

Less “Determined in His Purpose” than “Sincere in His Wishes”:  
Amelioration at Henry Goulburn’s Amity Hall Estate, Jamaica, 1825-1833

by

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## Abstract

There has been an explosion of recent scholarship on amelioration. Scholars have debated its effects on plantation management and the lives of the enslaved. This thesis is a detailed case study of Henry Goulburn's Amity Hall estate in Vere parish, Jamaica, spanning 1825-1833 set within the historical and historiographical contexts of amelioration. Goulburn was a British politician and evangelical Tory who inherited his holdings in the British Caribbean and managed them as an absentee owner through his Jamaican agents. He found the ownership of slaves to be a moral burden but relied on the income from his sugar works. His limited attempts at ameliorating the living and working conditions for his slaves were done through his attorney, Alexander Bayley. Bayley managed Amity Hall, seeing it through various forms of slave negotiation and protest. Goulburn largely failed to improve his slaves' conditions and lives in any substantial way. As a reformer, he was a minimalist who prioritized his finances over his slaves. He voiced concern about his slave population's comfort and happiness but did little to ensure it by way of ameliorative policy. His misguided attempts were undercut by his agents on the ground, often amplifying the horrors of the slave system for his enslaved workforce. He only introduced reform at Amity Hall in 1831 when his failure to do so was made public by recurring charges from the Anti-Slavery Society, previously made in 1826. Ultimately, the slave system itself limited the extent of the success of Parliamentary, colonial, and planter and agents' policies and attempts at ameliorative reform. Enslaved people proved to be the biggest catalyst for change during the era of amelioration. They continuously limited the levels of labour extracted. They utilized overt and covert collective action and made known to Amity Hall's managers what real amelioration entailed.

## Acknowledgments

This thesis was formulated over the course of years but was written during a long winter in a pandemic. This area of history is painful and dark. Yet what has always stood out to me from my studies is the resiliency of people to get through seemingly insurmountable pain and grief. I have witnessed the same across the globe over the past year. I hope our world continues to evolve into a place of healing from the legacy of slavery, and for those who are currently enduring hardships.

It means a great deal to me to be able to offer a sincere thank you here in writing to my supervisor, Justin Roberts. Not only for the time and knowledge he shared in helping me complete both this and my undergraduate thesis, but for providing what every student needs: someone who believes in them. From the first time I sat in his class seven years ago his passion for history and constant kind guidance have impacted my life more than I could express. I will forever consider myself fortunate to have been his student.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Amelioration Revisited and Reconsidered

Amity Hall plantation in Vere parish, Jamaica was, in many ways, quite like other Jamaican sugar works that were forced to navigate the changing imperial interests of the British empire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It was owned by an absentee planter, Henry Goulburn (1784-1856), like 80 per cent of Jamaica's sugar plantations at the time.<sup>1</sup> Like many other absentees, Goulburn had inherited proprietorship from his father in 1805, whose family acquired the Jamaican properties in the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Goulburn divided his time between London, Dublin, and his family seat of Betchworth, Surrey, and never in his lifetime visited his Jamaican estate.<sup>3</sup> Like many other sugar estates owned by absentees, knowledge of its workings and management was conveyed primarily and in most cases, entirely, through annual estate accounts and letters from its managers. In returning these letters, planters strove to manage their properties and people through careful instruction. These instructions made clear the mode of management, standards, and expectations of labour organization and sugar production they expected to see implemented on their oversea estates.<sup>4</sup> Similar to other sugar works, instructions given to managers at Amity Hall were often lost in translation, blatantly ignored by managers with diverging interests, or exacted inefficiently or improperly. This was anticipated, and usually accounted for by most absentees: owners might take steps to send agents to their properties to

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Morgan, "Labour Relations during and after Apprenticeship: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1834-1840." *Slavery & Abolition* 33, no. 3 (2012), 459. Higman notes that of the dominant sugar estates, 81 percent belonged to non-resident proprietors. In 1832, right before the abolition of slavery, 54 percent of slaves in Jamaica lived on properties owned by absentees. See B. W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy*, (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2005), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations during and after Apprenticeship: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1834-1840," 459.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 460.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Morgan, (2008) Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House: An introduction to the British Online Archives edition, <https://boa.microform.digital/collections/14/view>. Last updated: 20 April 2009.



review their managers or supervise changes occurring on their properties, or through epistolary inquiry, garner information about their individual works from neighbouring persons on the island. With the rise of the campaign of abolitionism, the Colonial Office defined new laws for their colonies, and in 1823, the British government outlined a reform program to regulate the extraction of slave labour, vested slaves with basic legal rights, and advocated for religious instruction.<sup>5</sup> They aimed to improve slaves' work conditions and prepare them through Christian instruction for free legal status and wage work- largely as a result of abolitionist pressures.<sup>6</sup> The reform program set new terms for enslaved labour, regulated workplace discipline, legalized certain customary rights slaves had, and appointed a full time resident official known as a "Protector of Slaves" to implement the laws.<sup>7</sup> The reform program largely ignored details of

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<sup>5</sup> The Colonial Office was a department of the British government which oversaw affairs in the Crown colonies. While it revised laws to attempt to liberalize the slave regime and eventually bring into effect legally-regulated abolition of slave status, it also "pressured colonies with representative Assemblies to define their own." Mary Turner, "Planter Profits and Slave Rewards: Amelioration Reconsidered." In *West Indies Accounts: Essays on the History of the British Caribbean and the Atlantic Economy in Honour of Richard Sheridan*, edited by Roderick A. McDonald (Kingston, Jamaica: Press, University of the West Indies, 1996): 232, 233. George Canning was the Leader of the House of Commons at this time. His resolution committed the government in principle to encourage amelioration. J. R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration*, (Oxford [England]: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1988), 273.

<sup>6</sup> Ursula Halliday, "The Slave Owner as Reformer: Theory and Practice at Castle Weymss Estate, Jamaica, 1808-1823." *The Journal of Caribbean History* 30, no. 1 (1996), 79; According to Burnard, in contrast to Williams' "decline thesis", the plantation system would not have failed due to intrinsic problems in how it was constructed or because of slavery- he argues that it was the outside opposition of the powerful abolitionist movement in Britain and the United States which limited it. He argues that there is no reason that we should see in the plantation system a teleology of inevitable decline. Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650-1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 5; Bryan Edwards tried to stifle claims that the West Indies were economically impotent, calculating that Jamaica alone was worth £39 million and growing in the late eighteenth century. Christa Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire: Progress and Slavery in the Plantation Americas* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 177; Ward suggests that the Ragatz-Williams decline interpretation was the result of the available information about nineteenth-century public controversies, where abolitionists were ready to accept evidence that slavery was unprofitable as well as inhumane. Today, privately kept records of sugar estates have become available for research and point towards technical adaptations during this period of slavery. J. R. Ward, "The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: Technical Change and the Plough." *New West Indian Guide* 63, no.1/2 (1989), 41.

<sup>7</sup> Turner identifies customary rights as a form of common law which embodied slave rights established by tradition under pressure from slaves. For example, the right to Sundays free from forced labour as well as Christmas holidays. Turner notes that customary rights tended to be fragile and slaves had to act on their own behalf to defend them. Mary Turner, "The 11 O'clock Flog: Women, Work and Labour Law in the British Caribbean." *Slavery & Abolition* 20, no. 1 (1999), 38, 40.

maintenance and labour schedules.<sup>8</sup> Some planters in the colonies consistently opposed the amelioration policy- the Jamaica Assembly at first refused to even consider the proposed reforms on the grounds that the imperial government was trespassing on its constitutional privileges.<sup>9</sup> Many planters did not accept that slavery needed to be reformed at all.<sup>10</sup> However, some involved owners in their “enlightened self-interest” made it their prerogative to implement reforms geared toward improvement, even before the official government policy of amelioration came into effect in the mid-1820s- aimed to extend the legality and institution of slavery.<sup>11</sup> Unlike many planters, Henry Goulburn accepted that the slave system required reform. As a government official in high office, however, he did not subsequently implement government reform policies on his own estate. At least, as Mary Turner argues, he did not only until the pressure of public exposure threatened to uproot his political career.<sup>12</sup> It is here that a fascinating opportunity exists to highlight connections between the metropole and colony, offering an entrance to join the recent historiographical conversation on amelioration in the British West Indies.<sup>13</sup>

## The Goulburn Papers

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<sup>8</sup> Ward, *British West Indian Slavery*, 273.

<sup>9</sup> The Jamaica Assembly controlled the largest single unit of slaves in the British Caribbean. Planters in the Crown colonies conquered from the Spanish and Dutch (Trinidad, Demerara-Essequibo and Berbice) were unenthusiastic but commanded less constitutional power. In Trinidad the imperial government’s 1824 Order in Council implemented the reform package. In Demerara- Essequibo and Berbice, new slave labour laws were in place by 1826. Turner, “The 11 O’clock Flog: Women, Work and Labour Law in the British Caribbean,” 38.

<sup>10</sup> Trevor Burnard and Kit Candlin, “Sir John Gladstone and the Debate over the Amelioration of Slavery in the British West Indies in the 1820s.” *The Journal of British Studies* 57, no. 4 (2018), 779.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn, 1784-1856: A Political Biography*. DesLibris. Books Collection. (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 38, 43; Charles Ellis, an absentee proprietor, represented the West Indian interest in Parliament in 1797 and introduced a motion that professed to initiate gradual abolition through the policy of amelioration. Morgan notes that it was intended to reinforce slavery, however, not eradicate it. Kenneth Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction in Jamaica, C.1776–1834." *History* (London) 91, no. 2 (302) (2006), 250.

<sup>12</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 246.

<sup>13</sup> Burnard and Candlin, “Sir John Gladstone,” 760.

Trevor Burnard and Kit Candlin observe the reinvigoration of the topic of amelioration in historiography after years of neglect in their recent work on Sir John Gladstone's ameliorative efforts.<sup>14</sup> They offer the position that the period between the 1790s and the 1830s has come to be understood by historians as a crucial period "when notions of how imperial labour should be organized dovetailed with debates on the empire's future."<sup>15</sup> Amity Hall estate experienced these intersections in profound detail. In his archival overview of the Goulburn Papers (officially known as "Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House") Kenneth Morgan notes that the collection of manuscripts comprise one of the best sets of West Indian planters' records found in English county record offices, mainly covering the period c.1750-1860.<sup>16</sup> The collection contains all surviving Jamaican material relating to the Goulburn family, and also includes further material on Henry Goulburn's political career.<sup>17</sup> Consisting of "land patents, legal papers, mortgage assignments, plans of sugar estates, lists of plantation supplies, statistics on the slaves and livestock, journals on the daily employment of slaves and apprentices, sales accounts for produce, and, above all, a long series of letters and accounts," ample material exists for serious study of the workings of the Jamaican sugar estate.<sup>18</sup>

From surviving letterbooks remain correspondence bundles between various attorneys and agents acting at Amity Hall and Henry Goulburn. This thesis primarily makes use of the volume 'Correspondence with agents and others, 1790-1854' from the Goulburn Papers. I focus on this collection as it provides the most insight into the concerns, attitudes, and daily undertakings of management on Amity Hall Estate. Original letters are preserved in the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 760.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 760.

<sup>16</sup> Morgan, Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House: An introduction to the British Online Archives edition.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

collection, as well as copies Goulburn meticulously kept for his own records. Letters between Goulburn in London and his attorney, Alexander Bayley, mainly from Woodhall in St. Dorothy parish, Jamaica have been transcribed for this thesis, spanning the years 1825-1832. Bayley's successor, John Ashley, took over Amity Hall's management in 1832 and acted as attorney until the spring of 1833. His letters have also been transcribed. For purposes of clarity, all direct quotes from archival sources provided in this study are presented exactly as they were originally written, with exceptions in two areas: spelling and punctuation, in which I offer more intelligible transcriptions when needed. Other volumes assessed from The Goulburn Papers are 'Miscellaneous papers relating to Henry Goulburn's parliamentary candidature, 1826-1832' and 'Estate Accounts, 1802-1855'.

That letters were like tools in the hands of their authors and should be read not just as texts, but also as "historical artefacts" is especially true in Goulburn's case.<sup>19</sup> As an absentee owner, letters were his only means of managing his Jamaican property, and they were constructed by him as a tool of management. It is also important to consider that Bayley, his attorney, strove to impress his employer with his competency and skill in management; his communications with Goulburn were an extension of that goal. He sometimes omitted or warped the truths of a situation, and he was a prejudiced Jamaican settler- reflected in the views he expressed in his letters. In the same light, previous attorneys with less enlightened views than Bayley informed Goulburn from Jamaica as he aged into adulthood. Goulburn was twenty-one in 1805 when he took possession of Amity Hall and he was sworn into the House of Commons two years later in 1807. Jenkins observes that Thomas Samson, Goulburn's attorney at the time of his

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<sup>19</sup> Christer Petley, *White Fury: A Jamaican Slaveholder and the Age of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 12.

inheritance, exploited Goulburn's willingness to attribute Amity Hall's labour problems to black promiscuity, based on his evangelical concerns.<sup>20</sup> In the same way, he explained away many concerns Goulburn brought to him- mainly concerning the mortality rate at Amity Hall- through his own prejudices, thereby reifying Goulburn's own preconceived notions of his slaves.<sup>21</sup> As Goulburn aged and collected more experience, he became more critical of Samson's methods, and better equipped to communicate that a harsh regime would not be tolerated.<sup>22</sup> However, Goulburn worked with Samson to manage his estate until 1818 and was no doubt influenced by his opinions and counsel. This is evident in his correspondence with his later attorneys, though Goulburn continually advocated for more humanitarian approaches towards his workforce. Sugar and the profits of slavery were not the only things exchanged between the Caribbean and England; ideas and practices returned to England helped to shape British notions of race, nationhood, and civility.<sup>23</sup>

Marisa J. Fuentes calls for attention to the production of evidence as another way to understand the intention behind archival production and power, noting that "simply citing these records as historical evidence only skims the surface of meaning."<sup>24</sup> In considering the context of the Goulburn Papers, it is critical to note that the letters transcribed for this thesis were written during a time when public opinion in England regarding slavery was undergoing drastic changes.

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<sup>20</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 50.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>22</sup> Jenkins observes that Goulburn's insistence to Samson on a humane approach bordered on posturing: "It was as if he was seeking to establish a record of concern for the material well-being of his labour force." As a public figure, this was probably the case. *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>23</sup> This idea is an overview of Susan Dwyer Amussen's work *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700* which contends that capitalists in the British Isles developed techniques similar to, or even modelled on those used to control slaves and maximize profit in the Caribbean. Christer Petley, "New Perspectives on Slavery and Emancipation in the British Caribbean." *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 3 (2011), 861.

<sup>24</sup> Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 137.

The authors of the correspondence cited in this study intended to use and uphold the plantation system for profit and were careful to stress their good intentions towards the enslaved in order to not provide abolitionists with more fuel for their cause. Goulburn and his attorneys often ignored larger realities about the physical and psychological violence of slavery and sugar work and eased both their internal and external struggles through their dependence on their prejudices against blacks.<sup>25</sup> This thesis identifies areas in which, as Fuentes observes, depictions of the enslaved in the archive, especially women, “deflect the violence of slavery onto them.”<sup>26</sup>

The limitations of these records are much like other collections concerning the management of slaves: they were compiled by the owner and his agents and so in using these records, this thesis is not told from the perspective of the enslaved. This case study focuses on management practices, slaveholder views, and the horrors that accompanied this late stage in slavery. As Morgan has pointed out in his micro-study using these archival records, no written testimony exists from the slave workforce; one must infer their motivations by “reading between the lines of the paperwork generated by those responsible for operating the plantation.”<sup>27</sup> I have attempted to do so and highlight their experiences wherever possible. D. A. Dunkley asserts in *Agency of the Enslaved* that slave freedom was not often explicit- which is much of what it owes to its survival, and part of the reason it could force changes upon slaveholding, as well as why “historians need to literally look through pin holes in the records to see it... It requires rereading

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<sup>25</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 357.

<sup>26</sup> Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 137; Turner notes that in addition to planters, abolitionists viewed enslaved women and their children as essential to their goal of transforming the colonies into free society. Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica*. Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 42.

<sup>27</sup> Morgan, “Labour Relations during and after Apprenticeship: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1834-1840,” 458.

documents generated by dominators, or reading which is against the grain.”<sup>28</sup> Dunkley explains, “I view these records also as the records of the enslaved, since they do tell a great deal about enslaved people, albeit in indirect ways.”<sup>29</sup> Hilary Beckles has highlighted the necessity for further examination of slaves’ political culture, which he asserts would make it possible for historians “to illustrate more precisely those linkages, real or imaginary, that existed between plantation-based politics and the international anti-slavery ethos.”<sup>30</sup> Amity Hall’s slave population were a driving force for change before, during, and after Bayley’s tenure as attorney. Their capacity to create change at Amity Hall stemmed from their efforts directed at collective action and other tactics- used to reinforce limits to the exploitation of their labour during the key years leading up to provisional emancipation. It is a fair assessment that they were larger catalysts for change at Amity Hall than their owner, Henry Goulburn, though they are less visible in the archive. This study aims to provide an understanding of attempts towards amelioration through the experiences of Amity Hall’s management. At times, these intersected with the experiences, desires, and choices of the Amity Hall workforce, which sheds light on slave influence on the transatlantic conflict over slavery.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Dunkley argues that freedom survived in spite of slavery and that resistance is the permanent and powerful reminder that freedom persists: viewable even in instances where horrific suppression and oppression are actively taking place. Daive A. Dunkley, *Agency of the Enslaved: Jamaica and the Culture of Freedom in the Atlantic World*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013): 5, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Dunkley, *Agency of the Enslaved*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Beckles observes a large response to this challenge, with black anti-slavery movements becoming a growing area of Caribbean historiography led by scholars such as Orlando Paterson, Michael Craton, Edward Brathwaite, Mary Turner, and others. Hilary Beckles, “Caribbean Anti-Slavery: The Self-Liberation Ethos of Enslaved Blacks.” *The Journal of Caribbean History* 22, no.1 (1988), 1.

<sup>31</sup> Petley observes a recent focus by historians on white colonizers and the power structure of the colonial state. I hope to add to these “critical appraisals of discursive and material strategies that aimed to terrorize and control enslaved people and their descendants.” He observes that the most successful recent studies of power in the Caribbean have paid close attention to the political strategies of the enslaved, however limited their agency was, to ask questions about the ways and means of oppressed people “to come to terms with changing modes of oppression.” Petley, “New Perspectives,” 879.

Brian Jenkins' political biography of Henry Goulburn identifies him as a major political figure of the era.<sup>32</sup> Stewart Weaver has noted, however, that Goulburn was also a "complete functionary, an able but uninspired bureaucrat marked by his quiet statesmanship, industry, and moderately evangelical and commercial conscience."<sup>33</sup> Goulburn was devoted to the Crown and Church of England; his conservatism, Jenkins posits, was a result of his need for security "at a time of great anxiety, both personal and national."<sup>34</sup> Goulburn believed in "the defence of the monarchy, the established church and private property."<sup>35</sup> It is this juncture that makes him a significant point of study, not just as politician, or slaveholder, but as constituent of the British Empire himself. Although he held high office for much of his life, Goulburn also represents a class of absentee owners reliant on their West Indian income, grappling with a changing world. As the reviewer notes, Goulburn was a modest and unassuming man, writing no books and making few great speeches.<sup>36</sup> As one member of a large group of landholding elite, he has fallen into the depths of history and attention to his life has only recently been restored by Jenkins and a focus by historians on his West Indian property due to its large surviving collection of records. Goulburn offers insight into not just what a politician believed publicly, or what a slaveholder steadfastly committed to, but what ideas and policies he put into practice on his estate in his quiet obscurity. While public spotlight shone on him during various scandals throughout the 1820s and 1830s, he largely went about his business in private. His surviving letterbooks offer the only extant view into a man who encapsulates and represents many of his contemporaries: an inconspicuous person navigating an age where his reliance on an immoral system was at conflict

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<sup>32</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 355.

<sup>33</sup> Stewart Weaver. "Reviewed Work: Henry Goulburn: 1784-1856, A Political Biography." *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 1 (1998), 167.

<sup>34</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 20.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>36</sup> Weaver, "Henry Goulburn: 1784-1856, A Political Biography," 167.



with his changing beliefs. Of course, Goulburn differentiated himself from other planters by his own unique actions, which offer valuable opportunity for a case study. His unwillingness to implement ameliorative policies on his estate departs from many planters, but his struggle to do so is similar. His personal motivations are his own and are interrogated in this thesis. Goulburn's voiced ideas echoed many of his contemporaries. I argue that he was the quintessential elite Brit of his time: forced to navigate the problems and consequences of colonialism he had hand in creating and perpetuating.

Much like Simon Taylor, one of Jamaica's wealthiest sugar planters, Goulburn's letters reflect larger historical themes like transatlantic politics- specifically surrounding the debate on abolitionism occurring in the metropole and across British colonies.<sup>37</sup> Christer Petley's study of Taylor observes that he was both transformed and confused by the revolutionary age, and his letters reflect his aspirations and frustrations.<sup>38</sup> Goulburn possessed his own desires and personal challenges as he navigated a changing world for slaveholders and their allies, "as part of a battle over the long-term security, economy, and 'soul' of the British empire."<sup>39</sup> Petley points out that Taylor's letters aid us in more fully understanding historical change by connecting the personal with the political, which he believes bears out historian Catherine Hall's observation that "the tensions at work within individuals" are "as vital to historical understanding as what happens outside."<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Goulburn was a conflicted individual; both relying on the income from his sugar works as a member of high society in England, and opposed to the absence of morality that sugar production under slavery necessitated.

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<sup>37</sup> Petley, *White Fury*, 12.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

## The Goulburn Papers in Historiography

Various aspects of material found in the Goulburn Papers have been the focus of historians' attention. Morgan offers a bibliographical note on work produced about Amity Hall using the Goulburn Papers in his introduction to the record collection on the British Online Archives. Notably, his 2012 article "Labour Relations during and after Apprenticeship: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1834-1840" contributes to literature surrounding labour relations in the transition from slavery to freedom in Jamaica.<sup>41</sup> G.S. Ramlackhansingh's 1966 economics thesis, "Amity Hall 1760-1860: the geography of a Jamaican plantation," which Morgan notes is a detailed account of Goulburn's Jamaican properties, and is cited in other studies of Amity Hall, remains undigitized and thus unavailable for consideration in this thesis. Mary Turner's 1996 "Planter Profits and Slave Rewards: Amelioration Reconsidered" and 1991 "Slave Workers, Subsistence and Labour Bargaining: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1805-1832" is closely studied and reengaged with in this study. This thesis will draw largely on Turner's arguments regarding Amity Hall, as she has written about the estate in the years leading up to emancipation, and during the apprenticeship period. Additionally, J.R. Ward's 1988 book *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration* in which he briefly considers Amity Hall's experiences in a larger discussion of amelioration in the British West Indies, is examined.

Turner wrote at length on issues of amelioration. In "Planter Profits and Slave Rewards: Amelioration Reconsidered" her article assesses whether Goulburn qualifies as an ameliorator in any capacity by reviewing his record as an absentee owner.<sup>42</sup> She notes that she does this in greater detail than the extent of Ward's work or the "scale of an election broadsheet permits."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 457.

<sup>42</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 234.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

Turner questions whether Goulburn's conduct was rightfully characterized by his contemporaries, as well as in historiography, and asks what light his record as owner of Amity Hall threw on both the "process and programme of amelioration."<sup>44</sup> Her interest in his case is much as the same as mine: Goulburn was an evangelical Tory and Conservative Member of Parliament for Armagh City, West Looe and Cambridge University.<sup>45</sup> Between February 1810 and August 1812 he was Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs, then replaced Robert Peel as Under-Secretary of State for War and the Colonies.<sup>46</sup> Morgan notes that at Westminster he was familiar with colonial legislation and dealt with antislavery advocates and the West India interest in Parliament.<sup>47</sup> As a moderate liberal Tory, he served twice as Chancellor of the Exchequer and "sought to balance the budget through strict economy and increased taxation."<sup>48</sup> Jenkins writes that Henry Goulburn's inheritance of Amity Hall "proved to be a lifelong burden," becoming a "crippling liability" economically, alongside a "political encumbrance as well as a moral burden for a public man."<sup>49</sup> Described as a "reluctant sugar proprietor" by Morgan, Goulburn nonetheless relied heavily on his income from his Jamaican properties, and spent most of his life reconciling this reliance with his political career, religious convictions, and inner morals.<sup>50</sup> Despite the entanglement of Goulburn's material circumstances with the profitability of his estate, he remained an owner who was comparatively less overtly cruel than

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 460.

<sup>46</sup> Jenkins notes that Goulburn was "unexceptionably Tory in his imperialism." He valued the colonies "primarily for the power and prestige their possession conferred on the mother country." Goulburn declared the colonies were "one of the greatest sources of our glory, and one of the great supports of our power, affording resources in war, and increasing our commerce in peace." He viewed the empire as "an extended field for commercial enterprise, additional markets for our produce and manufactures, and the employment of an annually increasing mercantile marine." Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 70.

<sup>47</sup> Morgan, Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House: An introduction to the British Online Archives edition.

<sup>48</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 460.

<sup>49</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 32.

<sup>50</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 460.

other planters towards his slaves.<sup>51</sup> Morgan and Turner concur that Goulburn only pursued ameliorationist policies when his failure to do so was made public, however, he was not an overtly strict or cruel owner.<sup>52</sup> I wish to explore attempts at amelioration in more detail, by “process” or by “program” as Turner puts it, at Amity Hall.<sup>53</sup> How Goulburn, a policymaker, instated reform through his management and how in effect it was ultimately achieved through the convictions of his slave workforce, must be revisited.

### **Amelioration Revisited and Contextualized**

Historian Diana Paton identifies Mary Turner as one of the pioneers of a new Caribbean historiography produced in the context of the 1950s and 1960s nationalist movements.<sup>54</sup> She writes that Turner’s book *Slaves and Missionaries: the Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834*, remains the definitive study of the Jamaica Rebellion of 1831, establishing the significance of the rebellion for the subsequent abolition of slavery.<sup>55</sup> Her work using plantation records demonstrated that slaves took action to lobby for better working condition, and she interpreted the 1831 rebellion as a general strike.<sup>56</sup> Although Turner has provided detailed studies of ameliorative undertakings at Amity Hall, reviewing and differing from Ward’s arguments, they must be revisited in lieu of a surge in scholarship on the process of amelioration in the last decade, and in more comprehensive format. Turner notes that the term “amelioration” is embedded in the literature “because it cloaked for contemporaries the economic and political priorities of both slave owners and the imperial government.”<sup>57</sup> Goulburn was both of those

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 460.

<sup>52</sup> Morgan, “Labour Relations,” 460; Turner, “Planter Profits,” 248.

<sup>53</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 234.

<sup>54</sup> Diana Paton. “Mary Turner, 1931-2013.” *History Workshop Journal* 77, no.1 (2014), 348.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 348-349.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 349.

<sup>57</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 249.

things, and ultimately serves as a case study of the conflicting interests between metropole and colony, being a planter and politician, and slave ownership with morality. Many historians, including a number cited in this thesis such as Ward, Roberts, Dunkley, Higman, Burnard and Candlin, and Morgan have referenced Turner's work on Amity Hall, making her work foundational in discussions and scholarship surrounding amelioration in the British Caribbean, specifically regarding labour bargaining and negotiations by slave workers. Several decades after Turner detailed Amity Hall's experience of amelioration, it is time to reconsider her studies alongside new scholarship on amelioration, enabling an expansion of her ideas and arguments and allowing for different perspectives to be included.

Amelioration was a response to a variety of factors at play in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The diminishing value of sugar, "increasing dominance of Cuba and Brazil in the sugar trade," and public opinion turning in favour of reform in aspects of colonial government led planters and their agents to try to reform slavery in order to prove it was humane and improvable as a system.<sup>58</sup> Mortality rates on plantations were high, and though the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 encouraged some planters to sustain their slave populations through improved diets, allotment grounds, clothing, and rudimentary health care, many planters took this approach previous to abolition to protect their investments.<sup>59</sup> Jenkins notes that even before humanitarian critics applied mounting pressure on slaveholders, some planters "realized that money invested in the improvement of their slaves' living conditions would return a worthwhile human dividend."<sup>60</sup> In the last decade of British slavery, some planters attuned to metropolitan thinking on the future of slavery attempted rearguard action to ameliorate slavery in order to

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<sup>58</sup> Burnard and Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone," 761.

