Compiled from the Records of the Club*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1900), pp.59-65.

¹⁹ Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, p. 212-9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.469.

²¹ T.F. Donald, *The Western Club, 1825-1925*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1924), p.5; See also Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, p.469.

²² For example, the Duke of Hamilton. See Donald, *The Western Club*, pp.11-15.

²³ Of the seven members of the committee appointed on 31 August 1825, Thomas Campbell and Mungo Campbell had West India connections. Western Club Archive, Glasgow, ‘Managers Minute Book’, 1825-1843.

involvement of Highlanders in the West India trades is also evident from the membership lists of their dedicated social and cultural club.

The Gaelic Club was established in Glasgow in March 1780 and the surviving minutes indicate it was typical of its type during the period.²⁴ However, unlike others, the Gaelic Club was specifically established for Highland émigrés in order to promote the culture and language. All members had to attend the meetings in a ‘tartan short coat...under the penalty of a bottle of rum’.²⁵ This perfectly encapsulates the Highland-Caribbean identity of the club. The only qualification for membership was ability to speak Gaelic, which was the favoured method of conversation at meetings. However, a reconstitution of the club in 1798 relaxed the criteria. According to Strang, membership was subsequently decided on an individual’s status and connections rather than Highland origins. In turn, mercantile luminaries such as Kirkman Finlay joined and the Gaelic Club became ‘a most social and aristocratic brotherhood’.²⁶ Membership of such elite clubs established or reinforced the reputation of members which in turn facilitated commercial opportunities with other merchants or enhanced credit worthiness with the banking fraternity.

The leading influence in the establishment of the Gaelic Club was manufacturer George McIntosh, whilst bankers John Robertson and Archibald Graham of the Thistle Bank also frequented. However, West India merchants Andrew Houston, John Campbell senior and others had been admitted by 1784 and members with Caribbean connections regularly constituted over one third of the membership up to 1835.²⁷ At least ten of Campbell senior’s immediate relations were admitted during this period, including several members of the family West India firm. One cousin, Alexander Campbell of Hallyards, introduced a taste of the Caribbean to proceedings on 11 July 1798 when he ‘very politely provided the Club with a Turtle...upon which the above Gentⁿ feasted like Aldermen!’.²⁸

The Gaelic Club met in a tavern – usually at the Black Bull Inn at 640 Argyle Street – which was sometimes filled with the skirl of the bagpipes and the chatter of Scots newly arrived on ships from the West Indies. Some were full members, such as Gilbert Douglas, an absentee plantation owner who settled in Glasgow around 1794. Around thirty sojourners also attended the Gaelic Club as guests (admitted as ‘strangers’ via

²⁴ Glasgow City Archives, TD746/1, ‘Minute book of the Glasgow Gaelic Club, Vol.1’, 7 March 1780, 14 April 1817; TD746/2, ‘Minute Book, Vol. 2’, 13 October 1817- 12 December 1867.

²⁵ GCA, TD746/1, ‘Minute book, Vol.1’, 7 June 1787.

²⁶ Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, p.108.

²⁷ Not all members attended all meetings at all times and it has proven difficult to identify full membership, which reached a peak of forty-one in 1800 although it was restricted to thirty in 1805. Individuals with West India connections were prevalent during 1798-1835.

²⁸ GCA, TD746/1, ‘Minute book, Vol.1’, 11 July 1798.

recommendation from existing members) during the period 1800 to 1836. In the minutes, the secretary noted the guests' various residences including Jamaica, Grenada and Trinidad although the principal colonies were Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo. In November 1810, 'Thomas Cuming Esq of Demerara', was unanimously admitted as an honorary club member following recommendation by Alexander Campbell.²⁹ Formerly of Morayshire, Cuming spent fifty years in Demerara – as 'the patriarch and benefactor' of the colony – acquiring several large plantations before leaving for good in 1810.³⁰ Perhaps Cuming, and several others, arrived in Port Glasgow on their way home and made a point of visiting fellow Highlanders at the Gaelic Club to discuss commercial business and the prosperity of kith and kin in the colonies. Another sojourner, James MacQueen, came to Glasgow that year although he made the city his long term home. He was later a leading propagandist of the 'West India interest', a relationship that developed in a club that acted as a conduit of mercantile information.

The Post Office Club was formed around 1810, the year MacQueen arrived home from Grenada. The club met in a tavern in a close directly facing the Tontine Rooms, the home of the sugar trade in Glasgow. MacQueen was said to be employed to read aloud newspapers of the day which promoted discussion amongst members eager to hear the commercial gossip, like the progress of merchant and manufacturing firms. It is unknown how many attendees of the Post Office Club had West India connections, although it was likely a high proportion given many were 'notable merchants' and several junior associates were later reckoned to be 'merchant princes'.³¹ Whilst such clubs demonstrate how some members of the 'Glasgow West India interest' mixed in high society, the networks also facilitated the dissemination of colonial and commercial information and allowed fraternisation with financial and political elites – especially in the pre-eminent club of Glasgow.

The Board of Green Cloth was frequented by the 'Burgher aristocracy' in the city.³² Established c.1780, the Board met at Buckshead Inn on Argyle Street between October and May. The reprinted minutes describe the activities of an elite whist and supper club in the period; membership was limited to eighteen and admission was decided by ballot although candidates for admission could be vetoed by any current member. Meetings were held every Tuesday, where the members bet bottles of rum on, for example, the marriages and

²⁹ GCA, TD746/1, 'Minute book, Vol.1', 12 November 1810,

³⁰ *The Essequibo and Demerary Royal Gazette*, 15 June 1813

³¹ Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, pp.361-369.

³² 'The Burgher Aristocracy' was a small, exclusive clique made up from landed interests who dominated commerce and politics in Glasgow. See Richard H. Trainor, 'The Elite' in *Glasgow, vol. 2: 1830-1912*, ed. by W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996), p.232.

pregnancies of local gentry wives and daughters.³³ The secretary, Colin Dunlop Donald, attended regularly³⁴ and he was a conduit of information across the network given his concurrent membership in other clubs and the Glasgow West India Association.³⁵ Furthermore, the Board was frequented by a group of influential individuals connected through a high degree of kinship and commercial interests. A diverse range of professionals were amongst the sixty eight attendees between c.1780 and 1820, such as David Cross of the Thistle Bank. This encouraged fraternisation with transatlantic entrepreneurs - especially the 'West India interest' - who represented the largest commercial group. At least twenty two members of the Board of Green Cloth had West India connections (32% of total membership), including individuals associated with thirteen elite merchant firms.

The members and associates of the Board of Green Cloth perfectly illustrate how social clubs facilitated a wider network that connected the banks, counting houses and manufactories of Glasgow with the plantations in the West Indies and the Houses of Parliament in London. Five Members of Parliament with connections to the 'interest' patronised the club and four in particular maintained professional relations with the Association after 1807. As MP for Clyde Burghs, William McDowall was as one of the most important men in Scottish politics in the 1790s. Kirkman Finlay was Lord Provost of Glasgow (1812-14) and MP for Glasgow Burghs (1812-18). Henry Monteith was Lord Provost of Glasgow (1814-16, 1818-20) and MP for Saltash (1826) and Linlithgow Burghs (1820-1826, 1830-31). Monteith has been described as 'a staunch church and king Tory',³⁶ which perhaps initiated and surely reinforced the political alliance with his patron, Blythswood. Another member of the Board of Green Cloth was John Buchanan of Ardoch, MP for Dunbartonshire (1821-1826), father in law of Robert Findlay junior (1784-1862), a member of the Association.³⁷ However, Sir Archibald Campbell of Blythswood was at the centre of the political network and it is evident that Campbell, Monteith and Buchanan were close friends which facilitated political patronage. The three associates subsequently

³³ Colin Dunlop Donald, *Minute Book of the Board of Green Cloth, 1809-1820*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1891).pp.10-13.

³⁴ Colin Dunlop Donald attended least 199 meetings between January 1812 and May 1820. However, the Board was only active from October until May and if compared against these periods only, Dunlop Donald attended an average of around seven meetings every two months.

³⁵ Dunlop Donald was a member of the Hodge Podge, the secretary of the Board of Green Cloth, the treasurer of the Western Club in 1825 and secretary/ treasurer of the Association.

³⁶ David R. Fisher, 'Henry Monteith (?1764-1848), of Westbank, Renfrew Road, Glasgow and Carstairs House, Lanark' in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1820-1832*, vol. 4, ed. by D.R. Fisher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.421-422.

³⁷ David R. Fisher, 'John Buchanan (1761-1839), of Ardoch and Balloch Castle, Dunbarton', in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1820-1832*, vol. 6, ed. by D.R. Fisher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.400-401.

provided the Association with varying levels of support which will be examined in turn. These informal social clubs were also complemented by the development of focused commercial organisations.

In January 1783, the Chamber of Commerce was established to improve the various 'branches of trade and manufactures'. The initial membership was dominated by merchants who hailed from the west of Scotland, especially Glasgow. Members immediately voted in thirty directors (of whom twelve represented a quorum) entrusted with 'executive power'.³⁸ There has been no comprehensive analysis of the West India interests and connections of members of the Chamber of Commerce when it was established in 1783 although it is unlikely they comprised more than a powerful minority.³⁹ Indeed, whilst they were disproportionately represented amongst Directors, and Patrick Colquhoun was the first Chairman, members of the 'interest' did not comprise a decision making executive in 1783. In spite of the decline in overall membership and thus the size of the Chamber of Commerce over the ensuing quarter-century, the minority West India membership remained remarkably constant (see Appendix 9 and 10). Unsurprisingly, the Chamber continued to support colonial business deemed beneficial to the city.

Almost immediately after it was established, the Chamber petitioned the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury on West India matters including duties on sugar and tobacco.⁴⁰ Other mercantile lobbying groups established contact with the Glasgow Chamber and the Chairman Patrick Colquhoun became the conduit of information between the organisation and West India merchants in London and Glasgow.⁴¹ This evolved into collaboration with the London 'West India interest',⁴² as well as in Bristol, Whitehaven and Liverpool.⁴³ In the later period, Glasgow's Chamber of Commerce petitioned the King (via the MP for Glasgow Burghs, William McDowall) in an effort to protect the Free Port trade in the British Colonies with the Spanish West India traders,⁴⁴ especially as this trade

³⁸ Glasgow City Archives (hereafter GCA), TD1670/1/1, 'Minutes of the Chamber of Commerce', vol.1, p.2.

³⁹ Henry Hamilton underestimated the West India position in the establishment of the Chamber in 1783 although he analysed policy on foreign trade, see Henry Hamilton, *An Economic History of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p.271-8; Henry Hamilton, 'The Founding of Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, 1783', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 1/1, (March 1954), pp.33-48; A more recent article suggested 'merchants' dominated proceedings although there was no differentiation between types of merchants or colonial focus. See Cooke, 'An Elite Revisited', p.139;

⁴⁰ GCA, TD1670/4/15, 'Memorial of the merchants of Glasgow', 7 March 1783.

⁴¹ GCA, TD1670/1/1, 8 April 1783, p.18.

⁴² Afterwards the London Committee of West India Planters and Merchants asked for support regarding a petition to Parliament requesting free trade between the sugar colonies and North America. See GCA, TD1670/4/20, 'Petition from the West-India Planters and Merchants of London', 12 June 1784.

⁴³ Gilbert Hamilton also contacted the Merchants Hall in Bristol and the Chambers' of Commerce in Liverpool and Whitehaven requesting assistance in a petition intended to reduce duties on sugar and tobacco. See GCA, TD1670/4/15.

⁴⁴ GCA, TD1670/1/2, 'Petition to his Majesty on the Spanish West India trade', 15 May 1801, p.285.

stimulated linen exports from Perth, Arbroath, Montrose and Dundee.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, and consistent with their minority membership, West India business in the proceedings of the Chamber between 1783 and 1807 was subordinate not only to resolutions concerning tobacco, but also those related to the linen and cotton trade.

The establishment of the Chamber might be viewed in the context of Eric Williams' argument that the rise of free trade and industrial capitalism eventually destroyed orthodox mercantilism and what he referred to as the 'West Indian monopoly'. Mercantilism and the Navigation Acts created a mutual trade monopoly between Great Britain and her West India colonies. Thus, merchants from foreign nations such as France, Spain (and America post 1783) were barred from the British colonies and African slaves and European goods had to travel via British ports and shipping. This created a huge, regulated export market which encouraged national industry through the export of manufactured goods such as clothing to colonists. In return, West India merchants enjoyed a monopoly over the domestic sugar market with significantly lower rates of duty than East India competitors. According to Williams, this monopoly put West India merchants, planters and ship-owners in direct conflict with not only East India merchants but also British manufacturers after 1783. As 'the new industrial order' sought to develop Smithian free trade with Brazil and America, planters resident in the West Indies increasingly invoked their trade monopoly.⁴⁶

Rising to prominence after 1790 the 'Glasgow West India interest' were therefore only one of several trade factions active during the city's golden age of sugar, a period in which industrial capitalism was developing into the most important and influential sector of the Scottish economy. Evidently, the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce was dominated by individuals with contrasting commercial ethos. On the one hand, the 'West India interest' sought to protect their right to export and import goods in a regulated market, whilst the manufacturers (such as Kirkman Finlay after 1816) sought to expand free trade with developing countries. However, during the early years, the Chamber not only petitioned in support of West India interests but refused as an institution to condemn the economic system based on forced migration and expropriated labour. After requests from London in 1788 to take a 'decisive resolution' in support for the movement for the abolition of the slave trade, the Chamber refrained which was unsurprising since John Gordon of West India merchant firm Stirling, Gordon & Co was appointed to the Committee to investigate the matter. Instead, the Chamber acknowledged that individual

⁴⁵ GCA, TD1670/4/94, 'Letter from Mr Faulkener', 9 June 1801.

⁴⁶ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, pp.55-57, pp.126-7.

members should 'take such part in the question as to each for himself shall seem proper'.⁴⁷ Thus, the Chamber refrained from supporting the abolition movement and the non-committal outlines the influence of pro-slavery members. The Glasgow Chamber of Commerce support for West India vested interests adds weight to recent historians' suggestion that Williams exaggerated the extent of supposedly conspiratorial unity amongst capitalists whom he believed staged a concerted attack on slavery and Parliamentary protection of the West India trade.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, there was a clear commercial dichotomy between these trade factions and in order to represent their own agenda the 'West India interest' established at least two commercial bodies in Glasgow.

Formed before October 1780, the West India Club was a commercial interest group with a well-established organisational structure, including officers such as Chairman, President and Secretary. The leading influences were Robert Houston, John Riddell, John Gordon, as well as Alexander Houston, John Campbell senior, Robert Mackay and Robert Dunmore.⁴⁹ In October 1780, Secretary, Thomas Whytelaw, published 'rules of bargaining...By order of the Preses of the W.I.C.', in order to prevent disputes over sugar and rum, especially those related to the precise time when 'risque devolves upon the purchaser'.⁵⁰ Evidently, members of the 'West India interest' exerted influence at local level prior to the establishment of the Chamber of Commerce. In March 1781, prominent members of the West India Club petitioned the Town Council for permission to construct a base in the Tontine Rooms, the commercial headquarters of the city.⁵¹ A coffee house, sugar sample rooms and a broker's office were later built which became the home of the sugar trade. Whilst they were active at local level, they also lobbied on national matters. In 1778, the Houstons were at the forefront of West India affairs in Glasgow. In an effort to maintain the demand for produce imported into Scotland (a variation of the entrepot trade in tobacco), the Houstons lobbied Richard Neave and the Committee of West India merchants in London demanding support for a joint stance against the direct export of sugar to Ireland from the Caribbean.⁵² The minutes of the Chamber of Commerce in

⁴⁷ GCA, TD1670/1/1, 'Minutes of the Chamber of Commerce, Vol.I.', 14 October 1788, p.307.

⁴⁸ Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman, 'British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams: An Introduction', in Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman, (eds) *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.15

⁴⁹ *Reprint of Jones's Directory for the Year 1787*, (Glasgow, 1868), p. 6; *Jones's Directory for the Year 1789* (Glasgow, 1789), p. 69; *Jones's Directory, for the Year 1790 and 1791*, (Glasgow, 1791), p.69.

⁵⁰ *Glasgow Mercury*, 19 October 1780, quoted in Senex, 'Loose Memoranda on Glasgow Subjects' *Glasgow Herald*, 15 August 1855.

⁵¹ The petition was signed by 'Robert Dunmore, Robert McKay, Alexander Gordon and other merchants', See GCA, C1/1/36/458, 'Petition of West India merchants', 17 January 1781.

⁵² National Library of Scotland, MS 8795, 'Letterbook of Alexander Houston & Co.' 18 March 1778, pp.320-2.

Glasgow in this period also outline collusion with the West India Club on customs⁵³ and it may be they operated in conjunction to advance mutual interests such as grain exports.⁵⁴ However, by 1807, it was recognised the existing arrangements for West India matters were inadequate as:

Much inconveniences having been felt and much injury sustained by the want of mutual co-operation in matters affecting the General Interests of the [West India] trade, it was an object of great importance that the different Planters and Merchants...should form themselves into a Public Association.⁵⁵

And the most pressing matter that had affected the West India trades leading up to 1807 was the abolition of the slave trade.

The Glasgow West India Association

The Slave Trade Act of 1807 – which abolished the maritime trade in slaves - was the result of a twenty year campaign by individuals across Great Britain, including Scots. For example, fifteen percent of the petitions to the House of Commons protesting against the slave trade in 1792 were from Scotland. Iain Whyte has also noted that prominent abolitionist William Dickson was assured there would be no counter-petitioning from Scotland in support of the trade in 1792, which Whyte attributes to the lack of a formal West India Association in Glasgow.⁵⁶ However, a ‘Petition against the Abolition of the Slave Trade’ was received in the House of Commons on 25 April 1789 and although individuals were not named, it was addressed from the ‘Proprietors of Estates in West India Islands, and Merchants trading to the West Indies, residing in the City of Glasgow’.⁵⁷ At least one of the parties was the firm John Campbell, senior, & Co. who charged their correspondent William Urquhart the small sum of five shillings as his ‘proportion of expences defending African Slave Trade’ in June 1789.⁵⁸ Thus, a loosely associated group merchants and planters sought to protect their vested interests. The later failure to prevent abolition in 1807 was surely one of the ‘inconveniences’ that prompted the establishment of a powerful lobbying group which provided greater protection for their shared interests.

⁵³ GCA, TD1670/1/1, ‘Memorial for the sugar merchants referred to the West India Club’, 25 May 1784, p.62.

⁵⁴ The British Library, Add MSS 38393- Liverpool Papers Vol. CCIV, f.306, p.153, ‘Minutes of the Committee of Trade 1791- 1792’.

⁵⁵ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the Glasgow West India Association (GWIA)’, pp.1b-2.

⁵⁶ Iain Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery, 1756-1838*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp.84-5.

⁵⁷ Parliamentary Papers (hereafter PP), Journal of the House of Commons (44), 4 December 1788 - 11 August 1789, p.294.

⁵⁸ National Register of Archives in Scotland (NRAS), 2570/120 ‘Account Sales’, June 1789.

The Glasgow West India Association (the 'Association') was established at a meeting held in the Tontine Inn on the 22nd October 1807.⁵⁹ Within walking distance of the counting houses, the Tontine was a 'great mart of commerce' frequented by colonial merchants.⁶⁰ From 1781, it had served as the home of the West India Club and sugar was sampled, bought and sold in the broker's office at the back of the building. Thus, the creation of the Association in 1807 built on long standing activities and formalised previous networks into a powerful lobbying group.⁶¹ The Association met quarterly on the first Thursday of the month, with a new committee decided annually at a general meeting.⁶² By 1809, twenty nine of the major Glasgow-West India firms and sixty three individuals subscribed annually, raising a 'pecuniary fund' of over £1000.⁶⁴ An occupational breakdown of the Glasgow West India Association outlines the commercial diversity of members. This was mainly a mercantile lobbying body: the majority of subscribers were partners in West India merchant firms, some of whom who had control of or shares in plantations. The subscribers had concerns across the Caribbean mainly in Jamaica, Trinidad, Demerara and Grenada. Thus, policy in Glasgow was controlled by merchants with commercial interests across a broad geographical region, in contrast to the London Association which was dominated by absentee Jamaica planters and merchants.⁶⁵

The prominent status of Caribbean merchants and planters in the city was increasingly uncertain by 1807, as new industries and trade created ever greater economic diversification. Recent research has indicated that at least sixteen West India merchants (including the secretary and first five directors of the Association) were involved with the establishment of the Glasgow East India Association (GEIA) in 1812. At this point the commercial relationship in Glasgow was courteous, exemplified by a statement from the GEIA (including Kirkman Finlay) stressing they did not wish to harm West India commerce.⁶⁶ Glasgow's East India and West India Associations adopted similar lobbying strategies. However, although many Glasgow-West India merchants diversified into the East Indies, it is unlikely there was widespread West India involvement in the East Indies

⁵⁹ Some studies have examined specific aspects of their activities such as Iain Whyte who assessed the Association's pro-slavery activities from 1823 in *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery*, pp.165-68.

⁶⁰ Peter Mackenzie *Old Reminiscences of Glasgow, Vol. II*, (Glasgow: James Forrester, 1890), pp.532-3.

⁶¹ In addition to the four MPs who maintained relations, a further nine merchants and planters and Colin Dunlop Donald were members of both the Association and the Board of Green Cloth. Thus, around 15% of initial membership of the Association were also involved with the Board. In addition, six of the 23 (26%) members of the West India Club were members of the Association.

⁶² The first five Directors were John Gordon (also Chairman), Robert Dennistoun, Francis Garden, Alexander Campbell of Hallyards and Robert Bogle junior. James Ewing was the first secretary.

⁶⁴ GCA, TD1683/1/1, 'Abstract of GWIA', pp.1-8.

⁶⁵ David Beck Ryden, *West Indian Slavery and British Abolition, 1783-1807*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.46.

⁶⁶ Yukihiisa Kumagai, *Breaking into the Monopoly: Provincial Merchants and Manufacturers' Campaigns for Access to the Asian Market, 1790-1833*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p.44.

up to 1830.⁶⁷ Instead, with their position under threat, the Association focused their efforts on protecting investments by mounting a sophisticated offensive to protect the West India monopoly. This involved collaboration with the ‘West India interest’ across Great Britain and commercial organisations in Glasgow, whilst public opinion was shaped by colonial agents and the publication of journals and articles in newspapers. More importantly, the Association influenced Parliamentary business through direct petitioning, sympathetic MPs and expert witnesses thus influencing opinion at both regional and national level.

Lobbying Parliament to alleviate ‘West India distress’

The economic strength of the ‘West India interest’ in 1807 was threatened by the declining profitability of sugar. In the aftermath of the St Domingue uprising and the subsequent decline of French competition in the international market, sugar prices had boomed during the 1790s. After 1795 however, an increase in production and the resulting decline in profits affected both merchants in the metropolis and planters in the colonies.⁶⁸ Indeed, prices in Glasgow remained low in 1806 because the market had been saturated by low quality sugars from Otaheitan cane, which had been recently introduced into the colonies.⁶⁹ The Association was therefore formed in an era of perceived economic distress and their early minutes outline a strategy to address various, related issues. Parliamentary business and ‘the progress of bills’ was cited as a principal consideration and an eight-point manifesto sought to influence commerce, shipping and customs, including duties on imports and drawbacks, which was the reimbursement of duties if imports were subsequently re-exported. The long established strategy of mutual co-operation within a wider ‘British West India interest’ - previously undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis by the West India Club and the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce - was prioritised by the Association in order to promote ‘the great advantages which would result to all by their associating themselves together for the common good, and the benefit which would naturally arise’.⁷⁰

Thus, from the outset, the Association connected with similar West India organisations across Great Britain. Indeed, requests for co-operation from Liverpool and the ‘West India body’ of London was the ‘first business’ laid before the directors.⁷¹ This built on existing connections and the sustained, long term collaboration suggests B.W. Higman’s interpretation there was no co-operation between the Glasgow West India

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.43, p.82.

⁶⁸ Beck Ryden, *West Indian Slavery*, pp.216-254.

⁶⁹ PP 1806-07 (83) *Report from the Sugar Distillery Committee*, pp.12-14.

⁷⁰ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of GWIA’, pp.1a-3.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.9.

Association and London requires some revision.⁷² Furthermore, correspondence with the West India body in Bristol demonstrates sophisticated collusion with Glasgow over a long period. In some cases petitions destined for Parliament from the Glasgow West India Association were simultaneously sent to Bristol suggesting a desire for collaboration on crucial issues, such as defending the institution of plantation slavery.⁷³ Thus, the mutual co-operation also had an ambitious aim of influencing national politics based on a shared agenda, a policy that was ratified even before the Association was officially established in Glasgow. The initial eight-point manifesto of 1807 granted the Directors authority to appoint agents in Edinburgh and England, whilst the first action of the Association on 22 October was to formally reply to requests from Liverpool and London to assist:

Such measures as may appear to them most advisable and best calculated to impress on the minds of His Majesty's Ministers the distressed state of the West India Colonies and induce them to afford to the present interests therein the most speedy and effectual relief.⁷⁴

There was also collaboration between the Association and the Chamber of Commerce in Glasgow on petitions concerning related matters of trade, a policy that continued intermittently throughout the early nineteenth century.⁷⁵ The Association also petitioned the Admiralty in order to influence international issues such as piracy as well as Glasgow Town Council on regional matters concerning the navigation of the River Clyde and the Broomielaw in March 1809.⁷⁶

The employment of the colonial agent James MacQueen illustrates how the Association used print media for propaganda purposes.⁷⁷ Born in Crawford, Lanarkshire, he had sojourned to Grenada as a young man where he was employed as a plantation overseer. Following his return in 1810, MacQueen was well known in commercial Glasgow due to his role as speaker at the Post Office Club. Moreover, as David Lambert has recently argued, MacQueen's advanced knowledge of bookkeeping and statistics was used effectively to promote West India interests, especially in *Blackwoods Magazine* who

⁷² Higman, 'The West India 'interest'', p.7. This claim was recently repeated by Paula Dumas, 'Defending the Slave Trade and Slavery in Britain in the Era of Abolition, 1783-1833', (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2014), p.49.

⁷³ Bristol Record Office (hereafter BRO), SMV/8/3/4/1/57, 'Glasgow West India Petition to the House of Commons', May 1826.

⁷⁴ GCA, TD1683/1/1, 'Abstract of the GWIA', p.9.

⁷⁵ See for example, GCA, TD1670/1/4, 'Application of the Sugar Merchants', 16 May 1822.

⁷⁶ *Glasgow Herald*, (hereafter GH), 31 March 1809; *The Times*, 18 November 1822; *The Scotsman*, 23 November 1822.

⁷⁷ Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery*, pp.168-173.

employed him to author commercial reports from 1817.⁷⁸ MacQueen was commissioned by the Association around 1823 and as editor of the *Glasgow Courier* during the 1820s, he was particularly vocal in support for slavery. With his practical knowledge, his vested interest and eloquence, MacQueen used the *Glasgow Courier* to launch a series of vitriolic attacks on abolitionists, such as Rev. Dr. Ralph Wardlaw.

Lambert adopted Anna Gambles' term 'Tory Protectionism' to describe MacQueen's outlook on political economy.⁷⁹ According to Gambles, protectionism – including opposition to laissez-faire free trade and political reform - particularly appealed to Conservatives as a 'strategy for economic and social cohesion' as 'it rooted economic stability primarily in trade between domestic and colonial producers'.⁸⁰ MacQueen's staunch defence of the West India monopoly and political views would have particularly appealed to the hierarchy of the Glasgow West India Association for, as will be demonstrated later, many of them shared similar principles. Thus, the 'Glasgow West India interest' and the colonial demagogue MacQueen were at the centre of a pro-slavery network that linked the Atlantic world.⁸¹

At the same time, the Association adopted various measures designed to influence policy at a higher level. Like the Glasgow Association of Master Cotton Spinners who lobbied on behalf of cotton employers, the West India Association of Glasgow relied upon individuals with a vested interest to testify before Parliament.⁸² A case in point is John Blackburn of Killearn who defended the sugar monoculture of Jamaica in expert testimony before a Parliamentary committee in early 1807. He recounted a thirty-two year residence on the island, a period in which he managed about thirty plantations at various times, including Wallens in St Thomas in the Vale. By the time Blackburn gave evidence to the committee in 1807 he had been in Glasgow for three years as an absentee merchant-planter and he was a founder member of the Association. Blackburn's position was clear: the plantation were in a 'very general distress' due to a 'glut of low [quality] sugar' from the Dutch colonies. To remedy this situation, he called for free trade between the West India colonies and America (by then free from British mercantilism) in order to supply the

⁷⁸ David Lambert, *Mastering the Niger: James MacQueen's African Geography and the Struggle over Atlantic Slavery*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp.62-65.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.74-81.

⁸⁰ Anna Gambles, *Protection and Politics: Conservative Economic Discourse, 1815-1852*, (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1999), p.20.

⁸¹ David Lambert, 'The "Glasgow King of Billingsgate": James MacQueen and an Atlantic proslavery network' *Slavery and Abolition* 29 (2008), pp. 389-413.

⁸² Anthony Cooke, *The Rise and Fall of the Scottish Cotton Industry, 1778-1914*, (Manchester, 2010), pp. 189-90.

plantations with provisions.⁸³ Significantly, Blackburn did not plead for British free trade but instead demanded greater freedom for West India planters within the existing mercantilist system which would, they hoped, restore their monopoly to pre-1783 levels.

In 1808, John Blackburn travelled with other Association members James Ewing and Colin McLachlan in an official deputation appointed to reinforce connections with the London West India body and to prevent what they argued would be the ‘downfall [of the] commercial maritime and financial interests of this kingdom’.⁸⁴ Blackburn and McLachlan gave evidence to another Parliamentary Committee examining the distillation of sugar and molasses later that same year. Significantly, they were questioned as experts based on their previous experience as colonial sojourners. McLachlan, a partner in the elite firm George & Robert Dennistoun & Co. testified about his experiences in the Danish West Indies. Blackburn reiterated his previous evidence and called for Government intervention to alleviate the commercial distress of the West India trades, which he stated had been further exacerbated by a decrease in sugar prices.⁸⁵

The Association also monitored Parliamentary activities through commissioned agents in London. In January 1816, the Directors found it ‘necessary to have a person... to attend to the business of the Association there and to give notice of all motions in Parliament relative to the West India affairs’. They appointed Mr John Richardson, solicitor in Westminster, and Kirkman Finlay, MP for Glasgow Burghs, made the necessary arrangements.⁸⁶ Whilst Finlay sometimes assisted the Association he was not a committed ally of the ‘West India interest’ - especially after he championed free trade and shifted commercial focus to the East Indies in 1816. In a public speech of 1830 which referred to his long-term policy as MP, he declared that he operated free of adherence to any administration in Parliament. Furthermore, he did not approve of acting on pledges to potential electors in return for votes.⁸⁷ However undependable Finlay may have been, the ‘West India interest’ of Glasgow had close connections with another MP for the city throughout the 1820s.