<sup>59</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 38.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

maintain their enormous profits.<sup>61</sup> Burnard and Candlin argue in their study of Sir John Gladstone, a Liverpool merchant with large slaveholdings in the British West Indies, that the debate over the amelioration of slave conditions in the 1820s included a variety of actors.<sup>62</sup> Sasha Turner notes that the “ideological struggles” between activists of abolition, government officials, those representing the slave interests, and the enslaved were “many and varied.”<sup>63</sup> Burnard and Candlin write that reactionary planters were determined to prevent diminution in their power and profits, idealistic abolitionists opposed everything that planters stood for, and imperial politicians who thought that slavery could be improved and preserved all contributed to the divisiveness over ameliorative discourse and policy.<sup>64</sup> They also note that abolitionists became substantially more sophisticated in their arguments against slavery in the early 1820s, using statistical evidence about slave population decline.<sup>65</sup> Essentially, “competing ideas about amelioration and its ultimate aim were also running in tandem.”<sup>66</sup>

It is necessary to make distinctions between five main aspects at play impacting the project of amelioration. First, as Ward has argued, planter policy was determined above all, by Parliament.<sup>67</sup> The imperial agenda underwent heavy debate in the early nineteenth-century. British lawmakers in the metropole dictated colonial laws and customs and were influential in

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<sup>61</sup> Burnard and Candlin, “Sir John Gladstone,” 761.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 761.

<sup>63</sup> Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 20.

<sup>64</sup> Burnard and Candlin, “Sir John Gladstone,” 761; Turner explains that the industrial revolution altered Britain’s economic base, turning manufacturing into the foundation of the economy and making industrialists a key element in the ruling class. This upheaval affected all classes in British society, and along with the wars and revolution of the period, forced both secular and religious thinkers to rethink the new economic and social order and formulate critiques. These ideological developments eventually made slavery a political issue and the attack on slavery was formulated in religious terms with Christians providing leadership for the cause. It was also championed by political radicals and political economists- notably Adam Smith. Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834*. Blacks in the New World. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 3-4.

<sup>65</sup> Burnard and Candlin, “Sir John Gladstone,” 761.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 761.

<sup>67</sup> Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery,” 1224.

determining how and to what extent planters implemented ameliorative reform. Second, there was a pronounced disconnect between metropole and colony. The Jamaica Assembly resisted many of Parliament's outlined reforms, and their expectations for Jamaican planters varied drastically from Parliament's. Third, policies and regulations adopted by individual estates were contingent on the personal priorities and beliefs of the owner. Additionally, as was often the case with estates under absentee management, reforms put into place were dependent on the efforts of the resident managers. Reform plans and experiments could look very different on any given estate, even in close geographic proximity. A fourth distinction to make is what actually happened on the ground in terms of what ameliorative reforms were experimented with, and the fifth is the lived experiences of enslaved people labouring on these estates. As Dunkley has observed, when slaveholders made choices to shift the productions and relations of power in colonial settings, these choices were made because of, or with due consideration made of enslaved people's choices.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, there was a difference, though often muddled, between the dictated policies of Parliament, colonial directives, the ideals of planters, and the actual practices of amelioration and the lived experiences of the enslaved. In sum, the process of amelioration was convoluted. Influence on processes and policies of reform came from both the bottom, top, and middle. The history of amelioration can only be understood by studying what this moment looked like on individual estates, what it reveals, and what it means.

This thesis provides a detailed case study of one plantation in Jamaica called Amity Hall. It uses the business correspondence of the estate and other resources in the Goulburn Papers to reconsider Amity Hall's experience of the unfolding of amelioration alongside three major historiographical arguments surrounding amelioration, as helpfully indicated by Burnard and

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<sup>68</sup> Dunkley, *Agency of the Enslaved*, 8.

Candlin in their recent scholarship. They identify three major positions adopted by historians on amelioration in the British West Indies: those of J. R. Ward, Christa Dierksheide, and Caroline Quarrier Spence. Ultimately, this thesis engages with these scholars' arguments surrounding amelioration to help show that amelioration was a much more complex and contested process than historiography alludes. Rather than solely focusing on refuting or proving their arguments, this thesis uses their work alongside Amity Hall's experiences to illuminate amelioration as a complicated phenomenon with many components and actors. Amity Hall's experiences merely add to the picture of a process that was individual to each slaveholder, estate, and workforce.

J.R. Ward's recent article, "The amelioration of British West Indian slavery: anthropometric evidence," asserts that a traditional view amongst historians, predominant until around 1970, was that slave maintenance standards were significantly improved through amelioration from the later eighteenth century onwards.<sup>69</sup> Ward describes amelioration as "a process of reform yielding more sugar at a lower cost to the labour force, as indicated by the balance between deaths and births."<sup>70</sup> Amelioration could be deemed a success, "judged on its own terms," and labour productivity rates increased from the 1780s onwards.<sup>71</sup> Using estate records and eastern Caribbean anthropometric evidence, Ward finds that the mean stature of Jamaican-born adult detainees rose between 1788 and 1838, confirming "old school" judgements that substantive amelioration occurred as a result of deliberate policy by slaveholders.<sup>72</sup> He suggests that revisionist judgments on amelioration, a genre he refers to as "amelioration scepticism," are insufficient in various areas.<sup>73</sup> He argues that planter policy determined above

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<sup>69</sup> J. R. Ward, "The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery: Anthropometric Evidence." *The Economic History Review* 71, no. 4 (2018), 1199.

<sup>70</sup> J. R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery*, 190.

<sup>71</sup> Burnard and Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone," 763.

<sup>72</sup> Ward, "The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery: Anthropometric Evidence," 1199.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 1200, 1223-1224.



all by metropolitan influences, was the main source of change.<sup>74</sup> While punishment rates remained high, many planters in the British West Indies promoted technical and managerial developments in order to improve productivity and slave workers' material conditions, and showed concern for innovation.<sup>75</sup> Ward calculates that West Indian estate income applied to slave maintenance increased between 1750 and 1834, "and the costs of more generous management were fully repaid through improved natural reproduction and labour efficiency."<sup>76</sup> Turner notes that this is not demonstrated at Amity Hall since its productivity suffered a decline, although Goulburn did lose much of his revenue in order to promote reproduction, albeit belatedly.<sup>77</sup> This is discussed in greater detail in the coming chapters.

Turner observes that for both Ward and the Anti-Slavery Society, a key measure of the success of amelioration was the reproduction of the workforce, as it reflected nutrition, labour levels, punishment methods, and partnership patterns.<sup>78</sup> In this way, amelioration was a process motivated by the planters.<sup>79</sup> The main difference, she contends, was political: for Ward, reform was a result of planters' engagement with market forces, with voluntary redistribution of their profit margins in order to promote slave welfare.<sup>80</sup> The Anti-Slavery Society considered reform as regulations which curtailed levels of labour extraction and gave slaves legal rights.<sup>81</sup> The uncertainty of direct evidence on material standards, Ward argues, encouraged a resort by historians to demographics with inconclusive results. He offers another line of argument through his recent article on anthropometrics, showing that adult Jamaican creoles under late slavery

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 1224.

<sup>75</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 233.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 233-234.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 234.

experienced stature gains as an effect of the improvement in material regimes, gaining strength from around 1800.<sup>82</sup> With a collection as large as the Goulburn Papers, opportunity exists to explore evidence of the material standards at Amity Hall through the records of managers who took differing approaches. Ward observes that some revisionism still acknowledges the possibility of improvements in the slave system, while attributing it to the slaves' own agency; day-to-day resistance bred negotiation and compromise.<sup>83</sup> Slaves in higher status positions on the plantation were able to help secure more widely spread benefits for slave communities.<sup>84</sup> This view is largely asserted throughout this case study. I offer the argument that the key measures of amelioration, which are still undergoing discussion in historiography, can be reconsidered and expanded in order to account for the centrality of the contribution of the slave workforce.<sup>85</sup> Used alongside evidence from Ward's work, a more comprehensive understanding of how the ameliorative process unfolded on individual plantations can offer a broader picture of how its influence extended from both the "bottom" and the "top".

Christa Dierksheide, in her 2014 book *Amelioration and Empire: Progress and Slavery in the Plantation Americas*, departs from Ward's arguments. Dierksheide writes that amelioration was both a theory of gradual progress through the stages of human development as well as a pragmatic approach to problems resulting from the transatlantic slave trade and plantation slavery.<sup>86</sup> She aptly remarks that "on the face of it" critics and supporters of the slave trade stood on "opposite sides of the fence," which has also been supported by generations of historians.<sup>87</sup> Planters supported a continuation of the trade alongside the status quo while abolitionists lobbied

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<sup>82</sup> Ward, "The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery: Anthropometric Evidence," 1218.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 1201.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Dunkley, *Agency of the Enslaved*, 7.

<sup>86</sup> Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 159.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

for its end in order to morally reform the nation: abolitionists were humanitarians, while those who supported the trade were committed to the barbaric principles necessary to support their wealth.<sup>88</sup> “Viewed in this presentist light, the two factions appear to be binary opposites without common ground. And yet- both camps employed amelioration as a point of departure; they embraced it as the process that would ensure progress and modernity.”<sup>89</sup> Abolitionists geared amelioration towards an end to the trade, while planters championed amelioration through a reformed trade that would improve West Indian societies.<sup>90</sup> Dierksheide notes that these were “remarkably similar plans of improvement.”<sup>91</sup> West Indian planters believed that since amelioration encompassed their private property, improvements should be managed locally, not by Parliament.<sup>92</sup> The 1780s and 1790s saw pro-slavery ameliorationist visions focused on the reform of the slave trade, but by the 1820s the focus shifted to plantation conditions.<sup>93</sup> Dierksheide argues that West Indian slavery was never adequately improved and that mortality remained high; abolitionism proved to be a much stronger and pervasive movement that culminated in full emancipation in 1838.<sup>94</sup>

A review of *Amelioration and Empire* by Gregory O’Malley suggests that in Dierksheide’s study of Henry Laurens, a South Carolinian planter, a conflation of slaveholders’ written ideas and actions is at play.<sup>95</sup> He notes that it raises profound questions of how seriously expressed ideas of slaveholders should be taken, and that more attention to the disparity and

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>95</sup> Gregory E. O’Malley, "Amelioration and Empire: Progress and Slavery in the Plantation Americas by Christa Dierksheide (review)." *The Journal of Southern History* 82, no. 1 (2016), 146.

interplay between words and actions is necessary.<sup>96</sup> A study of Henry Goulburn and his Jamaican estate can offer a useful bridge between that gap. To supplement Dierksheide's analysis of Sir John Gladstone, an absentee planter with property in the British West Indies, alongside that of Burnard and Candlin, Goulburn offers opportunity to probe further into the disparity of a Member of Parliament and slaveowner's voiced and written ideas and his actions. In fact, Goulburn's contemporaries, as well as historians such as Turner, have found him to be lacking in the execution of his ideas. This study uses detailed archival evidence from the Goulburn Papers to deduce and differentiate between what ideas he voiced and what was actually executed overseas on Amity Hall estate. As O'Malley noted, "envisioning" is much different than putting "into practice."<sup>97</sup>

Caroline Quarrier Spence's 2014 dissertation on amelioration, "Ameliorating Empire: Slavery and Protection in the British Colonies, 1783-1865" contests both Ward and Dierksheide's arguments. Her work looks at the ways that both abolitionists and politicians attempted to reform slavery, a prominent disparity examined in this thesis. Spence identifies two phases of amelioration, the first being planter led from the 1790s to 1823, and the second from 1823 to 1833, which was dominated by abolitionists who used it as a means to abolish slavery altogether.<sup>98</sup> She states that this attempted amelioration of slavery influenced both the timing and form that emancipation took.<sup>99</sup> Spence observes the influence of Spanish laws and practices on British abolitionism, offering a template for amelioration framed around laws such as the office of Protector of Slaves.<sup>100</sup> Notably, Spence argues that the ideas behind amelioration survived the

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<sup>96</sup> O'Malley, "Amelioration and Empire," 146.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>98</sup> Burnard and Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone," 764.

<sup>99</sup> Caroline Quarrier Spence, "Ameliorating Empire: Slavery and Protection in the British Colonies, 1783-1865" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2014), iii.

<sup>100</sup> Spence, "Ameliorating Empire," iii.

abolition of slavery, and that reforms adopted in the decades preceding emancipation came to inform the regulation of subsequent labour relationships.<sup>101</sup> This is expanded on in the fourth chapter of this thesis, as Amity Hall transitioned into apprenticeship.

### **Purpose and Significance**

The purpose and significance of this case study are largely derived from its concentrated focus on the experience of amelioration and reform on one Jamaican sugar estate. Studies of amelioration should not be lumped only into larger conversations surrounding the transition from slavery into emancipation or the abolitionist movement. Amelioration evolved over the turn of the nineteenth century and case studies can shed light on the phases of amelioration; locality, regional variation, context, and time matter. It was a dynamic process, and to view it only from the standpoint of the metropole risks leaving static the experiences of people undergoing these changes in the colonies. Studies focused on amelioration can act as entry points to scholarship and stand on their own as informative discussions of the experiences of slaves and managers during a time in which the system of slavery was still upheld but undergoing significant changes. Considered independently, they can offer insight into the attitudes of owners, managers, and slave workforces, as well as reveal a great deal about the goals and day-to-day operation of sugar works. Discussions between owners and managers, and subsequent negotiations and attempts to implement reform with the slave workforce often inspired conflict- revealing the goals and needs of each party, as well as where they were going unmet. Changes in policies, regulations, organization, and the daily running of an estate while it still existed under a slave system with inherent limitations, brought to the surface tensions and problems that had been submerged by time and violence, but never resolved. This thesis distinguishes between the idea of amelioration

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., iii.

and the actual experiences of the enslaved; it explores the differences between the ideals and practices of amelioration on one sugar estate.

There have been various calls for further study of amelioration from historians who have recently restored attention to the phenomenon. Spence identifies amelioration as an understudied and overlooked aspect of imperial policy in the final years of British Slavery.<sup>102</sup> Kenneth Morgan notes that case studies are important because there are as of yet too few investigations of the transition in labour relations to generate firm conclusions.<sup>103</sup> Christer Petley asserts in his article “Slavery, emancipation and the creole world view of Jamaican colonists, 1800–1834” that in spite of recent work on the white minority in the Caribbean, there is still a lack of detailed and focused studies of Jamaican planters in the period immediately before emancipation.<sup>104</sup> These calls identify amelioration and the time period leading up to emancipation as areas in need of further consideration. The Goulburn Papers offer opportunity to consider the “process and program” of amelioration on one Jamaican estate through the policies of a planter who was heavily involved in imperial decision-making in Parliament.<sup>105</sup> The years immediately leading up to emancipation (1825-1833) on his estate are focused on and significantly detailed in this case study. This thesis contributes to the picture of a group Petley describes as committed to a social order based on ideas of racial inequality; determined to protect their economic and social privileges, and only compromising over abolition under great pressure.<sup>106</sup> This thesis illustrates how Henry Goulburn is prime example of this group’s membership, even and especially as

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>103</sup> Morgan, “Labour Relations,” 458.

<sup>104</sup> Christer Petley, “Slavery, Emancipation and the Creole World View of Jamaican Colonists, 1800-1834.” *Slavery & Abolition* 26, no. 1 (2005), 94.

<sup>105</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 234.

<sup>106</sup> Petley, “Slavery, Emancipation and the Creole World View of Jamaican Colonists, 1800-1834,” 94.

absentee and government official, and can offer insight into the languages and logic of amelioration.

## **Outline of Thesis**

This study follows attempts at ameliorative reforms at Amity Hall spanning the years 1825-1833 and its changing goals: amelioration at Amity Hall was a “constantly moving target.”<sup>107</sup> The history of amelioration can be understood only through its attempted practice; this thesis examines the disparity between the metropole, colony, and Goulburn’s ideals of amelioration and its actual practice on the estate. The period of this thesis encompasses Alexander Bayley’s employment from his installation at the estate in February 1825 until his death in July of 1832. John Ashley, placed with dormant power of attorney by Goulburn during Bayley’s employment, immediately took over until the spring of 1833, when he returned to England and was subsequently replaced by Evan McPherson.<sup>108</sup> This project also includes Ashley’s brief correspondence with Goulburn during his employment.

The following chapters trace ameliorative efforts at Amity Hall in a chronological framework. This is done because the rich detail found in the estate’s records and letterbooks is best suited to a sequential structure in order to trace developments and reveal key shifts over a short period of time. The years leading up to emancipation are configured into periods of goals Goulburn and his attorneys were striving to meet. By organizing these periods into goals, this thesis explores the motivations and priorities of management, how these goals were implemented

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<sup>107</sup> Holt writes that Barbara Fields writes about the idea of freedom as a “constantly moving target”. He notes this idea resonates with his themes on the fate of Jamaican workers in the twentieth century. Thomas C. Holt, and American Council of Learned Societies. *The Problem of Freedom Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*. Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), xxviii.

<sup>108</sup> Kenneth Morgan’s article “Labour Relations during and after Apprenticeship: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1834-1840” provides a comprehensive overview of McPherson’s management of Amity Hall, during years post-emancipation and regarding the transition into the Apprenticeship period at the estate.

by the on-the-ground management, as well as the price exacted from its workforce and their degrees of participation. As the cause for abolition gained more traction, and planters moved to ameliorate conditions on their West Indian properties to ensure the institution of slavery's survival, the early nineteenth century became a period of great change. I consider historiographical arguments regarding amelioration alongside archival evidence and determine how Goulburn pursued his changing goals of amelioration throughout the years 1825-1833. Additionally, I extend the debate surrounding amelioration beyond planter or imperial measurements of success and discuss how the slave workforce were active participants in reforming living and working conditions at Amity Hall.

Chapter Two studies Alexander Bayley's first two years, 1825 and 1826, as attorney at Amity Hall. These years saw a modification of workloads and a restructuring of the workforce at the sugar plantation. Amity Hall's slave population was accustomed to extreme cruelty under Thomas Samson and were then placed under George Richards' more neglected management and left to the mercy of overseers. Goulburn, hoping for sustained production and increased reproductive rates at Amity Hall, subsequently assigned this task to Bayley, who was offered few extra resources and thus struggled to actualize Goulburn's desires. Goulburn was also forced to address circulating political charges in 1826 that he had not improved conditions for his slaves since he inherited Amity Hall's ownership. This chapter accounts for Goulburn's expectations of his plantation, and to what degree he implemented reforms to achieve such ends. The first few years saw the reestablishment of Amity Hall's goals from previous years: maximized production to offset a shrinking workforce.

Chapter Three follows Bayley's next four years as attorney of the plantation, 1827-1830. These years saw increased discussion between Bayley and Goulburn regarding the



implementation of new regulations, as well as in determining what the “real interests” of the estate were.<sup>109</sup> This period saw less crop output than previous years, fluctuating sugar prices, rising tensions between the white management, and conflict with other whites in Vere parish. It also offers insight into the mortality rates of the slave workforce and how issues of mortality were addressed by Goulburn and Bayley. The goals of Amity Hall during these years were reproduction and keeping the estate’s costs low. This chapter illuminates how these years saw more discussion than action in producing substantial reform due to financial concerns, and how a changing society shifted relationships amongst whites in Jamaica. These years in particular continued to reinforce the foundation in which Amity Hall would enter the apprenticeship period upon. Relations between management and slaves at this time were pivotal for determining how the following years would proceed.

Chapter Four traces Amity Hall in 1831-1833, the final years leading up to provisional emancipation in August of 1834, when the system of slavery transitioned into the apprenticeship period. Goulburn’s attempt to get elected to the House of Commons resulted in him being charged in 1831 once more with failing to improve conditions on his estate by the Anti-Slavery Society. He belatedly introduced reforms and concentrated more effort on ameliorating conditions at Amity Hall. The estate during this time saw a drastic shift from lackadaisical effort to a demand for strict adherence to ameliorative regulations on the plantation influenced by fellow absentee planter and Member of Parliament, James Wildman. The goals for this period finally shifted towards reform, though Goulburn’s correspondence with his attorney shows he

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<sup>109</sup> *Slavery in Jamaica, Records from a Family of Slave Owner, 1686-1860*. Surrey History Centre: Microform Academic Publishers. British Online Archives. <https://microform.digital/boa/collections/14/slavery-in-jamaica-records-from-a-family-of-slave-owners-1686-1860>, Bayley to Goulburn, 22 November 1828, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854. Henceforth, the record collection will be referred to as the Goulburn Papers, with the title of the volume noted after the date. If the date is unrecorded, the image or box number will be noted.

was still very concerned with his finances. Slave rebellion broke out in December of 1831 in Jamaica. A campaign for the immediate abolition of slavery launched in the House of Commons in April of that year created a climate of political excitement which resulted in the rebellion.<sup>110</sup> After Bayley's death in July of 1832, John Ashley took over as Amity Hall's attorney, and his correspondence with Goulburn until 1833, when Evan McPherson assumed attorneyship, is discussed. Morgan and Turner's scholarship has offered detailed study on the apprenticeship period at Amity Hall, and this chapter illuminates the climate of relationships between the management and workforce, and its overall goals of production. This provides contextual analysis for the transition of Amity Hall and other Jamaican sugar plantations into the epoch of apprenticeship.

The final chapter concludes with an overview of Goulburn's ameliorative attempts during Bayley's time as attorney and evaluates whether amelioration occurred in any substantial capacity on the estate, by "process or by program."<sup>111</sup> It considers the experiences of Amity Hall detailed throughout the preceding chapters and situates them among the major historiographic arguments surrounding amelioration. The conclusion highlights Amity Hall's workforce as the most significant force for change on Goulburn's estate, and offers some concluding thoughts on the future of the debate surrounding amelioration in historiography.

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<sup>110</sup> Mary Reckord, "The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831." *Past & Present* 40, no. 1 (1968), 110. Mary Turner assumed the surname Reckord in the 1950s whilst married to her husband, Barry Reckord.

<sup>111</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 234.

## Chapter 2

### “Tolerably Well”: 1825-1826

This chapter traces Bayley’s first two years, 1825 and 1826, as newly appointed attorney at Amity Hall, succeeding a relatively relaxed manager (George Richards), who succeeded a notoriously brutal and cruel one (Thomas Samson). Bayley faced unique challenges as emancipation crept closer. While Goulburn negotiated reform instead of emancipation in Parliament, Bayley was responsible for the monumental task of making these ideas actionable: maximizing profit while improving slave conditions and reproduction. Statistics from six triennial censuses of the entire British Caribbean slave population from the last two decades of slavery show that the problem of demographics was not easily solved.<sup>1</sup> Jamaica imported 575,000 African captives in the eighteenth century, but the population of the enslaved on the island increased only by about 250,000.<sup>2</sup> Between 1807, when the slave trade was abolished and 1834, when provisional emancipation came into effect, the Jamaican slave population fell by 43,000 or about 12 percent.<sup>3</sup> The period covered in this thesis was when slave productivity was emphasized at the same time as slave amelioration, thus making it one of contradiction.<sup>4</sup> In order to maintain sugar output levels, many planters worked their slaves harder than they had in previous years, but were also under pressure from abolitionists to improve working and living conditions to justify the continuation of slavery and maintain the slave population.<sup>5</sup> One other aspect of the challenges Bayley faced, which is highlighted in this chapter, was inheriting a workforce accustomed to the conditions and work routines of previous management. As is

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction in Jamaica, C.1776–1834." *History* (London) 91, no. 2 (302) (2006), 232.

<sup>2</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 232.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

evidenced in the records, slaves at Amity Hall had undergone the change of a series of overseers and attorneys who they found less than satisfactory and made them less inclined to submit to Bayley's authority and innovations. Within Bayley's first few months as attorney, he replaced the overseer three times, and a fourth time by the spring of 1826.<sup>6</sup> This indicates the difficulties planters, especially absentees, faced in putting ameliorative measures into place through a less-than-willing, or capable, staff. Ursula Halliday astutely points out that reforms sought to be implemented by even the best-intentioned owners "were largely contingent on reforms in the character of slave managers: a demonstrably unsound foundation in a society based on the pursuit of profit."<sup>7</sup>

Amity Hall was located in the "Grand Square" of Vere, in Middlesex county, some of the best cane producing land in Jamaica (see Figure 2.1).<sup>8</sup> Vere was largely flat, featureless, and was "invariably hot and frequently arid."<sup>9</sup> It was located seven miles north inland from Carlisle Bay on the eastern banks of the Rio Minho river.<sup>10</sup> Vere was a wealthy parish on Jamaica's southern side.<sup>11</sup> Amity Hall spanned eastwards for two and a half miles from the river, comprising about 665 acres, with about half planted in sugar cane.<sup>12</sup> Morgan notes that predominantly dry weather

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<sup>6</sup> Bayley wrote to Goulburn that one of his greatest difficulties was not being fortunate in finding a good overseer. "The one I found on the Estate would not and in fact could not remain on it, per his incompetency and...his successor I had every reason to hope would do well, but in this I have been disappointed, however I have now an overseer in which I have every confidence..." Bayley to Goulburn, 6 July 1825, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825-July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>7</sup> Ursula Halliday, "The Slave Owner as Reformer: Theory and Practice at Castle Weymss Estate, Jamaica, 1808-1823." *The Journal of Caribbean History* 30, no. 1 (1996), 74.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Turner, "Slave Workers, Subsistence and Labour Bargaining: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1805-1832" in Ira Berlin, and Philip D. Morgan, *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London, England; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 1991), 94; Kenneth Morgan, "Labour Relations during and after Apprenticeship: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1834-1840." *Slavery & Abolition* 33, no. 3 (2012), 459. In 1866 Vere was amalgamated with St. Dorothy and the old parish of Clarendon to form present day Clarendon parish.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn, 1784-1856: A Political Biography*. DesLibris. Books Collection. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 33.

<sup>10</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 94; Morgan, "Labour Relations," 459.

<sup>11</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 459.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 459.

throughout the year facilitated the ratooning of successive crops.<sup>13</sup> Provision harvest began in September, and the cane harvest commenced in the dry season after the October rains had passed, running from December to June on the south side of the island.<sup>14</sup> Planters tried to take off as much crop as possible before May, another month associated with heavy rainfall, but double insurance rates on shipping were not imposed until August, when hurricane season began.<sup>15</sup> Amity Hall possessed a great house, factory buildings, a still house, a windmill, a trash house, a steam engine, cattle pens, bookkeeper's houses, and various livestock such as horses, sheep, and mules.<sup>16</sup> It was under absentee ownership, much like the rest of Vere, which had one of the highest rates of management by attorney on the island.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 2.1: Map of Vere Parish, Jamaica

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<sup>13</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 459; Ratooning was the reaping of successive crops from the same root. Turner, "Slave Workers," 99.

<sup>14</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 95; B. W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2005), 182; Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834*. Blacks in the New World. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 40.

<sup>15</sup> Higman, *Plantation Jamaica*, 182.

<sup>16</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 459.

<sup>17</sup> Higman, *Plantation Jamaica*, 291.



Source: Emanuel Bowen, -1767. *A new & accurate map of the island of Jamaica. Divided into its principal parishes.* [London, 1752] [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. <https://www.loc.gov/item/74693274/>.

### Prior Management

The decades leading up to Alexander Bayley assuming the position of attorney in February of 1825 were ones of substantial change for Amity Hall plantation, as indicated by the turnover of attorneys and other management. After assuming power from George Richards, Alexander Bayley became the new manager of Henry Goulburn's inherited estate. "...Everything has gone on tolerably well at Amity Hall," Bayley wrote to Goulburn just a few months later, on May 10, "The negroes I am glad to say are healthy and attending to their work much better than when I had last wrote to you. I shall not fail to do everything I can to improve their conditions and render them comfortable."<sup>18</sup> This sentiment was Bayley's assurance that he would follow

<sup>18</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 May 1825, Goulburn Papers.

Goulburn's directions to prioritize slave welfare, and its improvement.<sup>19</sup> The change of attorney at Amity Hall offered Goulburn opportunity to implement reforms advocated by the West India Committee, and the government he served.<sup>20</sup> Until 1825, Goulburn had, by all accounts, failed to prioritize substantially reforming management standards at his estate. However, he would not take deliberate action to implement reforms until 1831.

Morgan notes that the attachment absentee planters had to their Jamaican properties were ultimately based on capitalist considerations whereas resident planters felt "threatened by the erosion of a social system- slavery- that had underpinned their absolute authority."<sup>21</sup> That is, as Turner asserts, the attack on slavery threatened both planters' livelihoods, as well as the very structure of West Indian society.<sup>22</sup> This certainly applies to Goulburn as an absentee, as his concerns were directed towards profit. His various managers in Jamaica faced challenges to their authority, difficulties in reconciling between a changing system, shifting expectations, and how this translated to the treatment and management of the slave workforce. From 1803 to 1818, the management of the estate was overseen by Thomas Samson while it sat in the Court of Chancery, with Goulburn taking over its ownership in 1805. Until 1818, Goulburn found Samson a satisfactory manager, capable of maximizing production and providing returns averaging 300 hogsheads of sugar a year.<sup>23</sup> Turner notes that the expenditure of capital on technological improvements such as a waterwheel to replace the cattle mill in 1808 and the introduction of a steam engine in 1818, both at Samson's recommendation, was aimed to increase sugar

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<sup>19</sup> Mary Turner, "Planter Profits and Slave Rewards: Amelioration Reconsidered." In *West Indies Accounts: Essays on the History of the British Caribbean and the Atlantic Economy in Honour of Richard Sheridan*, edited by Roderick A. McDonald (Kingston, Jamaica: Press, University of the West Indies, 1996), 238.

<sup>20</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 238.

<sup>21</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 459.

<sup>22</sup> Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 234.

production and decrease the numbers of slaves employed at the mill. Ward notes that the steam engine was installed to take immediate advantage of high sugar prices at the time by improving yields and quickening the crop.<sup>24</sup> While production soared, however, the slave population declined. Alongside this expenditure, Goulburn sold his land in Manchester parish, Jamaica in order to purchase forty-two new slaves for £3,000 from the internal slave trade (from the estate of a planter named Eugene Mahony), rather than pursue a pro-natalist policy on his estate.<sup>25</sup> The average slave holding in Vere was larger than in any other parish in Jamaica, but the density of slaves per cultivated acre was the lowest in the island.<sup>26</sup> This suggests that while plantations in Vere had larger slave populations, their workloads could be much higher, as fewer workers were responsible for cultivating larger areas of land. Turner reveals that slave hunger and discontent jeopardized the utility of the new steam engine: while steam-powered grinding required fewer workers, it imposed more intense labour and new work routines.<sup>27</sup> As Justin Roberts has shown in *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807*, “Efficiency, improvement, and reform often meant an intensification of work for the slaves.”<sup>28</sup> New technological innovations enhanced the need for cooperation amongst slaves, and a sufficient diet to maintain high levels of labour.<sup>29</sup> Maintaining the estate’s labour supply was essential, especially since the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> J. R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration* (Oxford [England]: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1988), 93.

<sup>25</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 235.

<sup>26</sup> B. W. Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834* (Kingston, Jamaica: Press, University of the West Indies, 1995), 122.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Turner, “Slave Workers,” 96; Roberts states that labour-saving technology was ultimately offset by the fact that planters owned all of the slave’s time. “Labour saved was ultimately labour invested in other tasks.” Justin Roberts, “The Whip and the Hoe: Violence, Work and Productivity on Anglo-American Plantations.” *Journal of Global Slavery* 6 (2021), 18.

<sup>28</sup> Justin Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 130.

<sup>29</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 96.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.



Upon inviting his brother, Major Archibald Goulburn, to supervise the installation of the steam engine at Amity Hall, as well as review its management, Henry Goulburn was subsequently informed that the estate was badly managed in every respect.<sup>31</sup> “The crop was thin, stunted, and plundered by slaves who were inadequately fed, miserably housed and manifestly discontented with their manager.”<sup>32</sup> George Richards, the attorney of neighbouring Bog Estate, maintained that the solution to the problem of slave reproduction was to supply more food and demand less work.<sup>33</sup> Several of Amity Hall’s slaves brought their grievances to Richards at nearby Bog Estate in order to appeal for mediation.<sup>34</sup> Henry Goulburn subsequently transferred the duty of day-to-day management of his estate to Richards in August 1818 at his brother, Major Goulburn’s, behest.<sup>35</sup> Turner notes that despite Richards’ insistence that reproduction patterns were contingent on adequate food supply, Goulburn did not take the initiative to increase the quantity of herring sent to the estate, instead relying on improved food production alongside sustained cane production.<sup>36</sup>

With Samson’s departure also went his jobbing gang, who were fed at Goulburn’s expense.<sup>37</sup> This led to a reduction in the workforce, whose numbers were not replaced, and were imperative in maintaining the levels of output during Samson’s years as attorney.<sup>38</sup> The

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<sup>31</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 235.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 97.

<sup>35</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 235; Major Goulburn considered Richards “a very superior man from every point of view.” Turner, “Slave Workers,” 97.

<sup>36</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 235-36.

<sup>37</sup> A letter to Susannah Goulburn informed her that Samson was charging upwards of £1,200 a year for the labour of his jobbing gang at Amity Hall. *Ibid.*, 242.; Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 46; Roberts notes that planters hired jobbing gangs to perform the most backbreaking job of digging cane holes in order to preserve their own slaves. Samson was able to use this reasoning in order to hire his own jobbing gang out to Goulburn in return for large sums of money. Roberts, “The Whip and the Hoe,” 15.

<sup>38</sup> Kenneth Morgan, (2008) Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House: An introduction to the British Online Archives edition, <https://boa.microform.digital/collections/14/view>.

investment in a steam engine and forty-two new slaves in 1818 absorbed most of Goulburn's spare funds and left him unable to afford much else.<sup>39</sup> Richards allowed the slaves thirteen more acres of land for subsistence farming and planted more corn (26 acres of marginal cane land) to increase the ration to fourteen pints a head for eight months, up from Samson's allotment of eight pints of corn for seven months of the year.<sup>40</sup> Turner points out that this change only brought the estate into line with customary standards for ration-fed slaves on other estates.<sup>41</sup> In Vere, most estates did not have provision grounds and relied on distributed rations.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Amity Hall depended on rations of imported fish and homegrown guinea corn, but this was supplemented by vegetables grown on allotments and house plots, significantly smaller than provision grounds.<sup>43</sup> Instead of provision grounds, slaves were given allotments attached to cane land covering between one and one and half acres.<sup>44</sup> The workers village also had 18 acres of gardens attached.<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, Amity Hall's revenue declined under Richards. While Goulburn weathered the loss of income, he "did not adjust his expectations" and maintained that the expense of services such as religious instruction for the slaves could only be tolerated by

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<sup>39</sup> J. R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration* (Oxford [England]: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1988), 93.

<sup>40</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 235; Turner, "Slave Workers, 1805-1832," 97.

<sup>41</sup> Turner notes that in Antigua, for example, Parham estate distributed 28 pounds of estate grown yams and eddoes, equating to 14 pints of corn per head. In Barbados, the FitzHerbert estates distributed 10 to 14 pints of corn or 28 to 35 pounds of yam or potatoes. Supplying this much corn at Amity Hall necessitated an increase in corn acreage from 30 to 60 acres, amounting to about one-sixteenth of an acre of allotment land per head. Turner, "Slave Workers," 96.

<sup>42</sup> Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica*, 122.

<sup>43</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 235; Provision grounds were usually on the fringes or backlands of estates and provided slave workforces with an unsupervised meeting place, whereas allotment grounds were usually attached to the cane land and were exposed to white oversight. Turner, "Slave Workers," 93, 94.

<sup>44</sup> Morgan notes provision grounds were uncommon in Vere parish due to limited hilly land for such a system. Morgan, "Labour Relations," 459; Turner explains that allotment grounds maximized the land available for sugar on a fertile alluvial plain 15 miles wide that was drained by the Rio Minho, extending south from the Clarendon mountains to the sea. It was considered some of the most fertile soil in Jamaica. Turner, "Slave Workers," 93.

<sup>45</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 459.

equivalent earning.<sup>46</sup> “Goulburn did not re-balance the books and redistribute profit to promote either reproduction, or religious instruction.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Conflicting Interests**

Goulburn’s biographer, Brian Jenkins, notes that Goulburn’s personal evangelicalism, as well as a mounting assault on slavery “failed to weaken his attachment to the institution.”<sup>48</sup> Goulburn relied on his income from Amity Hall to maintain his position in British society, and because he possessed no other form of private income, “it would have required a monumental act of moral courage for him to have taken up the cause of abolition.”<sup>49</sup> Following the 1807 abolition of the slave trade, Goulburn’s dependence on the estate’s profitability proliferated his anxiety to sustain his current workforce. Jenkins notes that Goulburn “accepted the humanitarians’ argument that the slaves’ ability to sustain if not increase their number was the only valid test of their treatment,” and as an absentee owner, it was one of his only means of determining their treatment from afar.<sup>50</sup> Goulburn hesitantly committed himself to the amelioration of slave conditions at Amity Hall, however his communications to his management that population be given priority over production appear to have been motivated by material, rather than moral considerations.<sup>51</sup> Dierksheide explains that planters sought to maintain the equality of slaveholders, but did not wish to extend “individual so-called natural rights” to women and slaves.<sup>52</sup> She notes that the exercise of power slaveholding entailed came with consequent moral obligations and social sanctions: “Slave owners had a moral duty to ensure that slaves were well

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<sup>46</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 236.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>48</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 49.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>52</sup> Christa Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire: Progress and Slavery in the Plantation Americas* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 12.

treated, but this was done with an eye toward preserving their subordination.”<sup>53</sup> Although not an overtly cruel owner, Goulburn’s belated dedication to the cause of amelioration, alongside his misguided and rather perfunctory execution of reform policies on his estate did not successfully translate into the realization of the goals he wished for.

With pressure for abolition escalating in 1823, substantial reforms were proposed by a Special Committee of West India Planters and Merchants. This committee was headed by Charles Ellis, absentee owner of a Jamaican property, as well as other Members of Parliament.<sup>54</sup> Reforms included in the programme drawn up by the government included abolishing flogging for women, the elimination of the use of the whip as a symbol of authority in the field, and flogging only in the presence of the overseer, with each punishment recorded.<sup>55</sup> The Jamaica Assembly served as the chief symbol and mouthpiece of colonial rights in the colony.<sup>56</sup> Historian Christer Petley notes that by the end of the eighteenth century many white Jamaicans claimed that their legislature was equal to London parliament, with the same constitutional rights and privileges.<sup>57</sup> The Assembly initially refused to implement parliament’s 1823 reforms. As a

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<sup>53</sup> Dierksheide notes that the end goal of amelioration was to “broaden and protect the ‘rights’ and equality of slaveholding patriarchs. Whites functioned as the ‘agents’ of improvement, while blacks’ own agency and individuality was ignored and marginalized; they were the coerced subjects of whites’ amelioration schemes. Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 13.

<sup>54</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 236; In the past, the Jamaica Assembly in cooperation with the West India interest successfully undermined parliamentary criticism by reforming the slave system on paper. The Assembly approved the Slave Trade Regulation Act and revised it successively in 1787, 1789 and 1792. The 1792 slave code was officially intended to “obviate the causes which impeded the natural increase of the negroes; gradually to diminish the necessity of the slave trade; and ultimately, to lead to its complete termination.” However, no provisions were made to administer the innovations, and they successfully deprived abolitionists of propaganda derived from old slave laws. Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 6-7.

<sup>55</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 237; Altink notes that of all indecencies linked with slavery, abolitionists were most enraged with the violence done to slaves’ bodies- especially women- because they regarded physical violence against women as a “particularly insidious crime against humanity.” Henrice Altink, ““An Outrage on All Decency’: Abolitionist Reactions to Flogging Jamaican Slave Women, 1780-1834.” *Slavery & Abolition* 23, no. 2 (2002), 107.

<sup>56</sup> Christer Petley, *White Fury: A Jamaican Slaveholder and the Age of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 41.

<sup>57</sup> Petley, *White Fury*, 41-42; Turner notes that the Jamaica Assembly held real bargaining power with the House of Commons through its control of taxes and supplies. However, Jamaican planters were ultimately at the mercy of the

Member of Parliament, Goulburn could have shown his solidarity with policymakers in the metropole by implementing the reform package on his own estate. However, Goulburn did not implement any of the reforms proposed in 1823, and Turner astutely points out that change at Amity Hall was determined by the fact that production had declined.<sup>58</sup> The slave population had also suffered, falling from 267 to 251 between 1818 and 1825, and was comparable with that of Samson's management.<sup>59</sup> Richards, who had "plainly failed to deliver on his promises" was dismissed.<sup>60</sup> The instatement of Alexander Bayley as attorney provided Goulburn the opportunity to implement some of the reforms "advocated by his fellow proprietors and sanctioned by the government he served."<sup>61</sup> He voiced his concerns to Bayley for the welfare of his population of 251 slaves, and Bayley assured him he would use his every effort to effect his wishes.

Forebodingly, in his first letter to Goulburn as attorney, Bayley informed him that though his slaves seemed healthy and effective, "Notwithstanding, they certainly do not exhibit that appearance which Negroes generally have on *well regulated* Estates."<sup>62</sup> Richards rarely visited Amity Hall during his time as attorney, and his apathetic approach to estate management resulted in lower management running its day-to-day operations ineffectively and slave workers suffering for it.

### **A Proper and Moderate Degree of Labour**

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British government, which determined terms of trade, reviewed their legislation, and sanctioned the supply and use of slave labour. Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 1, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 238.

<sup>59</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 98.

<sup>60</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 238.

<sup>61</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 238; Roberts states that planters rarely considered the damage of sugar work on slaves as individuals. Instead, they thought of slave health in the aggregate "as if they were viewing a kind of unitary and essentially organic entity." Roberts, "The Whip and the Hoe," 12.

<sup>62</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 March 1825, Goulburn Papers [emphasis added].

Upon visiting Amity Hall on April 26, a month before taking charge of the estate, Bayley immediately recognized the sugar works in a state of decay and dilapidation, writing to Goulburn that the overseer's house, the hospital, and the trash houses were not habitable in their present state. It is possible Bayley exaggerated in order to present himself as an attentive and responsible attorney in contrast to Richards, but the decrepit state of Amity Hall was also confirmed by an overseer.<sup>63</sup> The disrepair was largely a result of Richards' apathetic approach to Amity Hall's management. No regular maintenance was paid to the estate during his time as attorney. The dwelling, or great house, Bayley surmised, would only require the roof to be shingled and would be adequate for use of the slave workforce, but noted that its distance from the sugar works would make it inconvenient for them, especially around crop time.<sup>64</sup> The boiler of the steam engine was also almost completely worn out, reconciling Bayley to the use of the windmill on the estate. Without regular maintenance under Richards, Samson's technological innovations were not of much use to the current workforce. Additionally, Bayley assumed charge of Amity Hall without so much as a regular plantation book to refer to, owing that circumstance to Richards' not relaying it to him.<sup>65</sup> Bayley wrote to Goulburn that the workforce on the estate had long be accustomed to a relaxed state of management, and that time would have to elapse before they would perform a moderate amount of work with "cheerfulness and alacrity."<sup>66</sup> In his mind, quantity of labour aside, the workforce was unaccustomed to making sugar with care, attention, and cleanliness, producing sugar of inferior quality. He noted that he was witnessing a progressive improvement, though it would require a great "change in their habits."<sup>67</sup> The slaves'

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<sup>63</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>64</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 March 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>65</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 March 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>66</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 April 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>67</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 April 1825, Goulburn Papers.

tendency to claim illness, he believed, was due to Richards' influence, but he reasoned that with a change of temperament, and under the current management, that too, would improve.<sup>68</sup> A few months later, upon sending Goulburn lists of the increases and decreases of his workforce for the year 1825, Bayley observed there was room for reform in their dispositions.<sup>69</sup> By August however, upon distributing clothing to the slaves, Bayley found their appearance and disposition quite satisfactory.<sup>70</sup>

In his first year as attorney for Amity Hall, Bayley's attention was focused mainly on the repair and upkeep of a dilapidated estate, the reorganization of work routines and workloads, and familiarizing himself with the workforce.<sup>71</sup> He re-classified each slave as a worker, reconfigured the gangs, and work was allotted to each gang conformable with their efficiency.<sup>72</sup> Turner notes that Bayley's reorganization was done in order to cope with a shortage of prime field workers- in demand since the end of the slave trade.<sup>73</sup> Bayley was also concerned with the cattle, stating that the small number of steers were unable to work that years crop without the help of the cows, but

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<sup>68</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 14 April 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>69</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 8 June 1825, Goulburn Papers; Ward notes that when masters commented on slaves' dispositions, which he observes are "derogatory epithets", they were applied disproportionately to field labourers, while compliments usually went to skilled labourers. J. R. Ward, "The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: Technical Change and the Plough." *New West Indian Guide* 63, no.1/2 (1989), 51.

<sup>70</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 August 1825, Goulburn Papers; Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 37. Planters could be liable to pay a fine if they failed to clothe their slaves.

<sup>71</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 238.

<sup>72</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 1825, Goulburn Papers; Turner, "Slave Workers," 98; Ward notes that slave workforces with greater numbers allowed further subdivision- individuals were better matched to the tasks at hand. This was seen at Amity Hall, with its roughly 250 slaves. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery*, 194.

<sup>73</sup> Women outnumbered men in the first gang at Amity Hall since 1812. Turner, "Slave Workers," 98; In the years 1807-1834 Sasha Turner observes that in many cases the proportion of women exceeded men on sugar plantations, making Amity Hall similar to other estates in its demographic sex ratio. Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica*. Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 48.

that custom should be abolished if it were not for the need of a heavy expenditure of capital on steers.<sup>74</sup> That custom, he wrote, he would gradually do away with.<sup>75</sup>

While Goulburn was otherwise satisfied with Bayley's management of his estate in regards to care attended to the property, after receiving lists of the increase and decrease of his slaves in August for the year 1825, he inquired as to why his workforce was not sustaining its numbers. Morgan observes that the tension between productivity and amelioration emerged in the writings of planters and their agents on slave reproduction.<sup>76</sup> This was certainly the case at Amity Hall. Since Richards' spell as attorney at Amity Hall, the estate's population had continually declined. From 1818 to 1826, deaths outnumbered births by ninety-two to seventy-six.<sup>77</sup> Bayley's subsequent letter of November 12, 1826 sheds light on previous states of management, as well as offers perspective to what on-the-ground management's suppositions were of the current goals of the plantation- relayed to them by their owner. Bayley warned Goulburn that it was difficult to identify exactly why there was a diminution in births at Amity Hall. He had "no hesitation" in stating that in antecedent years before the decrease took place, the slaves were under management in which their inclinations and desires were more restricted than in the indulgent ones. Whether this license operated as a cause to produce the result of decreasing births, Bayley wrote, there could be no doubt:

Where Negroes are regularly inspected and made to pursue industrious habits by performing a proper and moderate degree of labour whenever their health permits it, with all other regulations, in unison with such a system, that they will thrive and increase in a much greater ratio than they will do where such indulgencies are granted as place them more immediately at their own disposal and at the same time remove them from that

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<sup>74</sup> The breeze mill magnified livestock problems because wind was not a reliable source of power. The estate could only operate at fully capacity if the sails were still by the power of the steers. Even when working well, canes needed to be hauled quickly from pieces by the livestock or risk deterioration. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 55.

<sup>75</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 August 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>76</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 235.

<sup>77</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.



watchful attention and care, which is so necessary for their well being in their present state.<sup>78</sup>

Bayley was not quick to accept blame for the decrease, noting that in years where the mode of management had been stricter and more production focused, the workforce thrived, as opposed to a system in which slaves were offered greater indulgences and were freely disposed. This explanation was also offered by an overseer who wrote that the slaves had been under relaxed habits for years past and “between severity and excessive indulgence they were more likely to decrease than increase, there still being a number of Africans on the estate.”<sup>79</sup> The overseer added that the gangs had become very inefficient from such effects.<sup>80</sup> This was a common argument amongst anti-abolitionists. They often asserted that relaxed labour routines made the slave workforce “idle and insubordinate.”<sup>81</sup> The overseer noted that in consequence of suffering from dry seasons in preceding years, as well as from apathy (from Richards), they were prone to “sluggish cultivation” which was the probable cause of the failure of the corn crops.<sup>82</sup> All of this combined, the overseer stated, caused deprivations that were injurious to their health and constitutions, leading them to become licentious, disorderly, and insubordinate.<sup>83</sup> It was common for absentee owners to hold views circumscribed by common assumptions and prejudices about slave personalities and behaviour held by their agents- this is clearly demonstrated through Bayley and Wood’s (the overseer) correspondence with Goulburn.<sup>84</sup> Male planters viewed the

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<sup>78</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 November 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>79</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers; Amity Hall had a large number of elderly slaves. During Samson’s management, many slaves also died as “invalids” which Samson viewed as “only a tax on the estate.” Over time, Amity Hall’s population became increasingly creole, however, the aging population may have also added to the low birth rate under Samson and Richards. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 52.

<sup>80</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>81</sup> Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 24.

<sup>82</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>83</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>84</sup> Morgan, “Slave Women and Reproduction,” 235.

main challenge to reproduction as “women’s inability to exercise libidinal restraint.”<sup>85</sup> In reality, reproduction was inhibited by the physical taxation of work on women’s bodies, and the slaves’ “sluggish cultivation” was most likely an expression of their discontent of increased labour levels extracted through increased whipping. Goulburn’s agents, however, as to not implicate themselves as overworking the slaves, appealed to his faith in employment as a means of personal improvement for the slave workforce.<sup>86</sup>

In reality, the lists of increase and decrease for the years preceding Bayley’s management offer much more insight into the reasons behind the decrease in the slave population than Bayley was either unwilling or incapable of identifying.<sup>87</sup> It was not the depravity and licentiousness of the slaves under Richards that resulted in a lack of births, but until that time, the vicious state of Samson’s management that facilitated death, compounded with Richards’ subsequent neglect of the estate during his administration. Lists of increase and decrease from 1818 show 8 women and 7 men dying that year. The causes of death amongst the men were commonly old age, venereal disease, fever, and other physical ailments such as dropsy. The women died from debility, and in one case, apoplexy. These listed causes can be attributed to overwork and an insufficient diet. Women comprised most of the labour used in field gangs, the most physically arduous area of work on a sugar plantation, as well as the most fatal.<sup>88</sup> A slave named Susanna died from “dirt eating” in October of 1818 at Amity Hall,

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<sup>85</sup> Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 66.

<sup>86</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 248. As the British economy transitioned from moral to political, Goulburn’s support of a more commercial and industrialized state trumpeted work and discipline as ideologies of improvement.

<sup>87</sup> Roberts explains that lists of increase and decrease reveal that planters were making a concerted effort to maintain slave and livestock populations. Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment*, 60.

<sup>88</sup> Roberts, “The Whip and the Hoe,” 3, 13.

indicating a number of possibilities.<sup>89</sup> Michelle Gadpaille's article "Eating Dirt, Being Dirt: Backgrounds to the story of slavery" suggests that dirt-eating could be a way for slaves, particularly girls and women, to negotiate power.<sup>90</sup> Morgan notes that the practice of geophagy, or dirt eating, can be attributed to a response in nutritional deficiency, as it is now known that it can be beneficial for those suffering from thiamine deficiency and was general practice in British Caribbean slave society.<sup>91</sup> Women in particular ate fine clays that could be easily found for purchase in markets.<sup>92</sup> This could be the case for Susanna under the terror and state of malnutrition under Samson.<sup>93</sup>

In 1806 Samson informed Goulburn that the poor levels of fertility at Amity Hall resulted from the ability of pregnant slaves to procure abortions.<sup>94</sup> Morgan asserts that miscarriage and stillbirth resulting from physical punishment, malnourishment or overwork is much more probable than calculated abortion, which reveals even further the poor working and living conditions existing under Samson's management.<sup>95</sup> In 1818, seven slaves were manumitted, all with the surname Samson. The family of seven were Samson's mistress and his own biological

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<sup>89</sup> Gadpaille notes that scholarship on dirt-eating offers several possibilities of which to attribute the phenomenon including pathology, taboo or cultural practice/custom (notably regarding fertility, pregnancy, or birth), reclaiming autonomy, negotiating power through robbing an owner of their property through death or resale, explanation for other causes of death, or a way for owners to displace responsibility onto the slave. Gadpaille references Doctor Collins, a planter who noted in 1830 that when a better master took over the plantation, the practice dwindled. Collins saw it as the result of poor slave nutrition. Michelle Gadpaille, "Eating Dirt, Being Dirt: Backgrounds to the Story of Slavery." *AAA: Arbeiten Aus Anglistik Und Amerikanistik* 39, no. 1 (2014), 7.

<sup>90</sup> Gadpaille, "Eating Dirt, Being Dirt," 3.

<sup>91</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 236.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>93</sup> Susanna was noted as an "old runaway" in 1817, having left with a slave named Prince. The two were returned to the estate. Lists of Increase and Decrease 1817, Goulburn Papers; Turner notes that in 1816 when a hurricane reduced sugar production to 90 hogsheads at Amity Hall, the slaves attacked the remains of the crop, chopped down canes to eat, raided neighbouring estates for food, and "lay down often in the fields from sheer debility" according to one observer. She found that some ran away in desperation, only to be severely reprimanded by Samson when forced to return. Turner, "Slave Workers," 95.

<sup>94</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 245; Samson also attributed the frequency of miscarriages and abortions at Amity Hall to the slaves' indolence, instead of overwork. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 50.

<sup>95</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 246.

children, valued at £800.<sup>96</sup> Samson had appealed to Goulburn in earlier years to manumit five mulatto children who were his offspring, but Goulburn had refused in order to maintain the strength of the labour force.<sup>97</sup> This also reveals the sexual exploitation Amity Hall's slave workforce were subjected to under Samson. Samson convinced Goulburn in 1818 to purchase forty-two new slaves rather than introduce reforms or incentive schemes to encourage motherhood. In September of 1818, one month after Richards took up management, an old runaway returned, noted in the lists of increase of slaves.<sup>98</sup> Several slaves had run away after appealing to Richards. They sought mediation regarding Samson's treatment, and only returned when Samson was dismissed.<sup>99</sup>

Richards did not attend Amity Hall estate frequently as its new attorney, and his absence enhanced the position of overseers. Ration distribution was left to the overseers, one of whom stole a great deal of the slaves' allotted corn.<sup>100</sup> Turner suggests that Richards' neglectful supervision added to slave responsibilities, in addition to putting their rations at risk.<sup>101</sup> However, the delegation of responsibility to slave workers allowed them some control over their work routine, and enhanced the authority of the driver, John Gale.<sup>102</sup> Richards' lack of attention to concerns at Amity Hall allowed lower management to abuse their powers, leaving the workforce lacking in food supplies. This, compounded by Samson's previous brutality and removal of his jobbing gang, did not prove conducive for reproductive rates. Indeed, as Jenkins notes, low

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<sup>96</sup> 20 May 1818, Valuation relating to Margaret Williams Samson (1816, 1818), Miscellaneous Papers and Correspondence Relating to the Management of the Estate, 1793-1855, Goulburn Papers. Morgan notes that Thomas Samson agreed to pay £5 p.a. to Margaret and her children for their lives following their manumission by Henry Goulburn who also bound himself to pay a similar sum.

<sup>97</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 52.

<sup>98</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, attached Lists of Increase and Decrease of Slaves, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>99</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 97.

<sup>100</sup> The overseer was dismissed, but only after his arrest for smuggling flour from Carlisle Bay. The overseer left the corn stores empty. *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

fertility rates were too often a mask, behind which more alarming rates of mortality existed.<sup>103</sup>

Bayley inherited the workforce legacy of an absentee owner unwilling to address the root causes of diminishing birthrates: malnutrition, and the force and frequency of labour.<sup>104</sup>

### **The Same Wretched System**

Turner contends that Bayley's innovations upon taking possession of Amity Hall resulted in inevitable discontent from slaves expressed in slow and reluctant work.<sup>105</sup> Their dependence on distributed rations, however, offered management a mechanism for inducing cooperation.<sup>106</sup> Only 120 hogsheads of sugar were produced at Amity Hall in 1825. Slave discontent manifested itself externally in Bayley's second year at Amity Hall. In February 1826 Bayley wrote to Goulburn, "The negroes are looking as well as could be wished but I regret to say they have been behaving ill lately by a number frequently ascending for a few days without any ground or reason that they can appear for doing so."<sup>107</sup> Morgan asserts that Bayley's introduction of contentious new work arrangements, namely increased workloads, redefined gang responsibilities, and bringing nursing mothers back into the cane fields fostered the climate for a work stoppage.<sup>108</sup> Bayley endeavoured to do away with slave misconduct first through remonstrance, attempting to communicate with the workforce by expostulating with them, but eventually turned to punishment, stating that he had a few of the slaves "corrected"- by which he likely meant whipped- which he was certain would put an end to the misbehaviour.<sup>109</sup> By May,

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<sup>103</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 38.

<sup>104</sup> Roberts shows in his article that it was the violence of production that broke down the enslaved. "The threat of the whip may have driven slaves through the field but it was the hoe that destroyed them." Roberts, "The Whip and the Hoe," 19-20.

<sup>105</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 98.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>107</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 14 February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>108</sup> Kenneth Morgan, (2008) Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House: an introduction to the British Online Archives edition.

<sup>109</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 14 February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

Bayley faced collective action from the slave workforce on the estate, and Goulburn faced problems of a political nature.

Goulburn notified Bayley in March of circulating charges, citing long-term neglect and ill treatment, that he had failed to improve slave conditions on his estate.<sup>110</sup> Goulburn had vied for the Cambridge University seat in 1826, but was met with resistance from the Anti-Slavery Society who circulated to electors charges that Goulburn had failed to ameliorate slave conditions on his Jamaican estate.<sup>111</sup> The “friends of the Negro” did not consider proprietors or West Indian merchants eligible for election.<sup>112</sup> The anonymously authored letter, dated February 26, 1826 opposed Goulburn’s appointment to the University seat on the grounds that he was a proprietor of slaves. Of his treatment towards his slaves, the letter noted that “there is no intention to question the kindness of this gentleman’s feelings towards them but the fact is that there is nothing in their actual condition which distinguishes it from the common lot of colonial slaves.”<sup>113</sup> The author acknowledged that as an absentee owner Goulburn had necessarily left the care of his workforce to attorneys and overseers, but consequently “the same wretched system prevails on his estate which prevails on West India Estates generally.”<sup>114</sup> The author’s first charge was that Goulburn’s workforce had remained without religious instruction, and that during two decades of being “their absolute master” 200- 300 children possibly had been born on his estate, none of whom had the benefit of education extended to them.<sup>115</sup> The education of children centering on Christian values, along with their socialization to become obedient

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<sup>110</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>111</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 238.