West India Commerce, Scots Law and British Politics: *Cordial and efficient co-operation*

Sir Archibald Campbell of Blythswood was crucial to the Association strategy of presenting petitions in the House of Commons. An experienced politician, he was also Rector of the University of Glasgow (1807-1811), MP for the Glasgow Burghs (1806-

⁸³ PP 1807 (65) *Report from the Committee on the Commercial State of the West India Colonies*, pp.40-44.

⁸⁴ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of GWIA’, p.35.

⁸⁵ PP 1808 (178) *Report from the Committee on the Distillation of Sugar and Molasses*, p.23, p.173.

⁸⁶ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the GWIA’, pp.226-7.

⁸⁷ ‘Election for Glasgow Burghs’, *The Scots Times*, 24 August, 1830.

1809) and again (1820-1831), as well as Elgin Burghs (1812) and Perth Burghs (1818-1820).⁸⁸ Almost from the inception of the Association, Campbell lobbied Parliament on their behalf, providing both formal and informal assistance. Significantly, he was a second cousin of Colin Dunlop Donald, who was elected secretary of the Association on 29 May 1810. Near contemporary sources outline the privileged background of Dunlop Donald, who had matriculated at Old College in 1788 before undertaking a legal apprenticeship. Subsequently, he became a Member of the Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow in 1817, as well as Commissary Clerk of the city of Glasgow (1817-1824) and Lanarkshire (1824-1858).

According to Stana Nenadic, the two occupations that promoted rapid wealth accumulation and rising status in Scottish towns during the period was transatlantic commerce and the legal professions.⁸⁹ However, there were significant entry barriers to both and in particular a successful writer required the appropriate connections in order to identify clients.⁹⁰ Dunlop Donald had a ready-made client base of close relations who were elite colonial merchants. In addition to his father and uncle, who were both ‘tobacco lords’, he was related to several prominent West India merchants. He was a nephew of James Dennistoun of Buchanan, Steven & Co, first cousin once removed of John Hamilton of Northpark, and also the second cousin of Robert Houston of Alexander Houston and Co. and Thomas Dunlop Douglas of J.T.A. Douglas & Co. However, Dunlop Donald’s private legal practice dealt mainly with property, and whilst there is little evidence that he was active in commerce, he did undertake West India legal business on behalf of cousins and fellow members of the Board of Green Cloth.⁹¹ Thus, with his background in Scots law, his kinship ties and roles in several prominent clubs, Dunlop Donald was a natural choice to replace James Ewing as secretary of the Association in 1810,⁹² and he later became secretary-treasurer in 1834.⁹³ His role was administrative in nature and included drafting petitions to the King and Parliament.⁹⁴

The previously unexamined diaries of Dunlop Donald, which have remained in the private ownership of his descendants for two hundred years, add a new dimension to the

⁸⁸ Terry Jenkins, ‘Archibald Campbell (c.1763-1838), of Blythswood, Renfrew’, *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1820-1832*, vol. 4, ed. by D.R. Fisher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.524-527.

⁸⁹ Stana Nenadic, ‘The Rise of the Urban Middle Class’, in *People and Society in Scotland, Vol. I, 1760-1830*, ed. T.M. Devine, R. Mitchison, (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1988), p.114.

⁹⁰ Michael Michie, *An Enlightened Tory in Victorian Scotland: The career of Archibald Alison*, (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1997), pp.40-41.

⁹¹ Colon Dunlop Donald claimed over £1800 compensation for slaves on a Jamaican plantation, although this was as executor of the will of the original mortgagee, James Anderson.

⁹² GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the GWIA’ 29 May 1810, p.103.

⁹³ GCA, TD1683/1/2, ‘Minutes of the GWIA’, 22 January 1834, p.38.

⁹⁴ ‘Petition to the King’, *London Gazette*, 27 August 1830.

activities of the Glasgow-West India elite.⁹⁵ The surviving diaries start in 1812 – close to the beginning of his term as secretary – and they reveal that from the end of that year onwards he regularly met socially with politicians and directors of the Association at both the Board of Green Cloth and in their homes.⁹⁶ Crucially, Dunlop Donald was especially close to the director of the Association, John Gordon, one of the ‘central luminaries of the Tory party’ in Glasgow in the period.⁹⁷ Their relationship provides context for later events. Whilst lacking in detailed opinion (and there is only one overt reference to the Association), the diaries represent a unique account of the networking and daily activities of the secretary over forty years. Moreover, by aligning his daily movements between 1812 and 1838 with Association records and placing the narrative in the context of commercial and political events, the meticulously kept diaries illustrate that Donald was part of a wider network that specialised in ‘boroughmongering’ in regional politics as well as political lobbying at national level.

In the spring of 1822, Colin Donald Dunlop undertook official activities for the Association in London, which followed on from a series of meetings in Glasgow concerning ‘West India distress’. Following communication with Associations in London and Liverpool and planters resident in the colonies,⁹⁸ attendees at a meeting on 27 March ‘directed the secretary [Colin Dunlop Donald] to get the petition immediately signed...and...requested the Chairman [James Ewing] to transmit it to London to Mr Campbell of Blythswood to be presented to the House of Commons’.⁹⁹ The resulting deputation for the relief of the West India trade should be viewed in the context of the Colonial trade bill, which received its second reading in the House of Commons in May 1822. ‘The West Indian and American Trade Bill’ was subsequently passed on 24 June, which introduced measures that relaxed the Navigation Acts. This was an extension of the West Indian monopoly as it gave British planters the right to export sugar to Europe and opened up the British West India trades to American merchants. Although the results were less impressive than expected, the measures were greeted by planters at the time as a triumph after forty years of sustained pressure on the Government.¹⁰⁰ The success of the

⁹⁵ Private ownership, ‘Diaries of Colin Dunlop Donald’ (hereafter CDD Diaries).

⁹⁶ The regular social meetings Colin Dunlop Donald had with John Gordon (twenty four in two years) and Alexander Campbell of Hallyards (twelve in two years) suggest relationships that were both professional and personal in scope.

⁹⁷ Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, p.215.

⁹⁸ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the GWIA’, 6 February 1822, pp.387-397.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17 March 1822, p.412.

¹⁰⁰ Lowell Ragatz, *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763-1833*, (New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1928), pp.354-5.

campaign, therefore, symbolised the strength of the transatlantic alliance between the merchants of Great Britain and the planters of the West Indies.

In advance of this landmark legislation, Dunlop Donald left on the coach from Leith to London on Sunday 28 April 1822. He met James Ewing in Marleys Hotel on 4 May, perhaps to hand him the signed petition and to discuss the strategy for meetings with political associates. Dunlop Donald also met with John Buchanan of Ardoch, MP for Dunbartonshire, on three occasions in early May 1822 including at Georges Coffee Room in the Strand.¹⁰¹ Although Ardoch seems to have later raised an abolitionist petition,¹⁰² he was perhaps encouraged to present a petition in the House of Commons on 21 May 1822 for the relaxation of restrictions on the export of Scotch whisky.¹⁰³ Campbell of Blythswood was less restrained and introduced two petitions that represented both factions of the 'West India interest'. In the House of Commons on 17 May 1822, Campbell 'presented a petition from certain West India merchants connected with the port of Clyde' which 'prayed' for the modification of laws on bonded goods. Moreover, another petition from 'West India planters resident in Glasgow' sought the maintenance of the status quo on (comparatively high) Custom House duties for the import of East India sugar - thus protecting the privileged status of West India sugars.¹⁰⁴ With his business complete, Colin Donald Dunlop left London on 19 May 1822 and reached Glasgow via Liverpool three days later. In his *Commercial Handbook*, he tallied up 'cash [spent] on going to London' of £48 13s 6d for travel and accommodation, no doubt to invoice the Association for payment on his return.¹⁰⁵

At a General Meeting of the Glasgow West India Association in the Tontine on 11 September 1822 – which preceded the dinner in honour of Blythswood – relevant Members of Parliament were formally thanked for their support.¹⁰⁶ Significantly, the Association differentiated between the assistance of Campbell and others:

Mr Ewing...reported to the meeting the progress of the deputation to London for relief of the West India Trade, the particulars of the conferences with his Majesty's Ministers and the detail of the measures which has been introduced into Parliament... [He] expressed his sense of the assistance he received from Mr Campbell of Blythswood and the attention he experienced from Mr Monteith of Carstairs and Mr Buchanan of Ardoch amongst other members of Parliament.

¹⁰¹ 'CDD Diaries', 12 May 1822.

¹⁰² 'Mr Buchanan' introduced a petition in 1826 from the inhabitants of Stirling 'praying for the abolition of slavery in the colonies' in 1824. See *The Times*, 'House of Commons', 6 April 1824.

¹⁰³ 'House of Commons', *The Times*, 22 May 1822.

¹⁰⁴ 'House of Commons', *The Times*, 18 May 1822.

¹⁰⁵ 'CDD Diaries', 23 April 1822.

¹⁰⁶ 'West India Trade', *Glasgow Herald*, 13 September 1822.

The Association also extended their gratitude to James Ewing for his role in facilitating a high-level political network. He travelled to London at short notice and spent two months ‘wholly engaged’ with the ‘important public measures connected with the West India Interests’. Campbell of Blythswood was thanked for his attention to:

The welfare of the city, for the zealous regard which he has always evinced for the prosperity of the Colonial Interest; and in particular, for his cordial and efficient co-operation with Mr Ewing as representing the Trade.

The General Meeting resolved that Archibald Campbell, John Buchanan and Henry Monteith were to be honoured at the dinner held ‘at the expense of the West India Merchants and Planters’¹⁰⁷ which was also attended by Colin Dunlop Donald.¹⁰⁸ The Association enjoyed more support in subsequent years.

Archibald Campbell presented several other petitions in the House of Commons in the 1820s on general matters connected to transatlantic commerce such as navigation on the Clyde,¹⁰⁹ shipping,¹¹⁰ distilling,¹¹¹ and sugar duties.¹¹² He also introduced at least four petitions at the specific request of the West India merchants and planters of Glasgow on matters of trade such as rum duties,¹¹³ in addition to those concerning bonded goods and East India duties in May 1822. Although it is difficult to ascertain the effects of such activities, Campbell also voted on slave trials in Jamaica and criticised the Glasgow abolition movement in Parliament in 1826.¹¹⁴ Thus, throughout the 1820s, the ‘Glasgow-West India interest’ had Parliamentary representation through Campbell of Blythswood - and they supported him in return.

The ‘Tory West India interest’ of Glasgow: ‘borough-mongering’ in the County and the Royal Burgh

This study has examined how the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ successfully co-operated with local MPs – especially Campbell of Blythswood – to promote colonial interests in Parliament. This section will now outline how the ‘interest’ colluded to influence regional politics. Whilst some studies have acknowledged their importance, there has been little analysis of individuals or groups involved in the process. For example, whilst the most

¹⁰⁷ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the GWIA’, pp.240-241.

¹⁰⁸ ‘CDD Diaries’, 11 September 1822.

¹⁰⁹ ‘House of Commons’ *The Times*, 13 May 1825.

¹¹⁰ ‘House of Commons’ *The Times*, 3 April 1827.

¹¹¹ ‘House of Commons’, *The Times*, 17 April 1823.

¹¹² ‘House of Commons’, *The Times*, 18 May 1826.

¹¹³ ‘House of Commons’, *The Times*, 16 March 1824.

¹¹⁴ Terry Jenkins, ‘Archibald Campbell (c.1763-1838), of Blythswood, Renfrew’, *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1820-1832*, vol. 4, ed. by D.R. Fisher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.524-527.

recent study identified connections with the Tory Party, it is important to increase the evidentiary base to test this conclusion.¹¹⁵

As a contributor to the pro-reform periodical *The Scots Times* in Glasgow in the 1820s and City Chamberlain of the Town Council in Glasgow from 1834, John Strang would have been fully aware of the close connections between commerce and politics. Indeed, he later defined a reciprocal relationship between the ‘West India interest’ and the Tory party:

Mr [John] Gordon and his partner, Mr Charles Stirling, were also looked upon as the central luminaries of the Tory party, then dominant in the City; and it was within the walls of their business establishment [Stirling, Gordon & Co.], that the leaders of Mr Pitt's most ardent supporters were always summoned, for consultation and counsel. Here the qualifications of gentlemen attempting to become Members of Parliament were canvassed, and hence came forth the decree that was to render them either eligible or not to a seat in the House of Commons. It was for many years the peculiar sanctum and safeguard of the interests of Sir Campbell of Blythswood; and hence it derived, through the great Parliamentary influence of that gentleman, a reciprocal power in matters connected with the Government and its patronage.¹¹⁶

Thus, in Strang's opinion, the ‘interest’ effectively decided which candidates would sit as MP for Glasgow Burghs, which, in turn, facilitated connections with the Tory party who reciprocated favours in the British Parliament. It is therefore no coincidence that Archibald Campbell of Blythswood, the ‘Tory manager for the west’, advanced the West India position in Parliament.¹¹⁷

The Tory Party certainly enjoyed wide support amongst the ‘Glasgow West India interest’, a relationship that was often referred to in a pro-reform unstamped newspaper *The Loyal Reformers Gazette* that appeared in May 1831. In the early radical phase up to 1833, a host of elite figures were publically denounced in the *Gazette* which was in open conflict with the pro-slavery *Free Press* and especially the *Glasgow Courier*, which was referred to as the ‘oracle of the Tory, Sugar Lords’.¹¹⁸ These frequent denunciations of merchants and plantation owners also revealed and criticised their political affiliations. In total, the *Gazette* identified over forty members of the ‘Glasgow-West India interest’ as Torys. Some of these were well known politicians such as Campbell of Blythswood, Henry Monteith and Lord Provost Alexander Garden, although the majority were members of the

¹¹⁵ Cooke, ‘An Elite Revisited’, pp.137-138.

¹¹⁶ Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, p.215.

¹¹⁷ Dunlop Donald, *Minute Book of the Board of Green Cloth*, p.127.

¹¹⁸ ‘Prosecution against Us!!’, *The Loyal Reformers Gazette*, 28 April 1832.

commercial class such as John Blackburn, who had sojourned to Jamaica as a young man in the 1770s:

And from less to more he became a West India *planter*, and returned home... with a large fortune, which enabled him to buy the splendid estate of Killearn... in consequence of his *money*, and his money alone, he has been introduced to all the leading Tory Nabobs in these parts.¹¹⁹

Significantly, at least twenty-nine of these individuals were involved with the Association after its formation, and an elite core of this group monopolised office-bearing positions between 1807 and 1838 (see Appendix 11). Thus, members of a powerful Tory executive were at the commanding heights of the ‘Glasgow-West India interest’ and it is evident they co-operated on mutual concerns. Whilst this lends support to Strang’s insightful interpretation, the activities of the Association secretary Colin Dunlop Donald, a Tory agent involved in ‘boroughmongering’ in both the county of Lanarkshire and Royal Burgh of Glasgow, further substantiates his claim.

The terms of the political system laid out by the Union in 1707 had allowed succession of oligarchies to dominate Scottish politics. In the counties such as Lanarkshire voting was restricted to a small electorate of freeholders which facilitated management by politician-patrons assisted by canvassers who used patronage and bribery to gain support in the form of votes.¹²⁰ In 1818, Colin Dunlop Donald admitted being part of a Blythswood network that had attempted to influence the Lanarkshire County election through such methods. On 1 May he testified before a Committee of Privileges in London regarding accusations of corruption.¹²¹ The election was eventually decided on 3 July in favour of Lord Archibald Hamilton who beat the challenger Sir Alexander Forrester Inglis Cochrane (1758–1832). Cochrane was a naval officer, MP for Stirling Burghs (1802-1806) and Governor of Guadeloupe after capturing the French colony in 1810.¹²² Unemployed after his return to Great Britain in 1815, his previous experience of British politics made him an ideal candidate to promote West India interests. At the hearing of the Parliamentary Committee of Privileges, Thomas Ferguson - Campbell of Blythswood’s clerk - was accused of offering jobs for votes in an unsuccessful attempt to secure a Cochrane victory.

¹¹⁹ ‘Tory Tyranny’, *The Loyal Reformers Gazette*, 29 October 1831.

¹²⁰ The typical electorate at county level was 40-60, and was rarely above 150. See Ronald M. Sunter, *Patronage and Politics in Scotland, 1707-1832*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), pp.2-3.

¹²¹ PP 1818 (258) *Report from the committee of privileges, to whom the complaint made of a letter written to a voter of the county of Lanark, to influence his vote in the election of a member to serve in Parliament, by Thomas Ferguson, in breach of the privileges of the House, was referred.*

¹²² R.G. Thorne, ‘Hon. Alexander Forrester Inglis Cochrane (1758-1832), of Lamancha, Peebles’, in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1790-1820*, ed. by R. Thorne, (London: Boydell & Brewer, 1986), pp.368-369.

Dunlop Donald was also accused of being part of the same network and admitted that he had drawn up ‘some deeds for his [Cochrane’s] West India estates’ and had been ‘employed for him in matters connected with the contest for the county’.¹²³

Colin Dunlop Donald was an efficient agent who kept a meticulous record of political intelligence at both national and regional levels. In his diary, he noted new appointments in offices of the Glasgow Town Council and also attended elections in burghs across the west of Scotland. Moreover, he was also a regular attendee at the Michaelmas head court,¹²⁴ which was the annual revision (usually held in the first week of October) of freeholders eligible to vote in county elections.¹²⁵ Thus, Dunlop Donald would have been fully aware who was eligible to vote in the Town Council of Glasgow at certain times as well across specific counties. This allowed negotiations with influential individuals and facilitated patronage with prospective voters. He was also said to be a ‘paper freeholder’ in the pre-reform political system (when an individual who did not have the required property qualification to vote in a specific county voted after being granted a proxy by others). At the election in Dumbarton May 1831, he was said to have been given a ‘paper vote’ by James Dennistoun of Colgrain and Dunlop Donald voted for Lord William Montague Graham, an ally of Blythswood and younger brother of James Graham, 4th Duke of Montrose. After Lord Graham was returned as MP for the county of Dunbartonshire, Dunlop Donald was denounced as his agent a role for which he was said to have been paid three guineas per day.¹²⁶ Thus, members of the ‘West India interest’ influenced matters for the Tory party across the region in the period and it seems they had more substantial success in the Royal Burgh of Glasgow.¹²⁷

¹²³ PP 1818 (258) *Report from the committee of privileges*, p.19

¹²⁴ James Bridges, *View of the Political State of Scotland at Michaelmas, 1811*, (Edinburgh: John Moir, 1813), p.xxxix.

¹²⁵ Colin Dunlop Donald attended six Michaelmas head courts between 1820 and 1829 at Dumbarton (5) and Lanark (1). On 2 October 1827, he travelled with Blythswood by coach to the Michaelmas head court in Lanark.

¹²⁶ ‘Dumbartonshire Election’, *The Loyal Reformers Gazette*, 21 May 1831.

¹²⁷ Prior to Union, each of the sixty-six Royal Burghs sent a representative to the Scottish Parliament, although after 1707 they were combined (with the exception of Edinburgh) and limited to fourteen Members of Parliament. Therefore, although Glasgow was a major economic force by this period it was politically classified as the Clyde Burgh with Dumbarton, Rutherglen and Renfrew. In effect, Glasgow only had a quarter share of the MP, which was a classic case of ‘political underrepresentation’. Elections were undertaken on a rotational basis in each burgh and the respective Town Councils nominated ‘Special Delegates’ with each of the four casting a single vote of equal weighting to decide the Member of Parliament. If the vote was even, the hosting burgh had the privilege of a casting vote to decide. Whilst this seems like a simple affair, potential Parliamentary representatives were decided by those in control of respective Town Councils, a system that fostered ‘political jobbing’ within Glasgow as well as across the Clyde burgh. See Fiona Montgomery, ‘Glasgow and the Struggle for Parliamentary Reform, 1830-1832’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, 2/172, (October 1982), p.130; Irene Sweeney, ‘The Municipal Administration of Glasgow, 1833-1912: Public Service and the Scottish Civic Identity’, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1990), V.1, pp.9-30; Irene Maver, ‘The Guardianship of the Community’ in *Glasgow. Volume*

Members of the ‘Glasgow-West India interest’ held a virtual monopoly over the position of Lord Provost during the period 1800 and 1833, with eight members serving eleven separate terms of office over twenty two years. The office of Dean of Guild of the Merchants House was similarly monopolised during 1799 and 1834, although to a lesser extent. Nine individuals with West India connections – such as Archibald Smith of Jordanhill - were appointed for ten terms as Dean of Guild over 20 years whilst John Hamilton, James Ewing and James Black were appointed multiple times across each position.¹²⁸ Thus, the connections between commerce and politics continued a tradition established in the eighteenth century.

Analysis of the relationship between Colin Dunlop Donald and Archibald Campbell shines a new light on the political connections between the Tory party and the ‘West India interest’ in Glasgow in the 1820s. In this period, the second cousins sometimes socialised and the first recorded meeting was on 30 October 1812, when Dunlop Donald ‘dined at Blythswood Estate’ with Campbell, who was then MP for Elgin Burghs. According to Dunlop Donald’s diary, there are only a further four recorded meetings in the next nine years, a period in which Campbell was MP for Perth Burghs. However, by 1822, Campbell had been MP for Glasgow Burghs for two years and it is possible he commissioned his experienced kinsman as a political canvasser in the spring of that year. Certainly during the ten years up to 1832 there was a significant increase in meetings (see Appendix 12), a period in which Campbell was returned as MP for Glasgow Burghs in controversial circumstances on two occasions.¹²⁹

In the lead up to the 1830 election, *The Scots Times* retrospectively accused the Town Council of Glasgow of political manoeuvring when Blythswood was returned in the election of 1826 - an episode termed ‘The Dumbarton Job’.¹³⁰ Dunlop Donald was active during the campaign of 1830 and spent the evening of 29 June ‘canvassing all night for Blythswood’,¹³¹ which was exactly a month before one of the most controversial results in pre-reform Glasgow. The election was unique as not only were electors in the Magistrates and Town Council of Glasgow equally balanced on sixteen votes apiece for Campbell and his opponent Kirkman Finlay, but the Clyde Burghs vote was also tied.¹³² Although it

I: Beginnings to 1830 ed. by T.M. Devine and G. Jackson, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 261-2.

¹²⁸ *A List of Matriculated Members of the Merchant’s House, From 3d October 1768, to 5th October 1857*, (Glasgow: James McNab, 1858), pp.45-46.

¹²⁹ Sweeney, ‘The Municipal Administration of Glasgow’, pp.12-30.

¹³⁰ ‘The Dumbarton Job’, *The Scots Times*, 24 April 1830; 25 May 1830.

¹³¹ ‘CDD Diaries’, 29 June 1830

¹³² Dumbarton and Rutherglen voted for Kirkman Finlay, Glasgow and Renfrew voted for Archibald Campbell.

seems only six electors had West India connections (five of whom were members of the Association),¹³³ one of them, Alexander Garden had the ‘absolute right’ as Lord Provost not only to decide the deliberative vote for preferred candidate for the Town Council but also to deliver the casting vote for Glasgow as the hosting voting locality.¹³⁴ Amidst protests about the legal rights of the office, Blythswood was duly elected by the deciding vote of one individual.

On the steps of Glasgow Justiciary Hall in the immediate aftermath of the election the defeated Kirkman Finlay pointed out in a passionate speech that he had won a moral if not legal victory as the majority of electors in Town Councils across the Clyde Burghs had actually voted for him.¹³⁵ He denounced Lord Provost Garden as a ‘powerful ally’ of the East India Company Directors,¹³⁶ although he might also have added Garden had familial and commercial connections to the ‘West India interest’.¹³⁷ Finlay suggested he was the victim of underhand tactics and the smearing of opponents was a common tactic deployed by political groups, including the ‘interest’, during this period. In the speech, Finlay commented on the colonial trade system as well as his relationship with West India merchants and planters. He revealed that in the lead up to the election of 1830 it had been said ‘without his authority’ that he was ‘hostile to the West India interests’ and although ‘some people were active in spreading this’ it was ‘without foundation’. Finlay clarified his position, referring to the West Indian monopoly and free trade, prohibitive East India duties as well the perceived unfairness that plantation owners in the Caribbean had access to foreign markets:

When they were bound to send all to us, they should have been forced to take all from us... [although he] thought it better they should have liberty to send to any other country but... could not see how there could be a difference of principle in the duties imposed on the produce sent from our own colonies in different quarters of the globe.

Finlay also said he was opposed to slavery but respected the sanctity of British property laws which protected the investment of capital in the West Indies. Thus, he supported emancipation with compensation for slave-owners, a position less radical than some

¹³³ ‘List of the Magistrates & Council of Glasgow’, *Glasgow Herald*, 16 October 1829.

¹³⁴ Peter Mackenzie, *Old Reminiscences of Glasgow and the west of Scotland*, Vol. II, (Glasgow: James Forrester, 1890) p.198.

¹³⁵ The electorate was comprised of eighty four magistrates and Town Council members from four districts in the Clyde Burghs. Forty nine voted for K. Finlay, with thirty five voting for Campbell. See ‘Election for Glasgow Burghs’, *The Scots Times*, No. 301, 24 August, 1830.

¹³⁶ ‘Election for Glasgow Burghs’, *Glasgow Herald*, 27 August, 1830.

¹³⁷ Alexander Garden was a West India merchant in 1807 and a founder member of the Association. He was also the son in law and partner of Henry Monteith, a key ally of Blythswood.

abolitionists who called for immediate emancipation with no remuneration.¹³⁸ The controversial election of 1830 in Glasgow illustrated the failings of the old political system, and the Blythswood monopoly of the Clyde Burghs constituency from 1820 to 1831 was attributed to ‘the *Tories* of Glasgow...in the Town Council’, including Alexander Garden.¹³⁹ However, Blythswood’s term proved short-lived and amidst growing demands for reform in Glasgow he was ousted as MP for Glasgow Burghs in early 1831, just months after retaining his seat.¹⁴⁰

As the debates over reform developed from 1831 to 1833, the campaign for emancipation increasingly became part of the narrative. Recent historiography has connected events in the British Empire with domestic politics in Britain in the 1830s. Miles Taylor outlined the imperial dimension of parliamentary reform and argued this has been almost disregarded in the existing historiography.¹⁴¹ More recently, Gordon Pentland illustrated the Scottish context, demonstrated by propaganda in Edinburgh which depicted the freed slave, Caesaa Thompson, warning of the dangers of reform and emancipation.¹⁴² Pentland also suggested that abolitionists deployed rhetoric which represented themselves as ‘morally correct and patriotic’ whilst painting the ‘West India interest’ as an ‘unpatriotic and essentially foreign faction’.¹⁴³

In Glasgow, the ‘Tory-West India interest’ were characterised by the *Loyal Reformers Gazette* - which championed immediate emancipation without compensation to slave-owners - as staunch opponents of reform. In late 1832, a published ‘anatomy of Glasgow Boroughmongers’ alleged that West India merchants and planters were the largest group of subscribers to an anti-reform petition signed in the Tontine Rooms.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, representatives from all elite merchant firms subscribed,¹⁴⁵ as well as a broader section of the commercial and manufacturing community – described by the *Gazette* as ‘dependants’ of the West India traders - which included clerks to merchant firms, sugar brokers, accountants, lawyers as well as manufacturers.¹⁴⁶ The petition and rhetoric demonstrates the ‘West India interest’ were at least sympathetic to the anti-reform

¹³⁸ ‘Election for Glasgow Burghs’, *Glasgow Herald*, 27 August, 1830.

¹³⁹ ‘City Representation- Mr Dixon MP’, *The Reformers Gazette*, 8 December 1832.

¹⁴⁰ ‘District of Boroughs’, *The Loyal Reformers Gazette*, 7 May 1831.

¹⁴¹ Miles Taylor, ‘Empire and Parliamentary Reform: The 1832 Reform Act Revisited’ in *Rethinking the Age of Reform: Britain 1780-1850* ed. by Arthur Burns and Joanna Innes (Cambridge, 2003), pp.295-311.

¹⁴² Gordon Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity in Scotland, 1820-1833*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008), p.166.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.30.

¹⁴⁴ Of the 388 signatures, 225 had been identified. Of these, 34 were WI merchants and planters (15% of known individuals).

¹⁴⁵ ‘Glasgow Boroughmongers- Lists 1-5’, *The Loyal Reformers Gazette*, 29 October, 5 November, 12 November, 19 November, 3 December 1831.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Anatomy of the Glasgow Borough Mongers’, *The Loyal Reformers Gazette*, 10 December 1831

movement and the *Gazette* publication was no doubt intended to mobilise the anti-slavery movement to the cause of reform. The ‘West India interest’ were right be wary of the parliamentary reform of 1832 as it weakened their influence in the House of Commons and eased the passage of the Emancipation Act a year later.¹⁴⁷ In Glasgow, the irony is that whilst the city had greater representation with two dedicated MPs, James Oswald and James Ewing, both had family and commercial connections with Caribbean slavery. Although by this point, Ewing had varied commercial interests¹⁴⁸ and shifting political allegiances,¹⁴⁹ he assisted the Glasgow West India Association at the culmination of a ten-year campaign after 1823 to find a satisfactory solution to the slavery question. For the Association, as will be demonstrated, nothing less than ‘full and ample indemnity’ was acceptable.

The Campaign for ‘full and ample indemnity’

At the height of his political career in the 1820s, Archibald Campbell of Blythswood was employed not just by the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ on parliamentary business but also by the ‘West India interest’ across Great Britain. On 12 May 1823, he presented a petition to Parliament from ‘owners, planters and merchants, residing in London’ that reiterated their right to hold the ‘negro population’ as property and to maintain discipline and preserve order.¹⁵⁰ The petition itself was raised in the same week as George Canning, Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House, laid out his ‘resolutions’. In early 1823, a renewed abolitionist campaign sought to abolish not only the maritime trade in slaves, but also the entire practice of slavery in the British West Indies. Thomas Fowell Buxton, William Wilberforce’s successor, attempted to introduce a proposal which supported full emancipation. However, this was superseded by a series of resolutions introduced by Canning that slowed the process down and ensured further profits for West India merchants and planters by means of a series of gradual ameliorative reforms that also offered the prospect of compensation for slave-owners upon emancipation. ‘Canning’s resolutions’ therefore, set the context of the public debate between the abolitionists and

¹⁴⁷ Izhak Gross, ‘The Abolition of Negro Slavery and British Parliamentary Politics 1832-3’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Mar., 1980), pp. 65-66.

¹⁴⁸ In 1830, Ewing was caught between two commercial spheres with interests in both the East and West Indies. See University of Glasgow, Special Collections, Bh11-c.15, Letter to James Ewing Esq. L.L.D. of Dunoon Castle from a Reformer, 19 July 1832, p.6.

¹⁴⁹ Ewing also shifted political alliances to suit his own agenda. According to the *Gazette*, he was a Tory and opponent of reform in 1816. However, by 1830, with James Oswald, he had the support of a pro-reform group of Whigs known as the ‘The Clique’. Thus, the ‘half-Tory’ Ewing (by then affiliated with the Conservatives) broadened his network of supporters to advance his own political position in the lead up to the Reform Act. See Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform*, p.159.

¹⁵⁰ ‘House of Commons’, *The Times*, 13 May 1823.

slave-owners up to 1838. On the one hand, the resolutions provided practical steps for the improvement of slave conditions and eventual emancipation. On the other hand, the resolutions provided a basis for compensation and initiated the ‘property in men’ debate. Thus, both sides cited the resolutions in the years to come.¹⁵¹

There is a developing historiography of West India lobbying prior to emancipation, although this has generally been viewed from a national perspective.¹⁵² This section adopts a regional approach to trace how the Glasgow West India Association influenced public opinion at local and national level as well as Parliamentary policy. On 13 May 1823 Glasgow’s Association fired their opening salvo in the debate. Representing themselves as paternalist slave-owners with the right to own human property, the Association sent a petition to the Earl of Liverpool at the Treasury which outlined their stance:

That as their property has been acquired under the solemn sanction of His Majesty’s Government and is held by the same tenure and on the same security as any estates in the British Dominions, they are clearly entitled to the same justice and protection and if on public grounds an infringement should be made on their private rights or an injury be sustained on their private fortunes, they do with the utmost confidence in the faith of their country, enter their claim for full & ample indemnity.¹⁵³

Their position was clear: the enslaved were chattel property protected by the laws of Great Britain, a view which was further elucidated by James MacQueen. In *The Colonial Controversy*, which began as a series of articles in his newspaper, MacQueen addressed an open letter to Zachary McCauley, a leading abolitionist. Using familiar rhetoric, MacQueen mounted a defence of slavery as he compared the economic system to an imperial building constructed by the nation:

Though the building be old, and though it stands in a threatening attitude, and though it not be as beautiful as the finer architecture of other parts of the Empire, still all you can do by the laws of your country, is to compel the proprietors to take the building down, and erect a similar superstructure, in a more substantial manner; but you cannot compel them to erect it on a plan that may deteriorate the value of their property, nor can you deprive them of it, or of the ground on which it stands, in order to erect a building of a different kind, such as you plan out, without a positive law made to that purpose, and after full and ample compensation and indemnification. It is idle declamation to talk about human beings as property. Your country and your laws *made them such*, and when she thinks proper for her benefit, or her sin-offering, to render them no longer

¹⁵¹ Draper, *The Price of Emancipation*, p.20, pp.112-3.

¹⁵² Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation*, pp.1-24; Draper, *The Price of Emancipation*, pp.75-124. For a study of the ‘West India interest’ in Britain – although with limited analysis of Glasgow - see Alexandra Franklin, ‘Enterprise and Advantage: The West India Interest in Britain, 1774-1840’, (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1992).

¹⁵³ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the GWIA’, p.452.

property, she must pay their value, at the rate it bore, when considered a secured and protected *fee simple*.¹⁵⁴

Around the time of publication, MacQueen was paid 250 Guineas by the Association in Glasgow in February 1825 for ‘great services... rendered to the West India Interests in general’. They later paid him expenses and ordered 600 copies of his book.¹⁵⁵ By 1829, he was reputed to have been paid up to £15,000 by West India planters.¹⁵⁶ Another example illustrates how the ‘West India interest’ across Britain colluded on propagandist activities. In early 1831, MacQueen penned a series of anti-abolitionist letters to dignitaries (such as recently deposed Tory Prime Minister Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington) that were subsequently published as ‘The British Colonies - Anti-Colonists’ in *Blackwoods Magazine*.¹⁵⁷ In advance of publication, MacQueen had written to the West India organisations in Liverpool, London and Bristol in the name of ‘the Colonial cause, not for myself’. As a result, he managed to secure 500 advance orders for the publication ensuring a broad dissemination of pro-slavery views.¹⁵⁸ Thus, newspapers and polemics were utilised for propaganda purposes which continued right up to Emancipation.

MacQueen’s influence stretched across the Atlantic; he was at the forefront of a plan to establish a printing press in the Caribbean colonies on behalf of the ‘West India interest’¹⁵⁹ although it is unclear whether or not this press was eventually established.¹⁶⁰ In any case, the *Glasgow Courier* was named as a popular paper for overseers and slaves in Jamaica by 1832.¹⁶¹ It is no coincidence that Glasgow was known as a ‘stronghold’ of the ‘West India interest’, especially in Jamaica where the city was regarded as ‘the great den of colonial slavery’.¹⁶² However, it seems that the propaganda had limited impact on public opinion at regional level. The Glasgow West India Association attempted to mobilise a pro-slavery lobby in Scotland in 1825 and across Great Britain in 1830.¹⁶³ In 1830, the Association passed a series of resolutions designed to combat the efforts of the Anti-

¹⁵⁴ James MacQueen, *The Colonial Controversy*, (Glasgow: Kluill, Blackie, 1825), p.219.

¹⁵⁵ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the GWIA’, 12 January 1826, p.512/8-9.

¹⁵⁶ *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, Vol. II, 1827-1829, (London: Hatchard, 1829), p.429.

¹⁵⁷ *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1831), pp.186-214.

¹⁵⁸ BRO, SMV/8/3/3/2/1, ‘James MacQueen to Bristol West India Association’, 3 January 1831.

¹⁵⁹ University of Aberdeen Special Collections, MS 2564/57, ‘Letter from John Ross, Ferryhill to James McQueen, Glasgow’, 25 October 1825.

¹⁶⁰ ‘A debate of much interest’, *The Times*, 6 January 1826, p.2.

¹⁶¹ In his evidence to the Select Committee in 1831, the Reverend William Knibb stated that slaves in Jamaica were familiar with the contents of British newspapers that had been delivered to the Post Office for overseers (including the *Glasgow Courier*). Some were ‘carelessly thrown about’ and read by the ‘many’ slaves who could read. Knibb also stated the Free Coloureds would read content to illiterate slaves. See PP 1831-2 (721) XX, *Select Committee on the Extinction of Slavery throughout the British Dominions*, August 11, 1832. pp.243-244.

¹⁶² John Howard Hinton, *Memoir of Reverend William Knibb*, 2nd ed., (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1849), pp.158-59.

¹⁶³ Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery*, p.168.

Slavery Society. In an attempt to ‘counteract the machinations of their enemies’, the Association aimed to establish local Associations in Scotland and Ireland whilst the proposals were also forwarded to the West Indies bodies in London, Liverpool and Bristol.¹⁶⁴ However, like the previous attempt, the strategy failed to mobilise public opinion and the abolition movement gathered strength. In any case, the ‘West India interest’ did not need to win hearts and minds but instead they sought to convince legislators that their claims to hold men as property were just.

The Association stepped up the campaign in the British Parliament, sometimes with the assistance of influential allies. One petition in 1826 from James Graham, 4th Duke of Montrose encapsulates the two pronged lobbying by the Association. Montrose presented a petition in Parliament from merchants and planters of Glasgow ‘praying compensation for injury to [West India] property’ and ‘expressive of their alarm at the present state of the West India colonies’.¹⁶⁵ Sustained agitation by the ‘West India interest’ on commercial matters was evidently successful and a Parliamentary Inquiry was appointed in 1831 to investigate conditions.¹⁶⁶ At the resulting meeting of the ‘Select Committee on the Commercial State of the Colonies’ that opened in February 1832, James MacQueen’s detailed testimony underlined the distressed state of the colonies and the protected nature of property.¹⁶⁷ The Association also defended the institution of slavery whenever it came under Parliamentary scrutiny. After communication with the London West India Committee in early May 1832, the Association in Glasgow recommended thirty-two potential witnesses (including returning sojourners, plantation owners, naval captains and doctors) who would appear in the upcoming inquiries to provide ‘valuable evidence if required’ on conditions in Jamaica, Demerara, Berbice, Trinidad, Grenada, Tobago, St Lucia, St Vincent and Antigua.¹⁶⁸ At the subsequent meetings of the House of Lords Select Committee which sat between May and August 1832, three of twenty four witnesses concerning Jamaica had been recommended by the Association.¹⁶⁹ Not surprisingly, they gave rosy accounts of the conditions within plantation society.¹⁷⁰ Other Association

¹⁶⁴ BRO, SMV/8/3/4/2/41, ‘Glasgow West India Resolutions’, 4 November 1830.

¹⁶⁵ ‘From our Private Correspondent’, *Glasgow Herald*, 15 May 1826.

¹⁶⁶ Butler, *Economics of Emancipation*, p.11.

¹⁶⁷ PP 1831-32 (381) *Report from Select Committee on the Commercial State of the West India Colonies*, pp.104-113.

¹⁶⁸ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the GWIA’, pp.576-578

¹⁶⁹ PP, 1833, *Evidence upon oath touching The Condition and Treatment of the Negro Population of the British West India Colonies, Taken before a Select Committee of the House of Lords, Part 1, Jamaica, 1832.*

¹⁷⁰ Sir John Keane stated the condition of the enslaved was ‘very good’ and that he had ‘seen more misery in Ireland in one day’ than in eight years in the West Indies. Similarly, Sir Laurence Halstead denied the whip was used to inflict punishment. *Ibid*, pp.9-11; p.74.

recommended speakers gave further expert testimony at the subsequent ‘Select Committee on the Extinction of Slavery’ in May 1832.¹⁷¹

As the slavery question reached crisis point in early 1833, the Association implemented a familiar strategy which was referred to retrospectively in the minutes.¹⁷² By this point, emancipation was a *fait accompli* but the slave-owners still had to justify their claims for compensation. Firstly, they commissioned a pamphlet entitled ‘The Origin and Progress of West India Slavery’ which contained a nuanced legal and political justification of slave-ownership. According to the pamphlet, the English and subsequently British Parliament passed laws that enabled the slave trade and provided land grants for colonists. Thus, the nation’s political legislators were directly responsible for the chattel slavery system. Furthermore, purchasers acquired slaves in the West Indies protected by British property laws whilst the nation benefited from related duties and tax. Thus, ‘if it is a sin, it is a sin in which the country has had its full share of guilt, and ought to bear its proportion of the redemption’. The redemption, of course, was ‘adequate compensation’. One thousand copies were produced and published in the *Free Press*, *North British Advertiser*, *Scots Times*, *Scottish Guardian* and the *Morning Post* as well as on the front page of the *Glasgow Courier* and the *Glasgow Herald*. Moreover, it was sent to the London Committee of West India Planters and Merchants and to all Members of Parliament.¹⁷³

Furthermore, when it became clear that lengthy Parliamentary Inquiries were to be concluded (against their wishes), the Association petitioned Parliament and also encouraged other groups and individuals to do the same in order to demonstrate ‘the importance of the interests’. As in previous campaigns there was collaboration with other West India bodies, especially London. However, during this critical period, Colin Dunlop Donald was replaced as secretary by Alexander McGrigor between 1832 and 1834. A.G. Milne, a commercial associate of John Campbell, senior, & Co., was appointed by the Association in April 1832 to represent their interests in the capital.¹⁷⁴ By this time, the Association were without their Parliamentary mouthpiece, Campbell of Blythswood, and the Association used individuals such as Keith Douglas, MP for Dumfries Burghs (1812-1832) to raise petitions in the House in 1830.¹⁷⁵ However, the election of James Ewing -

¹⁷¹ PP (1833) *Select Committee on the Extinction of Slavery throughout the British Dominions*, May 1832, p.311; p.407.

¹⁷² GCA, TD1683/1/2, ‘Minutes of the GWIA’, 22 January 1834, pp.33-34.

¹⁷³ GCA, TD1683/1/2, ‘Minutes of the GWIA’, 13 March 1833, p.15; ‘The Origin and Progress of West India Slavery’, *Glasgow Courier*, 16 March 1833; *Glasgow Herald*, 18 March 1833; ‘British Colonial Slavery’, *Morning Post*, 26 March 1833.

¹⁷⁴ GCA, TD1683/1/1, ‘Abstract of the GWIA’, p.574-6.

¹⁷⁵ ‘Houses of Commons’, *The Times*, 12 June 1830.

one of the first two MPs for Glasgow after the Reform Act in 1832 had established these new seats - restored the Glasgow West India network at the highest level.

In February 1833, discussions were held with the two MPs for Glasgow, James Ewing and James Oswald, as well as Robert Wallace, MP for Greenock. In early March, the Association sent a Memorial to Earl Grey, First Lord of the Treasury, which was also transmitted to James Ewing and James Oswald to raise in Parliament. The petition reiterated the Association's claim for 'just and ample compensation'. The Association also 'induced' the Chamber of Commerce and banks and banking companies in the west of Scotland to petition for a 'cautious, safe and satisfactory adjustment of the Slavery question', with similar petitions from Port Glasgow and Greenock.¹⁷⁶ Glasgow based banks subsequently sent a petition to Earl Grey, First Lord of the Treasury, in March 1833:

We, the undersigned, Bankers of Glasgow and the West of Scotland...cannot doubt for a moment...contemplating such an extensive change...[that] His Majesty's Ministers have duly considered the various and manifold consequences...But your Memorialists cannot refrain from stating, that from their knowledge of the financial relations between the colonial trade and the general commerce of the country, any sudden alteration of these relations might produce effects very seriously injurious to commercial credit. And while they hope that every precaution has been taken to prevent that shock [to the] credit of the country...your Memorialists respectfully, but earnestly, entreat His Majesty's Government make such provisions as will avert so destructive a calamity.¹⁷⁷

This petition invoked a familiar argument that parliamentary interference with West India capital – plantations and resident slaves – would be catastrophic for the British credit system.¹⁷⁸ The working alliance between the 'Glasgow West India interest' and the city's financial institutions - as described in chapter three – provides ample context for this petition.

Evidently, both the 'Glasgow West India interest' and the banking fraternity had a vested interest in securing full compensation for the loss of the chattel property. In order to achieve their goals, the Association strategy made full use of the national connections. The banking petition was sent to Bristol, perhaps to inform a similar strategy. The Glasgow West India Association also sent a high level deputation to London to 'co-operate in the present critical state of affairs with the West India body of the metropolis, and the Delegates from the colonies and the outports'.¹⁷⁹ These representatives left Glasgow for

¹⁷⁶ GCA, TD1683/1/2, 'Minutes of the GWIA', pp.12-15.

¹⁷⁷ BRO, SMV/8/3/4/4/7, 'Memorial of Bankers of Glasgow', March 1833.

¹⁷⁸ Draper, *The Price of Emancipation*, p.82.

¹⁷⁹ GCA, TD1683/1/2, 'Minutes of the GWIA', p.13.

London on 1 May,¹⁸⁰ and both James Ewing and James Oswald provided ‘valuable services during [the] important negotiations and debates relative to the question of Emancipation’.¹⁸¹

On 10 May 1833, the proposed Government plan for emancipation was presented to the national ‘West India interest’ for consultation. The main points of this plan were published in *The Times* three days before it was submitted to Parliament which gave the colonial secretary, Edward Stanley, the opportunity to gauge public opinion.¹⁸² The proposals included a loan of £15million to slave-owners as compensation, as well the right to the labour of former slaves under the ‘Apprenticeship scheme’ for an unspecified period.¹⁸³ These two points in particular were deemed unsatisfactory by the ‘West India interest’, nationally and in Glasgow. Consecutive general meetings of the Association were called in the Royal Exchange Rooms in Glasgow on 13 and 18 May,¹⁸⁴ where members unanimously resolved that the deputation in London should deliver a petition protesting against the impracticality of the plan.¹⁸⁵ At a subsequent meeting in late June 1833, the Association compiled a memorandum providing ‘suggestions to His Majesty’s Government, in reference to the plan of Emancipation’. With regard to compensation for proprietors of West India estates, they demanded a grant of £20 million as well as an additional loan of £10 million and an extended Apprenticeship of 12 years.¹⁸⁶ These claims were consistent with those made by the ‘interest’ in London, suggesting a degree of collaboration in order to increase the effectiveness of their pressure.¹⁸⁷

There is little commentary in the Association minutes about the immediate reaction to the passing of the Emancipation Act, which was given Royal Assent on 28 August 1833. Slavery in the British colonies was subsequently abolished on 1 August 1834. The Act represented both a defeat and victory for the West India lobby in Britain. It is clear that major concessions were made, evidenced by comparing the main points of the Act with the demands in the memorandum compiled by the Association in June 1833. In the Act, the Apprenticeship period was set at six years (which was a reduction from the 12 years demanded by the ‘interest’). However, in a significant increase from the loan of £15m initially proposed by Stanley, the level of compensation was re-defined as a grant of £20

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p.16.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.20.

¹⁸² Butler, *Economics of Emancipation*, p.19.

¹⁸³ ‘Slave Emancipation’, *The Times*, 11 May 1833, p. 5.

¹⁸⁴ The Association transferred operations from the Tontine Hotel to the redeveloped Cunninghame Mansion in 1829.

¹⁸⁵ GCA, TD1683/1/2, ‘Minutes of the GWIA’, 5 March 1833, p.18.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, pp.19-25.

¹⁸⁷ Butler, *Economics of Emancipation*, p.21.

million. This ‘prodigious, almost incredible sum’¹⁸⁸ was widely perceived as an unprecedented concession to West India demands - except by the slave owners themselves, of course.¹⁸⁹ By way of comparison, when the American government ended slavery in 1865, not a penny of compensation was paid to slave-owners.

Nonetheless, the Association was singularly unimpressed by the extent of the award. A statement from the Association in 1852– signed by the reinstated Colin Dunlop Donald – delivered a damning verdict on compensation. The ‘Case of the British West Indies’ outlined that whilst the grant was popularly viewed as ‘munificent’, West India slave-owners received a total of £16million which, the Association argued, represented no more than 15 per cent of the real value of their property (including land, works and machinery useless after 1838) which they believed to be worth over £120million. Similarly, the Association complained about the duration of the Apprenticeship scheme. Originally set at six years, the scheme was eventually ended prematurely in 1838 which, according to Dunlop Donald, was ‘utterly disastrous’ for West India proprietors. He also referred to the loss of forced labour which had reduced the plantations:

To the condition of crude materials – masses of brick and mortar, and collections of old iron – divested of every attribute of productiveness, and representing nothing but a huge expenditure now rendered incapable of making any return for the capitalist.¹⁹⁰

Thus, although the West India lobby agreed a solution almost on their own terms, it was not enough. However, in spite of their complaints, the extent of the compensation award was indeed munificent; it constituted 40 per cent of the expenditure of the heavily indebted Government in 1834 and remains the ‘largest single financial operation undertaken by the British state to date’.¹⁹¹ Julian Hoppit has recently placed this event in comparative context, arguing that property rights became less secure in Great Britain after 1688. He noted that the expropriation of property was not uncommon - sometimes due to the extinction of certain types such as hereditary offices in Scotland and of course, property in men – provided ‘adequate compensation’ was paid. Hoppit concluded that the British

¹⁸⁸ Several MPs and representatives of the Colonial Office were ‘shocked...by the extravagance’ of the award, as a previous figure of £7.5million had been mooted. See W.A. Green, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830-1865*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991), pp.119-120.

¹⁸⁹The strength of the Interest was demonstrated by the extent and nature of the compensation award. Whilst the press in Barbados suggested they were due £47million compensation, the victory was described as a ‘complete admission of our right to property’. Indeed, the West Indians achieved concessions on three levels. Firstly, their long held claim over the enslaved as property was upheld, as well as the right to be awarded a grant instead of a loan. Lastly, they secured apprenticed labour from former slaves for up to six years although the Apprenticeship scheme only lasted four. See Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation*, pp.21-24.

¹⁹⁰ ‘Case of the British West Indies Stated’, *The Glasgow Herald*, 3 December 1852.

¹⁹¹ Draper, *The Price of Emancipation*, pp.106-7, p.270.

Parliament frequently forced and reconfigured the nature of property and this has been an instrumental factor in the development of the national economy.¹⁹²

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the social and political networks of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ between the years 1776 – 1838. The associational culture of the period is exemplified by the gentleman’s social clubs, and it is evident that those aligned with the ‘interest’ joined such clubs in increasing numbers. The clubs - especially the Board of Green Cloth - facilitated connections with prominent individuals involved in politics, commerce and manufacturing. However, the ‘interest’ remained only a powerful minority in the world’s first Chamber of Commerce, although it is clear they lobbied effectively on a variety of related matters. The ‘interest’ established two West India lobbying bodies to represent their own agenda and the Glasgow West India Association evolved into the most powerful network of its type outside of London after 1807. The Association lobbied on economic conditions in the West Indies and collaborated with West India bodies across Britain - especially London - in the campaign for compensation, 1823-1838. The ‘interest’ achieved significant concessions on both. Their strategy had connections at the highest level, and relied upon the MP for Glasgow Burghs in the 1820s, Archibald Campbell of Blythswood. The conduit between the clubs, the Association and the Tory party was Colin Dunlop Donald, a Glasgow-West India writer *extraordinaire*. His second cousin, Blythswood, the Tory manager for the west, informally lobbied and presented petitions on West India matters in Parliament. In turn, Dunlop Donald was a Tory agent and admitted – publically at the Inquiry and privately in his diary - of political canvassing at county level and in the Royal Burgh for the Blythswood network. Whilst it may be true there was no long term dominance by the ‘West India interest’ over Glasgow Town Council, it is evident they influenced political appointments more than historians have appreciated. There is no evidence that ‘borough-mongering’ was officially sanctioned by the Association, but the *Loyal Reformers Gazette* suggested that there was widespread support for the Tory party amongst the ‘interest’. Whilst evidence from this unstamped newspaper should be treated with a degree of caution, the bigger picture suggests there was some truth in this observation, and that an executive at the commanding heights of the Association facilitated a mutual support network with the Tory party of Scotland in this period.

¹⁹² Julian Hoppit, ‘Compulsion, Compensation and Property Rights in Britain, 1688-1833’, *Past and Present* 210 /1, (2011), pp.93-128.

Chapter 6. The Glasgow-West India Merchant House of Archibald Smith of Jordanhill

This case study of the Glasgow-West India merchant house of Archibald Smith, which operated in Jamaica and Grenada between 1779 and 1867, will adopt a transatlantic approach. Commercial activities and networks in the West Indies will be traced through colonial mortgage deeds, official sources and sojourners letters whilst mercantile wealth accumulation and investments will be identified through sources such as wills and confirmation inventories. In doing so, this study will illuminate an integrated Scottish Atlantic economy which facilitated an influx of capital that assisted successive stages of the Industrial Revolution in the west of Scotland.

Archibald Smith (1749-1821) was born into a minor gentry family on Craigend estate in Strathblane, just outside Glasgow.¹ As the fourth son without prospects of landed inheritance, he travelled to Virginia in 1768 in search of fortune with his three cousins and worked as manager of a tobacco store.² In this case, family connections provided the young Smith with the initial opportunity for advancement and later facilitated the creation of several colonial fortunes. However, as a large landowner loyal to the crown at the outbreak of the American War of Independence in 1775, he fled and was expropriated.³ This was a timely return to Scotland and Smith became a junior partner in Leitch & Smith,⁴ one of city's great merchant houses during the city's golden age of sugar.

Archibald's father, James Smith of Craigend, purchased a Burgess and Guild Brethren ticket on 10 March 1779, which helped his son to embark on a mercantile career. Archibald and his trading partner John Leitch registered the next day.⁶ They subsequently became merchants trading with the West Indies, part of a small elite group within the overall mercantile community in Glasgow. The firm eventually became the Smith family business; Leitch was not listed as a co-partner of the firm in 1807 and Archibald's two brothers became partners until their deaths. Evidence regarding sources of start-up capital is scarce although the family certainly reinvested colonial profits. When his eldest brother, John Smith of Craigend, died in 1816 his inventory listed £46,168 in moveable property, with over £37,000 in Leitch & Smith.⁸ His other elder brother, James Smith of Craighead, also loaned capital to both family and the firm. When he died in 1815, he left £71,027 in

¹ John Guthrie Smith, James Oswald Mitchell, 'Craigend Castle', *The Old Country Houses of the old Glasgow Gentry*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1878 edn.)

² J. Guthrie Smith, *The Parish of Strathblane and its inhabitants from early times*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1886), p. 94.

³ Peter Coldham, *American Migrations 1765 - 1799*, (Baltimore, 2000), p. 597.

⁴ James MacLehose, *Memoirs and portraits of 100 Glasgow Men* (Glasgow, 1886), pp. 285-8.

⁶ James Anderson (ed.), *The Burgesses and Guild Brethren of Glasgow, 1751-1846* (Edinburgh, 1935), p.113.

⁸ National Records of Scotland (hereafter NRS), SC36/48/11, 'Inventory of John Smith', 24 June 1816, p.39.

moveable property including over £50,000 in Leitch & Smith, of which £20,000 was a loan.⁹ James also provided capital on bond which allowed younger members to enter the business.

In contrast to ‘gentry capitalist’ landed families – such as the Stirlings of Keir – who increased their existing wealth through collaboration and exploitation in the Caribbean, the Smiths were *arriviste* merchants.¹⁰ Indeed, the spectacular transformation of the family from tenant farmers in the 1650s into elite landowners with several estates coincides with the influx of West India capital across several generations. Robert Smith acquired Craigend in 1660 and the estate was improved in 1734 when Archibald’s father James extended what had previously been a minor farm holding. The improvement continued after his death in 1786 when his heir John built Craigend Castle, a country pile more befitting a West India merchant.¹¹ The main conduit of the slave fortune, however, was Leitch & Smith and the family wealth creator, Archibald, expected to be recompensed in his other elder brother James’ will in 1815:

I had a good right to expect a fair proportion of the money [c. £70,000] I had been the means of making, and I may almost say against his will, he was so extremely cautious & timid that had I been in the least guided by his advice or followed his views, there would be little to divide ... he considered me allways too venturesome, perhaps this was one reason why he entrusted me with so little of his fortune, which I suppose he thought I could not keep.¹²

Archibald Smith actually established a family dynasty which spanned over eighty-five years as he passed the capital and skills onto his sons, James, William and Archibald, who went on to become West India merchants in their own right. James and Archibald eventually established the successor firm of James and Archibald Smith and Company. Thus, capital from a tobacco sojourn created a global firm that connected Glasgow with London, Jamaica and Grenada for almost a century.

Within four years of its foundation in 1779, Leitch & Smith was established in the commercial centre of Glasgow at the Trongate.¹³ By 1790, the firm owned a counting house and merchant lodgings,¹⁴ and had access to a fleet of ships, including the *Pomona*, *Nestor*, *Alfred* and *Isabella*, which allowed the transfer of goods and produce across the Atlantic. The counting house enabled transatlantic credit exchanges and served as a

⁹ NRS, SC 36/48/9, ‘Inventory of James Smith’, 9 June 1815, p.685.

¹⁰ S. D. Smith, *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of the Lascelles, 1648-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 9.

¹¹ Guthrie Smith, *Strathblane*, pp. 52–7.

¹² Glasgow City Archive (hereafter GCA), TD 1/26/3, ‘Letter from Archibald Smith’, 11 Aug. 1815.

¹³ *John Tait’s Directory for the city of Glasgow*, (Glasgow: 1783), p. 41.

¹⁴ *Jones’s Directory*, (Glasgow: 1790), pp. 33, 55.

mercantile academy to train the next generation of sojourners. The firm sought profitable trade opportunities in Grenada after 1779, particularly in sugar and cotton. They also became significant merchant financiers and invested over £88,000 across the Caribbean from 1800–23, which included £25,000 in two plantations in Jamaica in 1800 (see Appendix 13). The capital accumulated in the New World had implications for the west of Scotland, as it assisted economic growth and propelled *arriviste* merchants into the landed class. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Archibald Smith invested in an estate four miles west of Glasgow and, in doing so, became part of a recently formed ‘plantocracy’ class. Like his contemporaries, the ‘tobacco lords’, Smith based his success on exploitative methods of trade in the colonies, which created vast profits that were invested in landed enterprise and industry in Scotland.

After the commercial demise of Alexander Houston and Co., the pre-eminent sugar merchants in Scotland, the estate of Jordanhill, including a mansion house and 285 English acres of land, was sold by auction in the Tontine Coffee House on 7 May 1800.¹⁵ On 10 September 1800, Smith paid £16,500 for the estate.¹⁶ He later estimated that Jordanhill had cost ‘near £30,000 with improvements’.¹⁷ In order to announce his rise to the gentry class, he modestly commissioned a coat of arms adorned with the Latin motto ‘Macte’ (‘well done’).¹⁸ As well as increasing social prestige and political influence, this long-term investment provided the base for domestic expansion as capital was invested across the west of Scotland.

In 1799, Leitch & Smith joined with a group of merchants in Glasgow to fund a ‘cotton wool adventure’, which paid annual dividends.¹⁹ This involved the purchase of new world cotton for import to Glasgow. Leitch & Smith were trading cotton with the Spanish in Grenada before 1786 and were still importing cotton into Glasgow from Jamaica and Grenada in the 1820s.²⁰ The organisation also used English ports to land produce, particularly Liverpool. The *Diana* arrived from Berbice on 19 April 1810 and the *Caesar* arrived from Demerara on July 1813.²¹ Thus, the new colonies seem to have become a main source of their sea-island cotton imports. James Finlay and Co. was the largest producer of textiles in Scotland in the early nineteenth century, with three cotton mills at

¹⁵ *The Edinburgh Advertiser*, 15 April 1800.

¹⁶ GCA, TD1/100/70, ‘Ledger’.

¹⁷ GCA, TD1/1095, ‘Daybook extracts’, 1800–1817.

¹⁸ GCA, TD1/1246/4, ‘Patent of Arms’, 4 June 1802.

¹⁹ GCA, TD1/76, ‘Business record’, February 1800.

²⁰ National Archives, (hereafter NA), CO101/26/83, ‘Records of the Colonial Office, Grenada Despatches, Memorial and petition from the merchants of Saint Georges’, 8 June 1786, pp.345–358; *Glasgow Herald* (hereafter *GH*), 22 July 1822; *GH*, 12 Aug. 1822.

²¹ *The Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser*, 21 Apr. 1810; *The Liverpool Mercury*, 2 July 1813.

Ballindalloch, Catrine and Deanston. Leitch & Smith were partners from 1792 until 1823, whilst Archibald was involved from 1792–99 on his own account.²² In 1797, the capital stock was valued at £30,000, with Leitch & Smith holding £5,000 and Archibald Smith £1,000 of the total. This made Leitch & Smith the second largest shareholder and their account current suggests they bought and sold produce and goods.²³ It has recently been argued that the holdings of elite Glasgow-West India merchants in cotton manufactories were, at the time of their deaths, small scale.²⁴ However, the colonies also provided raw materials and export markets.