<sup>112</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Copy letters re opposition to Henry Goulburn’s parliamentary candidature (February-May 1826), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>113</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers; Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 14-15.

<sup>114</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>115</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

workers, was advocated by abolitionists.<sup>116</sup> The author alleged that the entire population, young and old, existed in a state of heathenism. Additionally, no marriages had taken place among them and they cohabited like brutes. Marriage was seen as a way by both abolitionists and slaveholders to eradicate “loose sexual conduct and promote morality.”<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, the letter charged, the men and women toiled under the lash of the driver indiscriminately in the field without wages, from morning to night, and for four months of the year (cropping season) for half the night.<sup>118</sup> “They are liable both men and women to be imprisoned and each whipped on their naked bodies to the extent of 39 lashes at the caprice of the overseer for any offense or for no offence without the possibility of the slightest legal redress.”<sup>119</sup> As for innovations, the intense labour of digging soil “under a tropical sun has not been relieved by the substitution of ploughs and cattle for the muscular exertion of men and women aided only by the hoe.”<sup>120</sup> Therefore, the author observed, the population decreased in the same ratio as might be expected on other estates.<sup>121</sup>

The letter acknowledged that Goulburn’s estate may very well have been similar to other estates in its use of slave labour, but what made it exceptional was that Goulburn’s personal

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<sup>116</sup> Turner observes that abolitionists opposed slavery, and their aim to improve enslaved children’s moral and work ethics was an extension of the “economic, political, and cultural missions of British colonialism.” In this way “the reproductive bodies of young enslaved women linked abolitionist goals for ending slavery and promoting reform and the civilization of blacks.” Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 19, 20.

<sup>117</sup> Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 39.

<sup>118</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>119</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers; In 1810 the maximum punishment for work-place offences was set at 39 lashes, the Biblical standard. Mary Turner, “The 11 O’clock Flog: Women, Work and Labour Law in the British Caribbean.” *Slavery & Abolition* 20, no. 1 (1999), 40; Altink notes that abolitionists argued that the exposure of women’s bodies during flogging prevented her from attaining the level of “purity” needed to exercise the role of “guardian of morality” as wives and mothers. Altink, “‘An Outrage on All Decency’,” 110.

<sup>120</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers; Ward found that estates in Jamaica experimented with the plough between the 1760s and 80s. “The practice fell temporarily into disrepute,” but with a labour shortage as a result of the abolition of the slave trade, “most planters had resumed ploughing by the early 1830s.” Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834,” 45.

<sup>121</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers; Morgan notes that after the end of the slave trade, continuing high mortality contributed to the 12 percent decline of the Jamaican slave population. This high mortality rate was also a result of the ageing of African slaves. Morgan, “Slave Women and Reproduction,” 232.

position in office gave him more power than other proprietors to make change.<sup>122</sup> This was the final blow that solidified the author's argument:

It may indeed have been difficult, perhaps impossible for Mr. Goulburn or for any single slave holder by his own efforts to have materially alleviated their condition. But surely it was at least in his power to have ascertained the facts of the case and to have come forward manfully to denounce them. It was in his power to have joined heartily in endeavouring to put a period to such an opprobrious state of things. It was in his power to have brought the evils of the system before Parliament and to have proposed to apply to them adequate and appropriate remedies. The official situation of Mr. Goulburn afforded him peculiar facilities for such an undertaking: and even without calling for parliamentary interference it was in his power to have done much in the way of colonial reform.<sup>123</sup>

Goulburn's position as Colonial Secretary of State, the author argued, gave him the power through "a single shake of the pen" to at least abolish the tax on manumission, and effect change through six of Britain's colonies: Trinidad, Demerara, Berbice, St. Lucia, The Cape of Good Hope, and Mauritius.<sup>124</sup> Asserting that slavery had not undergone any substantial amelioration in any colony, the letter also pointed to the fact that during ten years under Goulburn's administration, the government had maintained that great improvements had occurred.<sup>125</sup> The author disavowed that notion altogether, stating that no evidence of improvement had been given to the public, and that all signs pointed toward an opposite conclusion.<sup>126</sup> Ultimately, when it came to amelioration, the letter charged that on Goulburn's part, "nothing of the kind was attempted."<sup>127</sup> Publicly and privately, Goulburn had failed to improve the conditions of his slaves.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>123</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>124</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>125</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>126</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>127</sup> Macaulay to Godfrey, February 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>128</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 238.



Goulburn responded to the charges in a letter to the President of Queen's College, Reverend Dr. Godfrey.<sup>129</sup> First noting the circumstances under which he inherited the estate in 1805, Goulburn made it clear that the manager, Thomas Samson, was not appointed by him but rather by a Master in Chancery years before.<sup>130</sup> Of this manager's conduct he claimed: "I was ignorant of the state and circumstances and had no ready means of acquiring information respecting it."<sup>131</sup> Being at the time unoccupied and without office, Goulburn added that he had considerable time to dedicate to Amity Hall's management, or at least, as far as was in his power, and that he suggested various measures for the improvement of his people. He claimed he took "immediate means" for equalizing the number of each sex of his slave population and that he proposed various means of diminishing labour.<sup>132</sup> Balancing sex ratios along with encouraging marriages were reforms aimed towards encouraging higher birth rates.<sup>133</sup> Subsequently, Goulburn noted that he built a windmill and steam engine and was informed and believed that night work had been abolished at his request.<sup>134</sup> Interestingly, Turner observes that Goulburn followed Samson's advice- particularly regarding technological innovations, not the other way around.<sup>135</sup> Ward asserts that Goulburn took advantage of high sugar prices by installing a steam engine, which would provide a quicker crop and improved yields.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>130</sup> Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>131</sup> Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>132</sup> Jenkins notes that Samson initially chose to misinterpret this and bought equal numbers of slaves of both sexes in 1805. He complained that Amity Hall had the weakest slave force in the parish, at 260 slaves, and requested he be allowed to buy more. At the time, Amity Hall was regularly producing one of the best crops in Vere. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 48, 49.

<sup>133</sup> Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 19.

<sup>134</sup> Jenkins notes that Goulburn deferred the decision on the breeze mill until Jamaica's security from French attack was secured. He grudgingly sanctioned the investment in 1805 when Samson insisted it was the only way to improve production. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 54.

<sup>135</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 234.

<sup>136</sup> Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834*, 93; Ward notes that doubts remain over the extent to which increased output volumes in the early nineteenth century came from intensified effort, as technological innovations such as steam engines offered more efficient processing systems enhanced worker productivity. J. R. Ward, "The

Furthermore, Goulburn argued that he suggested various plans of moral improvement and education for his workers, but he had no means of acquiring adequate knowledge in regards to its implementation.<sup>137</sup> By this time, Goulburn continued, he had come into office and had less time to dedicate to the management of his estate. However, after observing a continued decrease in his slaves, he sent his brother, Major Archibald Goulburn to Jamaica to investigate the causes. Upon Samson's dismissal, his brother appointed Richards to take over management, "on the sole ground that the negroes on the estate under his management were more happy and comfortable than those on any other estate in the parish."<sup>138</sup> Goulburn noted that he did this against the advice of other local, respected proprietors on the island, who informed him that under Richards his estate would be ruined, and he would not be consulted in its management. Disregarding this information as "local prejudice" Goulburn wrote that he was "Perfectly prepared to make any sacrifice of income to secure the comfort of the negroes."<sup>139</sup> Subsequently, part of the estate was converted from cane to allotment ground (thirteen acres) which led to the considerable decrease of the estate's income. Writing that he received the "most flattering assurances of the happiness of the slaves" he considered that as ample compensation for the deficiency.<sup>140</sup> He also asserted that the plough was adopted in place of the hoe. In regard to religious instruction, Goulburn stated that he proposed to allot £200 annually to have a missionary reside on the estate, and he even made preparations for his reception. Due to a bad first crop season under Richards, a reduced income, and learning that there was a church close to his estate with a resident

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Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery: Anthropometric Evidence." *The Economic History Review* 71, no. 4 (2018), 1200.

<sup>137</sup> Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>138</sup> Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>139</sup> Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>140</sup> Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Goulburn Papers; Roberts notes that slaves' happiness was being measured as a uniform collective—the increase and decrease of slaves became a way of judging the success of ameliorative practice, a way of calculating happiness. "Happiness" was becoming a measurable quality, and a key Enlightenment value. Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment*, 60-61.

clergyman, Goulburn did not follow through with this intention. The problem with Richards, Goulburn contended, was that he rarely, if ever, heard from him.<sup>141</sup> Upon accessing the Registry of Slaves by virtue of his position in office, Goulburn noticed a continued decrease in his slave population. He promptly dismissed Richards and had Alexander Bayley take over Amity Hall's administration. Therefore, Goulburn concluded, had any ill treatment occurred, it was against his knowledge and instruction, and in spite of a sacrifice of 4/5 of his income.<sup>142</sup>

### **Gross Exaggerations**

Goulburn asked Bayley in his letter of March 10 to come to both of their defenses, and in answer Bayley authored two letters, both dated May 6, 1826. One letter concentrated on rebuffing the charges of Goulburn's detractors. Repudiating the charges as "gross exaggerations to serve political purposes" Bayley testified to Goulburn's magnanimity towards his slaves:<sup>143</sup>

Of the anxiety you have always expressed to me about their welfare and improvements in all respects, I can bear the most ample testimony and your removing Mr. Samson from the management of your estate, when it was making large returns, merely with the hope of promoting this object, and placing it under the care of Mr. Richards is a positive proof of your good intentions.<sup>144</sup>

Bayley noted that in regards to the treatment of the slaves under Samson and Richards' management he was only able to speak by general report, however, he firmly believed that assertions that Amity Hall slaves were mistreated, under-fed, and overworked were false.<sup>145</sup>

Bayley believed Samson's regime kept up order and regularity, while Richards pursued a relaxed mode of management, though it was "certainly without benefit to the Negroes."<sup>146</sup> He

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<sup>141</sup> Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>142</sup> Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>143</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825-July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>144</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>145</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>146</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

acknowledged that men and women worked together in the fields, but that it was customary throughout the island, except for employments in which men were best calculated- in these cases the sexes were separated.<sup>147</sup> Only the most “trifling exercise” was required by children under the age of ten, and merely for the purpose of preserving cleanliness and obedience.<sup>148</sup> As well, the aged were indulged and no work exacted from the feeble.<sup>149</sup> Bayley did not comment on night work or the use of the whip. It was not until 1831, when Goulburn once more faced political scandal, that Bayley fully responded to the same charges Goulburn faced in 1826. In his letter of October 5, 1831 Bayley wrote,

I really cannot say whether the night work was abolished either by Mr. Samson or Mr. Richards- I never heard that it was- if it had been the practice not to work the mills, or in other words, to grind canes in the night when the estate came into my possession it would of course have been continued. The boiling off the cane juice ground in the day at night cannot be avoided, *if the quantity of sugar to be made forms any consideration.*<sup>150</sup>

Only when pressed by Goulburn years later in 1831 did Bayley admit that he was unsure about the veracity of this charge- and he only admitted so because a statement from his overseer reported such to Goulburn. Or, more likely, Bayley feigned ignorance. He dodged answering directly to the allegation in 1826 either by accident, or unwillingness. In any case, he was not ready to accept blame for such management standards, and he shrewdly assigned Goulburn’s expectations of productivity to be the main cause of such practices.

To counter the charge that the slaves were under-fed, Bayley reminded Goulburn of the money and effort invested in securing food for the workforce. For the twelve weeks previous to

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<sup>147</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>148</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers; Turner suggests “trifling exercise” could possibly mean weeding. Turner, “Slave Workers,” 98.

<sup>149</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>150</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers [emphasis added].

breaking in the last crop of guinea corn, it cost Goulburn £280 for 480 bushels, purchased “solely for the support of the Negroes.”<sup>151</sup> Bayley denied that the slaves raised crops on Sundays for their sole support.<sup>152</sup> The fallacy of this assertion, he pointed out, was found by the “notorious” fact that every estate in Vere had their workforces employed for three or four months of the year in guinea corn alone, which was regularly served out weekly. As well, slaves were allowed twenty-six Saturdays to work their grounds. Bayley stated that a few days in the year were “sufficient to raise abundant food, how then is it possible the Negroes can be underfed under these circumstances.”<sup>153</sup> This claim was later verified by an overseer at Amity Hall, claiming that upon Bayley taking charge of the estate, it became an incumbent duty on the managers’ part to provide against a scarcity of food, and they subsequently cleared large plots of land and realized a “bountiful” crop of corn for the slaves.<sup>154</sup> Proper people were selected to attend to the nursery, where they prepared food daily in addition to the weekly allowance given to their mothers.<sup>155</sup> Sasha Turner notes that planter efforts to strategize food distribution to mothers and children suggests that food grown by the enslaved was not as abundant as reports suggest.<sup>156</sup> At Harmony Hall Estate, bordering Amity Hall, the attorneys also prioritized distributing meat and fish rations to women and children.<sup>157</sup> This suggests that Amity Hall, alongside other estates in Vere, shared the problem of slaves not being able to raise enough food to feed themselves adequately, with supplemented food from management prioritized for women and children, countering Bayley’s claim that Amity Hall’s slave were well-fed. The estate’s overseer noted that in 1826, the slaves

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<sup>151</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers; Turner, “Planter Profits,” 239.

<sup>152</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>153</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>154</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>155</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>156</sup> Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 200.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

were given an “abundant allowance” of corn and other salted provisions.<sup>158</sup> In contrast to the ration allotments under Richards’ management where there was no increase in the quantity of herring sent to the estate, Amity Hall’s accounts show 2 hogsheads of fish purchased for the workforce for Christmas in 1826.<sup>159</sup> These extra provisions were not extended to throughout the year, however, making the herring a gesture of benevolence by observing a customary slave right to the holiday, but not an ameliorative policy.

In regard to the slaves’ religious education, Bayley adamantly denied all charges. The first, that curates had been prevented from going on the estate he denounced as “decidedly untrue,” because Vere had never had one.<sup>160</sup> That not one slave had been permitted “to enjoy the privilege of Christian instruction” Bayley cast off as equally erroneous; he had himself witnessed their attendance and the slave houses of Amity Hall were not more than a quarter mile from the Church.<sup>161</sup> Additionally, the late Reverend informed Bayley that Church was better attended by slaves from Amity Hall estate than almost any other in the parish. Turner aptly remarked that this testimony was at once unclear and unverifiable- the new appointee had not taken residence by that time.<sup>162</sup> A letter from an overseer, not passed on to Goulburn until 1831 alleged however, that in 1825 few of the adult slaves attended church, preferring instead the “Methodistical” form of worship, disseminated by “a crafty and illiterate” class of free people and runaway slaves principally from the towns, who had pretensions to instruct the labouring class on estates.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>159</sup> 16 December 1826 (Image 126), Statements of Accounts (1802-1833), Estate Accounts, 1802-1855, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>160</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825-July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>161</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>162</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers; Turner, “Planter Profits,” 239.

<sup>163</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers; Goulburn tolerated Methodists because he believed “the purity of its doctrines were better calculated than those of any other persuasion” which he told governors of the slave colonies in a circular. Missionary activities were to be

Hoping to alleviate their “minds from this mode” the managers took measures to encourage baptisms, marriages, and church attendance so that they might become good Christians.<sup>164</sup> Still, the slave population continued to congregate “at home and abroad” at unlawful, late, and irregular hours.<sup>165</sup> It was not until the slaves realized that they were being extorted for “all of their means” by the “dissemblers” that they finally conformed to the wishes of their managers.<sup>166</sup> In 1826, the overseer noted that very little visible religious or moral improvement or change for the better had taken place. However, he states that progressive improvement until 1831 is visible by their attendance in “different worship”.<sup>167</sup> By this, the overseer most likely meant that progressively over years, Amity Hall’s slaves increasingly participated in religious instruction disseminated from Anglican clergymen in the local church, as opposed to being instructed by sectarian preachers.

### **In a Manner so Calculated**

The second letter sent by Bayley tackled explaining to Goulburn the strike that had occurred at Amity Hall. Overlooking the fact that on March 3, he had written a short letter to Goulburn happily stating that he had received no reports of misconduct at Amity Hall, Bayley called attention in his May 6 letter to the fact that he had already informed Goulburn of the “unpleasant disposition” of his slaves, and that it indeed had increased, rather than diminished.<sup>168</sup> Bayley’s explanation stated that he acquired help from Richards and Mr. Parker, two magistrates,

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tolerated as long as they gave instruction in the leading doctrines of the Gospel and did not disturb an “infant Faith with polemical discussions.” Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 121; Ward notes that the West Indian interest’s more skillful advocates stopped trying to justify slavery on grounds of principle. The word “slave” affronted British traditions of liberty and the euphemism “negro” was preferred. After the turn of the century, some started to describe their gangs as “the working class.” Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834*, 2.

<sup>164</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>165</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>166</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>167</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>168</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

and he gathered Amity Hall's workforce in order to conduct an investigation into the continued absence of about fifty of the "most efficient people", presumably the first gang and millworkers.<sup>169</sup> They had, "to the great alarm, annoyance, and serious injury" of the neighbouring plantations, committed repeated robberies and depredations.<sup>170</sup> Inquiring into the causes of their discontent, Bayley soon learned that although allowances of corn had been increased, and "no encroachment on their own time or any privilege had been made" the slave community was unhappy with their management.<sup>171</sup> "The overseer they say is too rigid in punishing them for any neglect they might commit," however, Bayley dismissed, "they looked as well as Negroes could possibly do."<sup>172</sup> Bayley defended John Petrie, the overseer, to Goulburn as a very respectable man, but perhaps too eager in his anxiety for the well-being of the estate. "He has been more exact in the execution of his duty than I wished him to be" Bayley wrote, noting that he intended to remove him from his post immediately.<sup>173</sup> "But as this is a point in which I did not think it right to concede without hesitation and might have a bad tendency" he only gave orders in the presence of the workforce that no punishment would be given for the present, but future offences would be taken down in a book until he returned to the estate.<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, Bayley directed, if the absentees returned to work, nothing would be said and no notice taken of their nonappearance. These measures were largely unsuccessful- 34 of the workers remained absent and returned only when Bayley dismissed Petrie.<sup>175</sup> He hoped Petrie's replacement would be able to meet the slaves' wishes while at the same time get them to attend to their work. The

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<sup>169</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers; Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1826, Goulburn Papers; Kenneth Morgan, (2008) Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House: an introduction to the British Online Archives edition.

<sup>170</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>171</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>172</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>173</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>174</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>175</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.



habit of absenting themselves, Bayley was informed, always existed among them, but never in the past was pursued with so much obstinacy.<sup>176</sup>

Not keen to attribute blame for the mistreatment of slaves to the managers under his charge, Bayley did not concede that the state of management was the present cause of the strike- instead confidently attributing blame to the Driver, John Gale as the instigator of the recalcitrance:

He has I am informed for several years been virtually in more authority than any of the white people and finding such a description of the latter now employed on it as is inconsistent with that order of things, he has behaved with so much insolence to the overseer and in a manner so calculated to produce insubordination on the Estate, that I have had him legally brought before the Magistrates of the parish and tried for the above offences.<sup>177</sup>

What is significant from this passage is Gale's attempt to reconcile between management demands while retaining the respect of the work force.<sup>178</sup> Turner suggests that Gale's verbal confrontations with Petrie intended to convince him to recognize the driver's authority.<sup>179</sup> Indeed, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide* (1823) states that "a bad or indifferent head driver sets almost everything at variance; injures the negroes, and the culture of the land... but when he is well-disposed, intelligent, clever, and active, he is the life and soul of an estate. He very often is an elderly or middle-aged negro, who has long been so employed."<sup>180</sup> Gale, who had held his position for several years, used it to lobby for better conditions for Amity Hall's slaves. The

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<sup>176</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers; Roberts shows that absences were not normally large group protests, however, as will be shown in the following paragraphs, this instance at Amity Hall can be classified as collective action. Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment*, 265.

<sup>177</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers; Turner notes that there is no evidence to John Gale's colour, but slaves of his status were customarily mulatto. Turner, "Slave Workers," 106; The 1823 reform programme included the expansion of magistrate powers to hear complaints. Turner, "Planter Profits," 237.

<sup>178</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 99.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>180</sup> Thomas Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide; Or, A System for Planting and Managing a Sugar Estate, or Other Plantations in That Island, and throughout the British West Indies in General* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1823), 80-81.

attempt at collective action failed, and Gale was sentenced to four months confinement in a Clarendon workhouse for his leadership role in the strike.<sup>181</sup> Bayley hoped that Gale's example would have a positive effect on the rest of the workers. In a following letter, Bayley notified Goulburn that the overseer's position was filled by Hector McLean Wood, who had lived on another estate under Bayley's care. Since his letters of May 6 however, a cane piece had caught fire, causing one to two hogsheads to be lost. Whether or not it was accidental Bayley was unable to say, as he could not state what the effect had been of the change of overseer by that time.<sup>182</sup>

Bayley's letter of July 8 saw the slaves behaving "tolerably well."<sup>183</sup> Of their conduct Bayley noted that the crop being nearly at an end would be a relief to them, "although there has been the greatest forbearance and indulgence exercised towards them and indeed this is one of the principal causes of its being so late."<sup>184</sup> To make up for the lost production, Bayley employed a jobbing gang. Wood wrote to Goulburn that Bayley did this with a view to relieve the estate people from "immoderate exertion", but Bayley employed them to also achieve higher production and show Goulburn his competency as attorney.<sup>185</sup> This demonstrates Wood and Bayley's skill in appealing to Goulburn's morality and anxiety for his slave workforce in order to achieve their goal of high production levels in Jamaica. Some planters claimed that their economically motivated use of jobbing gangs was also "morally virtuous" because it preserved

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<sup>181</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>182</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 13 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>183</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 8 July 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>184</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 8 July 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>185</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1826, Goulburn Papers; Planters could treat jobbing gangs as an operating expense to preserve their own people while still producing large crops and reliable revenues. Ultimately, the history of jobbing gang use in the Caribbean reveals slavery as an "insidiously adaptable institution" that assumed many forms to meet specific economic demands and changing visions of the master-slave relationship. Bayley utilized jobbing gangs during his attorneyship both to meet profit-oriented goals and navigate his relationship with Amity Hall's workforce. Nicholas Radburn and Justin Roberts, "Gold versus Life: Jobbing Gangs and British Caribbean Slavery." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no.2 (2019), 225, 226.

slaves' health and helped to increase reproduction; as resident managers, Bayley and Wood did exactly that.<sup>186</sup> In this way, the hiring of jobbing gangs became a method of signalling the adoption of ameliorative management.<sup>187</sup> Radburn and Roberts suggest that from the 1780s through emancipation, jobbing gangs became ideological tools.<sup>188</sup> The harvest for that year, 275 hogsheads, would be the highest during Bayley's employment at Amity Hall as a result of the labour supplemented by the jobbing gang.<sup>189</sup>

By June 10, upon returning to the estate to distribute clothing, Bayley found that all but three of the absentees had returned to work and continued to behave "tolerably well."<sup>190</sup> Unable to determine how the canes caught fire, Bayley would not identify this occurrence to Goulburn as arson, conceiving that had it not been promptly extinguished, the slave house by its situation on the estate would have fallen sacrifice to it.<sup>191</sup> By mid-December as the year drew to a close, Bayley found Amity Hall's forced labourers conducting themselves better than they had than at any other period of that year.<sup>192</sup> Goulburn effectively lost the Cambridge University election, which ultimately turned on the Catholic question and not on slave emancipation.<sup>193</sup> He did not press Bayley further on the circulating charges.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Radburn and Roberts argue that jobbing gangs were a tool of amelioration because they reduced the amount of labour plantation slaves' had to perform which in effect lowered death rates and increased birth rates. Paradoxically, planters' use of jobbing gangs to mitigate their own slaves' labour made people in jobbing gangs even more disposable, "nothing more than a notation in an expense account, all but invisible and all too easily forgotten." This means that Bayley's use of jobbing gangs as an ameliorative tool was inherently the opposite for hired slaves- but Goulburn was probably unaware of this morbid fact. Radburn and Roberts, "Gold versus Life," 237.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 100.

<sup>190</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 June 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>191</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 June 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>192</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 15 December 1826, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>193</sup> Palmerston was re-elected for Cambridge University with the help of Whig votes, while Goulburn returned for Armagh city until 1831. Turner, "Planter Profits," 240, 250.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

Goulburn's letter of August 24, 1826 responded to Bayley's letter informing him of the strike.<sup>195</sup> According to Turner, Goulburn accepted Bayley's explanations for the slave strike and praised him for his attentive examination, but only acknowledged the slaves as "leaving the estate" and not their abandonment of both production and the plantation.<sup>196</sup> The cause of the disruption Goulburn attributed, as did Bayley, to the conduct of Gale instead of Petrie, and entirely disregarded the complaints of the workers. Turner reveals that Goulburn saw Petrie's dismissal as a "blameless sacrifice to the irrational workers"- his dismissal could be conceptualized, in Goulburn's words, as "deferring to the prejudices of the negroes."<sup>197</sup> *The Jamaica Planter's Guide* advocated for the dismissal of overseers who interfered with the authority of driver's and head men, suggesting that Petrie's dismissal was a calculated move to appease the slaves.<sup>198</sup> Assessing Goulburn's response to Bayley, Turner astutely points out that this instance is indicative of the way workers' challenges to management were often reversed into successful exercises of managerial authority. As well, documents produced by white planters and managers allowed them to "preserve confidence in the hegemony they claimed, as well as convince history that they did indeed exercise it."<sup>199</sup> In this way, Goulburn's erasure of his slaves' agency contributes to the difficulty in identifying the 1826 Amity Hall slave action as a strike through the archive; Goulburn attempted to attribute the incident to one insubordinate slave. However, Bayley's recollection, bolstered with details from the overseer, reveals the strike as coordinated, collective action from the workforce with an intentional purpose and goal: the

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<sup>195</sup> Here, it will be necessary to rely on Turner's recounting of the archive, as the letter is now illegible on microfilm.

<sup>196</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 100.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>198</sup> Mary Turner, "Chattel Slaves into Wage Slaves: A Jamaican Case Study." In *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas*, edited by Mary Turner. (Kingston: Bloomington: Ian Randle Publishers; Indiana University Press, 1995), 39.

<sup>199</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 100.

limitation of labour levels obtained through the use of increased corporal punishment. While it may not have begun in a coordinated, calculated way, the leadership role of Gale in attempting to mediate between the two parties shows that the slaves had predetermined and collectively agreed upon interests. As well, their plundering of nearby estates in protest and refusal to return to work until Petrie had been dismissed demonstrates that they had clear terms to be met in return for their labour. It is not an overstatement to classify their absenteeism as a strike.

Turner argues that the most significant aspect of the 1826 strike at Amity Hall was actually the removal of John Gale, the strike's leader. *The Jamaica Planter's Guide* states that when a head driver is ill disposed "the work will not be carried on agreeable to his dictates; things suffer in general; the slaves run away, or are inclined to be turbulent; he and they cabal; bad sugar is made... the root, then, of this evil must be struck at, and the head driver and his abettors sent to public punishment."<sup>200</sup> Turner states that managers took care to not lose the cooperation of skilled slaves and were often wary of exerting their authority over head men. The head driver was "the most important personage in the slave-population of an estate."<sup>201</sup> Ursula Halliday shares this view, noting in her case study of Castle Weymss plantation that the owner viewed good relations between slaves and overseers as essential to effecting reforms.<sup>202</sup> In this way, it is Turner's supposition that Bayley's act indicates the underdevelopment of the observation of grievance procedures and respect for slave leaders at Amity Hall, as compared to

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<sup>200</sup> Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide*, 82-83.

<sup>201</sup> Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide*, 79.

<sup>202</sup> Halliday, "The Slave Owner as Reformer," 73.

other parishes in the East.<sup>203</sup> While this indeed may be the case, a few different elements of the strike are significant in light of recent historiography.

Richard Dunn's comparative study of Mesopotamia estate in Jamaica and Mount Airy plantation in Virginia, using records from the final three generations of slavery in both locations, offers a different perspective to take from Turner's.<sup>204</sup> His study follows intergenerational communities in action over many years, tracing "the numerous followers as well as the much smaller number of leaders."<sup>205</sup> Dunn believes that this approach offers a more representative view of slave life than can be obtained by focusing on the most visible people- which he asserts many historians are inclined to do- "those who ran away, or wrote about themselves, or were in other ways remarkable."<sup>206</sup> Of course, historians often take this approach because the slave experience is largely missing from the archive, with only the "most visible people" remaining to be studied.<sup>207</sup> In the case of the Goulburn Papers, spanning from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, a picture of the collective slave population emerges, aided by historians who have produced work on Amity Hall. A reliance on focusing on leaders like Gale, while useful, is not the only available approach. The length of this particular study, although only seven years, enters at a point in time when Amity Hall's slave population was becoming considerably more creolized; it possessed developed slave communities with political awareness extending beyond plantation life. Abolitionism and amelioration schemes subjected them to, as Petley notes,

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<sup>203</sup> Turner attributes hampered development of bargaining procedures at Amity Hall, delayed until the 1820s, to the ration-allotment system, which allowed more managerial control over the slave population because they commanded the food supply. Provision grounds allowed slaves greater immersion in the commercial economy and allowed them capacity to better transform their condition. Turner, "Slave Workers," 100-101, 104.