Archibald Smith was one of the most influential cotton masters in Glasgow. At an exclusive ‘respectable meeting’ on 10 February 1803, he was present alongside other luminaries such as Archibald Campbell, Kirkman Finlay and James Dennistoun. According to them, cotton required for the Glasgow manufactures was ‘chiefly the product of foreign independent Countries, or of Colonies of other European powers’, and the high duty on such imports created an ‘artificial scarcity’. Subsequently, they sought the repeal of the government duty in order to enhance industry and increase ‘the productive power and wealth’ of Scotland.²⁵ Smith opposed import tax throughout his mercantile career. As Chairman of the Glasgow West India Association in 1819, he ratified a petition to the treasury protesting against cotton duties.²⁶ Thus, the Glasgow merchant rhetoric demanded a relaxation of the mutual monopoly conditions which had allowed them to flourish in favour of extending their own monopoly of cotton exports. This is consistent with Eric Williams’ view that merchant manufacturers sought to destroy orthodox mercantilism in the nineteenth century once the profits from trade with British West India colonies were in decline.²⁷ Archibald Smith later expanded into textile production by employing handloom weavers.²⁸ In 1799, he established Smith, Hutchison and Co., which became one of the great Glasgow linen houses.²⁹ Thus, the West Indies provided both the raw materials as well as the main export market; just over sixty per cent of all Scottish linen was exported

²² C. Brogan, *James Finlay & Company Limited: Manufacturers and East India merchants, 1750-1950* (Glasgow, 1951), p. xvii.

²³ University of Glasgow Archives (hereafter GUA), UGD91/1/4/1/3/1 ‘Ledger of James Finlay and Co.’, 1792-1800, p.105-6.

²⁴ Anthony Cooke, ‘An Elite Revisited: Glasgow West India Merchants, 1783–1877’, *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 32, 2 (2012), p.145.

²⁵ *The Morning Post*, 1 Mar. 1803.

²⁶ British Library, Liverpool Papers, Add MSS 38368, Petition of the Glasgow West India Association, 25 May 1819, f.273.

²⁷ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Billing and Sons, 1981 edn.), p.57.

²⁸ GCA, TD1/107, ‘Day book’.

²⁹ MacLehose, *Memoirs and Portraits*, pp. 173–6.

to the Caribbean in 1796, with Jamaica the principal destination.³⁰ In this way, through the process of vertical integration, the Glasgow-West India traders connected the Atlantic world, which assisted the agrarian and industrial improvement of Scotland.

Glasgow's first banks were established by tobacco merchants and, similarly, Smith sunk investment into savings banks and insurance schemes. He bought four shares for a total of £1,000 in Glasgow Fire Insurance Society in 1803 and was voted a director.³¹ The Society was short lived, however, and disbanded in 1811 when it was transferred to London. With James Ewing, Smith was involved with the establishment of the first Provident Bank in Glasgow in 1815 and the family still had outstanding subscriptions on its winding up in 1851.³² The 'plantocracy' class were therefore involved in a range of financial activities across the Scottish Atlantic.

An exact estimation of the profits accrued from these investments is impossible to ascertain, although asset purchases and estate on death hint at high personal income. Whilst there are difficulties in using wills and confirmation inventories as sole indicators of a successful mercantile career, the evidence suggests Archibald Smith accumulated a large colonial fortune. The estate was valued in 1822 at £81,494, with the most valuable assets the estates of Jordanhill (£22,000) and Whiteinch Farm (£13,000).³³ His initial inventory outlined over half (£42,604) was in Leitch & Smith.³⁴ A subsequent inventory not only revised the merchant house investment upwards to £62,237, but also outlined his role as a financier of plantations and the difficulties of valuing mortgages secured on enslaved people:

At the time of his decease, his share of certain sums of money secured over certain plantations in the colonies...by mortgages or otherwise and held by the said concern of Leitch and Smith which it is impossible to value at present...being heritable Colonial property.³⁵

The mortgages were difficult to convert to capital in Scotland in the short term, and the sons of Archibald Smith eventually assumed control of the investments.

As confirmation inventories sometimes underestimate assets on death, comparisons with individuals are not useful. However, studies of contemporary wealth creators provide data which allows a tentative estimation of scale. George McGilvary traced the repatriation

³⁰ Alistair Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979), p. 152.

³¹ GUA, UGD 71/1/5, 'Glasgow Fire Insurance Society', May 1803.

³² J. Cleland, *The Rise and Progress of the City of Glasgow* (Glasgow: 1840), p. 64; *GH*, 5 Sept. 1851.

³³ GCA, TD1/1096, 'Estate of the late Arch. Smith'.

³⁴ NRS, CC10/7/4, 'Inventory of Archibald Smith', 31 Oct. 1821, p.244-5.

³⁵ NRS, SC36/48/19, 'Inventory of Archibald Smith', 10 Aug. 1824, p.145-6.

of wealth from India to Scotland in the eighteenth century and defined the fortune size of returning East India nabobs. A 'large fortune' was defined as ranging from £40,000 to £100,000.³⁶ Furthermore, the average wealth on death of thirteen 'first generation' cotton merchants and manufacturers in the Glasgow area who died between 1787 and 1839 was £11,809.³⁷ Chapter seven of this thesis establishes that the average personal wealth of sixty eight subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association on death was around £40,000. Thus, with a total estate (including heritable property) of over £100,000, Smith epitomised the successful Glasgow-West India elite. His wealth passed directly to his sons: James Smith, as the eldest son inherited around £40,000 including the estate of Jordanhill, whilst William and Archibald received £8,000 each.³⁸ The three sons carried on the family tradition and further developed the portfolio of Caribbean investments.

Robert Kirk, a sojourner from Kilmarnock who underwent commercial training in Glasgow, was 'closing the business of Leitch and Smith' in Grenada in July 1822, and mooted travelling to another island.³⁹ In fact, Kirk remained in Grenada under the employment of James and Archibald Smith (J&A Smith and Co.) and eventually became a merchant financier in his own right. Leitch & Smith's satellite trade house, 'Guthrie and Co.', based in Glasgow, with offices in Kingston, Jamaica and St George's, Grenada, was terminated on 31 March 1824.⁴⁰ This was the formal process required to establish the successor firm. The glorious histories of Glasgow have portrayed James Smith of Jordanhill, as having limited involvement with the West India firm.⁴¹ This was replicated more recently as he was described merely as a 'sleeping partner' in Leitch & Smith.⁴² However, it is now apparent that James was also a leading influence in the successor family firm, and maintained an elite lifestyle based on a West India fortune.

James, William and Archibald Smith were groomed for West India careers by Archibald senior, although in contrast to their father's colonial sojourn, the sons followed a typically middle-class educational path.⁴³ James attended Glasgow High School and

³⁶ George McGilvary, *East India Patronage and the British State* (London: Taurus, 2008), p.199.

³⁷ Anthony Cooke, *The Rise and Fall of the Scottish Cotton Industry, 1778-1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp.191–2.

³⁸ NRS, CC10/7/4/245, 'Settlement of Archibald Smith', 31 Oct. 1821.

³⁹ NRS, GD1/632/13, 'Sarah Kirk to Marion Crooks', 14 July 1822.

⁴⁰ *The Law Advertiser for the year 1824, vol. 2*, (London, 1824), p. 124.

⁴¹ George Stewart, *Curiosities of Glasgow Citizenship*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1881), p.237; MacLehose, *Memoirs and Portraits*, p.286.

⁴² George Fairfull Smith, 'Smith, James, of Jordanhill (1782–1867)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn. (Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁴³ R. H. Trainor, 'The Elite' in *Glasgow, vol. 2: 1830-1912*, ed. by W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p.244.

matriculated at the University of Glasgow in 1795.⁴⁴ William and Archibald followed in 1798 and 1807, respectively.⁴⁵ James and Archibald registered as merchant burgesses in Glasgow and were given shares early in life.⁴⁶ In 1814, James was gifted £3,000 by his father to ‘make up his stock [£8,000] in Leitch & Smith’, whilst Archibald was given a present of over £5,000 on 31 March 1817, consisting of two shares in the West India firm (at £2,000 each) and the rest in profits.⁴⁷ William also took advantage of family networks and borrowed £2,000 on bond from his uncle James in 1808.⁴⁸ He was also co-partner with his cousins in the Glasgow-West India firm, Smith & Brown. William eventually became Dean of the Guild and Lord Provost in the city.⁴⁹

Archibald senior’s death in 1821 shifted family power to his sons and led to the formation of J&A Smith and Co. on 5 April 1824. The firm subsequently became significant merchant financiers in Glasgow and invested a minimum of £61,175 across the Caribbean, mainly in Grenada between 1829 and 1832 (see Appendix 14). The main partners also claimed compensation for the enslaved from the British government after the abolition of plantation slavery in 1834 and eventually transferred capital into heavy industry. This chapter will now examine the exploitative practices that underpinned the integrated Atlantic economy.

First phase operations: Grenada and Carriacou

As discussed in chapter four, Grenada became an increasingly popular destination for Scottish sojourners after 1763. One of the main partners of the firm, John Leitch, was in the West Indies in 1781 and Leitch & Smith developed a trade network soon after.⁵⁰ The *Isabella* sailed from Glasgow in January 1791⁵¹ and sometime after 1792 they formed a specialist trade house, Guthrie & Ryburn, which became the largest firm on the island by the end of the century.⁵²

This colonial base in St George’s, the commercial centre, allowed them to take advantage of the Free Port Acts, legislation which relaxed the strict navigation laws after 1766 and enabled lucrative trade with neighbouring colonies of other European powers.

⁴⁴ W. Innes Addison, *The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow, From 1728 to 1858*, (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1913), p. 179.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 187, 229.

⁴⁶ Anderson, *Burgesses*, p.269, p.304.

⁴⁷ GCA, TD1/1095, ‘Daybook extracts’.

⁴⁸ NRS, SC36/48/9, ‘Inventory of James Smith’, 9 June 1815, p.685.

⁴⁹ Stewart, *Curiosities*, p. 238.

⁵⁰ Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750-1820*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.88.

⁵¹ *The Glasgow Advertiser*, 3 Jan. 1791.

⁵² Frances Armytage, *The Free Port System in the British West Indies* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1953), p.69.

The free ports in the British West Indies allowed foreigners to trade goods which would normally be prohibited. In fact, this was an elaboration of the Navigation Acts as free ports only accepted foreign imports that were not in competition with goods produced in Britain or her colonies, whilst exports were limited to valuable goods. Thus, in free ports, French and Spanish merchants purchased manufactured goods and paid in bullion or plantation produce. This positive balance of trade created huge profits for British merchants in Grenada; exports were valued at £350,000 in 1792.⁵³

According to one historian, Kingston in Jamaica and St George's in Grenada were the 'most flourishing' free ports in 1791.⁵⁴ This was despite the latter only being awarded full privileges after a revision of the system in 1787. A petition to the Colonial Office demonstrates Leitch & Smith were pioneers of the Glasgow-Grenada free port trade after the American War of Independence. Prior to the revised legislation in 1787, they had conducted an informally accepted trade 'chiefly of cotton' with merchants in adjoining Spanish settlements, particularly Trinidad.⁵⁵ This was highly lucrative for the Glasgow firm. In 1799, John Guthrie was said to have 'publickally declared' to the collector of customs that profits from a cargo contained in a 'Vessel with Merchandize from home' would be 'five thousand pounds'.⁵⁶ However, whilst Guthrie later admitted the trade was 'very advantageous', he disputed the profit level and stated it was £5,000 in Grenada currency.⁵⁷ According to one contemporary source 'the currency of Grenada, or rate of exchange, is commonly sixty-five per cent worse than sterling'.⁵⁸ In any case, the profitable trade with slave based economies in Spanish America provided markets for Glasgow merchants as well as payments in bullion. The large gains were not without risk, however, as the sojourners were resident on a colony in a state of growing turmoil.

Amongst the wave of rebellions that swept the Caribbean in the aftermath of the uprising on Saint Domingue in 1791, the Franco-Grenadian free people of colour led by Julien Fedon joined forces with their black slaves to overthrow the British regime in favour of revolutionary France. The violent uprising began on 2 March 1795 and continued for sixteen months; around 7,000 slaves were killed as well as forty-eight British hostages, including Alexander Campbell. The sugar mills, buildings and rum works were obliterated on 100 estates and the total loss to the island's economy was £2.5 million sterling between

⁵³ Ibid., p.70.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.68.

⁵⁵ NA, CO101/26/83, 'Memorial', 8 June 1786, p.354.

⁵⁶ NA, BT 1/18/1, 'Letter to Governor Green', 13 Feb. 1799, pp.13-14.

⁵⁷ NA, BT1/18, 'Guthrie & Ryburn to Governor Green', 23 Feb. 1799, p.22.

⁵⁸ W. Winterbottom, *Historical, Geographical, Commercial and Philosophical View of the American United States*, 2nd edn, vol. 4, (London: J. Ridgeway, 1795), p.264.

1795 and 1798.⁵⁹ In order to rebuild the colony, the British government passed two acts that provided £1,500,000 ‘for the purpose of making Loans to persons with or trading to the Islands of Grenada and St Vincents’.⁶⁰ It is unclear if Leitch & Smith took out loans but they were eligible.⁶¹ More importantly, they were present during the lucrative restoration of the plantation economy. In 1817, the Speaker of the House of Assembly in Grenada, George Munro, pleaded with the British government to reduce tax duties as he condemned the merchants who had taken advantage of ruined planters:

A bill indeed was passed, and an issue of exchequer bills was made in May 1795 intituled “For Relief of the Grenada Planters and Merchants connected with that Island and St Vincents”. But to the latter only, it was a boon; to the former it was the reverse; it was calculated to save the merchant; to save merchants who must thus have become bankrupts if no such insurrection had happened; but more completely to subjugate them the planters. The merchant, supported by his numerous creditors and connections in Great Britain, only could command the personal security there the act required, and to them it was granted; and in respect to a few individuals, to a most enormous amount; but the ruined planter was stripped of his counter security by the same hand that held out this impotent relief. If any benefit had been meant to him, even by way of loan, Government was well aware his estate, in the plight it stood, was the only security he could give, and none other should have been exacted of him. The estates of course became more deeply encumbered than they had previously been, and fell very generally into the hands of the mortgagees, merchants in England.⁶²

Munro’s evidence points to vast profiteering in Grenada although it can now be shown the merchants were not only English; some were also from Glasgow.

In the aftermath of the abolition of the slave trade and exactly a fortnight before the Glasgow West India Association was formed, Leitch & Smith embarked on a policy designed to consolidate their interests in the West Indies. At a meeting on 8 October 1807, the co-partners Archibald Smith, John Smith, James Smith, James Smith junior, John Ryburn, John Guthrie, Andrew Ranken and Adam Crooks agreed on a transatlantic ‘house of trade’ system to lease ‘sundry Land’ and ‘slaves’, which was probably a renewal of a previous agreement. The network was dominated by an absentee mercantile oligarchy, with some partners assuming elite positions in Glasgow society. Archibald Smith was one of the original subscribers of the Chamber of Commerce in 1783, and chairman in 1815. He was also the Dean of Guild of the Merchants House, 1799–1800. John Guthrie was

⁵⁹ E. I. Cox, ‘Fedon’s Rebellion, 1795-96: Causes and Consequences’, *Journal of Negro History*, 67, 1 (1982), p.15.

⁶⁰ Parliamentary Papers (hereafter PP), 1801 (98), *Report on the petition of the proprietors of estates in the Island of Grenada*, p.11.

⁶¹ PP 1801-02 (43), *An account of the loans advanced, in exchequer bills and cash, to the planters and merchants interested in the islands of Grenada and St. Vincent's*.

⁶² PP 1821, *House of Commons Papers*, 14, ‘Correspondence between Lord Bathurst and the Colonies’, 12 Apr. 1817.

Dean of Guild of the Merchants House in 1814–15 and Adam Crooks was deputy chairman of the Chamber of Commerce in 1829. At the other end of the Atlantic, the colonial business was regulated by nominating power of attorney to John Lindsay, Daniel Brady and William Mitchell in Grenada.⁶³ The mercantile strategy of Leitch & Smith strengthened their connections with the West Indies just as the prominence of the ‘plantocracy’ was under increasing threat in Glasgow after abolition.

The network was not only oligarchic, but based on wider relationships of kith and kin. The transatlantic trade houses linked Glasgow with Robert Smith in Jamaica, whilst the firm of Guthrie & Ryburn were based in Grenada. The profitable ‘house of trade’ was led by co-partners, John Ryburn and John Guthrie, a nephew of Archibald Smith. In 1799–1800, they were respected members of the island community as ‘Guardians of Slaves’ in St George’s.⁶⁴ However, Guthrie returned home to join his uncle and cousins and purchased the estate of Carbeth in Strathblane in 1800.⁶⁵ His colonial partner, Ryburn, brought assets to the firm; he owned land in St George’s in 1807,⁶⁶ as well as the *Nancy* of Greenock, and had shares in two other ships, the *Pomona* and the *Alfred*.⁶⁷ The *Pomona* was running voyages for Leitch & Smith to Grenada in 1809, and to Port Morant and Kingston in Jamaica in the early 1820s.⁶⁸ Leitch & Smith, therefore, controlled a fleet of ships which facilitated the transfer of produce and capital across the Atlantic, although they depended on young Scotsmen to conduct their colonial business. As their Caribbean enterprise was based on credit, they minimised risk by recruiting known employees.

Newspapers in Glasgow in this period listed various employment opportunities in Grenada. As argued in chapter four, this was a commercial business. However, Leitch & Smith only recruited a limited number of employees in Glasgow for plantations in the West Indies.⁶⁹ Moreover, they did not utilise an open employment policy for their own enterprise and recruited sojourners of the correct sort based on established networks. As well as John Guthrie, Archibald also secured employment for his elder brother James. Crucially, he was entrusted with conveying profits to Glasgow:

⁶³ Grenada Supreme Court, St George, Grenada, Registry of Records, Grenada Deeds (hereafter GD), M2, ‘Power of Attorney’, 19 Apr. 1808, pp.489-93. I am grateful to Jim Smith of Florida for drawing my attention to these sources which were acquired from Microfilms held at the Family History Library, <http://www.familysearch.org/eng/library/fhlcatalog/printing/titledetailsprint.asp?titleno=574884>, accessed 13 May 2011. In April 2014, I examined many of the originals which are held in Grenada Supreme Court Registry, St George’s, Grenada.

⁶⁴ NA, CO101/42, ‘Persons appointed as Guardians of Slaves’, 1805, p.22.

⁶⁵ Guthrie Smith, Oswald Mitchell, ‘Carbeth Guthrie’, *Old Country Houses*.

⁶⁶ W. Snagg, (ed.), *The Laws of Grenada and the Grenadines* (Grenada, 1852), pp.147–8.

⁶⁷ David Dobson, *Scots in the West Indies, 1707-1857*, vol. 2 (Baltimore: Clearfield Publishing, 2006), p. 98.

⁶⁸ *GH*, 11 Aug. 1809; *GH*, 22 July 1822.

⁶⁹ Between 1806 and 1834, Leitch & Smith advertised just eleven jobs in Grenada and Jamaica in the *Glasgow Herald*. For example, See ‘For St George’s, Grenada’, *Glasgow Herald*, 14 January 1814, p.3.

I took him into the concern four years after its commencement [i.e. 1783] when he was idle, merely to give him employment. The business in Grenada was begun before he went there & which he rather check'd than promoted the only good he did was remitting the money regularly.⁷⁰

They also picked young merchants from outside the Smith family circle and developed them prior to departure. A series of letters that travelled by the packet on the ships *Pomona*, *Ardent* and *Nestor* illustrates the working of the trade house in St George's and the preparation of young sojourners in Glasgow. The Kirk family of Kilmarnock were kin of Adam Crooks, a co-partner in Leitch & Smith. This connection allowed two brothers, Robert and Adam Kirk, to embark on a mercantile career. A commercial handbook published in 1766 - for use by 'men of business' in commercial Glasgow - suggested firms employed groups of individuals as a risk-averse policy:

In the West Indies...merchants who establish factors there, find it necessary to settle two, three or more, in the same house, that, on the case of the death of one, there may still be a sufficient number known to their business, to carry on the affairs of the house till the vacancy is supplied.⁷¹

By sending out the two Kirk brothers almost at the same time, Leitch & Smith adopted a similar policy and this was to prove a wise decision.

Adam travelled to Grenada in 1811 into the care of Guthrie and Ryburn⁷² and immediately connected with an established network of Ayrshire sojourners: 'there is so many young men...for here you have a general acquaintance with every Body'. Thomas Gregory and Adam Pringle from Ayr were 'kind of cronies', whilst John Todd, another Kilmarnock sojourner, travelled from Carriacou to see Adam Kirk soon after his arrival.⁷³ Todd later assumed a prominent position with J&A Smith in the 1820s, and went into partnership on his own account with Robert Kirk. Whilst Adam began his career on Grenada, Robert remained in Glasgow for commercial education prior to embarkation. In the counting house in 1812 he was 'kept very close at work attending French and Spanish classes'.⁷⁴ These classes were international in focus and the practical skills allowed transactions with the resident French plantation owners as well as Spanish cotton merchants.

⁷⁰ GCA, TD1/26/3, 'Letter from Archibald Smith', 11 August 1815.

⁷¹ William Gordon, *The General Counting House and Man of Business*, (A. Donaldson: Edinburgh, 1766), p.379.

⁷² NRS, GD1/632/2, 'John Kirk to Adam Kirk', 22 February 1811.

⁷³ NRS, GD1/632/4, 'Adam Crooks to John and James Crooks', 26 June 1812.

⁷⁴ NRS, GD1/632/3, 'John Kirk to Adam Kirk', 20 Feb. 1812.

The Glasgow merchant house took full advantage of the increase in free port trade from St George's from 1808 to 1815. Indeed, the value of Guthrie & Ryburn's exports in the first eight months of 1813 was \$144,240, which was seven times greater than every other trade house on Grenada together. Some of the export goods had been sourced from the East Indies and Manchester, although almost half by value (\$71,250) were sourced in Glasgow.⁷⁵ Perhaps to assist with the increasing business, the parent firm Leitch & Smith purchased over one acre of 'land covered with water' in the 'Carenage' harbour area in St George's sometime between 1807 and 1814, allowing the transfer of stock and refitting of ships. The land was acquired at auction from the trustees of Alexander Houston and Co. for £290 sterling.⁷⁶ This was to prove a wise investment: it was sold in 1830 to Kirk & Todd in Grenada for £1500.⁷⁷

A ship captain, Mr Mcilven, recounted to Adam Kirk's father in January 1812 how his son was 'Commander in Chief in the shop' in St George's and 'had entirely put down flogging' to an extent that 'the poor black fellows' were 'extraordinary taken' with him.⁷⁸ Adam's brother Robert, eventually a key part of the Glasgow enterprise, served a longer apprenticeship and in 1814 was still 'confined to the store'.⁷⁹ On 22 February 1812, Leitch & Smith purchased black male slaves Louis, Alexis Brutus and Sampiere from Walter McInnes of the island of Martinique, a French colony, although under British control in 1812.⁸⁰ It is likely they became workers attached to the store, or crew on their schooner *Betsy* that traded along the Spanish Main.⁸¹ They also released at least two enslaved people from their chattel status in this period. In 1817, a 'Negro woman slave named Mary with her infant mulatto son James' were freed for the 'good Causes and Considerations' of Leitch & Smith.⁸² Whilst it is possible they sold slaves in the free port prior to 1807, the purchase and manumission described here represent the only direct traffic in the available evidence concerning Grenada. Instead, Leitch & Smith primarily advanced capital to planters although, as was common practice, they accepted plantations as security with literally hundreds of enslaved people (including infants only days old) as human collateral in such business dealings.

Similarly, there is no evidence that Leitch & Smith took direct ownership of plantations in Grenada. However, they extended capital and export supplies on credit

⁷⁵ NA, CO101/53, 'Abstract of Exports', 1813, pp.70-71.

⁷⁶ GD, Y4, 'Indentures for parcel of land', 20 June 1814, pp.156-64.

⁷⁷ GD, L5, 'Indentures for Carenage', 19 Apr. 1830, p.614-20.

⁷⁸ NRS, GD1/632/3, 'John Kirk to Adam Kirk', 20 Feb. 1812.

⁷⁹ NRS, GD1/632/6, 'Adam Kirk to Marion Crooks', 24 July 1814.

⁸⁰ GD, P2, 'Purchase of slaves', 19 December 1812, pp.46-47.

⁸¹ NA, CO101/52, 'Guthrie and Ryburn to Governor Ainslie, 5 April 1813, pp.19-20.

⁸² GD, R2, 'Manumission', 8 September 1817, pp.154-5.

which sustained the system and tied resident planters to long-term consignment plans. These methods were similar to the largest English merchant houses and in contrast to the 'store system'. A series of indentures from 1810 illustrate the process which allowed absentee Scottish merchants in Grenada to gain a stranglehold of the plantation economy.⁸⁴ Leitch & Smith advanced Ferdinand De Creft and his wife a mortgage on 9 October 1810 (see Appendix 13). The repayment of the principal loan was paid annually over the next three years with interest, which was typically five per cent. The credit agreement tied the plantations to Leitch & Smith for the duration of the mortgage and permitted future loans and advance of stock, whilst the sugar and all produce (except cocoa and molasses) were consigned to Scotland. As collateral, the De Crefts put up Columbia, a sugar plantation with sixty-six slaves, as well as a coffee and cocoa estate named Pyrrhenees, both in the parish of St Andrew.⁸⁵ Leitch and Smith were repaid with interest by 1819.⁸⁶ A reprinted *Reference to the plan of the Island of Grenada* listed 'F. De Creft' as the proprietor of Columbia in St Andrew in 1824, indicating he was a successful plantation owner over the long term.⁸⁷

As well as mortgages secured on plantations, Leitch & Smith also advanced short-term credit in the form of bond loans and bills of exchange. The extension of credit brought more consignments of produce to Glasgow and in order to deal with the increasing business they appointed three new attorneys in October 1816.⁸⁸ John Lindsay was retained whilst resident merchants, William Kirkland and Robert Kirk, were added to the Smith payroll. The two Kirk brothers had contrasting fortunes. Adam died on Grenada on 8 December 1816, whilst Robert, after completing a five-year apprenticeship, was promoted to a senior position, which he held for over twenty years.⁸⁹ A subsequent power of attorney in April 1818 recruited more individuals; Lindsay, Kirk and William Mitchell, a resident planter, were nominated, with a further six persons required. The colonial remit had shifted since 1807. In order to pursue outlying debts, attorneys were instructed not only to manage 'mercantile affairs and Business', but also to supervise with the 'collecting and receiving debts' as well as 'carrying in suits at Law or in Equity'.⁹⁰ Thus, the organisation broadened their trading operations and reinforced an efficient debt recovery strategy. However, just as

⁸⁴ The Grenada mortgage deeds were based on English law and took the form of 'lease and release' and 'bargain and sale' agreements.

⁸⁵ GD, Z4, 'Indentures', 29 January 1816, pp.257-67.

⁸⁶ GD, A5, 'Indentures', 6 March 1820, pp.872-5.

⁸⁷ Gavin Smith, *Reference to the plan of the Island of Grenada* (London, 1882), p. 8.

⁸⁸ GD, R2, 'Power of Attorney', 23 May 1817, pp.22-24.

⁸⁹ NRS, GD1/632/8, 'Sarah Kirk to John Kirk', 30 March 1817.

⁹⁰ GD, S2, 'Power of Attorney', 29 June 1818, pp.312-6.

the Grenada business developed, the death of Archibald Smith senior in 1821 led to the restructure of the Glasgow firm.

The transfer of power: James & Archibald Smith & Co.

After Leitch & Smith were disbanded, James and Archibald Smith and Company were formed on 5 April 1824. Whilst the organisation consisted of only three co-partners, the personnel and strategy in Grenada remained unchanged. They inherited the business interests of Leitch & Smith and the smaller structure streamlined profits into fewer hands. At a meeting in Glasgow on 12 February 1827, an agreement was reached between James and Archibald Smith and Robert McCunn to trade in Grenada and ‘all foreign West India islands except the Islands of Jamaica’. Taking advantage of established networks in Scotland and Grenada, the Smiths appointed the Kilmarnock sojourners John Todd and Robert Kirk as attorneys alongside William Scott Kirkland to support operations in Carriacou.⁹¹ Todd temporarily returned to Glasgow in 1827, perhaps to meet with the Smiths to receive instructions for the next investment cycle.

As the abolitionist movement gathered pace, the Smiths increased the extension of credit and laid out over £54,000 in a five-year period after 1827 (see Appendix 14). This level of credit is comparable to the top lenders in Barbados between 1823 and 1843, the merchant house of Daniel, a ‘major force’ who provided £62,694 in mortgages to planters.⁹² The Smith investment cycle was large scale and ambitious in a period which Richard Pares suggested abolition provided an ideal excuse for merchants to decline credit.⁹³ In the years leading up to emancipation, many West India merchant houses across Great Britain were threatened with insolvency. Foreign competition and overproduction of sugar meant fluctuating prices, and uncertainty over debt repayment made conditions increasingly volatile. Ten merchant firms across Great Britain went bankrupt in 1831 alone.⁹⁶

The Smith strategy would therefore seem at first to be high risk. However, all loans after 1827 were secured with mortgages on plantations and they added security after 1829 by strictly limiting credit to British planters. In the post-1829 sample, the Glasgow-West India merchant house set mortgages at five per cent interest which was the legal British rate up to 1854.⁹⁷ By adhering to the usury regulations and by demanding payment in

⁹¹ GD, V2, ‘Power of Attorney’, 11 September 1829, pp.42-6.

⁹² Kathleen Mary Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation: Jamaica & Barbados, 1823-1843*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p.66.

⁹³ Richard Pares, *A West India Fortune*, (Bristol: Longmans, Green and Co., 1950), p. 261.

⁹⁶ Butler, *Economics of Emancipation*, p. 66.

⁹⁷ Pares, *West India Fortune*, p. 258.

sterling in London and Glasgow, they placed the terms of credit in the British system which meant disputes could be settled in metropolis courts with greater prospects of success. Furthermore, they had the option of taking legal recourse against executors of individuals resident in the West Indies but whose wills were proved in Scotland. Leitch & Smith had previously raised a court case in Edinburgh in 1821 against the executors of the will of Andrew Rome, a Scottish merchant-planter resident in Carriacou. Rome was 'in the practice of sending home to them rum and sugar, the produce of his estate to be by them sold on commission and he drew bills on them from time to time'.⁹⁸

The Smiths had a long-term trading relationship with another Scot, William Stuart from Inverurie in Aberdeenshire. Stuart was a resident planter in Grenada in 1816, although he returned to Scotland and eventually entered into mortgage agreements with J&A Smith and Co. in 1829. They took over his extensive debts and Stuart put up three estates, Mount Hardman, Grande Ance and Morne Delice, as well as 430 slaves, as security. Some of the enslaved people that were placed as collateral were registered to Stuart's other plantations, Mount Moritz in St George and Diamond in St Mark. This was to prove important on emancipation in 1834. The interest on the mortgage was charged at five per cent,⁹⁹ and they gained supply privileges and consignment rights to Grand Ance, the largest sugar and cotton estate on Grenada, spread over 1,237 acres.¹⁰⁰ The principal loan was scheduled to be paid in stages at the Royal Exchange in London by 1834, as well as an additional advance which took the outstanding Stuart debt to over £24,000.¹⁰¹

The Glasgow merchant house continued to loan large sums in Grenada, including to their Scottish representatives, Kirk & Todd, who started business on their own account. They sold the merchant store at Carenage to their attorneys in April 1830,¹⁰² marking the beginning of a new relationship. Kirk and Todd subsequently borrowed capital from the Smiths in June 1830 which allowed them to take over the mortgage of David McEwan.¹⁰³ J&A Smith and Co. also continued with company policy of increasing sugar imports through large mortgages. The honourable George Paterson - originally from Old Rayne, Aberdeen - was a former governor on Grenada. By 1832, he was a resident planter who owned two plantations, Marli and Union, in the parish of St Patrick. He transferred a large mortgage to J&A Smith and Co. and, as part of the repayment agreement, he consigned sugar bi-annually each March and August. In a profitable arrangement, J&A Smith charged

⁹⁸ NRS, CS44/38/29, 'Condescence for Leitch & Smith', 1822.