<sup>204</sup> Richard Dunn, *A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life and Labour in Jamaica and Virginia*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 1.

<sup>205</sup> Dunn, *A Tale of Two Plantations*, 2.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

“changing modes of oppression.”<sup>208</sup> How the collective responded is more important than the experience of one leader. Gale’s application to the overseer to reduce the use of violent punishment resulted from the slave population taking action, not the reverse. In this way, it can be surmised that at Amity Hall alongside day-to-day acts of resistance also existed more structured and cohesive non-violent attempts to limit the levels of labour extracted.

Beckles observes that many years of revising interpretations have attempted to assess the extent to which slaves’ actions “were informed by ideological choices in the context of maturing political consciousness.”<sup>209</sup> He notes that there is an assumption common in western historical science that working classes rarely perceived effectively their group interests and scholars have since tried to differentiate clearly between Caribbean and metropolitan anti-slavery movements to assess their relative potency.<sup>210</sup> However, as Beckles points out, this puts slaves’ struggles as secondary or peripheral to European abolitionists.<sup>211</sup> Amity Hall’s slaves may or may not have articulated a cohesive ideology to their white managers, recorded only through Gale’s lobby for better treatment, but they did “live out” their group interest through a strike, meaning they perceived a conceptual understanding of their “wants, needs and means.”<sup>212</sup> Slaves’ approach to anti-slavery was more complex, it can be argued, than metropolitan anti-slavery because it made use of many different activities using any means possible.<sup>213</sup> Amity Hall’s slaves were

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<sup>208</sup> Christer Petley, “New Perspectives on Slavery and Emancipation in the British Caribbean.” *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 3 (2011), 879.

<sup>209</sup> Hilary Beckles, “Caribbean Anti-Slavery: The Self-Liberation Ethos of Enslaved Blacks.” *The Journal of Caribbean History* 22, no.1 (1988), 3.

<sup>210</sup> Beckles notes that slave resistance has long been conceived of as a lower species of political behaviour, lacking in ideological cohesion, intellectual qualities, and a philosophical direction, and therefore not possessing anything resembling theoretical significance. However, Williams argued that while metropolitan anti-slavery lobbyists intensified their campaign in the early nineteenth century, slaves did likewise. “By 1833, he said, ‘the alternatives were clear’, ‘emancipation from above or emancipation from below, but Emancipation.’” Beckles, “Caribbean Anti-Slavery,” 3, 7.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

overworked to the point where they demanded a change in management. Whether this connected to a wider political ideology is unclear, but what is evident is the determination of the field workers to improve their working conditions.

In effect, it was actually the arduous physical demands of cultivating cane and making sugar that was intensified by an increased workload that had heightened slave discontent. Justin Roberts has shown in his forthcoming article, “The Whip and the Hoe: Violence, Work and Productivity on Anglo-American Plantations,” while punishments such as whipping augmented the master-slave relationship, it was the chronic physical demands of forced labour that did the most physical damage to the enslaved.<sup>214</sup> While Bayley promised to reduce punishments after the strike and keep a log book of offences only to be addressed upon his visits to Amity Hall, he simultaneously pursued intimidation tactics and re-established control through the sentencing of the strike leader to a workhouse. Bayley most likely did this to conceal from the slaves their key role in the dismissal of the overseer.<sup>215</sup> The work regime exacted under Bayley’s charge, in accordance with Goulburn’s goals, continued the murder of the people on his estate, thereby maintaining the attrition of the population.<sup>216</sup> Therefore, I argue that eliminating or reducing punishments (only after the strike) but sustaining an increased workload does not qualify as amelioration of the slaves’ condition, because their quality of life was not adequately improved- if anything, it was worse. They had lost their liaison between management and themselves, and if Turner’s observation of the underdevelopment of the custom of observing slave grievances and negotiations at Amity Hall is correct, Bayley had just robbed the workforce of one of their

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<sup>214</sup> Roberts, “The Whip and the Hoe,” 1.

<sup>215</sup> Turner, “Chattel Slaves into Wage Slaves,” 44.

<sup>216</sup> Roberts, “The Whip and the Hoe,” 2.



greatest tools to ensure the improvement of their condition: a worker with status and the trust of the management.

Vere was a heavily creolized parish, with a mature creole population.<sup>217</sup> The population share of creoles born in Jamaica saw a long-term increase, and creoles were thought to be less dangerous and rebellious than imported Africans.<sup>218</sup> However, the amount of sugar produced by individual field workers in the Caribbean doubled between 1759 and 1837.<sup>219</sup> At the same time, the proportion of estate slaves who were active workers declined because of “the growing numbers of the elderly and of creole infants, and the extra relief allowed to breeding women and young children.”<sup>220</sup> Amity Hall’s largely creole population would have felt the long-term effects of this heightened workload over time.<sup>221</sup> After the slave trade was abolished, productivity levels were maintained by a “rationalization of the occupational structure of the slave population,” which Higman notes reduced some of the opportunities slaves had for positions of relative status and independent activity.<sup>222</sup> If Gale was indeed mulatto, as slaves of his status customarily were, Bayley’s management upended customary observances between status and colour, indicating to Amity Hall slaves that their positions were insecure, always subject to change due to labour shortages, and a hard line was drawn over status, regardless of colour. Therefore, if status was harder to attain within the plantation system, and no longer respected or observed by management as it had been previously, the workforce was left with limited options and tools to better their conditions. Bayley acted as attorney for many other plantations in Jamaica and

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<sup>217</sup> Higman, *Slave Population*, 79; Creoles could refer to people of British ancestry or slaves of African descent born in the colonies. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica*, 17.

<sup>218</sup> Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery: Anthropometric Evidence,” 1199-1200.

<sup>219</sup> Roberts, “The Whip and the Hoe,” 14.

<sup>220</sup> Ward, *British West Indian Slavery*, 190.

<sup>221</sup> By 1817 young worker between 15 and 24 years of age were in short supply in Vere. This impact was felt significantly a decade later in reduced numbers of prime workers aged 25-35 years old. Turner, “Slave Workers,” 98.

<sup>222</sup> Higman, *Slave Population*, 226.

owned over 200 slaves at Woodhall plantation in St. Dorothy, suggesting that he was familiar with tradition and customs in the plantation system. If he was directly rejecting established norms, that could prove much more alarming to a slave. Ultimately, this demonstrates that planters and agent's attempts at amelioration at times contributed to making slave life even more difficult than it already was, instead of improving it.

Bayley's reluctance to validate the slaves' concerns and hesitation to acknowledge their charges against Petrie in front of them show that Bayley was most concerned with demonstrating power. *The Jamaica Planter's Guide* made clear that drivers should be respectful to white people, and because Gale exhibited insolence, Bayley made a public display of the consequences.<sup>223</sup> Bayley and Goulburn's reversal of the sequence of events in subsequent letters I find less shocking, though still significant. Wood attributed the conduct of the slaves as fully proving that they "were not prepared to emerge at once from their late state of idleness and licentiousness which they had been permitted to indulge in without restraint" and assigned this to the cause of the strike, showing that management as a whole would not accept their own actions, modes of management, and the idealistic levels of labour expected as possible factors triggering large collective action.<sup>224</sup> It is not surprising that Bayley and Goulburn cast off blame for such large collective action onto Petrie and Gale, as addressing its true causes would have required a great deal of effort and funds, both seemingly in short supply at Amity Hall, as well as an admittance of failure in the amelioration of slave conditions on both their parts. It was easier to replace the overseer in order to somewhat appease the slaves, while exacting a greater price from

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<sup>223</sup> Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide*, 81.

<sup>224</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1826, Goulburn Papers.

them in the form of their own leader, leaving them with less leverage and in a weaker position than they were previously.

Jenkins notes in Goulburn's political biography that Goulburn was not an owner who was "mercilessly [extracting] as much labour from slaves as possible before emancipation," and that his personal commitment to amelioration long predated governmental policy.<sup>225</sup> By 1826, Goulburn privately conceded to his wife the necessity of eventual emancipation.<sup>226</sup> While slaves were not punished as harshly under Bayley's charge as under Samson, nor neglected as fully as they were under Richards, I argue that their condition during these years was not significantly ameliorated in ways that would make a true difference. Bayley initially pursued a sterner disciplinary regime than Richards to boost production, only scaled back by eventual strike action in response from the slave workforce.<sup>227</sup> Justin Roberts has shown that small changes in work regimes could have significant cumulative physical effects for the enslaved, in both positive and negative ways.<sup>228</sup> Goulburn's goals at this point in time were to maximize production and profit, while sustaining his slave population. Corn production was extended, with 1,600 husks reaped in 1825 and 3,000 bushels reaped in 1826, enough for a two-year supply of a 14-pint ration.<sup>229</sup> Increased corn planting paralleled an increase in cane holing.<sup>230</sup> Bayley required 45 acres holed for planting in 1826 to replace ratoons- reduced to 18 acres after the strike- as opposed to 14 acres in 1825.<sup>231</sup> However, this holing was in addition to working 287 acres of crop in 1825: 20 in plant and the remainder in ratoons of various ages. On top of that, 32 acres of young cane

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<sup>225</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 247.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> Roberts, "The Whip and the Hoe," 14, 17.

<sup>229</sup> A one-year supply of a 14 pint-ration was approximately 1600 bushels. Turner, "Slave Workers," 95, 98.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>231</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 99; Bayley to Goulburn 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1826, Goulburn Papers.

were established. By 1826, the increase of cane land and land established for corn was a great expansion of their workload.<sup>232</sup> A new boiler for the steam engine arrived in March of 1826, which under Richards was neglected and left to disuse. With the reinstatement of the use of the steam powered grinding system (which until its replacement repeatedly broke down, delaying production), coinciding with lack of wind to use the windmill, and heavy irregular rains, the slaves' "customarily strenuous regular work was intensified by irregularity."<sup>233</sup> An increased workload meant less time for physical recovery or for growing food to counter malnourishment.<sup>234</sup> The negative effects of the changes in slaves' work regimes at Amity Hall were significant enough to culminate in a strike, demonstrating their discontent over levels of labour extraction, as well as subsistence levels.

Turner concludes that Goulburn's participation in the amelioration process in the mid to late 1820s consisted of, "at best" in having his attorneys raise home-grown or locally purchased staples to levels above underfeeding.<sup>235</sup> She asserts that increased rations allowed Amity Hall's workforce the time and energy to direct their efforts towards other "necessities of life" and they launched a strike in order to protest increased workloads extracted through increased whipping.<sup>236</sup> Robert Dirk shows that the average plantation food allowance amounted to 1,500-2,000 calories per day.<sup>237</sup> Men required 3,200 calories per day and women 2,300 under average conditions, and both needed an additional 450 calories per day under conditions of exceptionally

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<sup>232</sup> Ward reinforces that sugar plantation slavery was unusually harsh, "above all through the crop's labour requirement: field preparation with cane hole digging and manuring; the weight of material to be shifted at the harvest; and the round-the-clock factory operations of milling and boiling that converted the cane juice into an exportable product." Ward, "The Amelioration of British West Indian slavery: Anthropometric Evidence," 1199.

<sup>233</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 99.

<sup>234</sup> Roberts, "The Whip and the Hoe," 17.

<sup>235</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 242.

<sup>236</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 104.

<sup>237</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 235.

heavy labour.<sup>238</sup> Amity Hall's slaves' diets were not improved enough alongside heightened workloads to make any substantial difference in their health alongside heightened workloads, and they remained chronically malnourished. Morgan contends that any improvements in slaves' diets were probably mitigated by increased demands on their work routines as planters sought to maximize the productivity of their work forces- this was entirely the case at Amity Hall.<sup>239</sup> Nutritional deprivation and overwork severely limited slave mothers' ability to bear surviving children, evidenced through Amity Hall's continual low birth rates.<sup>240</sup> As well, Ward notes that while physical punishment remained fundamental to discipline, the gradual lightening of punishments indicated that slaves were becoming more tractable.<sup>241</sup> Food allowances distributed or withheld- became a less violent form of inducing good behaviour.<sup>242</sup> In this way, even if Amity Hall's workforce's distributed rations had been adequately improved alongside heightened workloads, rations could still be used as a mechanism of control, and therefore were not a consistent means of amelioration.<sup>243</sup>

### **Miserable Disappointment**

B. W. Higman's book *Plantation Jamaica 1750-1850: capital and control in a colonial society* shows that absentee owners could effectively manage their estates through the skills of attorneys and managers, however Morgan notes that "Goulburn's stewardship of Amity Hall does

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>239</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 251.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>241</sup> Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834*, 201.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 201, 202.

<sup>243</sup> Turner notes that the distribution of staple food clearly indicated that a fundamental contractual term for the extraction of slave labour was a consistent supply of subsistence. Slaves attempted to exert control over work conditions to improve their subsistence- these developments derived from the integration of slaves in the commercial economy in which the coerced labour estates were embedded. Turner, "Slave Workers," 92, 93.

not fit this positive appraisal.”<sup>244</sup> In agreeance with Morgan’s assessment, it appears that Goulburn’s lack of initiative and reluctance to implement any substantial reform contributed to a persistent decline in reproduction at Amity Hall.<sup>245</sup> It was Goulburn’s failure to replace the labour gap left by Samson’s jobbing gang, and his insistence in maintaining both sugar output and increased subsistence farming that led to lower productivity levels. Extra holes created by hired jobbing gangs created larger cane yields and longer harvests for Amity Hall’s permanent labour force.<sup>246</sup> It was also his tendency to accept Bayley’s (and previous managers’) appraisals without further inquiry that allowed continually ineffective management techniques and a total disregard of the slaves’ customary rights to occur and continue in 1825, 1826, and onwards. As Halliday states, “there were entrenched attitudes on all sides to be modified or destroyed.”<sup>247</sup> It was Goulburn’s oversight that allowed Samson’s severe rule to remain in place, long after his mother, Susannah Goulburn, had been informed of it during Goulburn’s early life.<sup>248</sup> It was also under his distanced control that Richards attended irregularly to Amity Hall, left ration distribution to the overseers, and provided infrequent and incomplete accounts of estate business.<sup>249</sup> As the charges issued in 1826 by the Anti-Slavery Society claimed:

Had Mr. Goulburn condescended to inquire into the causes of that decrease, they might have been pointed out to him without any difficulty. They are precisely the same at this

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<sup>244</sup> Higman, *Plantation Jamaica*, 16; Morgan, (2008) Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House: An introduction to the British Online Archives edition.

<sup>245</sup> Turner notes that Goulburn replenished his workforce during Samson’s attorneyship through the internal slave trade instead of pursuing a pro-natalist policy and purchased forty-two new slaves in 1818. Despite this boost in numbers, under Samson’s management reproduction declined, and under Richards the number of births were comparable as under Samson- the population dropped from 267 to 251. Turner, “Planter Profits,” 235, 238.

<sup>246</sup> Roberts, “The Whip and the Hoe,” 16.

<sup>247</sup> Halliday, “The Slave Owner as Reformer,” 73.

<sup>248</sup> A “friend of humanity” warned Susannah Goulburn of Samson’s “wanton and savage cruelty.” His consideration for the position of attorney evoked anonymous and signed protest. This informant alleged that nowhere in Jamaica were deaths higher, births lower, and runaways more numerous than on Amity Hall. Despite these charges, Samson was appointed to act as Amity Hall’s attorney. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 49.

<sup>249</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 98.

day, and nearly to the same extent, as they were in 1788. No substantial, nor even material change, has taken place since that period. The causes are not at all hidden.<sup>250</sup>

Bayley attributed the deaths that had occurred since he took charge as attorney in 1825 to have been usually among infants and old people, and not arising from any particular cause.<sup>251</sup> Many infant deaths went unreported on plantations.<sup>252</sup> He noted a decrease of the population due to the manumission of Samson's children years prior, and the sale and transfer of slaves. He did not comment, except for marking it in lists of the increase and decrease of slaves, on a young boy killed by a wain passing over him, or a woman killed by falling in a pan of hot liquor (only mentioned once by Wood) during these years.<sup>253</sup> The loss of slave life due to work was accepted by management as a hazard of the job. The chronic and dangerous labour of sugar production, compounded by ineffective management, resulted in a continual loss of life. Deaths can be directly attributed to the failure of the institution of reforms at Amity Hall. In short, the workforce was subject to increased crop and corn production (only mitigated by a hired jobbing gang post-strike), increased allotment ground working, a reconfiguration of their work routines and responsibilities, and a destruction of their customary rights, along with a decrease in their population. These conditions were not significantly bettered by slightly increased food rations to levels above under-feeding and reduced punishments. In this way, Goulburn's case proves the exception to Ward's arguments regarding amelioration. Goulburn showed serious concern for maintaining the profitability of his Jamaican estate, which prompted him to implement innovations like a steam-engine and slightly improved nutrition. Production at his estate fell, but

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<sup>250</sup> Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831-May 1832), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>251</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825-July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>252</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 38.

<sup>253</sup> Lists of Increase and Decrease, 1825, Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1826, Goulburn Papers.

not because of his pursuit of expensive pro-natalist policies.<sup>254</sup> As Turner concluded, Goulburn did not re-balance his books in order to ameliorate conditions for his workforce.<sup>255</sup> While Goulburn claimed in writing that his priority was the care and management of his people, his actions showed more concern for the production of sugar to maintain his income which focused on technological and managerial changes geared towards improving productivity.<sup>256</sup> While not as draconian in his disciplinary policies, his ameliorative goals during this period were profit-oriented first; his humanitarian concerns always placed second, and he had not publicly taken up the cause of abolition though he acknowledged in private its inevitability. While Goulburn was anxious to maintain the numbers of his workforce, which, in common with all Jamaican sugar estates, persistently declined, he attributed their numbers mostly to adequate feeding, and did not act to alleviate their work routines.<sup>257</sup>

Spence's argument that amelioration was championed principally by abolitionists after 1823 remains valid, but Goulburn as a planter or politician was not a leading force in the early phases of ameliorative pursuits, proving an exception to Spence's contention that pre-1823 ameliorative efforts were planter-led.<sup>258</sup> Goulburn's commitment to bettering conditions on his estate before 1823 largely comprised of innovations directed towards improving profits and maintaining population and can barely be qualified as ameliorative efforts. Spence asserts that planters were less disposed to concede to further ameliorative reforms after the first wave of legislation passed in the late-eighteenth century.<sup>259</sup> Local ameliorative agendas in the colonies

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<sup>254</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 242.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>256</sup> Halliday, "The Slave Owner as Reformer," 67.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>258</sup> Caroline Quarrier Spence, "Ameliorating Empire: Slavery and Protection in the British Colonies, 1783-1865." (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2014), 9, 54.

<sup>259</sup> Spence, "Ameliorating Empire," 227.



fell short of metropolitan goals, paralleling Goulburn's insufficient attempts at instating an amelioration program at his estate put forward by the government he served.<sup>260</sup> Ironically, if Goulburn had made more of an effort to produce tangible results at his estate by way of ameliorative measures, he may have contributed to stalling the impending abolition of slavery he anxiously anticipated by proving the effectiveness of the reform program. Instead, his reluctance to do so, partly due to the fact that he was dependant on the income from his West Indian property and did not have much income to spare to put towards these efforts (unlike many other politicians he worked with), added fuel to abolitionist claims that the institution of slavery was beyond moral redemption through reform.

Goulburn's efforts at transforming conditions on his estate were undercut by his resident managers in Jamaica. His half-hearted attempts to implement change were disregarded by his attorneys and foiled by his overseers, large in part because of Goulburn's inability to supervise to a sufficient level and compounded by the lack of monetary incentive for his managers to do so and resources to allow them to. This would provide a foundation for abolitionist arguments against Goulburn. In 1825 and 1826, slave worker's efforts at collective action were the most significant force for change at the workplace. While their strike of 1826 may have culminated in the loss of an important leader for their community, it also set the stage for what could be achieved through their collective action and made clear to management the conditions they were willing to labour under: less punishments, and regular, increased food rations. Bayley understood these terms to a degree and attempted to alleviate the amount of labour needed from Amity Hall's workforce by employing a jobbing gang, but that was more out of necessity to finish cropping season in a timely manner and less about humanitarian concerns. Bayley was faced

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 215.

with reconciling between his employer's expectations, the methods of on-the-ground management, and the slave workforce's needs and desires. As revealed through the archives, there were concessions required from Goulburn and the management of Amity Hall as priorities were reoriented towards amelioration. In the first two years of Bayley's management, these concessions were not made. The accusations against Goulburn were just. In refuting the charges laid against him, Goulburn had only revealed his own dissonance:

The fact is, as is evident from the whole tenor of Mr. Goulburn's communication to you, that he is in utter ignorance of the state of things on his own estate, and that he is consequently still more ignorant of the state of things in the island generally. The vices of the system are not to be reformed by a mere change of agents, or by a few exhortations to moderate work, and adequate food: and those who limit their views to such expedients, and who yet expect reform and improvement, will continue to be as miserably disappointed as Mr. Goulburn has been.<sup>261</sup>

There was apparent strife and discontent in the first two years of Bayley's appointment as attorney at Amity Hall. Goulburn's goals for his plantation during this period wedded Samson and Richards' systems of management in an optimistic attempt to pursue high production levels alongside improved conditions for his slaves. Conflict had been navigated to Goulburn's satisfaction for the time being, and things continued on at Amity Hall plantation for the white management "tolerably well."<sup>262</sup> The next several years, however, would only bring more problems- ones never truly resolved- but resurrected due to Goulburn's failure to lay the groundwork for ameliorative policies at Amity Hall and his resistance to readjusting his expectations.

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<sup>261</sup> Image 5, Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831-May 1832), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>262</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 13 October 1826, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825-July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

### Chapter 3

#### “Real Interests”: 1827-1830

The year 1827 was inaugurated with optimism by Alexander Bayley. He reported to Goulburn that everything was going on as well as could be hoped at Amity Hall, and the estate was improving in appearance in all respects.<sup>1</sup> He hoped that the annual crop would not be less than the previous year. The crop would commence in early January, but late rains had delayed the beginning of the harvest. Bayley noted that no estates in Vere were making sugar at the time because of this, inferring to Goulburn that his expectations of Amity Hall’s productivity should remain on par with other estates.<sup>2</sup> A month later, things began to take a turn for the worse. Bayley and Goulburn struggled to settle an account against Amity Hall with George Richards, from his time acting as the estate’s attorney. Richards insisted on receiving interest on the amount due to him, and the parties struggled to reach an amicable settlement. Bayley encouraged Goulburn to keep the matter out of court, which would be a tedious and expensive process, and they struggled to balance the books in order to pay Richards what he was owed. The canes had yielded badly by that time, but Bayley remained optimistic that a considerable improvement would take place and that they would satisfactorily settle estate matters. Goulburn’s slaves were “generally well.”<sup>3</sup> Bayley’s letter to Goulburn of February 10 promised “You may rely on my keeping the expenses of the estate within as narrow limits as I possibly can consistently with its real interests.”<sup>4</sup> Although this statement was referring to reaching a settlement with Richards, fittingly, it would prove to be a theme of the year 1827 and onwards at Amity Hall: maximizing profits while minimizing costs. Goulburn was becoming increasingly financially strained as

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<sup>1</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 3 January 1827, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854.

<sup>2</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 3 January 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 February 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 February 1827, Goulburn Papers.

profits fell drastically due to poor weather conditions and a workforce unwilling to work at the levels they had been violently forced to work under Samson.

When it came to settling Richards' Bog Estate account against Amity Hall- a hefty sum of £642 to be paid- Goulburn was very concise and exact in his instructions to Bayley. The "well-defined instructions" Bayley read with "great attention," and subsequently "embraced several considerations of advantage and avoided others of a doubtful and uncertain nature," finally bringing the matter to a final conclusion.<sup>5</sup> When it came to protecting his own finances, Goulburn was observant, forthcoming, and precise. Bayley was efficient and diligent in executing his employer's directions. By May, Goulburn notified Bayley that he had retired from his position in public office. He assured Bayley that he would have more time in the future to dedicate to his "private concerns" (meaning his Jamaican property) and that he would shortly send Bayley a few points for his consideration concerning the management of the estate.<sup>6</sup> This promise was subsequently fulfilled, and Goulburn's letters to Bayley proved more frequent, thorough, and lengthier than any of his preceding the year 1827. Whether Goulburn extended his detailed and comprehensive administrative skills towards instating reforms on his estate over the following four years, is evaluated in this chapter.

This chapter traces ameliorative efforts at Amity Hall through the years 1827 through 1830. Bayley's first two years at Amity Hall largely saw him acquainting himself with the plantation's slaves, restructuring work routines, and improving the state of the land and buildings. There was apparent discontent in the slave population, but Bayley managed to navigate it to his employer's satisfaction. Now familiar with estate business, both Bayley and

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<sup>5</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 March 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>6</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 May 1827, Goulburn Papers.

Goulburn expected production to sustain its current levels and hopefully increase, and Goulburn's heightened attention to his estate signaled optimistically, an increased dedication to its affairs. However, these efforts would, for the most part, remain directed towards his finances instead of implementing improvements at the estate. His desired goals- production and improvement- were ultimately met with both resistance and obstacles, some out of management's control entirely. The weather in Vere, for example, proved undesirable for the sugar crops over the course of 1827, severely affecting sugar output and profits. Consequently, Goulburn felt pressed for income, and was reluctant to sacrifice any more than he already had to improve working conditions. His communications with Bayley remained cordial, but obvious tension manifested between his voiced desires, and Bayley's attempts to successfully exact them. This tension trickled down to lower management, where it was fostered between Bayley and his overseer. The four years saw negotiation between the attorney and Goulburn. Conversations focused on how to best increase the slave population and implement new regulations on the estate, but most importantly, how to keep costs low. They attempted to determine how to achieve the "real interests" of the estate: reform with profit, without a greater expenditure of Goulburn's income than he had already sacrificed.<sup>7</sup> These years ultimately saw more discussion amongst the white management than direct action. In Goulburn's view, there could be no further tangible reform than his accounts would allow.

Affairs at Amity Hall from 1827 through 1830 reflected the confusion and frustration felt on all sides about a changing system. Sugar prices fluctuated and Goulburn and Bayley oscillated between shipping sugars to Liverpool or London and selling them in Jamaica.<sup>8</sup> They attributed

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<sup>7</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 February 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>8</sup> Jenkins notes that the Goulburn were somewhat unusual in their employment of two agents (one in Liverpool and one in London) to sell produce. Brian Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn, 1784-1856: A Political Biography*. DesLibris. Books Collection. (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 35.

poor sales to the inferior quality of Amity Hall's sugar, a result of poor weather in the parish. Too much moisture from a flood in November 1827 caused the canes to rot, and drought in 1828 consequently reduced the sugar content in the canes.<sup>9</sup> There was also a shift in expectations for whites: a marked difference was evolving in the way punishments were inflicted. Where white managers were once able to implement disciplinary action in the privacy of their own estates, they were now being forced to answer on a more public scale for their actions, such as in court or to island magistrates. This in turn provided the slave population with the ability to contest the validity and fairness of inflicted discipline and limit the degree of physical violence. This is revealed through the records on numerous occasions as Amity Hall's managers deliberated how to keep order and discipline in a population who were aware of their ability to vocalize their concerns to magistrates. The years 1827 through 1830 encompassed new regulations implemented at Amity Hall, manumission, violence between slaves, a runaway, unsettled accounts and conflict surrounding debt between whites, two court cases including one involving the trial of an overseer, several fires, disease, rumours about Amity Hall circulated once more in England, and of course, the production of sugar. Obstacles for Bayley and lower management included unfavourable weather conditions, conflict between slaves, and tension between themselves. Resistance to reform was met by slaves who disliked innovation, but also by Bayley himself, who was wary of what amelioration would infer to the workforce in the wake of burgeoning abolitionist rhetoric. He was also displeased with the disruption of his own managerial system. By 1831, Goulburn would once again see political charges circulated about his Jamaican property which would interrogate management practices during these pivotal years at Amity Hall. This chapter evaluates whether Goulburn's attempts at implementing ameliorative

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<sup>9</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 35.

measures progressed since 1826. Goulburn voiced his intentions more than he made actual effort to improve conditions on his estate during these years, and ultimately, not enough to acquit him from future accusations that he had continued to fail at employing ameliorative reforms.

### **The Best Proof of Good Management**

The year 1827 saw a continuation of the same strained climate between white management and the slave population as in 1826, but tensions amongst white management also began to manifest. Following the strike, Bayley was concerned with sustaining production of both sugar and guinea corn. Goulburn had become altogether more focused on sustaining the numbers of his slaves since the 1807 abolition of the slave trade. Tensions between productivity and amelioration heightened. Goulburn's letter of July 5, 1827 provides insight into his concerns and goals for his plantation. He was pleased with the increase in the number of his slaves, though only of one, following Bayley's submission of the annual lists of increase and decrease of slaves for the year 1826. He noted "The increase of the negroes is to my mind the best proof of good management quite independent of any question of humanity."<sup>10</sup> He was satisfied that the political charges against him in 1826 were misplaced and his managers were effective. If they were not, there would be no increase. Goulburn's view of reproduction aligns much with that of Ward's. For Ward, a key measure of the success of amelioration was the reproduction of the workforce.<sup>11</sup> It reflected nutrition, levels of labour extraction, methods of punishment, and partnership patterns.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, July 5 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Turner, "Planter Profits and Slave Rewards: Amelioration Reconsidered." In *West Indies Accounts: Essays on the History of the British Caribbean and the Atlantic Economy in Honour of Richard Sheridan*, edited by Roderick A. McDonald (Kingston, Jamaica: Press, University of the West Indies, 1996), 232.

<sup>12</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 232.

To this object Goulburn noted that he had observed on his own estate that the number of children born in a year had no proportion to the number of women of an age to bear children, and he endeavoured to discover some adequate reason: "It appears to me probable that it may arise from the employment of women in field labour, a measure which on many accounts it would be desirable to dispense with."<sup>13</sup> Goulburn had accurately identified that slaves' reproduction was linked to their material and working lives.<sup>14</sup> Miscarriages and stillbirths were generally caused by insufficient nutrition, mechanical injury or abnormal positions while at work: all hallmarks of slave life on sugar plantations.<sup>15</sup> He arrived at such a conclusion by devising lists of women under 40 years of age and the number of children borne to them, alive or dead, as well as a similar list of women under 40 who had not borne children and their condition. Goulburn had found that of the 39 women identified under 40 years of age, 24 of them had 41 children alive and 4 children dead. 15 had never had any children. Goulburn selected the 39 women because "the whole of this number are on the first gang and consequently under the same circumstances as to labour."<sup>16</sup> He noted that no cause appeared that could account for the women in one list having children and those on the other having none.<sup>17</sup> A more in depth discussion of Amity Hall's increase and decrease in slave numbers is given in Chapter Four.

Goulburn's following suggestion reinforced his inexperience as an absentee owner with the on-the-ground management of a sugar plantation:

The exemption of women from field labour would of course reduce the effective power of the Negroe gangs and would require a proportionate increase of the number of men to

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<sup>13</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 5 July 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction in Jamaica, C.1776–1834." *History* (London) 91, no. 2 (302) (2006), 235.

<sup>15</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 235.

<sup>16</sup> Women under 40 Years of Age, their Condition, and the Number of Children of Each, Goulburn to Bayley, (Image 162 and 163: 304/J/1/21/56), Goulburn Papers.

<sup>17</sup> Women under 40 Years of Age, their Condition, and the Number of Children of Each, Goulburn to Bayley, (Image 162 and 163: 304/J/1/21/56), Goulburn Papers.



be employed in the cultivation of the estate. But if it were possible to devise any useful branch of industry in which the women could be employed I am not certain that the produce of that industry would not more than compensate for their exemption from labour in the field. You of course are better acquainted with the details of a West Indian estate than myself and I shall be very glad therefore to know your opinion whether women could be otherwise employed...<sup>18</sup>

Goulburn was trying to play a more active role in the management of his estate, but his unfamiliarity with how Jamaican sugar plantations traditionally ran impeded his ability to do so effectively. Turner notes that this suggestion also reveals how determined Goulburn was to promote production while improving rates of reproduction.<sup>19</sup> Goulburn hoped that in removing women from field work they would not just become wives or mothers, but also industrial workers.<sup>20</sup> In September, Bayley answered Goulburn's letter, but carefully rejected his suggestion: "I am of opinion that the field labour is not the cause of the small number of children born because the work is generally light and no more enforced daily either from women or men than may with truth be said to be performed voluntarily."<sup>21</sup> By this, Bayley meant that the use of corporal punishments used to exact higher levels of labour had been thoroughly lessened at Amity Hall due to the strike and Goulburn's political anxieties. Bayley stated that the women could not be otherwise employed without a serious loss, and that no other mode of where to direct their labour with "adequate advantage" or suitable return suggested itself to him.<sup>22</sup> He advised Goulburn that if any useful branch of industry could be devised for women, even if it were practicable to replace their labour by that of men, he feared that an increase of children as well as the moral improvement of the slaves would be sacrificed for it.<sup>23</sup> Women made up a large

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<sup>18</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 5 July 1827, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825-July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>19</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 241.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>21</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>23</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

majority of the field gang population, comprising most of the two field gangs that undertook heavy agricultural work under enormous pressures of time.<sup>24</sup> Goulburn was correct in assuming that the hard labour of field work was the cause of low reproductive rates due to the extreme physical stress on female slaves' bodies. However, to remove women of reproductive age from the field gangs would seriously impede the power of the work force; 12 nursing mothers made up almost a third of the first gang totalling 39 workers, and his suggestion to replace their labour gap with men was not a suitable solution for Bayley.<sup>25</sup> Male slaves made up a great degree of skilled labour at Amity Hall, fulfilling trade jobs such as carpentry, blacksmithing, and working the mill and steam engine. To restructure the workforce in this way would be to further destroy customary positions and rob slaves of status. Additionally, male field workers were twice as likely as craftsmen to die annually.<sup>26</sup> To substitute men for women would be to lose workers in trade areas, who could be paid less than white craftsmen for the same role.<sup>27</sup> Women were essential to gang labour, and it was not customary at that time for women to work in trades.<sup>28</sup> Unsurprisingly, women taking on the largest share of the heaviest work conflicted with their role in reproduction.<sup>29</sup>

Bayley stressed the difficulty of achieving Goulburn's goals, and a tone of condescension is evident in his letter to Goulburn. Bayley wrote that "Experience seems to satisfy the opinion

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<sup>24</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 237.

<sup>25</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 98.

<sup>26</sup> Justin Roberts, "The Whip and the Hoe: Violence, Work and Productivity on Anglo-American Plantations." *Journal of Global Slavery* 6 (2021), 9.

<sup>27</sup> Roughley notes that slaves took on roles such as carpenters, coopers, masons, coppersmiths, and watchmen. Thomas Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide; Or, A System for Planting and Managing a Sugar Estate, or Other Plantations in That Island, and throughout the British West Indies in General* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1823), 87.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Turner, "The 11 O'clock Flog: Women, Work and Labour Law in the British Caribbean." *Slavery & Abolition* 20, no. 1 (1999), 40.

<sup>29</sup> Turner, "The 11 O'clock Flog," 40.

that it is almost impossible to convey to one who has not had a personal knowledge of these people a correct impression of their character and of the difficulty of producing generally a better state of things.”<sup>30</sup> He told Goulburn that he *could* put his time and efforts towards promoting reproduction, but wryly pointed out that he could ultimately do nothing to actually achieve it, and that time would effectually accomplish Goulburn’s wishes.<sup>31</sup> Bayley noted that he had already introduced a disproportionate amount of men on the estate which he hoped would “increase the temptations of habits and desires” and thereby naturally increase reproduction among the slaves.<sup>32</sup> Morgan has shown that parity among the sexes did not reflect back on gross reproduction rates- in the second half of the eighteenth century 40 to 50 percent of the slaves on Jamaican sugar estates were women.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, Bayley stated that the use of the plough lightened the labour of cane holing and he vowed to continue to resort to that relief of manual labour as much as possible, indicating that he either did understand work as having a negative affect on women’s ability to bear children, or he was just trying to appease Goulburn.

It is impossible to know whether or not Bayley considered field labour as a possible cause of low reproductive rates due to its disastrous physical effects on women’s bodies. “Planters were loath to search too closely for the causes that would reflect badly on the regime of slavery that they enforced,” thus giving plentiful records of low fertility being blamed on the dress, customs, habitual ignorance and sexual immorality of slaves themselves.<sup>34</sup> Full immersion in an entrenched slave society blinded Bayley by his own prejudice. He attributed low birth rates to the moral regression of the slave population and not the brutal labour they were subjected to.

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<sup>30</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>31</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>32</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>33</sup> Morgan, “Slave Women and Reproduction,” 231.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

Pregnant women worked in the cane fields until six weeks before expected delivery.<sup>35</sup> Morgan argues that planters were obviously aware of the risks they imposed on pregnant women; excusing them from field work, giving them lighter tasks, and placing them in the second gang.<sup>36</sup> This was probably the case with Bayley, but he was unwilling to lose more labour power than he felt necessary. New limitations on the use of corporal punishment only signified to Bayley the improved treatment of Amity Hall's slaves, and he expected them to be capable of higher production levels. Distance allowed Goulburn to accurately pinpoint field labour as the main factor contributing to low reproduction simply by looking through plantation records. If Bayley did identify the same thing, he was reluctant to admit it. Due to his subsequent denial of Goulburn's hypothesis, he either did not believe it to be the case due to racial prejudices or knew that it would not be possible to sustain productivity levels without women's inclusion in field labour, which was Bayley's primary focus.

Bayley's condescension reflect the time period and gap between metropole and colony. Petley notes that Jamaican whites backed up their rhetoric with the notion that as local leaders and managers, they had a better understanding than abolitionists in Britain of problems affecting Jamaica and other parts of the British West Indies.<sup>37</sup> They used arguments that asserted that they understood the minds and dispositions of the enslaved and were better qualified to judge "the danger to public order that the agitation for emancipation posed."<sup>38</sup> This rhetoric is clearly utilized by Bayley, as he expressed to his employer that he was more experienced as a result of

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Christer Petley, "Slavery, Emancipation and the Creole World View of Jamaican Colonists, 1800-1834." *Slavery & Abolition* 26, no. 1 (2005), 100.

<sup>38</sup> Petley, "Slavery, Emancipation and the Creole World View of Jamaican Colonists, 1800-1834," 100.

his residency in Jamaica and immersion in plantation society, meaning his judgement should be placed above Goulburn's.

Bayley attributed the lack of births generally to the inconstancy of both sexes, and in his mind, "the imprudent conduct of the women themselves" during pregnancy, which he noted was difficult to prevent and impracticable to lessen.<sup>39</sup> Bayley stated that, "from a perverse and obstinate disposition and from a knowledge of their state precluding all attempts to enforce proper regulations at their periods and which might excite those violent bouts of passions that often arise among them and are frequently attended with serious consequences," that it was difficult to ensure an increase.<sup>40</sup> A letter written by Wood reaffirmed to Goulburn Bayley's assertion that the conduct of the women was to blame. In detailing the increase and decrease of slaves at Amity Hall in 1827 Wood wrote:

Every encouragement and hope of reward was held out for a natural increase, when much imposition was practised by the females reporting themselves pregnant when they were put to light work- and admitted for them to be six or eight weeks exempt from labour in the last stage of pregnancy after an elapse (in several cases) of six, eight and even twelve months, they either returned to their work or absented themselves from the estate conscious of their imposition having proved that they were not with child.<sup>41</sup>

Wood stated that women were feigning pregnancy to excuse themselves from field labour, and when they were no longer able to keep up the ruse, they either simply returned to work or ran away to escape punishment.<sup>42</sup> Wood was immersed in the same world Bayley was, and was therefore dedicated to the same prejudices and racism towards Amity Hall's slaves. Both

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<sup>39</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>41</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>42</sup> Roberts notes that individual absences were common and often tolerated by management. They were less about slaves' seeking permanent freedom but rather a way for them to take a day off when they could not face the daily physical and psychological exhaustion of labour and acted as an institutionalized "pressure valve." Justin Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 264-65.

overseer and attorney assumed that slave women used pregnancy to escape field labour and ran away to escape punishment. They did not identify the harshness of field labour as having intense physical tolls on women's bodies.

The punishment of John Gale, the leader of the slaves' collective action in 1826 successfully curbed recourse to strike action or verbal expressions of grievances for a period of time.<sup>43</sup> However, Turner found that in 1827 the slaves sat down rather than took to the woods in order to communicate their discontent of their workload and lack of jobbers hired since 1826.<sup>44</sup> Bayley seemed at a loss as to how to manage the slave population, admitting to Goulburn in August in a letter:

It is with pain I confess that the latter continue to show a disposition once repugnant to that which could be wished for than any other Negroes under my care and has baffled in some measure the means and endeavours I have used to amend it, and which have hitherto always proved successful in other instances in which I had occasion to resort to them- whatever may have been the original cause of producing this temper of mind among them I cannot undertake to say but it is natural to suppose that some remains of it still exist and it will require time perseverance and patience to do away with...<sup>45</sup>

Bayley appeared frustrated with not being able to utilize punishment the way it had been traditionally at Amity Hall to ensure discipline and compliance. He subtly hinted in his letter at the cause of the slaves' dispositions, which he anticipated only time would do away with. Bayley would reveal in a later letter that he believed Richards' influence and relaxed state of management to result in the unideal behaviour of Amity Hall's slaves.<sup>46</sup> He only identified

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<sup>43</sup> Mary Turner, "Slave Workers, Subsistence and Labour Bargaining: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1805-1832" in Ira Berlin, and Philip D. Morgan, *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London, England; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 1991), 101.

<sup>44</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 101. I did not find such evidence in the archives, specifically in Bayley's letter of 3 August 1827. It is possible Turner found something in her in-person examination of the records that I was unable to over microfilm. It is probable her claim that Amity Hall's slaves sat down in the field, or something similar, occurred, as only an incident of a larger nature would have elicited such an exasperated response from Bayley worth communicating to Goulburn in a letter.

<sup>45</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 3 August 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>46</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 2 December 1827, Goulburn Papers.

Richards when he believed him to be ostensibly interfering with affairs at Amity Hall, which were now under his own jurisdiction. Bayley conveyed a defeated attitude, writing that it would not be possible to carry the capabilities of the estate to their fullest extent. He wrote, “I can only assure you that nothing on my part shall be neglected to promote its interests generally considerably with the due management of it under these circumstances.”<sup>47</sup> Bayley attributed the low productivity of the slave workforce to previous managerial approaches differing to his own, and was not keen to be blamed for their effects on the slaves’ willingness to work.

### **Due Allowances**

In July, Goulburn solicited Bayley’s assistance in identifying an agent in Jamaica who Goulburn could vest with a dormant power of attorney for his estate in the event of Bayley’s illness or death.<sup>48</sup> Mortality rates were high in Jamaica, and it was a common precaution for owners to have agents on the island ready to take over the affairs of their estate in the event of a manager’s death or incapacity. Bayley’s answer in September was short; it was tacked onto the end of his otherwise condescending explanation of why women should not be removed from field labour. He noted that Goulburn’s request was not easily complied with, but he would endeavour to do what he wished.<sup>49</sup> It would take Bayley until July of 1828 to carry out this request, almost a full year. John Ashley was vested with dormant power of attorney and took over Amity Hall’s affairs in 1832. Perhaps it was Bayley’s irritation for Goulburn’s increased interference in estate affairs, his examination and correlation of Bayley’s plantation data, and subsequent uninformed suggestions. Or maybe it was the stark reminder of his mortality and replaceability, but the tone and forthrightness of Bayley’s letter suggest a strain in their

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<sup>47</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 3 August 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>48</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 5 July 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>49</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

otherwise professional and genteel relationship. The gap between metropole and colony became increasingly apparent and would continue to become so over the course of the year.

Bayley's exasperation in his letter of September 29, hidden behind cordiality, was due to much more than an ignorant suggestion on Goulburn's part. Bayley's attempts to satisfy the requests of his employer, compounded with the difficulties of keeping Amity Hall in working order and a disappointing crop season in 1827 were not all under his power or managerial control. As well, the added responsibility of finding an agent to take on these tasks in the event of Bayley's death added increased stress. Bayley was also attorney for various other properties in Vere parish. Similar to the strike of 1826, Bayley was not keen to assume responsibility for the failings of a plantation he had inherited in a poor state in various respects. Excessive rains in November had flooded the finest cane lands at Amity Hall and the canes were not fit to make sugar. They were instead ground into rum. The quality of the juices and the quantity of the cane were far inferior to what was projected by the overseers, and the crop fell short significantly.<sup>50</sup> Bayley looked over the past year's sales with much regret- poor sales in Liverpool of the 1826 crop only saw 58 hogsheads sold, but not until August of 1826.<sup>51</sup> Bayley's own account against the estate by the end of 1826 was £618 pounds and required 40-50 hogsheads of sugar to be sold to pay for it.<sup>52</sup> The expenses of the estate in 1826 were heavy, mostly due to the dilapidated state of buildings and the deficiency in cattle, but Goulburn accepted them as unavoidable and made "due allowances" for them.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 7 April 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>51</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 March 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>52</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 March 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>53</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 5 July 1827, Goulburn Papers.



Both Bayley and Goulburn wished to dispose with future purchases of cattle and hoped that the quantity of guinea corn produced on the estate would be enough that it would eliminate the need to purchase as much as in the previous year (£280 worth).<sup>54</sup> Bayley regretfully informed Goulburn that due to the bad yields of cane the expectation they had formed for the crop in 1827 would not be realized.<sup>55</sup> By early May, 140 hogsheads of sugar had been made, but Bayley noted that the remaining crop would only make 30-40 more hogsheads. In June, only 20 more hogsheads were made- Bayley had delayed the finishing of the crop due to drought. The end of May saw rains which were “seriously required” and Bayley did not want to cut all of the cane before a significant rainfall in order to save the grafts for planting and guard against want of food for the cattle.<sup>56</sup> He hoped that the larger proportion of rum made that year would sell well at 2/6p/ gallon, and he would attempt to sell the sugar made in Kingston, Jamaica, where there was a general demand for sugars of fine quality, instead of shipping them to London or Liverpool. It was necessary to sell the sugar off quickly in order to gain the much-needed profits. In the same letter Bayley compared prices of American oak casks versus those made of beechwood from “home” and urged Goulburn to purchase the former, unless the prices should get too high.

There was also a discussion of an account Goulburn held against Doctor Robert Wright, whom he had tasked Bayley with recovering funds from.<sup>57</sup> Finances were tight, and Bayley was responsible for saving money in any area possible, including recouping debts in Goulburn’s

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<sup>54</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 5 July 1827, Goulburn Papers. There were no purchases of guinea corn recorded after 1826.

<sup>55</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 March 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>56</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 1 June 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>57</sup> Bayley urged Goulburn to avoid a lawsuit because “the lawyers will ultimately be the only persons benefited by resorting to one.” Bayley to Goulburn, 7 May 1828, Goulburn Papers; Jamaica was an extremely litigious society, and the major reason for litigation was action over debt: between 1772 and 1791, 80,021 executions were lodged amounting to over twenty-two million pounds. Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650-1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 198.

name.<sup>58</sup> The crop totalled only 175 hogsheads of sugar and 86 puncheons of rum, about 100 hogsheads less than the previous year.<sup>59</sup> There was still trouble with the state of the buildings, and the trash houses required rebuilding as they had fallen down and were unfit for preserving fuel.<sup>60</sup> 200 bushels of guinea corn had been sold, and Bayley hoped that if they continued to reap such high crops, it would fully repay the amount they had laid out for the purchase of corn in 1826.<sup>61</sup> By the end of the harvest season it was determined that the crop sales would cover what was owed Richards and the contingencies spent on the estate in the previous year. Bayley hoped the increase rum production would cover all other expenses.<sup>62</sup> Amity Hall managed to scrape by with profit, but one benefit found by Wood, the overseer, was that the small crop, due to “the effects of dry weather... required little exertion for the people to take off in proper time.”<sup>63</sup>

### **A Mistaken Zeal**

By September of 1827, with the accounts settled, Bayley and Goulburn were able to direct their attention to other estate business. Goulburn’s letter of July 5 enclosed “Regulations for managers of estates in the West Indies prepared by the West India Committee in London” which were an expansion of Canning’s resolutions.<sup>64</sup> This motion was passed by Goulburn in Parliament. He “believed” he had forwarded a copy of the regulations to Richards when he was

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<sup>58</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 June 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>59</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 3 August 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>60</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 1 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>61</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>62</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 3 August 1827, Goulburn Papers; Contingencies or “island expenses” included local taxes and purchases, along with other costs of freight, insurance, warehousing and brockage. Expenses could absorb one-third to one-half of an estate’s profits, but many tried to offset the costs with the proceeds from rum sales. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 36.

<sup>63</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>64</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 248.

acting as attorney at Amity Hall but received no reply.<sup>65</sup> Goulburn requested that Bayley inform him of how the regulations had been attended to on his estate and if not, to identify difficulties that would impede him from doing so.<sup>66</sup> Bayley was pleased to be consulted in this manner by his employer in August, and stated that “under present circumstances no suggestions occur to me calculated to contribute to the improvement of the estate or the Negroes...”<sup>67</sup> There were 11 regulations in total listed, opposite which Bayley provided his own notes regarding their instatement at Amity Hall. In September, after Bayley had comprehensively examined the regulations and compiled a response his letter revealed an attitude different to that of his in August. His opening statement was not promising, “I cannot say that on taking possession of your estate I found any of them in operation.”<sup>68</sup> He explained,

Considering the temper and disposition of the Negroes on it, I have endeavoured to avoid everything that was the appearance of innovation and opposition to their habits and feelings, but I have on the other hand done what I could to introduce imperceptibly, which I conceived the most advantageous way of effecting improvement, the aspect of these regulations and I have abolished the use of that kind of whip so much complained of except in cases where example required it being used but not in any instance among females.<sup>69</sup>

Bayley’s notes beside each regulation reflect the same weariness; he did not believe several of them to be practical, some meaningless, and he did not expect them to be accepted by the slave population. He was also anxious about the association of abolition and amelioration, making it difficult to implement reforms without disrupting the status quo too much.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 5 July 1827, Goulburn Papers; Turner notes that the regulations are not found in the minutes of the West India Committee, although they clearly reflect its recommendation to the Colonial Office. She writes that they were in circulation for some years and probably date to 1823. Turner, “Planter Profits,” 251.

<sup>66</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 5 July 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>67</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 3 August 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>68</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>69</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers; Turner notes that the whip “so complained of” was the cat o’ nine tails. Turner, “Planter Profits,” 241.

<sup>70</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 242.

The first regulation declared that the whip was not to be carried into the field and another symbol of authority (a cane with a proper ornament) was to be substituted. Turner notes that the whip, a focus of both slave complaints and anti-slavery propaganda, symbolized the barely restricted personal power of owners and the archaic nature of labour extraction methods which characterized chattel slavery.<sup>71</sup> Bayley wrote that the regulation would effectually be viewed with ridicule and consequently lessen authority. The second regulation required the name of ‘headman’ to be substituted for driver; ‘head woman’ for driveress; and ‘class’ for gang.<sup>72</sup> This too, Bayley thought would be ridiculed, and wrote that the slaves would not comprehend a mere change of terms, and would require an additional term, as all slaves instilled with superintendence were already called ‘headsmen’.<sup>73</sup> This regulation is another indication of the lack of knowledge policymakers had of what was occurring on plantations, and exemplifies the ideas and practices exchanged between the British Isles and West Indies.

The third regulation stated that women were to only be punished with a switch, only by females and in the presence of females solely, as well as confinement all night in a dark room. Bayley noted that this had been objected to by the slaves from their dislike for innovation. He wrote “It loses its effect in some degree for the present in consequence of being considered an improper punishment. Complaints have been made by the women of it and requests that the usual mode of punishment should be continued.”<sup>74</sup> However, Bayley agreed, it was a regulation that should be enforced. Similarly, the fourth regulation required corporal punishment to be inflicted the day after the offence occurred- and if possible, at the breakfast hour, but in no case after 12

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<sup>71</sup> Turner, “The 11 O’clock Flog,” 50.

<sup>72</sup> These terms reflect the exchange of the attitudes and rhetoric towards work and discipline between the British West Indies and the metropole.

<sup>73</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>74</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

o'clock noon. Punishment in the field or by a switch was still to be used on the spot whenever occasion required it. Bayley found this regulation to be proper and enforceable. A register of all punishments with the offences to be kept in was also deemed appropriate by Bayley. As evident by his communication to the slave population after the 1826 strike, he had already put this into place at Amity Hall. Roberts observes that the violence of the whip was as much psychological as it was physical.<sup>75</sup> To delay punishment until the next day was to inflict the psychological terror of impending violence. It is not surprising that this was contested by slaves. Their engagement in protests surrounding changes in punishment, and Bayley's understanding of their "dislike for innovation" indicate their awareness of changes occurring in the public and private sphere. They leveraged this awareness and communicated that they would not be amiable to implemented reforms they did not agree with, hence Bayley's endeavours to introduce reforms "imperceptibly."<sup>76</sup>

The sixth regulation, that work was to be adopted in every instance where practicable, was "very desirable but will be attended with inconvenience producing continual disputes between the overseers and negroes as to quantity, and will require in the former qualifications that do not always exist among them such as an evenness of temper, a judgement easily adopting itself to a variety of circumstances."<sup>77</sup> Bayley was keen to maximize production at Amity Hall. However, he knew well that slaves were opposed to increased workloads, especially when it infringed on their own time. The seventh regulation concerned religious instruction: "Wherever there is a church or chapel within reasonable distance the gentlemen employed on the estates to attend divine service- the negroes to receive every encouragement from recommendation and

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<sup>75</sup> Roberts, "The Whip and the Hoe," 2.

<sup>76</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>77</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

otherwise to attend divine service.”<sup>78</sup> Opposite this Bayley noted merely that this could only be achieved by voluntary acts. Regulation eight concerned religious instruction given to the children on the plantation under the direction of clergymen. The adult slaves were also to be encouraged in receiving religious instruction. Bayley was not enthusiastic about this duty befalling to him, noting that “this must rest with the clergyman and will be very difficult to effect- from the want of proper persons to be instructors and who will undertake the task.”<sup>79</sup> Similarly, his ambivalent comment concerning white management and slave attendance at church indicate that Bayley was not enthusiastic to personally enforce it. For resident managers, any innovation in the slave system was regarded as a threat to security; “church attendance in itself meant a substantial innovation in the life of a people traditionally bound by the demands of estate labour.”<sup>80</sup> Bayley simply noting that it could only be achieved through a person’s own volition suggests he would not accept the obligation, and he placed it fully on the clergy.<sup>81</sup> That was not easily done either. Reverend John Smith was the newest rector of Vere, but five had died within the past three years.<sup>82</sup>

The 1827 report from the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the British West India Islands (on which Goulburn served as a Governor) shows the state of religious instruction in Vere and reveals the

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<sup>78</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers; Turner notes that as a member of the Incorporated Society Goulburn presumably knew that it was an uphill battle to get slaves to attend church whose clergy traditionally ignored their existence. Turner, “Planter Profits,” 239-240.

<sup>79</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>80</sup> Anti-slavery propaganda stressed the importance of religious instruction for slaves. In 1789 a Wesleyan preacher began preaching in Jamaica- the first of a contingent of missionaries. The Wesleyan church was regarded as disruptive and dissenting because it raised up workingmen as preachers, threatening the social order. Planters feared that missionaries would teach the slaves that God made all men equal. Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834*. Blacks in the New World. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 7, 8.

<sup>81</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 241.

<sup>82</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 15 March 1828, Goulburn Papers.

lack of instruction available to the people of Amity Hall, as Bayley had communicated to Goulburn. Reverend Smith reported that in Vere there were 150 whites, 220 free people of colour, and 7,550 slaves.<sup>83</sup>

There is but one Place for Public Worship, which will accommodate 300 persons, and in which the Morning Service is regularly performed on the Sunday. There is a Free School in this Parish supported by funds arising from a large estate. Owing to the lamentable circumstance of the death of 5 Masters (Rectors of the Parish) within the short space of 3 years, and the length of time between those deaths and the appointment of Successors, the School has been much depressed, and at present there are but 12 boys on the foundation, all white. There is also a Sunday School, but in a very backward state.<sup>84</sup>

Wood seemed to find a satisfactory change at Amity Hall regarding religious instruction, however, noting that in 1827 “It was obvious to every impartial observer that a change had taken place for the better, in the habits and conduct of the people; the adults in a great proportion attended the established church and the children were detained after service to receive oral instruction, by the rector or officiating minister. Baptisms became frequent.”<sup>85</sup> Smith did note in the Incorporated Society’s report that he was in the habit of catechizing people that presented themselves to him after service on Sundays, making Wood’s observation a credible one.<sup>86</sup>

The last two regulations (10 and 11) concerned incentive schemes designed for the slave population. One stated that slaves who conducted themselves to the satisfaction of management either by their attendance at church, progress in religious instruction, or marriage were to be rewarded with presents. The second intended to minimize slave attendance at Sunday markets which would instead facilitate their presence at church. It dictated that any exportable articles

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<sup>83</sup> *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the West India Islands, for the year MDCCCXXVII* (1827). London: Printed by R. Gilbert, St. John’s Square (1828), 28.

<sup>84</sup> *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the West India Islands, for the year MDCCCXXVII*, 29.

<sup>85</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>86</sup> *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the West India Islands, for the year MDCCCXXVII*, 29.