⁹⁹ GD, L5, 'Indentures', 9 September 1829, pp.174-217.

¹⁰⁰ Smith, *Reference to the plan of the Island of Grenada*, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ GD, L5, 'Indentures', 4 January 1830, pp.392-405.

¹⁰² GD, L5, 'Indentures', 19 April 1830, pp.614-20.

¹⁰³ GD, M5, 'Indentures', 21 October 1830, pp.124-53.

for shipping and organised the export of ‘stores, supplies, goods, wares and merchandize’. Whilst they also promised to pay bills of exchange drawn in the colonies and assumed responsibility for the disposal of the sugar in Glasgow, the burden of risk was firmly on Paterson until it arrived as ‘the dangers of the seas and the Kings enemies only and always expected’.¹⁰⁴

In the absence of merchant correspondence or company ledgers, it is impossible to reach definitive conclusions on the extent of their commission business. However, although it is a small dataset of loans, it is useful to make some observations especially as ‘much remains to be learned about plantation finance...during the years leading up to Emancipation in 1834’.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, there is no comparative sample of Glasgow-West India loans. This study identifies Leitch & Smith and their successors as significant merchant financiers in Grenada, with loans of over £84,000 in both short- and long-term credit to individual planters. They also loaned to their own merchant attorneys, Kirk & Todd. The Glasgow merchant house was well situated to take advantage of restoration of Grenada: they operated in the colony before 1783 (although the sample of investments analysed here begins in 1810) and were pioneers of the free port trade. Their trade house was the largest on the island, and the Guthrie declaration suggests they acquired large-scale capital from this. However, the peak years were before 1793 and the British capture of Trinidad in 1797 marked an exodus of free port traders to the new colony as it was closer to the Spanish Main. The decline in the Grenada free port trade was dramatic after 1816.¹⁰⁶ Thus, it is possible the mortgages were part of a strategy designed to increase the commission business within Grenada.

The evidence suggests the Smiths preferred to undertake colonial business with Scottish merchants and planters. Indeed, they utilised kith and kin networks not only for recruitment in Glasgow and the Caribbean, but also for business opportunities. The mortgages secured on Jamaican plantations (described in the next section) were loaned to Scots, including a Glasgow-West India merchant house. Of the twelve transactions in Grenada and Carriacou, the majority were with individuals with Scottish surnames and six individuals or trustees have been identified as Scots. The Smiths were specialists in acquiring trade rights from plantations through the extension of long-term loans. Significantly, the six mortgages and largest bill of exchange in Grenada were not intended to consolidate existing debt, but instead were the lure that attracted new correspondents. For example, in 1817 a loan was provided to James Bain, who purchased Belmont

¹⁰⁴ GD, N5, ‘Indenture’, 1 August 1832, pp.261-70.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *Gentry Capitalism*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁶ Armytage, *Free Port System*, pp. 123–4.

plantation from Thomas Townsend. Later, in 1829, William Stuart assigned mortgage debt from the Hankeys, merchant financiers in London, to the Smiths whilst George Paterson assigned mortgage debt from John Ryburn and Andrew Ranken - both formerly of Leitch & Smith - who had previously financed the purchase of Marli in 1824. Thus, the majority of the Smith loans were to planters indebted to other lenders, which was in sharp contrast to the merchant house of Pinney based in Bristol, who stopped taking on clients with outstanding mortgage debt in 1815 due to the depressed conditions.¹⁰⁷ The strategy allowed the Smiths to increase their share of the sugar trade, which they consolidated through monopolistic practices.

The Smiths controlled planter debt by placing strict demands that tied the import of plantation produce to the repayment of mortgages, thus increasing their consignment business. . Although these conditions of trade were not legally enforceable, similar agreements were written into the deeds of at least four planters with mortgages secured on multiple large sugar plantations. The Glasgow house maintained control of outstanding loans and account current through sales of sugar and cotton, which were imported in regular shipping runs. Whilst the merchant house of Pinney in Bristol struggled to undertake two voyages per year in the 1790s,¹⁰⁸ Leitch & Smith insisted on bi-annual voyages in at least one mortgage in Grenada and another in Jamaica. It is significant the Smiths did not foreclose any mortgages in Grenada. Three of the six planter mortgages were fully re-paid. Another was reduced through compensation and the largest bill of exchange was also cleared. Although it is probable they had bad debts in Grenada, it is impossible to identify them through the available sources. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests they maintained an efficient approach to debt recovery, enforced by trusted attorneys primed for lawsuits in the colonies and supported by the threat of court action in the metropolis. This maintained the profit flow not only to Scotland, but also to their investments in older colonies. Indeed, they exported their system from Grenada to Jamaica in 1800, although with less lucrative returns.

‘The Jamaica business’

Flush with the profits from Virginia and Grenada, Archibald Smith eventually took his place among the Glasgow-West India elite in the late eighteenth century. However, whilst Smith was a founding member of the Chamber of Commerce, he was not a member of the West India club that met in the late 1780s. By 1798, Smith was dining with the ‘Sugar

¹⁰⁷ Pares, *West India Fortune*, p. 307.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 227

Aristocracy' at the Pig Club. Smith was therefore part of an informal West India network, where it is possible discussions of colonial business took place. The reprinted minutes recreate extravagant dinners and the financing of sugar plantations in Jamaica with wealth from Grenada seems an appropriate business to be concluded over turtle soup and rum punch.¹¹⁰

This section outlines the relationship between the Glasgow-West India house of Robert Mackay and Co., the absentee owners of two Jamaica plantations and their preferred merchants Leitch & Smith. Moreover, this section will illustrate the evolution of a bad debt. The Caribbean economy was based on the extension of credit from Great Britain and there were frequent court cases, bankruptcies and foreclosures leading to merchants assuming control upon default on debts. Leitch & Smith and their mercantile successors were involved in at least five court cases in the 1820s and 1830s concerning debts in the Caribbean, the majority of which concerned Iter Boreale and Heywood Hall. The two estates, located in the northern parishes of St George and St Mary, were acquired after Robert Mackay and Co. foreclosed mortgages with previous proprietors. The estates remained heavily encumbered with annuities paid in London, however, and Henry Glassford (son of tobacco lord John Glassford and member of the Pig Club) was appointed trustee around 1790.¹¹¹ Part of his remit involved the regulation of operations, which included attracting investment capital. In 1800, Archibald Smith advanced £25,000 to Mackay and Co., secured with a bond agreement (see Appendix 13). The loan ensured all plantation produce was consigned to Leitch & Smith, who took 2.5 per cent commission on sales of sugar.¹¹² The capital injection also marked the decline of one Glasgow-West India merchant house and the rise of another.

A legal document based on the estate accounts of Iter Boreale and Heywood Hall outlines the practicalities of the Glasgow-West India trade.¹¹³ Sugar was the most valuable commodity and Iter Boreale was the most productive plantation. The produce was transported in two ships on bi-annual journeys: 383 hogsheads of sugar were shipped from both plantations in 1820. Leitch & Smith sold the sugar to local refiners, such as James McNair, who purchased part of the July shipment on the *Pomona*.¹¹⁴ The raw muscovado was refined in Glasgow sugar houses and sold in local shops or re-exported to Europe. The provisions of the initial loan also guaranteed imports of high quality Jamaica OP (over-proof) rum, and ninety-four puncheons were sent in 1820. That triple-distilled Jamaican.

¹¹⁰ John Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, (Glasgow: Richard Griffin & Company, 1857), pp.212–19.

¹¹¹ GCA, TD 569/1, 'Opinions of counsel', 1808.

¹¹² GCA, TD1/1081/1, 'Contract and Bond of Robert Mackay', October 1800, pp.2-3.

¹¹³ GCA, TD1/1081/2, 'States respecting the Affairs', 1820.

¹¹⁴ NRS, CS 96/4260, 'Raw Sugar Book', 1820.

rum was high quality was reflected in the price, which was 4s 9d a gallon compared to 3s 5d for the Leeward Island version in 1810.¹¹⁵ Leitch & Smith imported rum from Jamaica at least from 1801, when it was sold to Hugh Milliken and Co. in Glasgow.¹¹⁶

Manufactured goods were exported to Jamaica in 1820, adding a level of integration with their manufacturing interests. Commission at half of one per cent interest was charged on drafts and payments.

The trading privileges were protected by provisions of the loan, which placed the burden of risk on the absentee owners. However, the available evidence suggests this became a costly investment that was not repaid. After Robert Mackay and Co. went bankrupt around 1818, Leitch & Smith provided working capital at the behest of Henry Glassford. Whilst it was in the interests of attorneys of the plantations to maintain accurate accounts and maximise profits, the highest costs in the next two years were for draft bills drawn in Jamaica.¹¹⁷ The main costs were for the purchase of island provisions, lumber, salaries for bookkeepers and carpenters as well as the hiring of slave labour. Indeed, correspondence in 1820 between Leitch & Smith and Patrick Cockburn, an accountant in Edinburgh in charge of the Mackay estate, suggests the plantations required more resident slaves to produce large sugar crops.¹¹⁸ There was also a high level of legacies served on the plantations, some of which were only cleared in 1856. The *Iter Boreale* annuities were historic debts paid in London, sometimes to family members of past owners.¹¹⁹ In 1819, the costs of attorney drafts and annuities alone were over £1,000 more than the proceeds from sugar and rum on both estates in 1820.

The activities in Grenada were evidently rewarding to Leitch & Smith, and initially so was the business in Jamaica: ‘the agency of these estates was very profitable for many years, indeed was the best account in their books’.¹²⁰ However, in 1818 they assumed *de facto* ownership of the Jamaican plantations – in contrast to Grenada – and in the next two years a balance of over £18,000 became due.¹²¹ As trustee of the estate of Robert Mackay & Co., Henry Glassford assumed legal responsibility for outstanding debts,¹²² including the outstanding balance and the initial investment of £25,000. A business history of the Jamaican plantations (written in 1867, perhaps by the youngest Archibald Smith) described how the Glasgow firm had sunk all ‘proceeds of these estates’ accumulated from 1800

¹¹⁵ *The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine and Review*, 1 (Edinburgh: 1810), p. 140.

¹¹⁶ NRS, CS96/4361, ‘Imports book’, 13 October 1801, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ Higman, *Plantation Jamaica*, pp. 94–112.

¹¹⁸ The National Library of Jamaica, MS 707/2, ‘Letter from Leitch & Smith’, 28 September 1820.

¹¹⁹ GCA, TD1/1081/1, ‘List of *Iter Boreale* Annuitants’.

¹²⁰ GCA, TD1/1081/1, ‘*Iter Boreale* and Eden Estate’, 7 Mar. 1867.

¹²¹ GCA, TD1/1081/2, ‘States respecting the Affairs’, 1820, p.6.

¹²² GCA, TD1/1081/1, ‘State of Henry Glassford affairs’, February 1820.

back into them, as well as a 'large additional sum'. When Henry Glassford died on 14 May 1819, Leitch & Smith were ranked on his estate for debts upwards of £45,000.¹²³ After his death, trusteeship was transferred to accountants Patrick Cockburn and Charles Selkrig, although Leitch & Smith retained trading privileges and *de facto* ownership. They eventually raised a court case in order to pursue over £50,000.¹²⁴ The account was passed on to James and Archibald Smith who were paid a dividend of £15,572,¹²⁵ and took ownership of both plantations.

Compensation claims at the end of Caribbean slavery

Archibald Smith, John Guthrie and Adam Crooks were founder members at the establishment of the Glasgow West India Association in 1807. Leitch & Smith were amongst the top seven company subscribers, indicating their elite status.¹²⁶ In time, both Archibald Smith senior and junior were appointed director and chairman. As discussed in chapter five, this was a very influential West India network chaired by vested interests who exerted influence in the debates surrounding emancipation.

The Smith family were involved in at least nine compensation claims in the West Indies, the majority of which arose from the outlying debt in Jamaica and Grenada. However, as merchant financiers who principally advanced capital this was a complex process as they attempted to claim compensation for human collateral when the owner had possession of the slave property. J&A Smith and Co. remained the main creditor of the bankrupt estate of Robert Mackay and Co. in 1834. John Ryburn, previously of Grenada, was involved as a trustee suggesting he had been appointed as an agent by J&A Smith. A deal was struck in 1836 between Edinburgh accountants and trustees Charles Selkrig, Patrick Cockburn and John Bell who claimed the compensation for the slaves on Heywood Hall and Iter Boreale. The compensation was intended for creditors of the bankrupted Robert Mackay and Co. whilst the Smiths assumed ownership of the two plantations, which were valued at £23,550.¹²⁷

In Grenada, J&A Smith made six compensation claims and received £12,573 for 480 slaves.¹²⁸ The first two claims were small (four and seven slaves), perhaps for the workers attached to the store and the ship. However, the four largest claims were for slaves on Mount Moritz, Morne Delice, Mount Hardman and Grand Ance, plantations owned by

¹²³ GCA, TD1/1081/1, 'Iter Boreale and Eden Estate'.

¹²⁴ NRS, CS44/9/45/6, 'Summons', 1 December 1821.

¹²⁵ GCA, TD1/1081/1/1, 'State of the Dividends'.

¹²⁶ GCA, TD1683/1/1, 'Abstract of the Glasgow West India Association', pp.6-8.

¹²⁷ GCA, TD1/90, 'Conveyance Deeds', 1837.

¹²⁸ PP 1837-38, (215) 48, *Slavery Abolition Act: an account of all sums of money awarded by the Commissioners of Slavery Compensation*, pp. 98, 312.

William Stuart, a mortgagee since 1829. It is likely that Stuart reached an agreement to take this total from his outstanding mortgage, and J&A Smith claimed compensation on the human property which formed the collateral of the credit agreements. As head of the organisation, this made James Smith – supposedly the sleeping partner of the family West India business – one of the largest compensation claimants in the city.

Associates of J&A Smith were also heavily involved in the process. William Scott Kirkland received compensation for slaves in Dumfries Estate, although Robert Kirk was a far more prolific claimant.¹²⁹ He was involved in twenty claims with a total value of £12,718 for 486 slaves.¹³⁰ As a partner in Kirk & Todd, he made several claims for the firm. However, he also made a number of claims in his own name and received over £7,000 compensation, including for slaves owned by James Bain, previously a Smith correspondent. Kirk personally collected these awards in London. He also made several claims for solitary slaves – it is assumed that he became a speculator and purchased claims at a discount from Grenada residents who were unable to make the journey or to pay agents to collect on their behalf. By 1842, Kirk was in the English spa town of Buxton, where he enjoyed relaxing in the local baths.¹³¹

The Smith family benefitted from further compensation. By 1836, William Smith was wealthy estate owner after inheriting Carbeth Guthrie from his deceased ‘cousin german’ John Guthrie, who died unmarried in 1834.¹³² Thus, the exceptionally close ‘cousin-german’ relationship directed more West India riches to Archibald Smith’s heirs, although they had ample interests of their own. William Smith claimed over £7,500 for 154 slaves on a plantation on Trinidad named Jordanhill, perhaps named in deference to the family estate. The partnership structure of the Glasgow-West India firm Smith & Brown and the ownership and subsequent trusteeship of Jordanhill plantation further underlines the reliance on kinship networks. The co-partners Robert, Francis and William Brown were maternal first cousins with William Smith, whilst John Smith junior was a cousin on his father’s side. Francis Brown was also married to the sister of his business partner, John Smith junior, who operated the bookselling firm in Glasgow that continues today. Francis managed Jordanhill plantation and died on Trinidad in April 1826,¹³⁷ whilst the surviving co-partners collected compensation in 1836 as trustees of his estate. Thus, the family of Archibald Smith claimed over £20,000 in slave compensation, placing them amongst the

¹²⁹ I am grateful to Dr Nicholas Draper of UCL for drawing my attention to this information.

¹³⁰ PP, 1837-38 (215), *Accounts of slave compensation claims*, pp. 95-101.

¹³¹ NRS, GD1/632/15, ‘Robert Kirk to John Crooks’, 25 April 1842.

¹³² J. Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain*, vol. 4 (London: 1838), p. 62.

¹³⁷ W. Blackwood, *Blackwoods Magazine*, vol. 19 (Edinburgh, 1826), p.765.

elite West India families who received large-scale awards such as the Campbells and the Bogles of Gilmorehill.

In Archibald Smith's case, the liquidation of West India property initiated a partial exit from the West Indies. J&A Smith tried and failed to auction Iter Boreale and Heywood Hall 'with the services of the Apprentices' in the Royal Exchange sales rooms in Glasgow in early 1837.¹³⁸ However, they took a mortgage secured on Eden Estate in Jamaica from James Geddes in 1845,¹³⁹ and were still importing sugar to Glasgow in 1846.¹⁴⁰ Power of attorney on Iter Boreale and Heywood Hall was subsequently devolved to several individuals, and Iter Boreale was eventually offered to William Hosack as a cattle pen for £1,000 in 1853. They also assumed control of Eden Estate after the previous owner, James Geddes, died in 1846 but lamented the fact that it had provided no profits unlike Iter Boreale in the past.¹⁴¹ Two of the estates in Jamaica were still in their possession in 1867.

Investments and legacy

The business investments and leisure activities of James and Archibald Smith were indicative of their upper-middle-class status in Glasgow, and quite typical – as demonstrated in chapter seven - of other West India merchants with investments in land, townhouses and railways. Victorian histories of Glasgow describe the younger Archibald Smith as an 'excellent man of business'.¹⁴² In the 1820s and 1830s he ran the West India firm and made commercial investments much like his father; he was named as a director of Beacon Fire Insurance Company of London and Edinburgh in 1826.¹⁴³ In contrast, his elder brother and co-partner James ostensibly devoted himself to science, literature and gentrified activities. A statement of his wealth in April 1832¹⁴⁴ confirmed he was part of the 'very wealthy merchant elite' who maintained an estate and townhouse.¹⁴⁵ The most valuable investments remained Jordanhill and Whiteinch, as well as his library and house in George Square. His pastimes illustrate his middle class lifestyle. As the 'father of yachting on the Clyde', he owned sailing ships from 1806.¹⁴⁶ From 1830 until 1839 he was President of the Anderson's University (now the University of Strathclyde) and was a significant donor to the Andersonian Museum. As president of the Glasgow Dilettanti

¹³⁸ *Caledonian Mercury*, 18 June 1836.

¹³⁹ GCA, TD1/1081/1, 'Iter Boreale and Eden Estate'.

¹⁴⁰ *The Scottish Jurist*, vol. 21 (Edinburgh: 1849), p. 369.

¹⁴¹ GCA, TD1/1081/1, 'Iter Boreale and Eden Estate'.

¹⁴² MacLehose, *Memoirs and Portraits*, p. 286.

¹⁴³ *GH*, 26 June 1826.

¹⁴⁴ GCA, TD1/1096, 'Statement', April 1832.

¹⁴⁵ Stana Nenadic, 'The Victorian Middle Classes', in *Glasgow, vol. 2: 1830-1912*, ed. by W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p.283.

¹⁴⁶ MacLehose, *Memoirs and Portraits*, p. 285.

Society, he had a keen an interest in fine arts, exemplified by his extensive painting collection at Jordanhill, which was valued (with furniture) at £3,000. However, whilst his personal manner and academic achievements have been celebrated, the true source of the wealth has been disregarded. In 1832, Smith's main income came from West India shares and stock. He had £7,800 in Leitch & Smith - suggesting it was still owed debts - and £15,200 in J&A Smith and Co. Thus, in just over ten years following his father's death he had doubled his inheritance to over £80,000.

The rise of the Smith family coincides with involvement in the West India trades and subsequent generations became part of the political elite. James Smith's son, Archibald Smith of Jordanhill, graduated M.A. at Cambridge and was described as 'one of the best mathematicians of his day, and the first Scotsman who was ever Senior Wrangler at Cambridge'.¹⁴⁸ His son, James Parker Smith, was the Liberal Unionist MP for Partick in 1890–1906.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the family rose from modest origins as tenant farmers to elite status in Victorian Glasgow. However, much like the transformation of Scotland, the finer details of the wealth creation have remained hidden. It is unsurprising that the modern article in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* glossed over James Smith's role in the West India business, and preferred to focus on his activities as a 'geologist and biblical historian'.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, his role as senior partner in J&A Smith and Co., an organisation he profited from for over forty years, was omitted. Instead, he was described with the legal term 'sleeping partner' of Leitch & Smith, which was taken directly from a nineteenth century memoir (originally an obituary) written by Archibald Smith, James' own son.¹⁵¹ *The Old Country Houses of the Old Glasgow Gentry* was also cited, which has similar congenial descriptions of the city's West India merchants.¹⁵² The co-author was John Guthrie Smith, heir to the West India fortune of his father, William Smith of Carbeth Guthrie. Thus, without further scrutiny, the modern biography repeated the sympathetic representation first introduced and reinforced by direct family members.

The firm James and Archibald Smith & Co. was terminated soon after the death of James Smith in January 1867. James had no industrial investments at death or in two subsequent inventories which revised his estate.¹⁵³ In 1867, his interests in the organisation

¹⁴⁸ MacLehose, *Memoirs and Portraits*, p. 288.

¹⁴⁹ Trainor, 'The Elite', p. 250

¹⁵⁰ George Fairfull Smith, 'Smith, James, of Jordanhill (1782–1867)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn. (Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁵¹ Archibald Smith, 'Memoir of James Smith', in James Smith, *The voyage and shipwreck of St Paul*, 4th edn (London, 1880), p. xxv.

¹⁵² Guthrie Smith, Oswald Mitchell, 'Possil', *Old Country Houses*.

¹⁵³ NRS, SC58/42/44, 'Additional Inventory of James Smith', 28 August 1876, pp.12-14 (£2877); NRS, SC58/42/52, 'Additional Inventory', 28 Jan. 1886, (£14,850), pp.935-938.

(including two Jamaica plantations) were deemed to be of ‘no value’.¹⁵⁴ This is consistent with the decline in holdings in West India merchant houses by the subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association after 1834, as described in chapter seven. In this case, it is possible James had removed all investment or, more likely, that the Smiths no longer had any active role in the West India trades. Instead, they were left with a merchant firm whose only assets were plantations in Jamaica that they could not dispose of after years of unprofitability. In 1867, Archibald inherited the family interests and the estate income in 1873 was £5,899 per annum,¹⁵⁵ which was in the top 2.5 per cent wealthiest incomes in Glasgow.¹⁵⁶ Although the estate was heavily burdened, the main annual source was £3,000 from the Monkland Iron and Steel Company who mined Jordanhill estate. The investment in land from the initial fortune meant the family profited from successive stages of industrialisation. As one of the oldest members of the Chamber of Commerce, Archibald Smith maintained a public role and also continued to make investments before he died aged eighty-eight in 1883. His holdings on death were typical of the West India elite.¹⁵⁷ He owned shares in Scottish railways as well as in banks in Scotland and England. Thus, as one of last of the elite Glasgow-West India merchants, he ensured the Smiths of Jordanhill saw out the city’s ‘golden age’ of sugar. But how typical were the family?

¹⁵⁴ NRS, SC58/42/34, ‘Deed of Settlement of James Smith’, 31 Oct. 1867, pp.977-8.

¹⁵⁵ GCA, TD1/22, ‘Statement of Archibald Smith’, 1873.

¹⁵⁶ Nenadic, ‘The Victorian Middle Classes’, p. 272.

¹⁵⁷ Archibald Smith left personal wealth of over £33,000 when he died. See NRS, SC65/34/26, ‘Inventory of Archibald Smith’, 7 April 1883, pp.295-310.

Chapter 7. The 'Glasgow West India interest' - Life, Wealth and Legacy

In the third edition of his manual on the Glasgow-West India trades in 1820, James Morrison published a *Dissertation on the Business of the Counting House* which set out the benefits of a mercantile career:

Of all the various employments calculated to promote public, as well as private prosperity, there is none upon which industry, foresight, and economy, have a more striking influence than that of the Merchant. An imprudent step may not only ruin his fortune and family, but, perhaps, the fortune of hundreds connected with him in Business, and likewise have a tendency to injure the Trade of his Country in general; while, on the other hand, a plan properly digested, and well executed, may not only establish him, but add to the prosperity of all those who are within the sphere of his influence. We have repeated instances where considerable Estates have been a plan properly digested, and well executed, may not only establish him, but add to the prosperity of all those who are within the sphere of his influence. We have repeated instances where considerable Estates have been raised on slender Capitals, by means of application, integrity, and prudent management.

The aim was clear: the accumulation of wealth based on the trade and sale of Caribbean commodities. In some cases, merchants came from modest means and increased not only their own private wealth and status but also that of family and friends. Mercantile investments also promoted the industrial, agricultural and commercial development in the surrounding region. Morrison noted that commercial activities promoted 'public prosperity' and affected the 'fortunes of hundreds'.¹

These processes created vast personal fortunes for those involved. Moreover, according to Eric Williams and others, such processes also powered the industrial transformation of Great Britain. In his view, wealth generated from the West India trades was a profitable stream of finance that permeated the British economy and financial institutions. Williams cited shipping and shipbuilding, wool and cotton manufactures, heavy industry, banking and insurance as examples of areas that were stimulated by such profits and the related trades. He also claimed the triangular trade was but one part of a 'triple stimulus'. Referring to both supply and markets, Williams noted the slaves were purchased with British manufactures and produced commodities which created new industries in Britain, whilst the slave economies provided markets for British exports.²

The developing historiography on Scottish connections with the West Indies provides qualified support for the viewpoint espoused by Eric Williams and others. Historians have examined the West India merchants of Glasgow including their social

¹ James Morrison, *A Complete Treatise of Practical Book-Keeping*, 3rd Ed., (London: Longman, 1820), p.xiii.

² Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Billing and Sons, 1981 edn.), pp.52-84, pp.98-107.

background, investments and political influence. T.M. Devine's study of the Glasgow-West India elite in 1978 pointed to an influx of capital to local industry and landed estates. Devine, however, argued that the contribution of West India merchants to the regional cotton industry was unlikely to be a 'decisive influence'.³ Indeed, he was sceptical that colonial trade in general represented the '*deus ex machina* in the process of [Scottish industrial] change'.⁴ Yet, Devine's recent work that focused on the impact of New World slavery on Scotland represents a partial acceptance of the main Williams thesis.⁵

Anthony Cooke has recently revisited the elite Caribbean merchants of Glasgow. He analysed will and inventories of a group based on the elite West India merchants identified in the Devine study of 1978. Although there are issues with using confirmation inventories, which will be described in turn, they do offer evidence of patterns of acquisition strategies in life. This study adopted a comprehensive analytical model to trace mercantile investments before and after emancipation, notably in railways, banks and manufactories. Although the body of evidence outlined direct investments in Scottish industry by West India merchants - seemingly in support of the Williams thesis at a local level - the study refrained from taking a position instead pointing out it remained controversial. However, he did argue that the Scottish cotton industry, closely linked with Caribbean slavery, sustained rapid economic growth in the first phase of Scottish industrialisation.⁶

This study will add to this debate by tracing the extent and range of fortunes of a group of subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association and will include analysis of their industrial and commercial investments and landed estates. This chapter utilises a similar framework to that of Cooke to analyse investments which facilitates comparison.⁷ However, the chapter takes a broader approach and will also illustrate living standards of the West India elite particularly through the journal of John Gordon of Aikenhead and the household inventory of Richard Dennistoun of Kelvingrove.

³ T.M. Devine 'An Eighteenth Century Business Elite, 1740-1815', *Scottish Historical Review*, (1978), p.46.

⁴ T.M. Devine, 'Colonial commerce and the Scottish economy, c. 1730-1815' in *Comparative aspects of Scottish and Irish economic and social history, 1600-1900*, ed. by L.M. Cullen, T.C. Smout, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1977), p.180.

⁵ T.M. Devine, 'Did Slavery Make Scotia Great?', *Britain and the World*, 4/1, (2011), p.40-64.

⁶ Anthony Cooke, 'An Elite Revisited: Glasgow West India Merchants, 1783-1877', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 32, 2 (2012), pp. 127-65.

⁷ Of the sixty eight individuals examined in this study, thirty two were included in Cooke's sample of sixty four. Thus, although there is an overlap, there is sufficient scope to compare and contrast findings. The subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association had indisputable commercial connections with the region.

The Fortunes of the ‘Glasgow West India interest’

The study here is based on a group of personal subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association from its establishment in 1807 until emancipation in 1834. These individuals represented the West India elite of Glasgow and had strong connections to the region over the long term. The surviving records of the Association suggest around one hundred individuals subscribed in this period.⁸ From this group, wills and inventories were identified for sixty eight (‘the subscribers’). The use of confirmation inventories (analogous to probate inventories in England) as indicators of personal wealth is problematic. There are issues with interpreting data and such a ‘snapshot’ of wealth on death sometimes underestimates actual holdings or might not be a total of an individual’s wealth when their income was at its peak. Moreover, inventories only list moveable goods (e.g. cash, stock and shares) thus heritable property (e.g. land) is not included.⁹ However, large samples of personal inventories do offer some insights into the distribution of wealth and investments.¹⁰

The wills and personal inventories reveal that sixty eight subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association who died between 1807 and 1884 bequeathed a combined wealth valued at over £2.7million on death (see Appendix 15). The majority of these holdings were in Scottish enterprise although elite individuals such as Thomas Dunlop Douglas held substantial estates in England and abroad. Examination of the range of holdings (see Appendix 16) demonstrates the majority of subscribers left fortunes of less than £50,000 although a super-wealthy group of eight left personal property valued at £100,000 or more which was considered exceptional.¹¹ Of the super-wealthy group of Association subscribers, James Ewing of Strathleven left perhaps the largest fortune of all.¹²

This elite group of eight were amongst the richest in Scotland and indeed, Great Britain. In his accounts of the British wealthy, William D. Rubinstein defined Britons who died owning personal fortunes valued at £100,000 or more as the ‘wealthiest of their time’. By means of comparison in a Scottish context, just ten individuals died in Scotland leaving

⁸ Glasgow City Archives (hereafter GCA), TD1683/1/1-2, ‘Abstract and Minutes of the Glasgow West India Association, 1807-1853’.

⁹ For a good discussion of heritable and moveable property and the law of succession in Scotland, see William Alexander, *The Practice of the Commissary Courts in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1859), pp.8-27.