(such as arrowroot, ginger, cocoa, pimento, honey, etc.) grown by slaves were to be bought from them at a fair price and consigned to the proprietor in England, with their name to accompany it.<sup>87</sup> Bayley noted that awarding presents would only foster accusations of partiality against the managers “which too may extend among the negroes themselves and be attended with bad effects.”<sup>88</sup> Bayley was prepared to make the proposition of buying goods from the slaves. He noted however, that their experience selling at markets would mean that Goulburn would have to pay whatever price they set for their produce, or it would produce disputes between them and the overseers who were not equipped to bargain- at risk again of being charged with partiality.<sup>89</sup>

These regulations were disruptive of established norms and new routines at Amity Hall, and Bayley was less than enthusiastic to follow through with them.<sup>90</sup> Turner identifies the abolition of flogging for women as a highly contentious issue which the Jamaica Assembly refused to outlaw in slave code revisions (successively in 1826, 1827, and 1831).<sup>91</sup> She asserts that Bayley would have only acted to abolish it on clear instruction to do so.<sup>92</sup> This is evident through Bayley’s use of language. Bayley was careful in his phrasing, noting that changes to punishments “*should* be enforced” and “*ought* to be enforced” to offer tactful acknowledgement, but his responses as a whole are evasive.<sup>93</sup> Wood noted in 1828 that of the regulations, numbers “3, 4, and 10 in a code of regulations to be charged... enforced from the 1<sup>st</sup> January and the other numbers abided by as far as was consistent with the policy of the country.”<sup>94</sup> This reveals that at

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<sup>87</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 240.

<sup>88</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>89</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 241.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 241; As a result of the Jamaica Assembly’s refusal to outlaw the flogging of women, they were subjected to the lash until August of 1834 when the Abolition Act came into effect. Henrice Altink, “‘An Outrage on All Decency’: Abolitionist Reactions to Flogging Jamaican Slave Women, 1780-1834.” *Slavery & Abolition* 23, no. 2 (2002), 108.

<sup>92</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 241.

<sup>93</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers [emphasis added]; Turner, “Planter Profits,” 240.

<sup>94</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 3 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1828, Goulburn Papers.



Amity Hall, Bayley only ordered adherence to regulations concerning corporal punishment and incentive schemes. All else he left to the discretion of his lower management and the parish clergy. Bayley obviously only wanted to commit to the bare minimum in regards to the regulations and was not enthusiastic in his role to implement them. He was also anxious about the conflation of reform and abolition amongst the slaves. Bayley was weary of how the regulations would be received by the slave population, noting that the “great difficulty of enforcing some of these regulations consists in producing a conviction in the minds of the negroes of the *intention* with which they have been formed and of the advantages that would ultimately arise to them on their being carried into effect.”<sup>95</sup> More so, Bayley noted that if it was possible to convey that impression, the evils which the regulations intended to remedy would be largely removed. Under the circumstances existing at the time, however, he believed the regulations would be viewed with contempt, ridicule, or opposed to due to their dislike of innovation. I argue that the slave population was well aware of the disadvantages of some regulations- particularly the last two. To limit their ability to market and instead force them to sell their produce to the proprietor of their estate was to further limit their autonomy, personally and financially. Markets were used by slaves to further their economic positions for themselves and their families.<sup>96</sup>

Bayley, most likely being insincere, “deeply regretted” such circumstances. He lamented that “a mistaken zeal in the late desire to ameliorate the condition of the Negroes should have

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<sup>95</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers [emphasis added].

<sup>96</sup> Beckles shows that slaves sought to increase “their share of colonial wealth by participating in the market economy as commodity producers and distributors, with and without their owners’ permission.” Hilary McD. Beckles, “An Economic Life of Their Own: Slaves as Commodity Producers and Distributors in Barbados.” In *The Slaves’ Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas*, edited by Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (London, England; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 1991), 31.

blended this humane intention with the injudicious question, at the same time, of the abolition of slavery.”<sup>97</sup> Referring to abolition as a “mischievous measure” he noted that it was difficult to introduce any reform to promote amelioration on the estate “without producing in the negroes a disposition and feeling towards their masters quite different to that of gratitude, increased willingness to submission and a cheerful performance of work.”<sup>98</sup> Without the “ill-timed interference” of the surge of abolitionism, Bayley was certain these regulations would be met with all of the above and would be equally advantageous to both the master and the slave.<sup>99</sup> He believed it was lucky that there was not a greater degree of disorder in the island, which he attributed to the “happy state of the negroes,” disregarding the apparent discontent on his own estate.<sup>100</sup> Ironically, Bayley noted that the “rage for altering their condition” was pursued with sudden and immoderate violence alongside a reluctance to break through long-established habits and customs- not acknowledging the long-perpetuated violence used to subjugate the slave population, and his own reluctance to change routines and implement reform.<sup>101</sup> Bayley betrayed his true inclinations significantly through this letter: his priority was not amelioration in the name of humanity. He was not willing to personally promote reforms such as religious instruction, which would not directly increase production, without due compensation on his part. While he understood that improved working and living conditions translated into a healthier and more capable workforce, he was committed to the long-standing practice of violent punishment to ensure discipline and order. He viewed religious instruction as a means of encouraging civility

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<sup>97</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>98</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>99</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>100</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>101</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 September 1827, Goulburn Papers.

and morality amongst the slaves, but effectually viewed management as the most influential of all things.

Ward observes that planters identified the primary causes of unrest in their slave populations as “material deprivation and, increasingly, radical ideas from overseas.”<sup>102</sup> “The best safeguards of good order seemed to be reasonable treatment, close supervision, and, above all, the curtailment of the anti-slavery agitation in Great Britain.”<sup>103</sup> Bayley believed that ameliorative policies encouraged disorder and insolence, and hindered production rather than improved it. While Bayley attributed this to an association between amelioration and abolitionism amongst the slaves, that merely supplemented what he believed to be the true cause: the disposition and inherent nature of the enslaved. Bayley’s feelings were apparently sensed by Goulburn, as by the new year, Bayley expressed in a letter “My answers to your inquiries respecting the regulations send out by you were intended to convey to you an idea of the difficulties which oppose the execution of this most desirable object, and not in the least to raise an obstacle to or express a disinclination to its accomplishment.”<sup>104</sup> Bayley fostered reforms at the request of his employer, who shared differing interests than he. Amelioration came second to production for Bayley. He knew it was a useful tool to negotiate with the slave population but drew a hard line in allowing too many liberties to be taken by slaves or lower management, believing they led to a weaker work ethic or insolence. While in theory Goulburn was more committed to amelioration than Bayley, Bayley did not think Goulburn understood the difficulties in maintaining order alongside reform, while ensuring high production. Moreover,

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<sup>102</sup> J. R. Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: Technical Change and the Plough.” *New West Indian Guide* 63, no.1/2 (1989), 51.

<sup>103</sup> Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834,” 51.

<sup>104</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 15 March 1828, Goulburn Papers.

Goulburn did not have the on-the-ground experience managing sugar works that Bayley did. This disparity between metropole and colony became even more evident over the next few years.

### **The Trials of Amity Hall**

Over the course of 1827, two trials took place regarding incidents at Amity Hall. The incidents themselves are notable, but what is most significant is what the trials meant for the white management. Corporal punishments were no longer able to be used as liberally as they had once been without justification. White overseers and management were now subject to public opinion and were made to answer in court for misconducts. If incidents occurring on an estate, even between slaves, were brought to trial, they reflected on a manager's character and their system of governance. Whites could also bring other white managers to court to answer for their actions if they deemed them unnecessary or inappropriate. This climate created tension between other whites, especially ones who were already in conflict. After the government implemented a new reform program in their 1824 Order in Council, there was an appointment of a full-time, salaried Protector of Slaves in each colony, who would "hear charges brought by slave workers and slave-owners against each other and either deal with them summarily by applying the fines and punishments defined in the new regulations, or by referring cases to the courts."<sup>105</sup> Turner observed that when put into practice in Berbice, the numbers of cases dealt with monthly almost doubled.<sup>106</sup> As well, significantly, investigations were carried out on estates rather than in the Protector's office, and despite the considerable legal costs, cases against owners and managers

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<sup>105</sup> This was not an innovation by the British, but an adaptation of an established office found in colonial legal structures taken over by the British in their conquest from the Dutch and Spanish. Turner, "The 11 O'clock Flog," 39, 50.

<sup>106</sup> Women slaves would bring forward charges against owners, managers, and occasionally, slave drivers. They acted individually and collectively, sometimes in groups with other women on behalf of themselves, or of the whole workforce. Turner, "The 11 O'clock Flog," 42, 50.

were referred to the courts.<sup>107</sup> This was the beginning of the process of the rule of law between owners and slaves being implemented in the colonies.<sup>108</sup> The changing system was utilized on various occasions at Amity Hall in 1827, against both slaves and whites.

Bayley informed Goulburn in June of 1827 of an incident in which a man “of a very bad character” belonging to Amity Hall committed a “violent outrage” on a woman with whom he had a dispute. He had strangled her with a whip and “beat her in a way that her life was endangered” in front of the whole of the field gang.<sup>109</sup> Bayley wrote that the slave committed himself with insolence and the act used “language of the most rebellious and dangerous tendency” that the overseer had “no other alternative” than to confine the man and inform Bayley of the circumstances.<sup>110</sup> Bayley had him taken to the parish courts in Vere, where they examined the injured woman and put the man on trial. Bayley informed Goulburn “The offence comes under I think the 95<sup>th</sup> and 97<sup>th</sup> clauses of the slave act but as the woman appears to be recovering from the effects of the assault, and I do not think an intention to commit murder will appear, I should hope that he will not incur the severest penalty of the law.”<sup>111</sup> The slave was held in jail for months due to the absence of the man appointed to take the defense of the trial. The courts in Vere were held in quarterly meetings. By December 2, the man was tried and acquitted.<sup>112</sup> Bayley had dismissed the conflict between the man and the woman as the result of a “trifling cause” and the incident at most worried Bayley about delays in production, the display of insolence to a white overseer in front of the field gang, and the general reputation of Amity

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 June 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>110</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 June 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>111</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 June 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>112</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 2 December 1827, Goulburn Papers.

Hall's slaves at large, which reflected Bayley's own name as an attorney, and Goulburn's as an owner.

A second trial, described in much more detail, took place regarding a woman named Salinda, belonging to Amity Hall. Referencing his prior comments on the disposition of the Amity Hall slave population, Bayley now fully attributed it to Richards' instigation of trouble. In early December 1827, Richards issued a warrant to procure Salinda on account of "improper confinement."<sup>113</sup> The woman had been a runaway for over six months and was known to be harboured at Bogue estate (under Richards' care) by her husband, who was Bogue's driver. The overseer of Amity Hall, Wood, made repeated application to the Bogue estate overseer, but he would do nothing in Richards' absence. On Richards' return to Bogue, the overseer sent Salinda back to Amity Hall with a note stating that he had, by Richards' desire, rode past the driver's house where he found her. He assured Wood that Salinda had not always been there, except maybe on Sundays, when he repeatedly rode past the house to look for her in order to determine if she was pregnant.<sup>114</sup> Bayley attested that the Bogue overseer "furnished at once the nature of the evidence he should give if a persecution was instituted against the Bogue man and endeavoured by a false pretention of the woman being pregnant to screen her from any punishment, which state she herself denied to be in."<sup>115</sup> The only punishment Salinda had received by that time was confinement, and Bayley noted that she had been set at her liberty before the warrant was issued. Bayley went on to state that Richards did not concern himself with the concerns of the management of the slaves of any other estate in the parish except for

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<sup>113</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 2 December 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>114</sup> Morgan notes that because cohabitation was difficult in slave societies, some stable and exclusive intimate relationships between slaves involved travel from one estate to another when possible. Mobility was often mistaken by whites for promiscuity. Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 242.

<sup>115</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 2 December 1827, Goulburn Papers.

Goulburn's. Bayley was unable to identify Richards' motives, and stated that they had known each other for many years without the slightest difference between them. Bayley speculated that Richards was acting out of mortification of Amity Hall being taken out of his charge and placed under Bayley's, or the nature under which his accounts with Amity Hall had been settled, "or the contrast which the state of Amity Hall has been exhibiting between the period of his giving it up and subsequent times."<sup>116</sup> Bayley noted that Richards' conduct would cause additional trouble in the behaviour of the slaves, but sardonically assured Goulburn that "the overseer cannot with impunity conduct himself improperly in any way towards them, when they have an advocate anxious to hear their representations only two or three miles distant."<sup>117</sup>

By the end of December, Richards had Salinda sent to the jail to be brought before the justices for trial.<sup>118</sup> The trial took place on January 16, but by that time Richards was deceased—he had died from falling off his horse.<sup>119</sup> Not wanting to speak ill of him at that time, Bayley wrote that he would only mention that patient, long, and serious inquiry had been put into the trial, and Wood was found to have acted properly. Bayley included a document of the proceedings of the council of prosecution. The meeting of the council of the protection of slaves was composed of magistrates and vestrymen in Vere. They resolved that the charges were groundless, and Wood was acquitted of the charge of acting in "a wonton or cruel manner towards the slave Salinda and the court are further of opinion that Mr. Wood has only used merely a discretionary power in securing the said negro woman, she being a notorious offender as was distinctly proved before this court."<sup>120</sup> Despite his exoneration, Wood would resign by

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<sup>116</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 2 December 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>117</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 2 December 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>118</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 22 December 1827, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>119</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 February 1828, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>120</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 February 1828, Council Proceedings, 16 January 1828, Goulburn Papers.

1831 after Goulburn and his estate came under scrutiny once more. Goulburn would also be privy to information from within the House of Commons in 1830 that a second fire at Amity Hall was ignited by his slaves in protest to their state of management. Bayley and Wood would procure various letters and affidavits from respected men in Vere in order to clear their names of charges of cruelty. This is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Such accusations carried great weight and had the power to ruin an overseer's reputation, and thus, their ability to find work. A changing system meant that not only owners, but their attorneys and overseers could be held legally responsible for the mistreatment of slaves. In 1830 the death of a "fine boy" occurred when he was working a wain alongside another man and was crushed by a wheel when it was suddenly turned towards him.<sup>121</sup> Bayley noted that "a coroner's inquest was held but it appeared to be done without any design of injuring the poor boy and a verdict was returned accordingly."<sup>122</sup> Even after death, investigations were held in order to determine malintent or misconduct- either from manager or slave.

### **Accident or Arson**

Affairs at Amity Hall did not get any easier for Bayley to manage over the course of 1828, 1829 and 1830. A large fire took place in April 1828, commencing in two cane pieces windward of the great house, which stood a quarter mile from the sugar works. The day was reported to be dry and the canes were covered with brush. The fire burnt with "great fury" through three cane fields and burnt about sixteen acres. Bayley noted that the slaves and neighbours extinguished it quickly but made sure to mention that they were aided greatly by the fire engine Bayley kept in good order on the estate, which he thought was most likely

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<sup>121</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 8 May 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>122</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 8 May 1830, Goulburn Papers.



responsible for saving the dwelling house and surrounding buildings. He did not discover how the fire ignited, but “as it was in a part of the estate not much frequented it is likely some idle and skulking negroes may have accidentally caused it.”<sup>123</sup> Turner suggests that Bayley drew peace of mind, for himself and Goulburn, that responsibility for the fire lay with one individual, rather than a group of workers, such as the women in the first gang.<sup>124</sup> It is possible the slaves were exerting pressure on the management to protest their workload and the absence of jobbers.<sup>125</sup> Drought had affected the corn crop and reduced allotment yields and they may have decided to make their discontent known.<sup>126</sup>

The incident took place on a Saturday and Bayley noted that the slaves turned out very cheerfully on Sunday morning to cut the canes. He was less pleased that “they have had a day since given to them in lieu of the Sunday, which under all circumstances the overseer thought himself justified in permitting to be employed.”<sup>127</sup> Wood, the overseer, noted of the slaves’ behaviour in 1828 only that “The people behaved with few exceptions to the approbation of the managers and made progressive improvement under moral and religious instruction.”<sup>128</sup> He made no comments on the fire. The obvious disapproval Bayley communicated to Goulburn indicates ongoing tensions between levels of white management at Amity Hall. Bayley did not think the overseer giving the slaves an extra day in exchange for making them work on Sunday was appropriate. Nor did Bayley approve of the overseer making such a decision without consulting him. It seemed he was trying to be very cautious about any liberties granted to the slaves and by

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<sup>123</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 7 May 1828, Goulburn Papers; Ward’s note on “derogatory epithets” included the examples “runaway,” “skulker,” and “thief,” again, applied usually to field labourers. Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834,” 48.

<sup>124</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 101.

<sup>125</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 101.

<sup>126</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 101.

<sup>127</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 7 May 1828, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>128</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1828, Goulburn Papers.

whom. It was unsuitable to him that the slave population was rewarded for the incident; even if it was reported to Goulburn as an accident, Bayley's discontent reveals he believed it to be arson. Bayley did not want to encourage such protests through unsanctioned incentives.

Turner identifies the 1828 fire as a watershed in worker-management relations at Amity Hall. She argues that fires that did not damage food supplies but reduced sugar production could be used as a bargaining tool: it "forced management to recognize its dependence on worker cooperation to fight the fire and salvage the crop."<sup>129</sup> She asserts that it forced Bayley to acknowledge that the slaves remained determined to limit the exploitation of their surplus labour- and that Bayley took immediate steps to reduce the area kept in cane.<sup>130</sup> This evaluation could be considered an overstatement, though accurate: Bayley could not confirm the fire as arson- though he suspected it- and the dry parish of Vere had suffered from drought in 1828 making fires more probable. However, the drought did affect the slaves' food supply. Bayley subsequently reduced the acreage of cane, but it was most likely to preserve the health of the workforce over concerns about depletion rates (rate of natural decrease) and keep up production levels. He subsequently employed jobbing gangs in 1829 and 1830; his attempt to keep the slave force working at any rate. Bayley was aware of slave dissatisfaction and was prepared to reconcile in some areas, but he had previously drawn a hard line by punishing one of their leaders. Production was Bayley's main priority, and he understood that to keep the Amity Hall's slaves working, he would have to yield in some way to their pressures. The following section subsequently interrogates this.

### **A System Diametrically Opposite**

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<sup>129</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 101.

<sup>130</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 102.

As 1828 drew to a close Goulburn reiterated his priorities once again to his attorney. He voiced general concerns about slave welfare but was most worried about profit. The quality of sugar due to poor weather conditions was affecting sales. In late 1828 an allowance was deducted on one hogshead of sugar shipped to England due to it being “inferior to sample.”<sup>131</sup> Drought in Vere had put the corn crop in jeopardy, and the 1829 crop was projected to not exceed one half (only 100-115 hogsheads) of what was yielded in 1828 (235 hogsheads).<sup>132</sup> From want of sufficient pasturage the cattle were thin. Bayley suggested hiring a jobbing gang as they had in 1826: “It could be much to the interest of the estate to lay out from two to three hundred pounds by hard labour in clearing and fencing pastures as the estate’s negroes could keep them clean when established but cannot conveniently put them in that state in the first instance.”<sup>133</sup> Bayley informed Goulburn that when the guinea corn was planted the cattle was in want of pasturage, but when the cane was ending and the corn reaped, they had an abundance of food. Goulburn approved of Bayley’s request to hire labour but communicated that he was anxious not to incur any more expenditures in Jamaica and that he was not aware of the issue as it had not previously been brought to his attention.<sup>134</sup>

Bayley’s language suggests his low opinion of Amity Hall slaves’ work ethic.<sup>135</sup> His decision to lower the cane acreage, employ jobbers to clear pasture in 1829 and harvest the crop in 1830, and pivot the estate’s plan of cultivation could likely be attributed to Bayley attempting

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<sup>131</sup> Sales Account 1805-1830 (304/J/Box 4/12/8), Correspondence with Factors and Sales Accounts (1794-1856), Goulburn Papers.

<sup>132</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 2 January 1829, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>133</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 October 1828, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>134</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 24 November 1828, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>135</sup> Ward notes that planters’ low expectations of their labourers could be attributed to racial prejudice or “daily experience of slave sabotage and recalcitrance.” Bayley was, at this point in time, familiar with Amity Hall’s workforce’s determination to limit their labour levels. He expressed his frustration and projected his prejudices through his low expectations and commentary on their work ethic. Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834,” 47.

to keep the estate profitable without pushing the slaves so far that they would complain or take collective action which would halt production. He made this decision to satisfy dual parties- Goulburn and the workforce- and not necessarily to acknowledge directly to the slave population that he respected their wishes. Turner identifies the existence of jobbers, an alternative workforce, as enhancing the value of estate-based labour.<sup>136</sup> Jobbers employed to increase production opened the way for estate slaves to decrease the amount of work they did, to redistribute their work-load to hired workers, and made it customary for jobbers to do the cane holing, or to take off crop.<sup>137</sup> Experienced planters warned against the use of jobbers, but Turner notes that the abolition of the slave trade made them the only labour reserve left, increasing the practice.<sup>138</sup> Bayley's decision to hire jobbers in order to keep production in line with Goulburn's standards allowed Amity Hall's workers to decrease their work-load. As in 1826, slave workers were the most significant force for change at Amity Hall estate. They reinforced limits on levels of labour extraction by not meeting standards and applied pressures such as sitting down in the field and possibly arson, forcing Bayley to hire jobbing gangs to sustain production. While Bayley reconciled to the use of an alternative workforce, he also, perhaps unknowingly, enabled the estate slaves to decrease their workload.

In a previous letter, Goulburn had observed that in looking over his accounts, the estate's produce had diminished since 1817 and he asked Bayley to explain the reason for it with the estate documents he had at his disposal. Bayley's response, unsurprisingly, directly identified Richards as a main cause of the decrease:

I think the above year was about the time of Mr. Richards' succeeding Mr. Samson in the management of Amity Hall and this circumstance accounts at once for the diminution

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<sup>136</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 103.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

during the time of the former- as these gentlemen pursued a system diametrically opposite and particularly in what regarded the Negroes. Mr. Samson's exertions were made with mere anxiety for large crops than were consistent with the real interests of the Estate. Mr. Richards' plan was the reverse in all respects, and out of these extremes, has grown in my opinion the difficulties that have operated to retard my endeavours to restore that medium which alone can promote the well doing of the estate. This is progressively going on, but as the most effectual means of effecting it, is by producing better feelings and disposition in the negroes, it consequently cannot be very rapid as the change requires the operation of time with a government tempered with a due proportion of mildness, patience and forbearance and allowances for circumstances that have given rise in a great degree to the evil that is now sought to be removed.<sup>139</sup>

What this passage shows is that Bayley viewed himself as a happy medium between the extremes of Samson and Richards. Samson valued high production at the expense of human life. Richards prioritized better treatment of the slave population at the expense of profit. Bayley thought he understood the "real interests" of the estate: increased production alongside improved reproductive rates- reform with profit. He believed that the only way to increase production was to alter the disposition of the workforce, whose work ethic he believed to have been effectually destroyed by Richards' management. Until that was possible, as Bayley had repeatedly identified time as the only real means of achieving it, he formulated an alternate plan.

Goulburn requested that Bayley provide information on the number of acres in cane, corn, and pasture.<sup>140</sup> In response to Goulburn's query, Bayley noted that three detached pieces of land contained about 300 acres used for corn and pasturage but required fencing and cleaning. There were annually in canes, an average of about 280 acres. There was generally 150 acres of corn planted, and Bayley's plan was to get those parcels into a condition that would allow for growing both corn and pasture, and to plant one half of them alternatively in corn. By keeping them open as pasture and not planting corn every year on the same lands, they would get a better return. The jobbers achieved what Bayley hoped: they cleared 141 acres of pasture, and cleaned

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<sup>139</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 22 November 1828, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>140</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 24 November 1828, Goulburn Papers.

and planted upwards of 100 acres of corn land.<sup>141</sup> He noted that 280 acres was “the utmost that can be kept up by the present strength of the estate, and I should say that if the field of canes were reduced to 260 acres it would be in a better proportion to it, and yield as much, by superior care and attention as the larger one does now.”<sup>142</sup> Cultivating an estate on its own strength- no more land kept in cane than the resident workforce could harvest and process- was an approach many planters of the time took to avoid the expenses of jobbing gangs and not overworking its labourers.<sup>143</sup> Goulburn was amiable to this plan, writing that he was quite willing to forgo a larger crop if it was accompanied by the improved merit of his slaves, either in condition or disposition.<sup>144</sup> He noted that the only reason he called attention to the crops was to ensure that that Bayley’s intent was compatible with such objectives.<sup>145</sup> He stressed to Bayley however, “You will only surrender that I cannot well afford a reduction of income and you will govern yourself by what may upon the whole appear to you to be best for my interests.”<sup>146</sup> Not pleased to hear about the poor account of the crops, which only yielded 131 hogsheads in 1829- accurate with Bayley’s estimate- Goulburn concluded somewhat contradictorily that it was compensation enough to hear about the improved state of his slaves.<sup>147</sup>

The evidence indicates, as Turner has argued, that Goulburn was communicating with Bayley in a way that sent contradictory signals. He urged his attorney to use every means within his power to encourage a higher birth rate but questioned his proposal to use hired labour.<sup>148</sup> Goulburn was attempting to walk a fine line between making conciliations for the benefit of his

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<sup>141</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>142</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 February 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>143</sup> Ursula Halliday, "The Slave Owner as Reformer: Theory and Practice at Castle Weymss Estate, Jamaica, 1808-1823." *The Journal of Caribbean History* 30, no. 1 (1996), 79.

<sup>144</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 26 January 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>145</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 26 January 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>146</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 22 April 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>147</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 22 April 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>148</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 241.

slaves, while still being quite reluctant to sacrifice any more income than he had already to ensure such ends. Bayley, however, was reconciling between a workforce that would not keep up the levels of production he thought them capable of (especially with the added capacity of the steam mill, which could process more cane than the slaves customarily cultivated) and his employer's wishes of high production and slave welfare.<sup>149</sup> It seemed Amity Hall's priorities were much the same as they were in 1825 and 1826: amelioration on paper, production and profit in practice.

### **Take Every Measure**

High production levels necessitated a sustained workforce, which was in jeopardy since the abolition of the slave trade. Goulburn's anxiety about mortality rates was less humanitarian in nature, and more over concern for maintaining his slave population and reputation as a politician. In March 1829, Bayley sent Goulburn lists of increase and decrease for the previous year. Bayley noted of the decrease, "the causes that have occasioned it have been beyond the control of any person connected with the care of them. As the negroes in general on the estate are now behaving themselves better and in an improved disposition showing itself I am in hopes an increase of children will be the result of this change."<sup>150</sup> Taking into account the deaths which had occurred by accident that year, Goulburn noted it was not so far above average, but he was surprised by the small number of births.<sup>151</sup> He directed Bayley that "if you consider it to occur either from excess of labour or deficiency of food or other cause which it is within your power to remedy to take every measure for preventing its recurrence."<sup>152</sup> Bayley could only state that to

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<sup>149</sup> Turner, "Slave Workers," 102.

<sup>150</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 13 March 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>151</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 18 June 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>152</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 18 June 1829, Goulburn Papers.

assign any further cause to the low birth rate than he had already postulated was entirely out of his power.<sup>153</sup> “I can with truth assert that I believe there is no estate in the parish the negroes of which receive so ample and constant allowance of corn as the Amity Hall people, and I can with equal confidence say that there is no estate in it on which there is not a greater proportion of work done as regards the comparative population of each.”<sup>154</sup> Bayley assured Goulburn that his slaves were well fed, but few other properties were so undermanned.<sup>155</sup>

Bayley offered the comparative example of neighbouring plantations near Amity Hall also under his care (see Table 3.1). He noted in 1831, “I know of no difference in the treatment of the negroes on these estates and those on Amity Hall. The former do voluntarily a great deal more work than the latter and have not so many extra allowances and indulgencies, yet you will see how different the result is of keeping up their numbers.”<sup>156</sup> Since Bayley had taken charge of Hillside Estate the population had increased by twenty.<sup>157</sup> That of Braziletto Estate only by six.<sup>158</sup> It was not in proportion to Hillside, but Bayley could not identify any cause for the lower increase. Nearby Bog Estate’s increase had been only of three people in the past three years in a population of 500.<sup>159</sup> Under Bayley’s care for 19 months of that period however, there had been a natural increase of eleven.<sup>160</sup> Bayley and Goulburn’s hopes would be realized- there had been three births at Amity Hall in 1829 and by September six women were pregnant.<sup>161</sup> Amity Hall would lose two elderly slaves to dysentery in 1829.<sup>162</sup> The disease swept the plantation and sent

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<sup>153</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 September 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>154</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 September 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>155</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 247.

<sup>156</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>157</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 September 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>158</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 September 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>159</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 September 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>160</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 September 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>161</sup> Bog Estate had been under George Richards’ charge until his death in 1828. Bayley to Goulburn, 5 September 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>162</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 September 1829, Goulburn Papers.



more slaves to the hospital.<sup>163</sup> A slave named Samuel Jenners would also be manumitted that year by Goulburn. Jenners finally achieved this after two years through the purchase of a young boy who he placed on Amity Hall in his stead.<sup>164</sup> Bayley and Goulburn were agreeable to this transaction. Bayley noted that Jenners was the best carpenter on the property, and though tradesmen of his skill were very much needed, he was an elderly mulatto man who had conducted himself well and had married a free woman.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 1 August 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>164</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1829, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>165</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 2 December 1827, Goulburn Papers.