¹⁰ Nicholas Morgan and Richard Trainor, ‘The Dominant Classes’, in *People and Society in Scotland, vol. 2 1830-1914*, ed by W. Hamish Fraser and R.J. Morris, (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1990), p.113.

¹¹ Collectively, the eight top wealthiest individuals held £1,208,117. Thus, eight (12%) of the sixty-eight subscribers held forty-four per cent of the overall wealth. The average overall wealth on death was £40,352.

¹² James Ewing’s moveable property was valued at over £280,000 in 1853. See National Records of Scotland (hereafter NRS), SC65/34/7, ‘Inventory and Testament of James Ewing’, 24 February 1854.

personal property that exceeded this amount during the period 1809 to 1839.¹³ Three of these individuals - including John Gordon - are under examination in this study.¹⁴ This seems a disproportionately high figure since Nicholas Draper has pointed out that of the 2000 British individuals who died worth £100,000 or more between 1809 and 1863, just 300 can be considered to have derived their fortunes from Caribbean slavery.¹⁵ Thus, Glasgow West India merchants and planters – some from modest backgrounds - were able to acquire slavery based fortunes in the course of a commercial career which propelled them into the ranks of the British financial elite.

Rubinstein has noted that comparisons of intergenerational wealth and associated social mobility allow the historian to chart the source and rise of great fortunes.¹⁶ The social background of this super-wealthy group of eight further underlines the view that West India commerce enabled the accumulation of vast fortunes in one generation. It seems that none of this elite group hailed from ‘gentry capitalist’ families although all subsequently owned landed estates, the majority of which had been purchased or built by them. Colin Campbell was the son of John Campbell senior whilst James Ewing was the son of an accountant involved with colonial finance. John Blackburn and Charles Stuart Parker hailed from families involved with the Virginia trades. However, others had even more modest backgrounds such as James Buchanan, the son of a farmer in Dumbarton. John Gordon (1753-1828) perhaps exemplifies the Glasgow-West India *nouveau-riche*. The son of a bailie and grandson of a maltman, he matriculated at the University of Glasgow in 1763. By 1790, he was a partner in the West India firm that took his name, Stirling, Gordon & Co.¹⁷ According to his journal, he was worth over £70,000 by July 1806 with shares and stock in his own firm and in prominent cotton manufacturers James Finlay & Co. By July 1818, he listed assets worth over £167,000 although this included the estate of Aikenhead which shall be examined in more detail in a later section.¹⁸

The Gordon example serves to illustrate that the wealth of such merchant-manufacturers was sometimes derived from multiple enterprises not directly associated with slavery. James Ewing was another with other substantial interests elsewhere. In these case, it is impossible to separate the most profitable stream, the main source of the wealth

¹³ William D. Rubinstein, *Who Were the Rich? A biographical directory of British Wealth-holders, Vol. I, 1809-1839*, (London: Social Affairs Unit, 2009), p.13, p.17.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, James McInroy, 1825/37; Charles Stuart Parker, 1829/34 and John Gordon, 1829/35.

¹⁵ Nicholas Draper, ‘The rise of a new planter class? Some countercurrents from British Guiana and Trinidad, 1807–33’, *Atlantic Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (March 2012), p.73.

¹⁶ William D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The very wealthy in Britain since the Industrial Revolution*, (London: Social Affairs Unit, 2006), p.146-7.

¹⁷ George Stewart, *Curiosities of Glasgow Citizenship*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1881), p.190, p.218.

¹⁸ NRS, GD1/1209/9, ‘Journal of John Gordon of Aikenhead’, 1806-1819, p.1, p.149.

and relationship between enterprises without detailed quantitative analysis of mercantile ledgers - which do not exist in Ewing's case. In these examples, it is likely that profits from the West Indies were sunk into Scottish manufactories and banks and vice versa. It is suffice to say that elite individuals in Glasgow became super-wealthy based on both West India commerce and Scottish industry.

Transatlantic commerce in general and the West India trades in particular carried a high degree of inherent risk. Natural disasters in the Caribbean such as hurricanes, warfare and interruptions on trade and the loss of ships and goods as well the volatility of the sugar market and economic and political conditions in Great Britain all affected business. Indeed, Nicholas Draper noted that many mercantile slave-owners became bankrupt due to the economic decline exacerbated by the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and emancipation in 1834.¹⁹ It should not be assumed that West India careers in Glasgow automatically led to large fortunes. One of the original subscribers to the Association, Thomas Hopkirk, was worth just over £2,400 when he died in 1811. However, he was technically bankrupt with debts of over twice this amount.²⁰ The volatility of the West India trades is further underlined by those individuals whose wealth was revised downwards after death. At least five individuals left fortunes that were substantially reduced including William Eccles. His estate was valued at over £56,000 after his death in 1846, the majority of which was held in associated merchant firms in Glasgow, Trinidad and Demerara. These holdings were deemed 'utterly worthless' three years later after the bankruptcy of the firms.²¹ Nevertheless there were far more successful West India merchants who managed to extricate wealth via transatlantic trade, much of which was invested in Scotland.

The Investments of the 'Glasgow West India interest'

In *Africans and the Industrial Revolution*, Joseph Inikori argued that shipbuilding and shipping must be viewed as complementary industries with direct and multiplier effects in the mercantilist period. There were significant 'backward linkages' as construction stimulated iron, copper, ropes and wood production.²² For Inikori, the rise in shipping to the West Indies facilitated foreign trade which boosted commerce, industrialisation and manufacturing enterprises in Great Britain which in turn provided employment and

¹⁹ Nicholas Draper, 'Helping to Make Britain great: the commercial legacies of slave-ownership in Britain', in *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, ed. by Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.83.

²⁰ NRS, SC36/48/6, 'Inventory of Thomas Hopkirk', 8 December 1811, p.166.

²¹ NRS SC36,48/33, 'Inventory of William Eccles', 18 June 1847, pp.138-9; 'Amended Inventory', 15 October 1850, p.326.

²² Joseph E. Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution, A Study in International Development*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.265-6.

increased incomes. This supports the view of a ‘commercial revolution’ in Great Britain driven by foreign trade.²³ The ‘backward linkages’ of shipbuilding in the west of Scotland can be traced in the records of local financial institutions in Glasgow. In October 1818, a committee of the Royal Bank of Scotland examined ‘Bonds, Debts and Bills lying over at Glasgow’²⁴ and concluded the Glasgow branch received a ‘great mass of bills in the course of Trade’, and in particular:

The West Indian Merchant builds up a ship for that trade, and purchases goods for that Market; he makes Insurances in both, he grants Bills to the Ship Builder and to the Manufacturer who Endorse them to the Wood Merchant, and the Importer of Cotton, & they discount them to raise Money & purchase fresh Cargoes of Timber and Cotton. In this way an extensive West India Trade must require a great deal of money to carry it on and Banks seem to be safe in furnishing it to them. They get the Security in this case of the General Merchant, of the Wood Merchant, and of the Ship Builder; in the other case, the security of the General Merchant, of the Manufacturer and of the Cotton Merchant; at least three respectable persons for each advance... It is difficult [for the Bank] to employ money for a short period more profitably & securely than in such discounts. When the ship returns from the West Indies, the Merchant, to enable him to take up the bills granted for her outfit must sell the cotton, the Sugar, the Rum, the Coffee, the Mahogany & other India produce imported, each of these articles probably to one or more different persons or copartneries, from each of whom he obtains Bills. These bills or part of them are offered for discount, if it is thought they are entitled to credit at the Bank, if the situation of the Cash there admits of discount at the time for here, as in the former case, there is reason to expect both profit and safety, the Bills being fairly onerous transactions in the way of trade.²⁵

Evidently, West India merchants boosted the shipbuilding industry which generated a local trade in construction materials that, in turn, created profits for banks.

The inventories of the subscribers to the Association reveal investment in ships and shipping companies.²⁶ William Mathieson, for example, was the joint owner of nine vessels valued at a combined £7,500.²⁷ Nonetheless, the surprisingly small number of ships listed in inventories suggests that ships were listed as assets elsewhere, most likely on the ledger books of merchant houses. Certainly, West India firms in Glasgow commissioned new vessels from local shipbuilders. In December 1806, John Campbell, senior, & Co. hosted a ‘great entertainment’ in honour of the builders - John Scott and Co of Greenock - to celebrate the launch of the *Grenada* which was put to sea ‘amid the loud huzzas of a

²³ Phyllis Deane, *The First Industrial Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982 edn.), pp.53-72.

²⁴ The Royal Bank of Scotland Group Archives (hereafter RB), RB12/17, ‘Directors Minutes’, 1817 to 1820, ff.135-145.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, ff.137-138.

²⁶ The inventories outlined eight individuals owned ships worth over £18,000 on death. Six other individuals held stock and shares in companies like Clyde Shipping Company, formed in 1815.

²⁷ NRS, SC36/48/32, ‘Inventory of William Mathieson’, 29 March 1847, p.687.

great concourse of spectators' earlier that day.²⁸ The impact of the West India trades on Scottish shipping, shipbuilding and indeed the 'commercial revolution' awaits detailed, quantitative study.

However, whilst shipping investments were necessary to undertake transatlantic trade, the inventories reveal far more substantial investment elsewhere (see Appendix 17). According to the sources consulted, at least twenty eight subscribers to the Association held shares and stock in merchant firms in Glasgow and related organisations in Liverpool and Jamaica. Indeed, the bulk of the overall wealth of the subscribers on death was held in such firms.²⁹ These holdings declined as the nineteenth century progressed.³⁰ The holdings listed in the inventories were highest in the 1820s and although there remained substantial investment after emancipation in 1834, only two individuals who died after 1851 had investments in merchant firms (see Appendix 18). This can be explained by a partial transfer of capital from West India commerce to investments in Scotland which began in the aftermath of emancipation in 1834. For example, the books of the firm John Campbell, senior, & Co. demonstrate the compensation money awarded to the partners on emancipation reduced debts owed to the firm:

That the West India outstandings, consisting of debts and property in Estates, being greatly diminished in amount by Government Compensation money and other causes, the same extent of capital [£180,000] as formerly is not required to hold the property and carry on the business of the concern and the capital shall be accordingly reduced.³¹

This allowed the partners to pare back their personal investment by one-third. In this case, it is likely some of this wealth was invested in a Scottish landed estate which will be examined in turn. Nevertheless partners in the firm - and many others of their type - retained substantial interests in the West Indies after emancipation although other firms experienced difficulties, such as Eccles, Burnley & Co., who were made bankrupt in

²⁸ *Caledonian Mercury*, 18 December 1806.

²⁹ Twenty eight individuals had interests in merchant firms on death valued at £887,180 (32 percent of the overall wealth).

³⁰ This is in direct contrast to findings in the recent paper on Glasgow West India merchants by Anthony Cooke. However, his analysis included the substantial estates of father and son, James Richardson (d.1860) and Thomas Richardson (d.1872). Both were partners in a Glasgow merchant house that traded with Mauritius. It is not clear that they ever traded in the West Indies. In the c.1700 shipping adverts of voyages from the Clyde to the Caribbean examined for this study between 1806 and 1834, there is no record of any of their firms. Moreover, the holdings held by Thomas Richardson on his death in 1872 in 'Richardson & Company, Merchants, Mauritius' (£19,262) suggest the firm had by then shifted focus to the East Indies (if they traded with the West Indies at all). This suggests Cooke's assertion that 'holdings in Glasgow West India merchant houses increased...from 1843 to 1862... [and again] from 1863-1877' requires some revision. See Cooke, 'An Elite Revisited', pp.142-3; NRS SC58/42/39, 'Will and inventory of Thomas Richardson', p.969

³¹ GCA TD1696, 'John Campbell, senior, & Co., Minute book', 1803-1842, n.p., letter 11-12.

1849.³² Partners in merchant firms also spread their wealth - and associated risk – across the region.

The subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association also made commercial investments. The business of lending interest bearing capital may have been a substantial enterprise.³³ For example, the partners of John Campbell, senior, & Co. were ‘well accustomed’ to receiving loan offers from other merchants although they usually rejected them.³⁴ Others loaned capital to individuals out-with the merchant fraternity. At his death in 1840, John Blackburn was owed interest bearing debts of over £30,000 debts from members of the Scottish gentry.³⁵

Investments in commercial institutions in Scotland were far more extensive. Some also had shares or policies in insurance companies – such as Scottish Widows - which could be considerable.³⁶ Yet, the investments held in banks in the form of shares and savings were even larger. Although James Ewing owned stock valued at over £10,000 in the Bank of England, investment in Scottish institutions was more common.³⁷ The subscribers had holdings in the Bank of Scotland, the Glasgow Union Bank and the Royal Bank as well as smaller investments in other institutions.³⁸ It was common for individuals to hold shares or have accounts with two or three institutions such as James Buchanan of Dowanhill who held over £67,000 across two banks.³⁹ At least £23,000 was held in the Thistle Bank and there were a number of prominent patrons. John Gordon of Aikenhead had an account with the Thistle Bank over many years.⁴⁰ James Ewing of Strathleven was exceptional with over £110,000 invested in 1200 shares in the Glasgow Union Bank.⁴¹ Colin Campbell of Colgrain held over £50,000 in the same institution.⁴²

Given the paid-up capital of the Glasgow Union Banking Company was £287,050 when it was established in 1830, the West India influx may have represented a sizeable proportion.⁴³ Whilst banking institutions in Scotland evidently provided funding for

³² *The Edinburgh Gazette*, Issue 5876, 20 July 1849, p.678.

³³ Six individuals were owed debts of over £68,000.

³⁴ GCA TD1696, ‘John Campbell, senior, & Co., Letterbook’, 1827-1847, pp.47-48.

³⁵ NRS SC70/1/59, ‘Inventory and settlement of John Blackburn’, 24 August 1840, pp.635-649.

³⁶ Nineteen individuals held investments worth over £53,000 in insurance companies.

³⁷ NRS, SC65/34/7, ‘Inventory and testament of James Ewing’, 24 February 1854, p.187.

³⁸ Thirty seven individuals held £530,408 (19 percent of the overall) wealth in banking institutions: Bank of Scotland, £163,519; Union Bank, £143,334; Royal Bank, £106,256 and the Western Bank, £62,231.

³⁹ NRS, SC36/48/30, ‘Inventory of James Buchanan’, 11 July 1844, pp.519-520.

⁴⁰ John Gordon held £6390 in shares and £580 cash in the Thistle Bank in 1806. These holdings had slightly increased to £7500 and £910 respectively in 1818. On his death in 1828, he owned £9275 in shares, £1371 in account current and £5475 in a deposit account. See NRS GD1/1209/9, ‘Journal of John Gordon’, 1806-1819, p.11, p.149; NRS SC36/48/21, ‘Inventory of John Gordon’, 11 August 1829, pp.618-9.

⁴¹ NRS, SC65/34/7, ‘Inventory and Testament of James Ewing’, 24 February 1854, p.186.

⁴² NRS SC65/31/11, ‘Inventory and settlement of Colin Campbell’, 26 March 1863, p.461.

⁴³ S.D. Checkland, *Scottish Banking: A History, 1695-1973*, (Glasgow: Collins, 1975), p.326.

merchant firms in Glasgow and received the associated profits of their business, detailed quantitative analysis of each institution's records will add further understanding about the exact relationship with West India commerce.

The inventories of the subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association also listed holdings in manufacturing enterprises in Scotland (see Appendix 19).⁴⁴ The subscribers invested in the cotton industry including John Gordon who held over £68,000 in James Finlay & Co. on his death in 1828.⁴⁵ Given this scale of investment, it is unlikely that capital transfers from West India merchants were a decisive influence on the development of the cotton industry.⁴⁶ It should be noted the inventories do not reflect the actual extent of investment in this industry. Archibald Smith of Jordanhill, for example, held stock in Finlay & Co. in the early 1800s but did not hold any investment on his death in 1821.

The iron and coal mining industries attracted investment from the subscribers. Archibald Bogle of Gilmorehill, a second generation West India merchant, held substantial investment in Shotts Iron Company which he probably inherited from his father, Robert Bogle.⁴⁷ Charles Stirling of Cadder held shares in the Hurllet & Campsie Alum Co. (alum was used for dying purposes), which was part of the first enterprise of its type in the world.⁴⁸ Other merchants diversified into industries associated with the transatlantic trades. Colin Campbell of Colgrain held shares in Gourock rope works.⁴⁹ Alexander Campbell of Hallyards held shares in Newark sugar refinery in Greenock which had been part owned in the 1820s by a group of West India merchants including Robert Dennistoun.⁵⁰

After 1800, West India capital improved the regional transport infrastructure including roads, turnpikes and particularly canals and associated companies. Canals had been a favoured investment of the 'tobacco lords'.⁵¹ In particular, the Forth and Clyde canal allowed merchants in Glasgow to trade both eastwards and westwards. Naturally, West India merchants invested in the canal system of the industrial heartlands of

⁴⁴ A total of twelve individuals (some with multiple shares) held investments worth £260,994 in Scottish industry including cotton enterprises (five individuals; £144,108) as well as iron enterprises (four individuals; £34,595) and other industries (five individuals; £80,238).

⁴⁵ NRS SC36/48/21, 'Inventory of John Gordon', 11 August 1829, p.618.

⁴⁶ Cooke, 'Elite Revisited', p.145.

⁴⁷ NRS, SC36/48/19, 'Inventory of Robert Bogle', 21 September 1824, p.178; NRS, SC70/1/98, 'Inventory of Archibald Bogle', pp.945-6.

⁴⁸ NRS, SC36/48/22, 'Inventory of Charles Stirling', 14 July 1830, p.137.

⁴⁹ NRS SC65/31/11, 'Inventory of Colin Campbell', 26 March 1863, p.463.

⁵⁰ NRS, SC36/48/17, 'Inventory of Alexander Campbell', 16 April 1822, p.471; NRS, SC36/48/10, 'Inventory of Robert Dennistoun', 23 February 1816, p.535.

⁵¹ Devine, *Tobacco Lords*, p.23.

Monklands.⁵² These investments not only promoted trade and facilitated exploitation of minerals but also provided rental income.

The ‘Glasgow West India interest’ also invested heavily in railways as well as cotton industries, an investment pattern consistent with other slave-owners across Great Britain in the 1830s.⁵³ The impact of West India capital on Scottish industrial development, particularly after emancipation in 1834, is only beginning to be understood. It has certainly been underestimated in previous studies sources of railway funding; whilst the contribution of ‘merchants’ has been noted, specific sources of these merchants’ capital remained undefined due to the ambiguous nature of the term.⁵⁴ As Anthony Cooke has recently demonstrated, Glasgow-West India merchants invested in railways after 1834. Thus, colonial capital had an impact in Scotland beyond ‘manufacturing, mining and agriculture’ as laid out in T. M. Devine’s ‘Did Slavery make Scotia Great?’⁵⁵ Cooke claimed that West India merchants were ‘actively involved in the “second phase” of Scotland’s economic transformation through substantial railway investment in the 1840s and 1860s’.⁵⁶ However, he pointed out the investments by these West India merchants were small-scale considering overall Scottish railway investments totalled £28 million by 1860.⁵⁷ This is further reinforced if examined over the longer period, as nearly £47 million had been invested by 1870.⁵⁸

This study complements the view that the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ assisted in the ‘second phase’ of Scotland’s industrial transformation. A small number of subscribers to the Association committed considerable finance to British railways.⁵⁹ The leading investor was Thomas Dunlop Douglas. After he died in January 1869, his wealth on death was valued at £241,578, with railway investments in Scotland (£15,641), England

⁵² Thirteen individuals had holdings in canals and associated companies; Monkland Canal Company, Forth & Clyde Canal Co., Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal Co. and associated companies such as Forth and Clyde Navigation Company.

⁵³ Nicholas Draper ‘Helping to Make Britain great: the commercial legacies of slave-ownership in Britain’, in *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, ed. by Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.112.

⁵⁴ W. Vamplew, ‘Sources of Scottish Railway Share Capital before 1860’, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 17, 3, (1970), p. 437; T. R. Gourvish and M. C. Reed, ‘The Financing of Scottish Railways before 1860 - A Comment’, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 18, 2 (1971), p. 215.

⁵⁵ Devine, ‘Did Slavery make Scotia Great?’, p. 57.

⁵⁶ Cooke, ‘An Elite Revisited’, p.144-6

⁵⁷ Vamplew, ‘Scottish Railway Share Capital’, p. 425.

⁵⁸ T. M. Devine, ‘Industrialisation’ in *The Transformation of Scotland: The Economy since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2005), ed. by T.M. Devine, C.H. Lee and G.C. Peden, pp. 61–2.

⁵⁹ Thirteen subscribers to the Association had investments of £220,031 in British railways on death. Of this, thirteen held £76,680 in Scotland with four also holding investments worth £143,351 in England. Significantly, ten of the thirteen subscribers (77%) with investments in railways also claimed compensation in 1834.

(£121,701), as well as modest amounts in railways in New York and Demerara.⁶⁰

However, the overall investments by West India merchants were small scale and it is much more likely the merchants were involved in speculation in railway shares which increased prices of investments.⁶¹

Thus, the evidence led here provides heavily qualified support for the view that capital accumulated from Caribbean slavery assisted the development of Scottish industry into the nineteenth century. Indeed, the small number of subscribers with industrial investments is noticeable. Just twelve confirmation inventories (c. 18% of the overall group here) referred to investments in Scottish industries such as coal, iron and cotton although some individuals had multiple holdings. Whilst others had investments in railways, it could hardly be claimed that the capital investments made by a small group of West India merchants in Glasgow, albeit substantial personal sums, were the decisive influence on the development of industry in the west of Scotland after 1807. Nonetheless, further research on the indirect impact of the West India trades should provide further insights.

The wealth of the 'Glasgow West India interest' was not only invested in commerce, manufacturing and industry but also permeated into public utilities in the city as well as the transport infrastructure across the surrounding region. Irene Maver traced the municipal development of the city through the origins of the Glasgow Corporation and its predecessors, Glasgow Water Company and Glasgow Gas-light Company which were established in 1806 and 1817 respectively.⁶³ These companies and others in the surrounding region attracted investment from West India merchants including arch-Tory John Gordon who held £6,000 in the Glasgow Gas Company.⁶⁴ One contemporary pro-reform publication accused the utility companies of charging city residents exorbitant rates which went into the hands of the elite: 'Our Glasgow *Tories* are chief Directors both of the Water Companies and the Gas Company; and a set of more greedy monopolists never existed in this world. Mammon is their god! Corruption is their brother!'.⁶⁵ According to a later edition, the investments provided attractive returns.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ NRS, SC 6/44/34, 'Inventory of Thomas Dunlop Douglas', 20 March 1869, pp.677-692,

⁶¹ Stephen Mullen, 'A Glasgow-West India Merchant House and the Imperial Dividend, 1779-1867', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 33/2, (2013), pp.196-233.

⁶³ Irene Maver, 'The Guardianship of the Community' in *Glasgow, vol. 1: Beginnings to 1830* ed. by T.M. Devine and G. Jackson, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.247.

⁶⁴ Twenty five individuals held multiple holdings valued at: £62,346; Glasgow Corporation, £5226; Glasgow Water Company and its successor, £31,911; Cranstonhill Water Company, £739, (which amalgamated with GWC in in the 1830s); Glasgow Gas Company, £20320; Paisley Gas Company, £9376.

⁶⁵ 'Gas Light Imposition', *The Reformers Gazette*, 30 August 1834.

⁶⁶ 'Glasgow Gas Imposition', *The Reformers Gazette*, 29 August 1835.

The subscribers diversified into England and further afield. A total of ten individuals owned property in England including two of the individuals classed as wealthiest of their time, Charles Stuart Parker and Thomas Dunlop Douglas.⁶⁷ Parker owned consols in England whilst much of Douglas's wealth was held in English railways.⁶⁸ Merchants such as Archibald Smith of Jordanhill diversified their wealth into the New Zealand and Australia Land Company, investments which J.D. Bailey has argued were attractive to Scots in the last decade of the nineteenth century due to a lack of domestic opportunities.⁶⁹ However, the major investment of any merchant in their lifetime was in Scottish land and urban property which shall now be traced in the next section.

The Mansions of the 'Glasgow West India Interest'

The landed estates of the colonial merchants of Glasgow have attracted scholarly attention. Certainly, the purchase of a landed estate provided the *arriviste* merchant with social prestige, political influence and a long term investment that provided income through rents. T.M. Devine has examined land ownership patterns including location and motivations for purchase.⁷⁰ Other studies have examined the wealth disposal and conspicuous consumption of the 'tobacco lords' in the city.⁷¹

Christer Petley has noted there is surprisingly little known about the material culture of the planter class in the Caribbean.⁷² Similarly, although recent historiography has traced connections with Caribbean slavery and the British country house, there is very little known about the lives of the 'Glasgow West India interest'.⁷³ This section will address this lacuna by focusing on the landed estates of the West India elite living in Glasgow and surrounding regions and will also illuminate standard of living, patterns of consumption and material culture. The sources consulted here suggest around forty of the overall subscribers were in possession of landed estates in the period 1807 - 1838.⁷⁴ The

⁶⁷ Ten individuals held property in England valued at £257,790.

⁶⁸ NRS, SC6/44/34/677-692, 'Inventory of Thomas Dunlop Douglas', 20 Mar. 1869.

⁶⁹ J. D. Bailey, 'Australian Borrowing in Scotland in the Nineteenth Century', *The Economic History Review*, 12, 2 (1959), p. 269.

⁷⁰ T.M. Devine, 'Empire and Land: Glasgow's Colonial Merchants' in *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and Peoples in Scotland, 1700-1900*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006), pp.54-92.

⁷¹ Carolyn Marie Peters, 'Glasgow's Tobacco Lords: An Examination of Wealth Creators in the Eighteenth Century', (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1990), pp.261-374.

⁷² Christer Petley, 'Plantations and Homes: The Material Culture of the Early Nineteenth-Century Jamaican Elite', *Slavery & Abolition*, (2014), 35/3, pp.437-457.

⁷³ Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann (eds.), *Slavery and the British Country House*, (Swindon: English Heritage, 2013).

⁷⁴ T.M. Devine's study of colonial merchants concluded that of the sixty three individuals who subscribed to the Glasgow West India Association between 1807 and 1810, just twenty one owned landed estates of 500 acres or more. Devine suggested that as the merchants were just embarking on colonial careers, they simply hadn't acquired enough wealth to purchase an estate as yet. Thus, ownership of a landed estate was an indicator of a *successful* colonial merchant. See Devine, 'Empire and Land', p.56.

estates themselves were mainly located in the west of Scotland, especially Glasgow, Ayrshire Dumbarton, and Argyll. Locations such as Stirlingshire and Perthshire were favoured by merchants with historic ties to those regions, such as William Leckie Ewing who purchased the estate of Broich from his uncle.

In this period, Glasgow underwent rapid change as large swathes of the city were sold off in plots by landowners such as the MP Archibald Campbell of Blythswood.⁷⁵ Some elite merchants, such as John Gordon, owned residential properties (mainly in Glasgow or Edinburgh) or counting houses for business purposes. Locations near the commercial centre such as Buchanan Street and St Vincent Street were popular. Evidently, urban property and land were key investments for the subscribers to the Association; they provided accommodation in accordance with their wealth and social position and within commuting distance of the workplaces in the commercial centre of Glasgow.

Many individuals from the 'Glasgow West India interest' acquired landed estates in this period by direct purchase. However, inheritance and marriage were also important avenues into ownership, patterns which are consistent with their commercial predecessors the tobacco lords. In some cases, there was a degree of continuity across successive generations of West India families as estates were passed through primogeniture to sons who chose to continue in colonial careers. At least four subscribers to the Association bequeathed estates to sons who also subscribed to the West India Association during the period 1807 to 1838. One example is Robert Dennistoun who inherited Kelvingrove estate on the death of his father Richard in 1833. Others acquired estates from unmarried male relatives who were also involved with the West India trades such as William Smith who inherited Carbeth in 1834 on the death of his cousin John Guthrie.⁷⁷ Marriage seems to have been a less important means to acquire an estate. William Leckie Ewing was already a significant estate owner having purchased Argomery estate from his uncle although he inherited Ballancleroch House in Dumbarton through his wife.⁷⁸

However, it is likely that the system of primogeniture also provided the motivation for younger sons of landed families to embark on colonial careers. These young men may have had aspirations to join the landed elite but were without prospects of a landed inheritance. In some cases, West India commerce facilitated their rise to landed status. John Campbell senior was elevated to the landed class when he purchased Possil. In 1836,

⁷⁵ John R. Kellet, 'Property Speculators and the Building of Glasgow', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 8/3, (1961), pp.211-232.

⁷⁷ J. Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain*, vol. 4 (London: 1838), p. 62.

⁷⁸ John Guthrie Smith, *The Parish of Strathblane and its inhabitants from early times*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1886), p.98.

John Campbell's second eldest son and large scale recipient of compensation money, Colin Campbell, purchased Colgrain estate near Cardross which subsequently passed onto his son.

Successful merchants from a modest background deployed their West India fortunes to establish landed dynasties. John Gordon acquired the lands of Aikenhead in the parish of Cathcart before 1806 and subsequently erected a mansion for someone of elite status. The leading Glasgow architect David Hamilton designed the mansion which was valued at over £22,000 in July 1808. With continual improvements, the book value of the estate increased to over £60,000 in ten years.⁷⁹ The initial investment was not exceptional when compared to other estates owned by the West India elite (see Appendix 20). When comparing land purchase and upkeep costs against the relatively modest investments in industry made by the 'Glasgow West India interest', it seems Richard Pares was close to the mark when he noted that 'West India millionaires [built]...more Fonthills [i.e. mansions] than factories among them'.⁸⁰

The identified paths of successful merchants into estate-ownership demonstrate they converted fortunes into heritable property which was passed to the next generation. The estates also represented a solid long term investment that increased credit rating (and thus the ability to borrow for further mercantile investments and expansion) and attracted income in the form of rents which could be substantial. On his death in 1849, William Cunninghame - son of a famous tobacco lord - was owed annual rental income of over £4900 on the entailed estate of Lainshaw.⁸¹ According to their inventories on death, the Glasgow-West India merchants examined here also invested in furnishings and fittings for landed estates and townhouses. In a few cases, cattle and farming stock were also included with household effects. However, the inventories do offer general indicators of the value of goods utilised in West India merchants' households in a period when consumption habits were rapidly changing. Indeed, citing Adam Smith, Stana Nenadic suggested the middle class in Edinburgh and Glasgow pursued a more extravagant way of living during this period which manifested itself in architectural styles, furnishings, food and clothing. The *arriviste* colonial merchants in particular used large cash incomes to purchase luxury goods allowing them to engage in a 'spectacular form of self-invention through their conspicuous consumption and [the] acquisition of elaborate and symbol-laden possessions'.⁸²

⁷⁹ NRS, GD1/1209/9, 'Journal of John Gordon', p.11, p.24-5, p.149.

⁸⁰ Richard Pares, 'The Economic Factors in the History of Empire', in *The Historian's Business and other essays*, by Richard Pares, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p.61.

⁸¹ NRS, SC6/44/18 'Inventory of William Cunninghame', 3 May 1849, p.622.

⁸² Stana Nenadic, 'Middle rank consumers and domestic culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1720-1840', *Past and Present*, 145 (Nov. 1994), p.127.

Household goods were listed in the inventories of sixty three West India merchants examined in this study. The total value was £86,433, around three percent of the overall wealth listed in the inventories.⁸³ The household items were categorised formulaically with descriptions such as furniture, silver plate, wine, liquors, bed and table linen and books. Some testamentary bequests provide more detail which suggest luxury and cultured lifestyles. For example, in 1853, Colin Campbell of Colgrain bequeathed his grand piano and harp to his wife.⁸⁴ Overall, the data unsurprisingly suggests larger landed estates contained more goods than smaller townhouses. In terms of highest values, Colin Campbell of Jura (no relation to Campbell of Colgrain) had the most wealth in household effects (£6606) although this included farm stock and crop on Craiginch Castle in Argyll.⁸⁵ According to his inventory, James Ewing lived in the most luxurious circumstances at his mansion in Strathleven (£4576) whilst John Gordon's townhouse on Buchanan Street seems to have been the most impressive of all owned by this group with goods valued at £1595.⁸⁶

Quantitative data from confirmation inventories alone cannot recreate living conditions of the West India elite although another type - sequestration inventories – provide much needed qualitative information.⁸⁷ This complementary method forms the basis of a short case study of Richard Dennistoun (1762-1833), the fourth son of the second marriage of a 'tobacco lord', James Dennistoun of Colgrain. Several of his brothers had connections with the Caribbean; John drowned in a West India hurricane in 1780, whilst George, Robert and Richard were co-partners in the family merchant firm, George and Robert Dennistoun & Co. Based on profits from colonial commerce, Richard Dennistoun developed a portfolio of property investments. He was a partner in Findlay, Duff & Co. This firm later built the Virginia Buildings in the street of the same name in Glasgow which housed various cotton warehouses and where colonial produce was bought and sold. In 1806, Richard owned a townhouse at 31 Miller Street (which adjoins Virginia Street) and during that year he purchased the Kelvingrove estate.

⁸³ Inventories were identified for sixty three merchants who owned household effects at their death, the overall total was £86,433 (ave. £1372). Where possible, holdings in townhouses and estates were analysed separately; 27 inventories listed holdings of household goods valued at £41,658 (ave. £1542) in landed estates. Twenty six inventories listed holdings of £21,250 (ave. £817) in townhouses.

⁸⁴ NRS SC65/31/11, 'Inventory and settlement of Colin Campbell', 26 March 1863, p.474.

⁸⁵ NRS, SC51/32/6, 'Inventory of Colin Campbell', 22 January 1849, F p.581.

⁸⁶ NRS, SC65/34/7, 'Inventory and Testament of James Ewing', 24 February 1854; NRS SC36/48/21, 'Inventory of John Gordon', 11 August 1829.

⁸⁷ Stana Nenadic suggests that a comprehensive view can be gleaned by comparing confirmation inventories (a legal process of evaluation that followed death) with sequestration inventories (a legal process that followed bankruptcy). The former provides values of household goods whilst sequestration inventories describe household goods in some detail. See Nenadic, 'Middle Rank consumers', p.130.

Richard Dennistoun acquired Kelvingrove Estate from John Pattison at a time of relative personal prosperity. However, the decline of Dennistoun's commercial fortunes in the 1820s meant insolvency appeared imminent. With the 'whole estates and property of every description' subject to sale to appease creditors,⁸⁸ the landed estate and moveable property was recorded in some detail by evaluators.⁸⁹ The surviving documents allow the historian to step back into the world of the Glasgow-West India elite.

Situated on the banks of the river Kelvin and spread over twenty-eight acres in the south western section of the west end park, Kelvingrove was an estate built for the sugar aristocracy. The mansion was constructed in 1782 for Lord Provost and sometime West India merchant Patrick Colquhoun.⁹⁰ In 1790, Colquhoun put the estate and grounds up for sale:

The house, which overlooks the river, is built upon a very comfortable plan, containing a dining room, drawing room, eight bed rooms, two lumber rooms, a kitchen, larder, and three cellars under-ground. The offices consist of a stable, with stalls for four horses, a cow house, milk house, chaise and cart house, a hay loft, pigeon house, poultry houses, all in the most complete order. There are also a pump-well in the yard, a convenient wash house with a pipe from the river, and a large and commodious cold bath. The garden (which, as well as the offices, is hid from the dwelling house by trees and shrubbery) is well stocked with fruit trees and small fruit, and is surrounded by a brick wall, part of which has flues, and the whole of it is at present covered on both sides with a great variety of fruit trees of the best kinds. There is also upon the ground a great variety of flowering shrubs, and a considerable quantity of barren timber, part old, and part lately planted, all in the most thriving condition, and the whole disposed in such a manner as to greatly add to the beauty of the place.⁹¹

The legal sources on the threatened sequestration of Dennistoun in 1826 provide a great deal of detail about this estate. The initial evaluation in 1826 listed Dennistoun's overall investments at over £17,000.⁹² A subsequent statement suggested most of his wealth was held in Kelvingrove, which was valued at £13,700.⁹³ The appraisal of 1826 allows a glimpse into the rooms and furnishings listed in the sales advertisement of 1790, including eight bedrooms, a kitchen as well as dining and drawing rooms.⁹⁴ Much can be learned about the layout and function of the house. In the lobby, the incoming visitor stepped onto

⁸⁸ *Cases Decided in the Court of Session*, Third Series, Volume I, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1863), p.869.

⁸⁹ NRS, CS96/4808-4809, 'Sederunt Books of Richard Dennistoun sequestration', vols. 1 and 2; GD64/1/261, 'Papers relating to estate and debts of Richard Dennistoun of Kelvingrove'; CS44/178/56, 'Decree discharging Richard Dennistoun of all debts contracted prior to 3 April 1826'.

⁹⁰ John Guthrie Smith, John Oswald Mitchell, 'Kelvingrove House', *The Old Country Houses of the old Glasgow Gentry*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1878).

⁹¹ 'Sale of Land in Lanarkshire', *Glasgow Mercury*, 12 January 1790, quoted in Senex, *Glasgow: Past and Present*, Vol. 3, (Glasgow: David Robertson, 1884), p.43

⁹² NRS, CS96/4808, 'Sederunt Book of Richard Dennistoun', vol. 1, p.20.

⁹³ NRS, GD64/1, 'Statement of Claims', p.261.

⁹⁴ NRS, CS96/4808, 'Sederunt Book of Richard Dennistoun', vol. 1, pp.8-20.

a carpet whilst a stove and lamp warmed and lit the entrance.⁹⁵ The dining room was one of the main rooms of the house although the Turkey red carpet was old and the rug ‘much worn’. This room had a dual function for family activities and socialising. Richard could have sat in the stuffed arm chair reading a book from the mahogany stand or he may have relaxed on the black hair cloth sofa. The room, however, was mainly used for eating and drinking. The smaller clawfoot Pembroke dining tables were perhaps used by the family on a daily basis when the servants would have laid out the china breakfast and afternoon dinnerware and water jugs. However, the large mahogany dining table, covered by green cloth and surrounded by fourteen chairs, was probably reserved for large dinner parties. Soup would have been served by staff using the silver ladle. For the main course, fish was cut with a special knife and asparagus served with its own fork. The marrow spoon was a typical eighteenth-century implement and hints at long-gone dining practices. Dinner was eaten with the silver knives and forks, amongst the most expensive items in the house. Afterwards the desert dishes, saucers and jelly glasses would be filled for those with a sweet tooth.⁹⁶

Private diaries and journals provide further insight into the food and drink served at both grand events and on a daily basis.⁹⁷ Colin Dunlop Donald was close friends with John Gordon and was served turtle at two consecutive feasts in Aikenhead House in the summer of 1814.⁹⁸ Gordon’s household expenses in this period – which could be as high as £100 a month – demonstrate he bought staples such as milk, butter, sugar, tea, ale, beer, cheese and beef from local sources. He also had a taste for champagne.⁹⁹ A newspaper article that described the eating habits of an anonymous merchant – although his identity was apparent to local citizens – suggests this was a typical diet. A conversation between Dr James Craufurd Gregory of the University of Edinburgh and a ‘douce-looking Glasgow merchant’ was reported in the contemporary press. In a bid to cure his indigestion, the merchant visited the doctor and discussed his eating and drinking habits to get to the source of the issue. The merchant’s breakfast at 9am consisted of coffee, tea, eggs, kippered salmon and three rolls and butter as well as honey and jam. For dinner, the merchant ate soup, fish, plain roast beef and some cheese with ale or porter for pudding. He drank a glass or two of sherry and a ‘great deal’ of beer with dinner as well as a glass of Highland whisky afterwards as a digestif. The merchant described rum punch as the

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.10-11.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁹⁷ For a study of consumption patterns of planters in Jamaica, see Christer Petley, ‘Gluttony, excess, and the fall of the planter class in the British Caribbean’, *Atlantic Studies*, 9/1, (2012), pp.85-106.

⁹⁸ Private ownership, ‘Diaries of Colin Dunlop Donald’, 22 June, 6 July 1814.

⁹⁹ NRS GD1/1209/9, ‘Journal of John Gordon’, p.56-57, p.60-64, p.69, p.72, p.157.

preferred drink of his class but he only drank a couple of tumblers in the evening unless he was with male company. Later, just before he went to the counting house to read the evening letters, he ate bread and butter and drank tea. On his return, he sometime ate 'rizzer'd haddock', toasted cheese or oysters washed down with a bottle of ale. Before bed, he drank warm whisky toddy. Although he suggested this was representative of the 'everyday life' of a 'moderate...sober family man', the doctor described him as a 'notorious glutton and drunkard'.¹⁰⁰ Given that this newspaper article caricatured the merchants of Glasgow and their lifestyle, it is improbable that this level of consumption was typical although the imbibing of Caribbean produce was certainly widespread.

From the extent of his alcohol collection at Kelvingrove House, however, it seems that Richard Dennistoun did not especially favour rum punch. It seems to have been reserved for social occasions with others involved in the West Indies, a view consistent with contemporary medical opinion on the drinking habits of elite merchants. Indeed, Sir John Sinclair, Scottish politician and pioneering statistician, pointed out 'the most opulent' did not 'drink so much punch' instead preferring wine which was 'more fashionable'. Sinclair established a perceptive correlation between punch drinking and gout - a debilitating condition exacerbated by lead contaminated alcohol - no doubt a legacy of the distillation process in the Caribbean.¹⁰¹ Examination of Dennistoun's alcohol collection - mainly Madeira wine - suggests a more refined palate. The island of Madeira was a popular stopover for ships on their way to the Caribbean and many Scots were resident there in business distributing the famous wine.¹⁰² Certainly, the imminent departure of Glasgow ships destined for the West Indies was described as 'a most desirable opportunity for ordering the Wine' demonstrating that it was certainly shipped home.¹⁰³ Richard Dennistoun did have a well-stocked pantry. Alcohol was the most expensive (£92) category of goods in the house representing almost 10 percent of the total value of the inventory. The single most expensive commodity was twenty four dozen bottles of Madeira wine as well as nineteen dozen port, eleven dozen sherry, a dozen rum, eighteen bottles of cherry rum, three gallons of whisky, twelve dozen porter and six dozen strong

¹⁰⁰ 'Mercantile Indigestion', *Morning Chronicle*, 8 September 1824.

¹⁰¹ John Sinclair, *The Code of Health and Longevity*, vol.1, (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1807), pp.352-3; Frederick H. Smith, *Caribbean Rum: A Social and Economic History*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), p.145.

¹⁰² David Hancock, 'The Trouble with Networks: Managing the Scots' Early-Modern Madeira Trade', *The Business History Review*, 79/3, (2005), pp.467- 491.

¹⁰³ 'Armed Ships - to Call at Madeira', *Glasgow Herald*, 26 September 1808, p.3.

ale.¹⁰⁴ Whilst extensive, it was not unusual for elite West India merchants in Glasgow to own similarly valued wine stocks.¹⁰⁵

Stana Nenadic has argued that the conspicuous consumption of alcohol was an activity new to the home in this period and that male drinking in particular was loaded with symbol and significance.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, the mixing of Jamaica rum punch in a bowl set on a mahogany table - perhaps imported from the Spanish West Indies - illustrates a mercantile outlook that cannot be gleaned from a ledger book. The social consumption of alcohol at grand feasts reinforced group cohesion and trust amongst business and political associates whilst valuable possessions in rooms demonstrated the owners' wealth.¹⁰⁷ Male drinking followed these sumptuous dinner parties (which could last five courses) and toasts were an important part of the event. One account of high society in Glasgow described a toast which hints at a transatlantic *mentalité*:

They [women] were expected to get out of the way at the proper time, or when a hint was given them to do so. At Glasgow, forty years ago [i.e. 1821], when the time had come for the *bowl* to be introduced, some jovial and thirsty member of the company proposed as a toast, "The trade of Glasgow and the outward bound;" the hint was taken, and silks and satins moved off to the drawing room.¹⁰⁸

In Kelvingrove house, there were seven crystal punch bowls in which to mix up the drink although some were 'cracked'.¹⁰⁹ The ritual transformation of Jamaica and Leeward Island rum, sugar, lemon and lime into the 'Glasgow punch' was memorialised in a contemporary representation that recounted 'the solemnity and entire absorption of mind with which this portion of the Bacchanalian rites is uniformly celebrated in Glasgow'.¹¹⁰ Indeed, the mixing required great care and the correct proportions of rum, water, sugar and citrus. The refreshment was poured into tumblers with a silver ladle and imbibed whilst the merchants celebrated the success of the commerce and sojourners on which his fortune was based. After the men-only toast, Dennistoun and his associates could have rejoined the womenfolk in the drawing room. If the men remained *compos mentis*, they might join the women in games on the three card tables.¹¹¹ The punch bowl, probably refreshed by servants, allowed continued drinking. The bookshelf, ink and paper stands hint at this

¹⁰⁴ NRS, CS96/4808/19, 'Sederunt Books of Richard Dennistoun', vol. 1.

¹⁰⁵ NRS, SC36/48/27, 'Inventory of Charles Stirling', 24 October 1839, p.756.

¹⁰⁶ Nenadic, 'Middle Rank consumers'.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.148.

¹⁰⁸ E.B. Ramsay, *Reminisces of Scottish Life and Character*, (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1841), p.35.

¹⁰⁹ NRS, CS96/4808, 'Sederunt Book of Richard Dennistoun', vol. 1, pp.16-17.

¹¹⁰ T. Hamilton, *The Youth and Manhood of Cyril Thornton*, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1827), pp.50-51.

¹¹¹ Nenadic, 'Middle rank consumers', pp.147-8.

room's dual commercial role and the framed prints and flower jugs provided a serene environment. The merchants could have ended the night with a game of billiards by candlelight.

After a night's entertainment, Richard would have retired to his room which was downstairs as was Mrs Dennistoun's bedroom. The carpet in Richard's room was 'very old' although he slept in a large bedstead with fashionable red Gingham print curtains which were also on the window. A feather bed with cover, pillows and two pair of blankets made a comfortable sleeping arrangement. The sofa, mahogany chairs and tables suggest this was also a place of solitude. His wife's bedroom was sparsely furnished; the carpet was 'very old' and she slept in a small bedstead with feather mattress and pillow with blue curtains, also old. Other bedrooms, such as the low west, also had carpets and bedsteads that were of low value.¹¹²

The servants had their own bedroom as well as a dedicated 'Servants Garret Room' in the roof of the house which contained a pair of old bedsteads.¹¹³ Their other domain, of course, was the kitchen, which, as the table and chairs demonstrate, was also a dining room for servants. The room was therefore multi-functional; it was used to store wooden pails as well as items like pestle and mortar, pots, girdles, as well as 'tubs for salting meat', spits and dripping pans.¹¹⁵

After the death of Richard Dennistoun on 1 May 1833, the household furniture was valued at £918.¹¹⁶ This had hardly depreciated from the appraisal of 1826 which supports the view that the high intrinsic value of good quality household furniture meant such goods were a safe investment.¹¹⁷ Dennistoun's inventory demonstrates he did not own the same value of household effects as many of the other merchants examined here. This suggests he did not live the extravagant lifestyle favoured by James Ewing for example. Indeed, expensive paintings and books are conspicuous by their absence in Kelvingrove House. It is, of course, possible that all high value items had been removed prior to the visit of auctioneer Thomas Watson on 1 May 1826 and given to family members. It is, however, significant that the most expensive items in the house - silver plate, knives and forks, Madeira wine, silver candlesticks and tea vase - facilitated fine dining, the consumption of alcohol, entertainment and socialising. Dennistoun evidently lived a life dominated by commerce and leisure facilitated by the profits of the West India trades. Although the creditors were eventually satisfied without the need to sell Kelvingrove estate, the upkeep

¹¹² NRS, CS96/4808, 'Sederunt Book of Richard Dennistoun', vol. 1, p.9-10.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.16

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.11.

¹¹⁶ NRS, SC36/48/24, 'Inventory of Richard Dennistoun', 11 May 1833, p.9.

¹¹⁷ Nenadic, 'Middle rank consumers', p.134.

probably exceeded the earning potential of the younger Dennistoun and the mansion was sold in 1841. The merchants of Glasgow also invested in heritable property in the colonies.

Legacies of Glasgow-West India Trades: Emancipation and Compensation

The inventories examined here identify many of the subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association as extensive property holders, much of accrued from involvement with the West India trades. Over ten inventories referred to shares in plantations or mortgages held over them. Merchant-planter Charles Stuart Parker owned a third share of coffee, cotton and sugar plantations in Demerara.¹¹⁸ James Ewing bequeathed Taylor Caymanas and all other lands he owned in Jamaica to a family trust in Scotland.¹¹⁹

The ongoing *Legacies of British Slave-ownership* project at University College London allows the untangling of the Gordian knot of compensation claims from subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association.¹²⁰ Analysis suggests that thirty seven subscribers of the Association were involved with compensation claims worth over £300,000 for over 8,300 enslaved people.¹²¹ Considering the total figure for Glasgow is around £450,000, it is likely that the subscribers collected the majority of the compensation awarded to individuals ‘associated’ with the city (see Appendix 2). The subscribers made claims for slaves resident in Jamaica, British Guiana, Grenada, Trinidad and St Vincent. It is significant that all of these colonies except Jamaica were integrated into the British Empire after the Union of 1707. Thus, Scots had legal access to the frontier territories of the second and third phase colonies and took full advantage.

The background of Association claimants illustrates the commercial and professional sectors of the West India Interest in Glasgow. The majority of Association claims were from partners in West India merchant firms or merchant-planters who claimed compensation for the slaves which they held mortgages over or plantations they owned outright. Elite slave-owners such as James Ewing of Strathleven and John Blackburn of Killlearn made large scale claims. Notable West India families with associated firms were also represented including the Campbells of Possil, the Smiths of Jordanhill, the Bogles of Gilmorehill, the Stirlings of Keir, the Eccles, the Dennistouns and the Douglas’. Lawyers

¹¹⁸ Parker’s shares in cotton, coffee and sugar plantations Caledonia and Coffee Grove in Demerara was valued at £20,417 on his death. See NRS SC36/48/21, ‘Inventory of Charles Stuart Parker’, p.278.

¹¹⁹ NRS, SC65/34/7, ‘Inventory and Testament of James Ewing’, 24 February 1854, p.190

¹²⁰ ‘Legacies of British Slave-ownership’, Available: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/> Accessed: 9 September 2014.

¹²¹ At least twenty six subscribers of the Association died before 1834. Thus, thirty seven of the surviving members of the Association had a direct interest in the compensation process (at least 50 percent of membership). This further underlines why the Association fought a concerted pro-slavery campaign in the 1820s and 1830s.

who were members of the Association, Colin Dunlop Donald and James Reddie, claimed in legal roles as executors and trustees of estates.

One West India firm, however, stood out from the rest. Nicholas Draper has underlined the exceptional standing of the great merchant house of John Campbell, senior, and Co. Partners in the firm received over £73,000 compensation which ranked the merchant house as the eighth largest ‘mercantile beneficiary’ in Great Britain and highest in Scotland.¹²² The six remaining partners of the firm in 1834 - Colin, Thomas and James as well as Mungo Nutter and ‘Black’ and ‘White’ Mungo - made dozens of individual claims for enslaved peoples across at least twelve estates. They made claims for slaves in British Guiana as well as three claims for slaves in St Vincent, Trinidad and Grenada. It seems likely that at least some of this wealth was sunk into land in Scotland. After receiving large scale compensation in early 1836, Colin Campbell acquired Colgrain estate which passed onto his son, Colin Campbell junior.

Legacies of Glasgow-West India Trades: Property transmission

Consistent with the work of Amy Louise Erickson on marriage and inheritance, Nicholas Draper has noted that both mechanisms facilitated the intergenerational transmission of wealth in gentry families. Thus, West India fortunes percolated down the generations and eventually rested with individuals with no direct connection to the colonies.¹²³ As described above, eldest sons of merchants sometimes inherited their fathers landed estates through primogeniture. Chapter three has noted that patrimonial inheritance of shares in merchants allowed some sons to start in West India commerce. This section will trace how moveable and heritable property was transmitted to women through marriage and inheritance thus providing security for female dependants.

The legal supremacy of husbands was entrenched in Scottish matrimonial property law in 1820s Scotland.¹²⁴ Marriage contracts represented one legal mechanism designed to protect the economic rights of some women. The contracts of colonial merchants, according to Devine, ‘almost universally’ contained life-rents on property which provided an annual income for female dependants.¹²⁵ A limited number of marriage contracts have been identified for the subscribers examined here and it is evident that they could be

¹²² Nicholas Draper, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.236.

¹²³ Amy Louise Erickson, ‘Coverture and Capitalism’, *History Workshop Journal*, 59 (2005), p.2; Nicholas Draper, ‘Capitalism and Slave Ownership: A Response’, *Small Axe*, 16/1, (March 2012), p.171.

¹²⁴ Ann McCrum, ‘Inheritance and the Family: the Scottish urban experience in the 1820s’, in *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900*, ed. by Jon Stobart, Alastair Owens, (England: Ashgate, 2000), pp.152-155.

¹²⁵ Devine, ‘Empire and Land’, pp.77-79.

substantial. In 1813, at the advanced age of sixty, John Gordon married his second wife, Janet Hamilton, a daughter of Gilbert Hamilton, first secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and Lord Provost in 1792-93.¹²⁶ The marriage contract - drawn up by Colin Dunlop Donald - outlines the agreement of a post-mortem transmission strategy. On the death of John Gordon, Janet was guaranteed a large one-off sum and an annuity. Furthermore, he also obliged himself to 'aliment, educate and entertain' the children of the marriage in a 'suitable manner becoming their situation'. They were each to be paid £10,000 on his death whilst the eldest son would inherit his estate. In return, Gordon was given 'full power' to administer £1000 from the (then deceased) father of the bride, Gilbert Hamilton.¹²⁷ Whilst some marriage contracts were based on property in Scotland, others referred to West India estates. In 1831, Charles Stirling of Gargunnock married a daughter of John Hamilton of Sundrum in Ayrshire and guaranteed to pay an annuity to his new wife from his half share of Content estate on Jamaica, including 'negroes and warehouses and other buildings'.¹²⁸

Marriage 'tochers' (Scots for dowry) from fathers could also be generous and were designed, amongst other reasons, to ensure daughters maintained the appropriate lifestyles. In 1803, Isabella Smith, daughter of Archibald Smith of Jordanhill, married another West India merchant, John McCall of Ibroxhill. The contract included a 'tocher' of £2500 from the father of the bride.¹²⁹ However, such marriage arrangements were subject to the volatility of West India commerce. In the 1820s, Professor George Joseph Bell noted that claims from women and children on the bankrupted estates of husbands and fathers were the 'most distressing' yet Scots law frequently refused to acknowledge them as creditors, even if they had 'special contracts'.¹³⁰ As well as bequests in the form of annuities and tochers, it was common for the wealthy merchants to convey household goods to surviving wives so they could continue to live in luxury. John Gordon's testamentary settlement in 1819 made further provision for his wife, leaving her 'household furniture & plenishings of every description [and]...to deliver the whole stock of liquors in my cellars'.¹³¹ In the use of such methods, the West India elite of Glasgow followed the norms of the established financial elite. Thus, although these were typical methods of transmission, it is significant

¹²⁶ Stewart, *Curiosities*, p.219.

¹²⁷ John Gordon promised Janet Hamilton £1000 on his death and an annuity of £600 bi-annually. See NRS, SC36/51/7, 'Trust Disposition and Marriage Contract of John Gordon', pp.922-931.

¹²⁸ NRS, SC36/51/16, 'Contract of Marriage of Charles Stirling', 29 April 1840, p.521.

¹²⁹ GCA, TD1/18, 'Contract of Marriage between John McCall and Isabella Smith', 1 October 1803.

¹³⁰ George Joseph Bell, *Commentaries on the Laws of Scotland and the Principles of Mercantile Jurisprudence*, 7th Edition, vol. 1, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1870), p.678.

¹³¹ NRS, SC36/51/7, 'Trust Disposition and Marriage Contract of John Gordon', pp.924-5; John Gordon's household furniture was valued at over £3,500 on his death in 1828, See NRS SC36/48/21, 'Inventory of John Gordon', 11 August 1829, pp.618-9.

that in this way West India fortunes became detached from the colonies within a generation or two.

Some of the wills illustrate members of the Association returned home with children conceived with women in the West Indies. In his testament, Colin Thomson set out a particular strategy designed to protect his daughter's interests in Scotland. He bequeathed £3000 of his estate to be invested in Government stocks with interest paid regularly to his natural daughter, Ann, whose mother was described as a 'mullatta woman' named Ritta Allinan. If Ann married, she was to receive £1000 with the remaining sum life-rented and amongst any children. Thomson barred any future husband from management over the bequest and expressly excluded *jus mariti*, that is, the right of the husband in Scots law to administer his wife's goods during the marriage.¹³² Thus, marriage contracts were important legal instruments that defined inheritance strategies and provided security for female dependants in the event of the decease of husbands. Testamentary bequests also ensured wives and daughters received their share of the family West India fortune although the laws of primogeniture ensured sons carried the family name and most of the wealth.

The super-wealthy group of eight subscribers - John Gordon, James Ewing *et al* - left considerable fortunes that were transferred to the next generation. Three of the heirs remained in the West India trades: James McInroy junior, Colin Campbell junior and Humphry Ewing Crum Ewing. Inventories for six of this group of heirs have been traced and they left estates valued at a combined total of £1 million.¹³³ Three of the heirs left fortunes above £100,000. Thus, the wealth was retained at least across two generations. Colin Campbell junior, son of Colin Campbell of Colgrain, was the exceptional case. After the death of his father, Colin Campbell junior resided permanently at Colgrain although he spent much of his time in South Kensington Place in London. Much of his fortune was held in England. As a co-partner in prominent firms, he held large scale investments in Hogg, Curtis, Campbell & Co. and Finlay, Campbell & Co. The latter firm invested in the East Indies, particularly Ceylon. He also made domestic investments in Scottish and English railways as well as Manbre Saccharine Company. However, he retained an international focus with investments in the New Zealand and Australian Land Company

¹³² NRS, SC36/51/9, 'Last will and testament of Colin Thomson', 5 March 1831, pp.115-117; A.D.M. Forte, 'Some Aspects of the Law in Scotland: 1500-1700', in *Marriage and Property*, ed. by Elizabeth Craik, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), p.111.

¹³³ NRS SC67/36/58, 'Inventory of Peter Blackburn', 21 June 1870, pp.295-335; NRS SC6/44/46, 'Inventory of Thomas Douglas Cunningham Graham, 1884, pp.138-149; NRS SC65/31, 'Inventory of Humphry Ewing Crum Ewing', 3 November 1897, pp.203-229; NRS58/42/59, 'Inventory of John Gordon', 8 November 1897, pp.563-576; NRS SC49/31/109, 'Inventory of James Patrick McInroy', 18 February 1878, pp.357-410; NRS SC7/28/4, 'Inventory of Charles Stuart Parker', 19 August 1910, pp.807-812.

and even loaned capital to the Chilean Government. When he died in 1886, Colin Campbell junior left a personal fortune of over £680,000. By means of comparison, there were just twenty eight half-millionaires in Scotland during the period 1880-1939.¹³⁴ Thus, the inheritor of the family fortune seems to have been one of the richest Scottish merchants of the colonial period.¹³⁵ In this case, the Glasgow-West India trades propelled the Campbell family into the ranks of the wealthiest of Britain's elite.

Conclusion

The pursuit of a career in the West India trades in nineteenth-century Glasgow could lead to the accumulation of great wealth. Although risky, the majority of the sixty eight subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association examined here fared well, at least according to their inventories on death, and over ten percent were ranked amongst the wealthiest in Great Britain. Much of the wealth was invested in shipping and capital stock in the merchant firms that made transatlantic trade possible. Moreover, the subscribers invested in domestic commerce including banks and insurance companies. With the industrial investments in iron, coal and mining, the findings here add support to Eric Williams' view that the colonial trades stimulated industry in Glasgow and her hinterlands. The investments in cotton and railways - although relatively small scale - broaden the scope in a Scottish context. However, although wealth accumulated from slavery associated trades evidently assisted successive phases of industrialisation in Scotland, these findings do not suggest these streams were the principal influence on industrial transformation. They were but one of many rivulets. This thesis does provide evidence of the rapid accumulation of substantial personal fortunes and the subscribers here protected their legacy by investing in landed estates and urban property. They also invested in West India property including mortgages held on estates, plantations and slaves which led to large scale compensation claims on emancipation in 1834. The wealth was transmitted down the generations through marriage and inheritance and some direct heirs who inherited Glasgow-West India wealth continued in the colonial trades and accumulated even greater wealth.

¹³⁴ Rubinstein, *Men of Property*, p.131.

¹³⁵ NRS, SC65/34/29, 'Inventory of Colin Campbell junior', 1886, pp.391-416; NRS SC65/34/30, 'Additional Inventory of Colin Campbell junior', 1887, pp.383-385.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the West India elite of Glasgow, the processes that allowed them to accumulate capital as well as the young men who undertook the business in the colonies. These connections allowed a select few to become super-wealthy at home. The ‘Glasgow West India interest’ became prominent in the 1780s and the members developed influential financial, commercial, social and political networks in Scotland, England and the West Indies over the following half-century. The research demonstrates that these people were a commercially powerful group with political influence at regional and national levels. These connections facilitated the accumulation of large scale capital which was invested in Scotland and elsewhere from the later-eighteenth well into the nineteenth century.

The city of Glasgow and her satellite ports were a transatlantic trade hub and the premier Scottish gateway to the West Indies. Traders in the city shifted commercial focus – based on previous involvement as far back as the 1640s - to sugar and the Caribbean after the American War of Independence ended the city’s monopoly of the Virginia tobacco trade in 1783. The economic shift marked the dawn of a new social order as the Glasgow-West India commercial class rose to prominence as the city’s wealthiest and perhaps most economically and politically influential cohort. This was primarily a mercantile community although there were also absentee planters in the city. Some members of this group were second and third generation colonial traders – many were sons of ‘tobacco lords’ – but although there was a high degree of intermarriage, this was far from a closed caste. Migration patterns and occupations of fathers suggest a degree of both social and geographical mobility. Indeed, it was possible for exceptional men from modest backgrounds - such as John Gordon - to become amongst the wealthiest men of their time via a West India career in Glasgow. Religion strengthened the commercial ties and inheritance facilitated a transmission of property to other beneficiaries. Large fortunes were accumulated by the West India commercial class in Glasgow, who regenerated themselves over successive generations through key mechanisms such as marriage.

Whilst this enterprise was Atlantic focused and dependent on the exploitation of chattel slaves in the Caribbean, the Glasgow-West India trades were locally based and controlled by co-partners in counting houses in the area now known as the Merchant City. Legal and financial structures connected Glasgow with London, Liverpool and Bristol and the West Indies, networks which were designed to ensure the repatriation of capital to Scotland. The family firm represented the legal mechanism that reduced risk and promoted the accumulation of capital. The recruitment of close male relations to the firms provided

jobs for the boys and also meant that the accumulated wealth was more likely to remain in elite families.

The firms also had strong connections with Scottish banking institutions based in Edinburgh who opened new branches in Glasgow in this period. The development of the banking system in the city, therefore, was inextricably connected with New World slavery throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The banks provided credit to merchants in Glasgow which underpinned the West India trades. There is a possibility that large scale finance was sourced in London but evidence of this remains elusive. The key point is that this was a self-sustaining system based in Glasgow.

Yet, the counting houses owned by firms were much more than places to facilitate business; they were also training academies for the next generation. There were numerous commercial academies in Glasgow - probably the best in Scotland – as well as a really splendid genre of commercial publications. Specialist textbooks reveal a sophisticated, multi-faceted education system that included book-keeping, accountancy and languages. This prepared the lucky few for mercantile careers in Glasgow but perhaps more significantly created an annual supply of transatlantic professionals primed for careers in the plantation economy.

Instruction in Spanish and French demonstrates that Scottish sojourners were educated with the aim of doing business with individuals of other nationalities in the colonies – sometimes even enemies of Britain. Indeed, the representatives of Leitch & Smith were transacting in free ports with the Spanish merchants of Trinidad during the Anglo-Spanish War (1796-1808). Scots did collaborate with each other in networks across the colonies for understandable structural reasons. But mammon was their God. The merchants of Glasgow undertook business for profit and prepared the young men for business with individuals throughout the British, French and Spanish West Indies.

Young men who temporarily emigrated to the West India colonies – known as sojourners – were crucial to the repatriation of capital to Scotland. The legal opinion of Lord Corehouse that few sought to remain in the West Indies once they had acquired fortunes is consistent with both contemporary sources and modern historiography. This crucial difference between emigration patterns to the transient colonies of the Indies and the settler colonies of North America has implications for studies of the economic development of Scotland based on imperial connections.¹

¹ Ultimately, however streams of West India income must be put into comparative context with capital repatriated from India and China.

However, there is a lack of accurate data to ascertain numbers of Scottish emigrants to the West Indies. Estimates suggest up to 16,000 could have travelled from Clyde ports during the period 1806 to 1834, which is an increase on estimates for the preceding half century. Shipping advertisements suggest the newer West India colonies such as Demerara became increasingly important destinations into the nineteenth century thus providing fresh, lucrative opportunities, although Jamaica remained the principal destination.

The Glasgow-West India merchants acted as both shipping and recruitment agents thus transporting a transatlantic class to the colonies. Every decent-sized Caribbean plantation and all of the islands' mercantile houses employed a bookkeeper, and sometimes more than one, and many of these men had skills acquired in Scotland. However, slave-ownership was viewed as the best means to accumulate wealth. Merchant firms also recruited young men from familial and friendship networks who were trusted with positions dealing with finance. Evidence left of the Scots who lived, worked and in some cases died on Jamaica and Grenada illustrate earning capacity and career trajectory.

This research also adds some nuance to the view that West India property was difficult to repatriate to Scotland. During their lives Scottish sojourners in the West Indies conveyed profits via Glasgow merchant houses particularly through bills of exchange and plantation produce. Upon death, many selected the same merchant houses as executors to ensure that wealth was dispersed amongst beneficiaries at home. Sometimes the wealth was repatriated to Scottish banks. The intricacies of a dual legal system in a single imperial system (where the colonies were essentially governed under English civil law) may have induced this preference for Scottish institutions. In any case, Scots in the West Indies not only depended on networks for credit and jobs in the colonies but they also used Glasgow merchant firms and Scottish banks to repatriate the capital and disperse the profits at home. This data infers that Scottish sojourners in the colonies were far more extensive in numbers than the elite merchants of Glasgow, which in turn suggests their economic impact was greater and spread across other Scottish regions.

The 'Glasgow West India interest' depended on a range of social and political networks to advance their position in Great Britain. The associational culture of the time – exemplified by gentleman clubs – promoted fraternisation between the 'West India interest' of Glasgow and local financial and political elites. These early modern social networks were complemented by the development of focused commercial organisations, particularly the Glasgow West India Association from 1807. The Association collaborated at a national level with other pro-slavery organisations in London, Liverpool and Bristol and influenced parliamentary affairs through witnesses and colonial agents. Prominent

members of the Association such as Colin Dunlop Donald collaborated with local MPs, particularly Archibald Campbell of Blythswood. This ensured they had a say in national proceedings. Similarly, Colin Dunlop Donald was active in local politics, attempting to place politicians who were sympathetic to the West India cause in Parliament and canvassing for the friend of the Association, Blythswood. Significantly, the commanding heights of the Association have been identified as supporters of the Tory party.

The collusion and collaboration described here demonstrates that a powerful alliance between the 'West India interest' and MPs influenced British politics. Indeed, the activities of the 'Glasgow West India interest' have been traced in two prominent campaigns; firstly to extend the West India monopoly in 1822 and afterwards to secure compensation upon emancipation in 1834. This chapter establishes the Glasgow West India Association as a ruthlessly effective lobbying group with influence at the national level and associates who exerted influence in regional politics.

The case study of the merchant house of Archibald Smith of Jordanhill – as well as that of John Campbell, senior, & Co. - establishes a direct connection between financial institutions in Edinburgh, merchant houses in Glasgow, absentee proprietors across Scotland and transatlantic professionals and estate owners in the West Indies. This was a distinctly Glasgow operation which connected suppliers in Scotland with markets across the Atlantic. Representatives of the family firm, Leitch & Smith, were transacting with the Spanish in the free port of St George's and later provided large scale credit to Scottish and to (almost certainly) French plantation owners in Carriacou and Grenada. The language skills taught to young sojourners in the counting house were evidently put into practice. This study identifies the first sample of Glasgow-West India loans.

By tracing the direct financial connections between West India commerce and Scottish finance and industry, this type of transatlantic approach goes significantly beyond the pioneering work of Eric Williams. The profits accrued from financing plantations in the West Indies represented an almost invisible stream of accumulation. Indeed, such profits have not been quantified in this study. Nevertheless, all of the evidence suggests that the true impact of the West India trades cannot be measured in trade statistics alone and quantitative research on plantation finance should provide greater understanding. What is clear is that West India merchant houses facilitated the accumulation of large scale personal fortunes by partners based in Glasgow over successive generations.

This study adopts a focused approach to assess the life, wealth and legacy of a prominent group of subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association. Members constituted a powerful and extremely wealthy group and of the eight richest men in

Scotland who died during the period 1809 to 1839, three were members of the Association. John Gordon exemplifies the spectacular rise from modest beginnings to landed elite via a West India career in Glasgow. In most cases at least some, and often a great deal of the fortunes accrued were then invested across Glasgow and Scotland. Indeed, the data suggests that as the nineteenth century progressed, holdings in Glasgow West India merchant houses declined whilst investments in Scottish industry – particularly railways – increased. Thus, in general, the ‘Glasgow West India interest’ invested substantial sums in Scottish-based capitalist enterprises after emancipation. Caribbean productivity and wealth plummeted following full emancipation in 1838, providing further impetus for investment in the large scale exploitation of Scotland: minerals and an urban labour force replaced the sugar and chattel slaves of the Caribbean.

And yet, economic investment is but one part of the narrative and the legacy was much wider. The ‘Glasgow West India interest’ lived in newly built or renovated estates across Scotland. There is much to be understood about aspects of the elite lifestyles and this thesis has sampled a range of sources to illustrate living conditions and material culture. The estates represented the conspicuous conversion of West India profits into heritable property which, in some cases, remained with descendants well into the modern period. Furnishings, paintings and associated fitting were passed to beneficiaries. Wives and children of merchants and planters were substantial beneficiaries in many cases, meaning West India fortunes were separated from the colonies within a generation. The profits of the Glasgow West India trades were converted to heritable property and transmitted to the next generation thus ensuring descendants remained an elite group into the later nineteenth century and beyond.

The compensation awarded to individuals in Glasgow on emancipation was but a final pay-off after years of the exploitation of slave labour and accumulation of wealth. The subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association collected the majority of the estimated totals awarded to individuals in Glasgow, which provides context for their 1820s campaigns to ensure that if slavery ended they would not be economically disadvantaged. Perhaps the most significant point, however, is that whilst individuals in Glasgow were amongst the most concentrated regional groups in Great Britain, slave-ownership was not restricted to the transatlantic hub. Indeed, it is likely that the majority of the compensation awarded to individuals in Scotland was claimed by those residents who lived outside Glasgow, perhaps reflecting the fact that many who owed their wealth to the West Indies lived in large country estates across the country. Slave-ownership, like sojourning, was a

Scottish-wide phenomenon and further studies in a regional context should increase understanding.

This thesis ends with the foundation on which the transatlantic trades were based - the enslaved peoples of the Caribbean. Eric Williams only touched upon a global exploitative relationship between Scotland and the New World over two centuries and this thesis elaborates upon this relationship towards the end of Caribbean slavery. Although the misery and exploitation of enslaved peoples is unquantifiable, one thing is clear: their labour helped Glasgow flourish. They have earned their place in the history of the Merchant City.

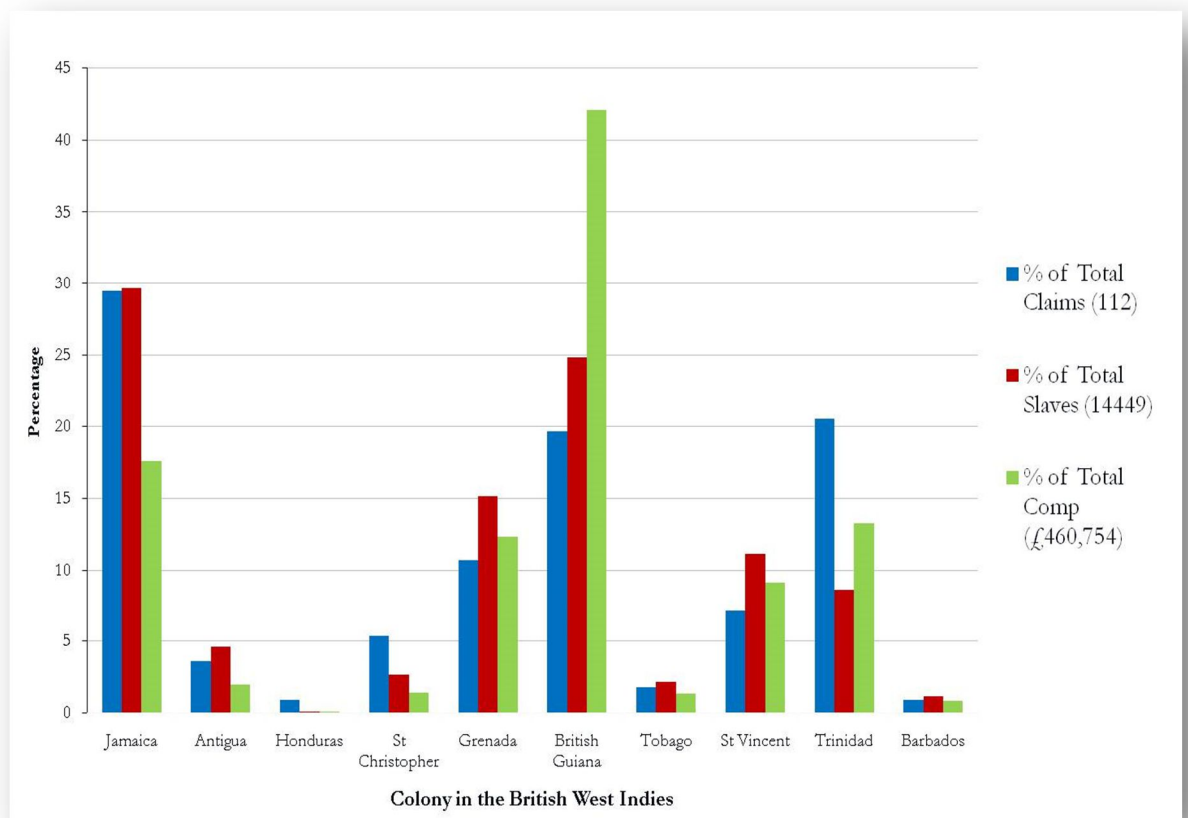
Appendices

Appendix 1: Transatlantic commodities imported to the Clyde Ports, 1790, 1800 and 1805

Commodity	1790	1800	1805
Coffee (cwts)	228	7,584	18,879
Sugar (cwts)	132,690	187,510	311,342
Rum (gallons)	224,232	670,889	484,570
Tobacco (lbs)	10,572,783	4,147,379	1,842,541
Cotton (lbs)	2,732,725	5,983,138	8,421,820

Source: This table (of colonial imports only) has been developed from G. Jackson, 'New Horizons in Trade' in *Glasgow, vol. 1: Beginnings to 1830* ed. by T. M. Devine and G. Jackson, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 219. This was originally based upon Parliamentary Papers, 1808 (338), *Accounts of the Quantities of Articles Imported into Scotland and Exported therefrom, 1790-93, 1799-1802, 1804*.

Appendix 2: Analysis of claims for slave compensation from individuals 'associated' with Glasgow, 1834-1838



Source: *Scotland and Glasgow in the Records of Slave Compensation*, Available: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/scottishdata.pdf> [Accessed 3 August 2011].

Appendix 3: Voyages of the Clyde-Caribbean Fleet, 1806-1834

Destinations	1806-1810	1811-1820	1821-1830	1831-1834	Total	%
Selected Colonies						
Antigua (1st phase, B.W.I.)	2	8	6	12	28	1.61%
Barbados (1st phase)	3	6	8	6	23	1.32%
Berbice (3rd phase)	10	19	11	2	42	2.41%
Curacao	1	0	0	0	1	0.05%
Demerara (2nd phase)	29	125	154	61	369	21.18%
Grenada (2nd phase)	17	37	34	13	101	5.80%
Guadeloupe	2	0	0	0	2	0.10%
Jamaica (1st phase)	96	271	193	55	615	35.30%
Martinique (French)	3	3	0	0	6	0.34%
New Providence (U.S.)	4	10	1	0	15	0.86%
St Croix (Danish)	3	3	0	0	6	0.34%
St Kitts (1st phase)	0	11	16	1	28	1.61%
St Lucia	2	0	0	0	2	0.10%
St Thomas (Danish)	0	57	56	41	154	8.84%
St Vincent (2nd phase)	9	33	38	10	90	5.17%
Tobago (2nd phase)	6	21	10	2	39	2.24%
Tortola	0	2	0	0	2	0.10%
Trinidad (2nd phase)	6	53	112	47	218	12.51%
Other	1	0	0	0	1	0.05%
Voyages to all colonies	194	659	639	250	1742	

Source: *Glasgow Herald*, 1806-1834

Appendix 4: Estimated sojourners to the West Indies from the Clyde, 1806-1834

Destinations, 1806-1834	Total voyages	5 per ship	7 per ship	9 per ship
Selected Colonies				
Antigua (1st phase, B.W.I.)	28	140	196	252
Barbados (1st phase)	23	115	161	207
Berbice (3rd phase)	42	210	294	378
Demerara (2nd phase)	369	1845	2583	3321
Grenada (2nd phase)	101	505	707	909
Jamaica (1st phase)	615	3075	4305	5535
Martinique (French)	6	30	42	54
New Providence (U.S.)	15	75	105	135
St Kitts (1st phase)	28	140	196	252
St Thomas (Danish)	154	770	1078	1386
St Vincent (2nd phase)	90	450	630	810
Tobago (2nd phase)	39	195	273	351
Trinidad (2nd phase)	218	1090	1526	1962
Other	14	70	98	126
Total	1742	8,710	12,194	15,678

Source: *Glasgow Herald*, 1806-1834

Appendix 5: Analysis of inventories of 45 Scots in Jamaica, 1776-1838 showing occupational breakdown and capital on death

Occupation	Inventories (n)	Total Value	Average per n.
Planter	16	£183,277	£11,454
Merchant	7	£112,713	£16,101
Doctor	4	£50,840	£12,710
Carpenter	2	£4,875	£2,473
Surveyor	1	£3,214	£3,214
Shipwright	1	£7,142	£7,142
Mason	1	£1,812	£1,812
Attorney at Law	1	£100	£100
Unknown	12	£18,966	
Total	45	£382,939	Overall ave. £8509

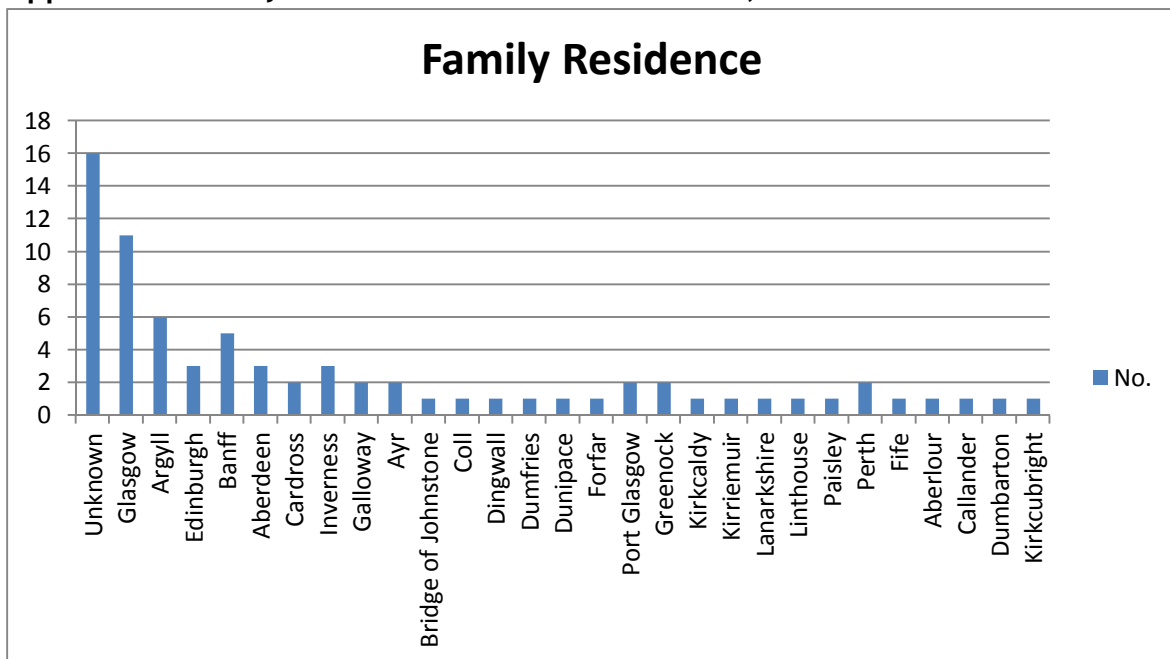
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Appendix 6: Analysis of inventories of of 21 Scots in Grenada and Carriacou, 1776-1838 showing occupational breakdown and capital on death

Occupation	Inventories (n)	Total Value	Average per n.
Merchant	8	£98,297	£12,287
Planter	6	£15,480	£2,580
Doctor	2	£1,802	£901
Carpenter	2	£1,227	£613.50
Provost General	1	£1,210	£1,210
Clerk	1	£8	£8
Unknown	1	£380	£380
Total	21	£118,404	£5,638

Sources: Will and Confirmation Inventories from Commissary Courts of Edinburgh and Glasgow and Sherriff Courts of Dunoon, Dumbarton, Edinburgh and Glasgow, National Records of Scotland.

Appendix 7: Family residence of Scots in the West Indies, 1776-1838



Source: Wills, Island Record Office, Twickenham Park, Jamaica. Probate inventories, Jamaica Archives, Spanishtown.

Appendix 8: The Clubs of Glasgow and the 'West India interest'

Club and membership years analysed	New members	New members from WI Interest
Hodge Podge, 1783-1845	82	23 (28%)
Pig Club, c.1790-1807	26	13 (50%)
Board of Green Cloth, 1809-1820	68	23 (33%)
The Western Club, 1825-1826	165	First 61 members - 19 (31%)

Sources: John Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs* (Glasgow: Richard Griffin & Company, 1857); T.F. Donald, *The Hodge Podge Club 1752-1900: Compiled from the Records of the Club*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1900); Colin Dunlop Donald, *The Board of Green Cloth, 1809-1820*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1891); T.F. Donald, *The Western Club, 1825-1925*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1924); The Western Club Archive, 'Managers Minute Book Western Club, 1825-1843'.

Appendix 9: Glasgow Chamber of Commerce membership, 1783

	Glasgow	Greenock	Paisley	Port Glasgow	Total	%
Merchant	131 (60%)	16	1	7	155	71
Manufacturer	38	0	25	0	63	29
Total	169	16	26	7	218	
%	77.5	7.3	11.9	3.2		100

Sources: GCA, TD1670/1/1, 'Minutes of the Chamber of Commerce & Manufacturers in the City of Glasgow, Vol.1', 1783-89, pp.5-9

Appendix 10: Chamber of Commerce membership and ‘Glasgow West India interest’, 1783 and 1806

Years analysed	Overall membership	GWI Interest	%	Directors	GWI Interest	%
1783	218	30	14	30	7	23
1806	73	11	15	29	6	20

Sources: GCA, TD1670/1/1, ‘Minutes of the Chamber of Commerce & Manufacturers in the City of Glasgow, Vol.1’, 1783-89, pp.5-9; GCA, TD1670/1/4/104, ‘Circular Letter’, 26 December 1806.

Appendix 11: Office Bearers of the Glasgow West India Association (1807-1838) named as Torys

First name	Surname	Chairman	Director	Secretary	Sec-Treasurer
James	Bogle		1823		
Robert	Bogle junior		1807		
Robert	Dennistoun		1807		
James Robert	Dennistoun		1837		
Colin Dunlop	Donald			1811- 1850s?	1835
James	Eccles		1823		
James	Ewing	1821-24	1821	1807-1810	
William Leckie	Ewing		1835		
John	Gordon	1807-1809	1807		
William	Hamilton	1830-1832	1830		
Archibald	Smith ygst.	1837	1832		
Charles	Stirling jnr.	1835-36	1832		

Sources: *The Reformers Gazette*; GCA, TD1683/1, Abstract of Minutes of the Glasgow West India Association; John Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs* (Glasgow: Richard Griffin & Company, 1857).

Appendix 12: Recorded meetings between Colin Dunlop Donald and Archibald Campbell of Blythswood, 1812-1832

Political context	Year	No. meetings	Separate days
Arch. Campbell – MP Elgin Burghs	1812	2	2
	1813	0	0
	1814	1	1
	1815	0	0
	1816	0	0
	1817	1	1
MP Perth Burghs	1818	0	0
MP Perth Burghs	1819	0	0
Burgh Election	1820	1	1
MP Glasgow Burghs	1821	0	0
MP Glasgow Burghs	1822	4	6
MP Glasgow Burghs	1823	2	2
MP Glasgow Burghs	1824	5	5
MP Glasgow Burghs	1825	5	6
Burgh Election	1826	3	3
MP Glasgow Burghs	1827	2	2
MP Glasgow Burghs	1828	3	5
MP Glasgow Burghs	1829	1	2
Burgh Election	1830	3	3
Campbell out	1831	1	1
Reform Act	1832	3	3
Totals	Overall	37	43
Totals	1822-1832	32	38

Source: 'Diaries of Colin Dunlop Donald, 1810-1853'.

Appendix 13: Leitch & Smith investments in the West Indies, 1800-1821

Date of Agreement	Name of Debtor/ selling party	Colony	Type and interest	Amount
1800	Robert Mackay and Co.	Jamaica	Bond Loan (5% p.a)	£25,000 ^a
9/10/1810	Ferdinand De Creeft	Grenada	Mortgage	£4353 Grenada ^b (£2829 Sterling)
1810-1818	Jean Pierre Marreud	Grenada	Mortgage Repayment	£10,000 ^c
1807-1814	Trustees of Alexander Houston.	Grenada	Land Purchase	£290 ^d
17/12/1812	Walter McInnes	Grenada	Slave Purchase	£507 Grenada (£329 Sterling) ^e
20/06/1817	George Burn	Grenada	Bond Loan (5% p.a.)	£4150 Grenada (£2697 Sterling) ^f
13/08/1817	James Bain	Grenada	Bills of Exchange (5% p.a.)	£20,000 ^g
1821	Heirs of Robert Mackay and Co.	Jamaica	Account current	£20,869 ^h
1821	Heirs of Robert Mackay and Co.	Jamaica	Bills of Exchange	£6,123 ⁱ
1821	Andrew Rome	Carriacou	Bills of Exchange	£455 ^j
				Total
				£88,592 Sterling

Sources:

^a GCA, TD1/1081/3, 'Bond by Robert Mackay', 3 October 1800

^b GD, Z4, 'Indentures', 29 January 1816, pp.257-267

^c GD, A5, 'Indentures', 6 August 1819, pp.720-727

^d GD, Y4, 'Indentures', 20 June 1814, p.156-164

^e GD, P2, 'Purchase of male slaves', 19 December 1812, pp.46-47

^f GD, A5, 'Indenture', 3 July 1817, p.245-8

^g GD, F5, 'Indenture', 14 May 1823, pp.315-329

^h NRS, CS44/9/45, 'Summons', 1 December 1821, p.6

ⁱ Ibid.

^j NRS, CS44/38/29, 'Account Current'

Appendix 14: J&A Smith, investments in the West Indies 1827-1866

Date of Agreement	Name of Mortgagee	Colony	Type of transaction	Amount
15/06/1827	Pierre Aman Belfon	Carriacou	Assignment of Mortgage (6% p.a.)	£1,300 ^a
05/02/1829	William Stuart	Grenada	Assignment of Mortgage (5% p.a.)	£24,025 ^b
1829-1832	Henry Wharton Waddilove	Grenada	Mortgage (5% p.a.)	£5,000 ^c
15/6/1830	Robert Kirk, John Todd	Grenada	Assignment of Mortgage (5% p.a.)	£6,478 ^d
2/4/1832	George Paterson	Grenada	Assignment of Mortgage (5% p.a.)	£17,853 ^e
1845	James Geddes	Jamaica	Assignment of Mortgage	£6,519 ^f
				Total
				£61, 175.

Sources:

^a GD, 'K5, Indentures', 10 April 1828, pp.424-437

^b GD, L5, 'Indentures', 4 January 1830, pp.392-405

^c GD, N5, 'Indenture', 10 January 1833, pp.327-332

^d GD, M5, 'Indentures', 21 October 1830, pp.124-153

^e GD, N5, 'Indenture', 1 August 1832, pp.261-270

^f GCA, TD1/1081, 'Iter Boreale Estate'

Appendix 15: Overall and average wealth of sixty eight subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association, by decade of death

Year died	No. Individuals	Total Value	Ave.
1807-1810	1	£59,508	
1811-1820	8	£206,035	£25,754
1821-1830	12	£734,867	£61,238
1831-1840	12	£237,533	£19,794
1841-1850	10	£362,457	£36,245
1851-1860	9	£399,730	£44,414
1861-1870	11	£596,474	£54,224
1871-1880	3	£107,496	£35,832
1881-1890	2	£39,879	£19,939
Total	68	£2,743,979	£40,352

Sources for Appendix 15-20:

Will and Confirmation Inventories from Commissary Courts of Edinburgh and Glasgow and Sherriff Courts of Dunoon, Dumbarton, Edinburgh and Glasgow, (Individually referenced throughout thesis).

Appendix 16: Range of inventories of sixty-eight subscribers of the Glasgow West India Association who died 1807-1884

Range	No.
£250,000+	1
£200,000-£249,999	1
£150,000-£199,999	2
125,000- £149,999	0
£100,000-£124,999	4
£90,000-£99,999	0
£80,000-£89,999	0
£70,000-£79,999	3
£60,000-£69,999	2
£50,000-£59,999	2
£40,000-£49,999	2
£30,000-£39,999	10
£20,00-£29,999	10
£10,000-£19,999	11
£5,000-£9,999	8
£1000-£4,999	8
0 - £999	4

Appendix 17: Investments of sixty eight subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association

Year died	No.	WI Houses	Banks	Transport (railways, canals, shipping)	Industry (cotton, iron, coal)
1807-1810	1	£48,000	£1,800	0	0
1811-1820	8	£105,144	£6,906	£230	£56,997
1821-1830	12	£420,939	£45,406	£12,150	£122,093
1831-1840	12	£47,307	£84,292	£7,787	£138
1841-1850	10	£130,790	£122,009	£27,443	£22,005
1851-1860	9	£115,000	£155,118	£42,278	£25,659
1861-1870	11	£20,000	£91,054	£178,884	£34,102
1871-1880	3	0	£14,151	£21,817	0
1881-1890	2	0	£9,672	£11,979	0
Total	68	£887,180	£530,408	£302,568	£260,994

Appendix 18: Investments in merchant firms of twenty eight subscribers to the Glasgow-West India Association, by decade of death

Year died	No.	WI Houses	Ave.
1807-1810	1	£48,000	
1811-1820	6	£105,144	£17,524
1821-1830	10	£420,939	£42,093
1831-1840	4	£47,307	£11,826
1841-1850	5	£130,790	£26,158
1851-1860	1	£115,000	
1861-1870	1	£20,000	
1871-1880	0	0	
1881-1890	0	0	
Total	28	£887,180	£31,685

Appendix 19: Investments in industry of fourteen subscribers to the Glasgow West India Association, 1807-1884

No. Individuals	Cotton	Coal	Iron	Other	Total
12	£144,108	£2,053	£34,595	£80,238	£260,994

Appendix 20: Valuation of landed estates owned by subscribers of the Glasgow-West India Association, 1807-1834

Owner	Estate	When Purchased	Value and year
James Ewing	Strathleven	1830	£110,000 (1830)
Archibald Smith	Jordanhill	1800	£16,500(1800)
John Gordon	Aikenhead	1806	£22,000 (1807)
William Cross	Auchintoshan		£20,000 (1839)
Robert Bogle jnr	Gilmorehill	1800	£8,500 (1806)
Richard Dennistoun	Kelvingrove	1806	£13,700 (1828)

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