Table 3.1: Increase and Decrease of Slaves at Bog, Hillside, and Braziletto Estate in the Parish of Vere, 1825-1831

| Year | Bog Estate                        |             |             |                   | Hillside Estate                   |             |             |                   | Braziletto Estate                 |             |             |                   |
|------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
|      | Population on 1 January this year | # of Births | # of Deaths | Increase/Decrease | Population on 1 January this year | # of Births | # of Deaths | Increase/Decrease | Population on 1 January this year | # of Births | # of Deaths | Increase/Decrease |
| 1825 | "                                 | "           | "           | "                 | 367                               | 11          | 8           | +3                | 217                               | 3           | 2           | +1                |
| 1826 | "                                 | "           | "           | "                 | 370                               | 5           | 1           | +4                | 218                               | 1           | 1           | 0                 |
| 1827 | "                                 | "           | "           | "                 | 374                               | 19          | 6           | +13               | 218                               | 4           | 3           | +1                |
| 1828 | 507                               | 21          | 10          | +11               | 387                               | 13          | 10          | +3                | 219                               | 5           | 2           | +3                |
| 1829 | 518                               | 12          | 19          | -7                | 390                               | 11          | 9           | +2                | 222                               | 4           | 7           | -3                |
| 1830 | 511                               | 14          | 7           | +7                | 392                               | 13          | 8           | +5                | 219                               | 5           | 3           | +2                |
| 1831 | 518                               | 7           | 11          | -4                | 397                               | 6           | 1           | +5                | 221                               | 4           | 2           | +2                |
| 1832 | 514                               | "           | "           | "                 | 402                               | "           | "           | "                 | 223                               | "           | "           | "                 |

*Source:* Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

Note: Increase/Decrease is by December 31 of that year. Increase/Decrease is calculated for 1831 in order to provide a population total for the beginning of 1832. Data for Bog Estate for the years 1825-1827 was not included in Bayley's lists.

This list was provided to Goulburn by Bayley in 1831. It shows a gradual increase in population from the years 1825-1831 for Hillside and Braziletto Estate. Bog Estate's population increased after coming under Bayley's charge in 1828 and then began to somewhat sustain its numbers.

Table 3.2 shows the increase and decrease of slaves at Amity Hall over the same range of years.

There is an apparent decrease of the population from 251 slaves in 1825 to 239 in 1831. The

number of males only decreased by a total of 5 where females decreased by 7. This can likely be attributed to females making up a larger proportion of field labourers.<sup>166</sup>

Table 3.2: Increase and Decrease of Male and Female Slaves at Amity Hall Estate, 1825-1831

| Year (As of January 1) | # of Males | # of Females | Increase/Decrease of Males | Increase/Decrease of Females | Total Population           |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1825                   | 114        | 137          | +1                         | -1                           | 251 (115 Male, 136 Female) |
| 1826                   | 115        | 136          | +1                         | 0                            | 252 (116 Male, 136 Female) |
| 1827                   | 116        | 136          | -2                         | 0                            | 250 (114 Male, 136 Female) |
| 1828                   | 114        | 136          | -3                         | -4                           | 243 (111 Male, 132 Female) |
| 1829                   | 111        | 132          | +1                         | -4                           | 240 (112 Male, 128 Female) |
| 1830                   | 112        | 128          | -3                         | 0                            | 237 (109 Male, 128 Female) |
| 1831                   | 109        | 128          | +1                         | +1                           | 239 (110 Male, 129 Female) |

*Source:* Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letters from Wood 1825-1831, Goulburn Papers.

Note: Total is by December 31 of that year, except for 1831, in which the total was 239 as of September 31, 1831, right before the letter with lists was sent. The deceased was a child who died of dysentery.

David Eltis and Paul Lachance assert that the natural rate of Caribbean slaves' population growth has been a continual subject of debate from the abolitionist era to the present day and was no doubt a topic of private discussion amongst slave owners.<sup>167</sup> This was certainly the case at

<sup>166</sup> Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction," 237.

<sup>167</sup> David Eltis and Paul Lachance, "The Demographic Decline of Caribbean Slave Populations: New Evidence from the Transatlantic and Intra-American Slave Trades." In *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, edited by David Eltis and David Richardson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 336.

Amity Hall (see Table 3.2). Rates of natural population change in Jamaica were those of attrition; rates of -5 percent to -6 percent per year in the late seventeenth century improved gradually to about -1 percent in the early nineteenth century.<sup>168</sup> Caribbean slave societies' growth conditions were severely delayed by the rigors of sugar production and the unhealthy, disease ridden environments in which they were located.<sup>169</sup> Eltis and Lachance observe a general ameliorative trend in the vital rates of Caribbean slave populations over the course of the eighteenth century, but they postulate whether it is plausible that the rates of natural increase and decrease varied so much from one colonial jurisdiction to another.<sup>170</sup> Amity Hall's trends, compared to surrounding estates in the same parish, show that variation is entirely plausible, not just between colonial jurisdictions, but in the same ones. Higman notes that within Jamaica, the most prominent example of positive natural increase on sugar estates was found in Vere parish where Amity Hall was located.<sup>171</sup> Amity Hall's population continually declined, as compared to plantations geographically close by under the same weather conditions and sometimes even the same system of governance (attorneys often managed multiple properties at once). This can likely be attributed to feeding levels, modes and rates of punishment, amount of labour extracted, and various other factors. Bayley asserted that Amity Hall's slaves were the best fed in all of Vere, and comparatively worked at levels lower than other estates. However, their population continually decreased during the 1820s. As Eltis and Lachance noted, the physical demands of sugar production were immense, and as determined in the last chapter, Goulburn's minor attempts at ameliorating conditions- increasing food rations to levels above underfeeding,

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<sup>168</sup> Eltis and Lachance, "The Demographic Decline of Caribbean Slave Populations," 336.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 341, 345.

<sup>171</sup> B. W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2005), 291.

reducing corporal punishment, etc.- were not enough to produce any tangible results in slave population growth at Amity Hall.<sup>172</sup>

It may have been a difference in age profiles that distinguished Amity Hall from neighbouring plantations. Ward notes that Amity Hall's slaves eventually maintained their numbers.<sup>173</sup> Higman shows through age-structures that renewed growth of the slave population in Jamaica had a lot to do with the age profiles of slaves.<sup>174</sup> The rate of population decline slowed between 1817 and 1832, and increased by 1838.<sup>175</sup> He asserts that the fecundity of the slave population was probably at a maximum in 1807 as a result of new arrivals in the preceding decade in child-bearing age groups, but declined in potential, with renewed growth waiting until creoles born from 1807-11 entered fertile age groups after 1825.<sup>176</sup> Therefore, "although the improvement in fertility (or mortality) may have resulted from changes in the attitudes of the masters, the growth of the creole population after 1830 could also be explained simply in terms of the internal cycle of the age structure."<sup>177</sup> This is a plausible explanation for Bog, Hillside, and Braziletto Estate, whose populations saw increases by the late 1820s. However, Amity Hall's population continually declined during the same period. Goulburn purchased 42 new slaves in 1818; 27 of them were women. In 1827, about one decade later, Goulburn identified 39 women under forty years old, with 15 never having children. It is possible that the women purchased in 1818 made up over half of the women Goulburn identified. If they were purchased in child-bearing years, their children born in the 1820s would enter child-bearing age groups in the late

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<sup>172</sup> Eltis and Lachance, "The Demographic Decline of Caribbean Slave Populations," 337.

<sup>173</sup> J. R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration* (Oxford [England]: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1988), 94.

<sup>174</sup> B. W. Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834* (Kingston, Jamaica: Press, University of the West Indies, 1995), 95.

<sup>175</sup> Higman, *Slave Population*, 95.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 95, 98.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

1830s and early 1840s. The other roughly twenty women who had been under Samson's management may have been less likely to bear children owing to physical stress and malnourishment. This means that Goulburn's injection of women into Amity Hall's slave population under Samson, designed to boost reproduction, would not see another phase of growth after a phase of decline until the late 1830s or 1840s, fitting in with Ward's assertion that Amity Hall eventually maintained its numbers, while other estates began to see an increase earlier in time, after 1830. Higman shows that in Vere specifically, from 1826-9 the rate of natural increase per 1,000 per annum was -0.7, but from 1829-32 it increased to +1.1, aligning with this hypothesis.<sup>178</sup> In this way, not only did management practices have an effect on rates of reproduction, but age profiles had a significant influence also. This mainly had to do with Goulburn supplementing his workforce through the internal slave trade in 1818, while other estates may have seen their last boost in numbers from the legal slave trade in 1807 or prior. Higman points out that a series of degenerating phases of decline and growth in the internal cycle may have continued, or self-sustaining population growth, if not for the abolition of slavery in 1834.<sup>179</sup> However, what these age profiles depend on still, is the "levels of fertility and mortality prevailing," that is, "the capacity of the creole population to survive in spite of slavery."<sup>180</sup> This means that despite the age profiles of individual plantations, an increase in numbers still relied on conducive living and working conditions- which went unprioritized at Amity Hall until 1831.

In 1830 Goulburn once again lamented the disproportion of births to deaths in 1829 (see Table 3.2), noting that it was "always a source of astonishment."<sup>181</sup> Alongside Goulburn's directions to Bayley to take every measure to encourage a higher birth rate at Amity Hall, he also

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 2 June 1830, Goulburn Papers.

became increasingly adamant that Bayley do everything he could to reduce costs in Jamaica. In March of 1830, Bayley informed Goulburn that he was owed £887. This upset Goulburn and seemingly caused him a great deal of stress. His letter to Bayley of June 2, 1830 includes many errors, words and entire lines with strikethroughs, rewritten sections, and one page entirely crossed out. He deliberated how to communicate to Bayley that he was slowly becoming destitute: “I cannot avoid impressing upon you the necessity of making every exertion to keep down the estate’s expenses.”<sup>182</sup> Because of the low yield of crops due to poor weather over the past few years, Goulburn wrote that the small returns of his estate would not enable him to pay Bayley’s account writing “I shall not find a net income sufficient” to cover the bills owed.<sup>183</sup> Rewriting the same sentiments a few times over, Goulburn managed to communicate:

It must be obvious that under these circumstances some effort must be made to equalize the income and the charge- to increase the former is scarce practicable (indeed I am not aware of any mode of doing it unless by improving the quality of the sugar), the latter alternative is the only one which can be adopted and as my attention will be directed to the reduction of the charges here I trust you will do the same in Jamaica as far as is possible.<sup>184</sup>

This entire page of Goulburn’s letter was voided by a big X. It is not clear whether Goulburn even sent the letter to Bayley as it reads more as a first draft would with the date written at the bottom of the completed letter, with no complimentary closure or signature. In any case, it reveals the concerns Goulburn had about his finances, and illuminates how he hoped to resolve them. He was determined to lower his expenses in England while Bayley did the same in Jamaica.

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<sup>182</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 2 June 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>183</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 2 June 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>184</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 2 June 1830, Goulburn Papers.

In this way, Goulburn was quite like other planters of the era. Many despaired that with rising costs, it would become impossible to continue the cultivation of sugar. Goulburn concluded his letter writing, “that unless some means be derived either of increasing the income or reducing the charges it will be impossible ... to carry on the cultivation.”<sup>185</sup> In response to this, Bayley merely noted that the amount owed to him was rather modest. He communicated that when Goulburn reviewed the accounts he would have to allow for the “almost total failure of the crops in Vere last year, and the consequent reduction in that of the rum, which is the only source at Amity Hall to meet the Island contingencies” which Bayley observed exceeded £1800. Bayley noted that amount could not be reduced under any circumstances, had there not been a two-year supply of guinea corn reaped in 1828. If it had not, it would have cost at least £700 to feed the slaves. Additionally, Bayley noted that such an expense was incurred by all of the estates in Vere, except for about three or four properties. Bayley feared that “an entire reverse” was going on with estates in the island generally, and that Goulburn’s opinion “as to the impossibility and uselessness of carrying on the cultivation will prove too correct, unless relief in some way or the other very shortly presents itself.”<sup>186</sup> A changing system, fluctuating sugar prices, and high insurance rates were making sugar cultivation a more costly endeavour by 1830. Bayley and Goulburn took comfort that births that year might exceed their usual number. Twelve women had “every appearance of being pregnant.”<sup>187</sup> Bayley noted that if an increase did occur however, it was still not within his power to assign any cause for it. He wrote that “I can only hope that it may proceed from the effect of a more regular and uniform government of the Negroes and which has probably had some influence on their habits.”<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 2 June 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>186</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 31 July 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>187</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 31 July 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>188</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 31 July 1830, Goulburn Papers.



## Perfect Openness

By 1830, Bayley and Goulburn were forced to a reckoning in their relationship. Finances took a backseat when charges from within the House of Commons, alleged that Goulburn's slaves were mistreated. In May of 1830, another fire took place in detached cane pieces between Monymusk Estate and Amity Hall. Amity Hall did not have more than a few acres burned, but the wind carried the flames toward Harmony Hall Estate and Greenwich Estate which suffered more severely from the blaze. The cause was not ascertained, but Bayley believed it to be accidental.<sup>189</sup> Goulburn wrote to Bayley in June that he had already received reports of the fire from an unidentified person in the House of Commons, and that it was represented to him as originating in a bad disposition in his people in consequence of their system of management, "of which they had reason to complain."<sup>190</sup> Goulburn noted that he readily believed it to be an accident, but nevertheless directed Bayley to make every inquiry to the slaves as a whole to discover the truth. If they did have genuine reason to complain, Bayley was to afford them relief for the future in the name of humanity. Goulburn reiterated that his "first anxiety as I have before stated to you is to have the people on my estate contented and happy and for this I am ready to make great sacrifices."<sup>191</sup> He continued "Not that I consider their happiness as inconsistent with my interests- on the contrary I believe that a kind and steady exercise of authority will... the advancement of both."<sup>192</sup> This statement once again reflects Goulburn's views on discipline and work as modes of moral improvement.<sup>193</sup> Goulburn concluded his letter noting that John Ashley,

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<sup>189</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 8 May 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>190</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 26 June 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>191</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 26 June 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>192</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 26 June 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>193</sup> Goulburn was educated at Cambridge University and was a part of a rising generation of conservative scholars, "Noetics," who believed in the attainment of virtue through moral discipline, and the motivation of duty. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 21.

whom he vested with a dormant power of attorney at Amity Hall through Bayley's direction, was considered to have a particularly well-conducted estate and that Bayley should consider adopting his methods. Up until this time, Goulburn accepted Bayley's assertions that it was better to avoid innovation and new regulations on his estate due to the disposition of Amity Hall's workforce.<sup>194</sup> Turner notes that Goulburn was "stirred from comfortable reliance on Bayley's judgement" because the new charges "extended the currency of election campaign propaganda"; Goulburn understood that such charges against proprietors of slaves were readily believed.<sup>195</sup>

Goulburn's letter of June had hit a chord with Bayley. In acknowledging the receipt of the letter Bayley wrote in his four-page response "I must beg you to pardon my trespassing on your time in noticing such parts of it in a separate letter as have occasioned to me pain and concur, although I am persuaded that your intention was not to produce such feelings."<sup>196</sup> Bayley believed that had they known each other personally Goulburn would not have the concerns he did.

Notwithstanding this source of regret I derive much gratification from knowing that from my correspondence for nearly six years you must be impressed with a favorable opinion of the truth, candour and consistency with which I have discharged the trust you reposed in me, and that in reflection you will find that results in a great degree justify my entertaining this conviction, although they may not have kept pace with my endeavours and wishes.<sup>197</sup>

Bayley called representations of mistreatment unfounded and noted that the informant possessed no possible means of ascertaining what he asserted. Bayley recalled the court proceedings he had sent Goulburn regarding the trial of 1828, noting that the accusations were proven untrue, and he

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<sup>194</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 242.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>196</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 11 September 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>197</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 11 September 1830, Goulburn Papers.

believed them to be refracted. Bayley stressed that he wrote such a letter because “I have thought it but justice to myself to say this much in vindication of my character and in refutation of the system which appears to have been adopted and persevered in to injure me in your opinion.”<sup>198</sup>

Bayley wrote that no complaints had been made to him by the slaves, which they had opportunity to do during Bayley’s monthly visits to Amity Hall. He declared that he had made eight distinct visits in the past year alone. Bayley commended their assistance in putting out a fire at Chesterfield Estate. That particular estate, unlike the others belonging to the proprietor Mr. Parker, was not under Bayley’s care. Since 1828 there had been various fires in the slave houses there and they had been moved to a different site. Public investigations took place but no cause was ascertained. Bayley noted that Amity Hall’s people consistently turned out cheerfully to stop the fires in a manner creditable to themselves. They also did this at Sutton’s Pasture, another adjoining estate. Bayley noted however, “Notwithstanding what I have said in favour of the Amity Hall people, it must not be forgotten that they are perhaps the most difficult negroes in the parish to manage and I believe this opinion of them is very generally entertained.”<sup>199</sup> In reply to Goulburn’s comments regarding Ashley’s system of management, Bayley coolly replied that he had never heard of his system and that the intimacy between them had ceased for reasons to which Bayley was a “perfect stranger.”<sup>200</sup> Bayley expressed regret for having recommended Ashley to Goulburn, and that he only did so to comply with Goulburn’s wishes. This was a departure far from Bayley’s glowing recommendation of Ashley in 1828 where he alleged that Ashley was a very good planter who had left his estate in a very improved state.<sup>201</sup> Additionally, to reinforce to Goulburn that he was following through with the new regulations, Bayley noted

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<sup>198</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 11 September 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>199</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 11 September 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>200</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 11 September 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>201</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 2 December 1827, Goulburn Papers.

that there was a new catechist introduced into Vere a year before, principally to instruct the children, and that he intended to employ him at Amity Hall.

Goulburn mended his relationship with Bayley by expressing that he was anxious to recall any comments that cause him pain. Goulburn noted that his principle of action in both public and private transactions “has always been to deal with perfect openness with those with whom I may be concerned.”<sup>202</sup> He explained that he only inquired with Bayley about the matter because “well knowing from past experience how readily statements of this kind when brought against West Indies Proprietors are believed, and how actively they are circulated, I deemed it essential to my own justification, and to your character...”<sup>203</sup> Goulburn was still wary of what had occurred in 1826 regarding public circulations about his estate. Pleased with Bayley’s stated commitment to religious instruction for his slaves, Goulburn advised Bayley that “The only rational mode of improving the negro condition is by instructing the younger in their duty and raising them gradually to a better condition in society.”<sup>204</sup> As for Ashley, Goulburn’s political informant recommended his system as a model for imitation, but Goulburn insisted he knew nothing of him. The matter was put to rest as Goulburn wrote that he would conclude by assuring Bayley he had no reason to doubt his conduct, and regretted his communication of June, as it had produced a satisfactory reply. A mutual trust, jeopardized by the judgement of Goulburn’s political peers, was reified once more between Goulburn and Bayley. Bayley later replied that if “I have expressed myself more warmly than the occasion required, I sincerely regret it and you will but do me justice in attributing it to the feelings of a mind not very conversant in the manners of the present times and perhaps too readily excited from a consciousness of

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<sup>202</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 6 November 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>203</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 6 November 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>204</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 6 November 1830, Goulburn Papers.

rectitude.”<sup>205</sup> This reflection underscores Bayley’s determination to clear his name of charges of mistreatment; he briefly departed from standards of British propriety and decorum in his resolve to protect his professional reputation.

Bayley passed on to Goulburn various letters and affidavits collected from respected members of the community in order to defend both himself and Wood, his overseer. The overt practice of white male solidarity was a main criterion that distinguished Jamaican settlers from people in Britain.<sup>206</sup> Though complex, Petley notes that the white settler community was remarkably cohesive.<sup>207</sup> This is evident by the twelve sworn testimonies collected to attest to Bayley and Wood’s characters. This point is disrupted, however, by Richards’ insinuations and charges against Wood, as well as Bayley’s competitive tension with Ashley. Petley notes that inevitably, Jamaican whites occasionally had disagreements with one another, and the common values they shared shifted over time.<sup>208</sup> Despite the exception of Richards, Vere’s white male population shared the same general world view.<sup>209</sup> The twelve testimonies were gathered from various magistrates, one being the Custos (Chief Magistrate of the parish), the Rector of Vere, a visiting medical practitioner working with Amity Hall’s doctor, other sugar proprietors, and Amity Hall’s own bookkeeper and carpenter.<sup>210</sup> Every letter refuted accusations that Amity Hall’s people were subject to severe punishments and asserted that they were fed at levels as were customary in the parish. Many cited the progress the slave population had made over the years. One letter from a neighbouring planter revealed the last 20 months particularly as resulting

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<sup>205</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 February 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>206</sup> Petley, “Slavery, emancipation and the creole world view of Jamaican colonists, 1800–1834”, 100.

<sup>207</sup> Christer Petley, *White Fury: A Jamaican Slaveholder and the Age of Revolution*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 41.

<sup>208</sup> Petley, “Slavery, Emancipation and the Creole World View of Jamaican Colonists,” 93-94.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>210</sup> Chief Magistrates were called custodes. Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 2.

in the moral improvement of the slave population, in contrast to 5 or 6 years prior “at which period their conduct and behaviour was notorious through the parish in many instances subversive of all order and regularity and at times bordering on open violence.”<sup>211</sup> This sentiment was previously made by Bayley in his letter of September to Goulburn.<sup>212</sup> One letter referenced a “lost character” now returning to the slaves.<sup>213</sup> Another echoed that Amity Hall’s slaves were infamous in the parish: “I am convinced that no Negroes are more comfortably situated in this Parish or any other, for instead of being once a part to the community, it is well known that their habits are now generally more discreet and orderly.”<sup>214</sup>

A few letters most significantly addressed the repercussions waiting for managers who abused their authority. They insinuate that a climate of archaic brutality was no longer accepted by whites nor slaves themselves. The ninth letter in the dossier noted that “if there was any impropriety in the management of the estate and labouring class therein it preceded the period of yours- and should there be any harshness or ill treatment it could not be concealed surrounded as yours with protectors of slaves- and the consequence would be, that an occurrence of that sort you could not avoid being dealt with *according to law*.”<sup>215</sup> This statement implies the increasingly litigious nature of other West Indian managers. Another testimony asserted that “every unprejudiced person that has the least knowledge of the existing system of management well knows that such conduct would not for a moment be tolerated it is too ridiculous and absurd to require any comment, I can only say that if you were so disposed to act, you are well aware of the consequence and *you dare not at your peril* make a bad use of your authority with

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<sup>211</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 October 1830, attached letter number 6, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>212</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 11 September 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>213</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 October 1830, attached letter number 8, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>214</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 October 1830, attached letter number 7, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>215</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 October 1830, attached letter number 9, Goulburn Papers [emphasis added].

impunity.”<sup>216</sup> This comment suggests that managers believed they would also ultimately reap consequences from slaves themselves if they subjected them to undue severities. One letter noted that if the slaves had been treated harshly, most everyone would know due to “Negroes being with the habit of always complaining when they have been punished.”<sup>217</sup> The Rector added: “I know of no instance, nor have I heard of any. If there were any instances, indeed I think I should have heard of them, as our residences are so close to each other and so surrounded by several estates.”<sup>218</sup> It seems that most whites on the island were also well aware that transgressions were inevitably made public by the geographic proximity of estates, and the spread of information between whites and between slaves. *The Jamaica Planter’s Guide* notes about the amelioration laws enacted by the Jamaican Assembly that “under heavy penalties of fine and imprisonment, the violation of them cannot escape a numerous magistracy, or watchful community.”<sup>219</sup> Therefore, even if a manager intended to misuse his authority, he could not avoid being found out and consequently would see some form of ramification- either from other whites or through slave protests. This reveals that the authors of the testimonies almost found it ludicrous that one would try to treat their slaves severely, signifying a marked difference in how plantation management had evolved since the open and gratuitous violence of the eighteenth century. Dierksheide notes that popular revulsion of West Indian slavery deepened significantly in the 1820s.<sup>220</sup> These men, faced with the opposition of abolitionism and its propaganda, were determined to preserve the social order organized around slavery on which their wealth and

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<sup>216</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 October 1830, attached letter number 6, Goulburn Papers [emphasis added].

<sup>217</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 October 1830, attached letter number 4, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>218</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 October 1830, attached letter number 3, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>219</sup> Despite such laws, many offending whites escaped ramifications or indictment, protected by the colonial body. Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter’s Guide*, 75-76.

<sup>220</sup> Christa Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire: Progress and Slavery in the Plantation Americas* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 182.

prestige were based.<sup>221</sup> They were wary of being painted as cruel and morally regressed colonists.<sup>222</sup> Petley observes that the planter class in Jamaica fostered solidarity among whites as a means of protecting itself against challenges from below.<sup>223</sup> It is notable that their solidarity in this instance was to protect against attacks from above: challenges to their position in society were originating from the metropole itself. In a society designed to prioritize elite whites, abolitionism saw white settlers in the colonies challenged from all directions. Wood's predicament offered them opportunity to come to the defence of their system, and it was in their best interest to downplay the violent subjugation slaves underwent, as well as protect fellow members of their colonial faction.

Resident whites could also be liable to pay in more ways than one for their transgressions. Aside from the cost of damaging one's reputation and jeopardizing subsequent opportunities for work, misconducts could warrant charges of a monetary nature. Apart from fines, large bills could be accumulated just by mediating accusations between parties in court. After Richards instituted charges against Wood, Amity Hall's accounts for 1828 show a charge of £64 paid to Counsellor Butly for his professional attendance in Vere on January 16, 1827 (the date of Woods' trial) "in defence of the charges instituted against Mr. Wood, the overseer of Amity Hall, for alleged conduct as highly improper towards a slave belonging to said Estate, named Salinda."<sup>224</sup> Bayley and Wood both contributed £16 each to paying this charge.<sup>225</sup> Their contribution reveals that they were in part responsible for incurring and paying off the charges, regardless of whether Richards' accusations were true or not. They were managers at Amity

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<sup>221</sup> Petley, "Slavery, Emancipation and the Creole World View of Jamaican Colonists," 100.

<sup>222</sup> The image of West Indian planters declined rapidly in the 1780s, coinciding with a changing vision for the future of the British empire: one without slavery. Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*, 216.

<sup>223</sup> Petley, *White Fury*, 43.

<sup>224</sup> 4 August 1828, Statements of Account (1802-1833), Estate Accounts, 1802-1855, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>225</sup> 4 August 1828, Estate Accounts, 1802-1855, Goulburn Papers.



Hall, and thus responsible for making sure incidents of this sort did not occur. The whole incident cost Goulburn £32- capital he could have put towards, say, a catechist to instruct his slaves at £25 per year. The trial regarding Salinda, therefore, was a costly endeavour in many ways, and it was in Bayley's and other Jamaican managers' best interests to not only resolve conflicts between slaves or between whites out of court, but rather to avoid them altogether.

A common detail in every letter in defence of Bayley and Wood was the expression that whoever had spread such charges about Goulburn's management had malicious intentions. Whether this was true or not, Jamaican whites were influenced by Parliamentary ameliorative efforts in the British colonies as a group: they were increasingly more conscious of how slaves were treated, whether they were their personal property or not. West Indian planters were keen to show that the system of slavery did not impose undue severities on slaves, and that it could be sustained. There was a concentrated effort to ward off abolitionist and anti-slavery pressure, which necessitated solidarity amongst Jamaican whites. That they identified such rumours as an attack on them as a unit reveals the coordination of their responses, the climate that abolitionism and revolution had created in the colonies, as well as the disparity between the interests of metropole and colony.<sup>226</sup>

### **On the Brink of Scandal**

The past four years at Amity Hall had seen great improvements in various capacities, according to Goulburn's Jamaican managers. In 1829 Bayley wrote to Goulburn, "I was much

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<sup>226</sup> Petley notes that even before the American Revolution, "paternalistic anxieties about the abuse of non-British peoples within the wider empire had become more prominent in official rhetoric and public debate." Britons were forced to reflect on their identities and rethink the future of their transformed empire. Imperial administrators concerned with the obligations and opportunities of empire found common ground with the imperial paternalism of abolitionists. This posed a greater threat to the ideas of slaveholders and planters in the colonies. Petley, *White Fury*, 151-152.

pleased with the improved appearance of the negroes a few days ago when I saw them served with clothing, the contrast is very acceptable within the last year, but if made as three years ago it is most strong.”<sup>227</sup> Even the appearance of Amity Hall estate was reported to have improved. Wood noted in 1830 that all of the buildings on the estate had undergone repair since 1825.<sup>228</sup> The dwelling house was made comfortable, and the sugar works were capable of taking off a greater crop than the slave population could cultivate. The young people continued to receive moral and religious instruction from Reverend Smith, who would devote several hours during his visits for that purpose. As well, the church each Sunday was “crowded to excess and even a number of people out of doors.”<sup>229</sup> Bayley and Wood communicated to Goulburn that great improvements had been made.

The years 1827-1830 at Amity Hall were nothing less than eventful, featuring fires, disease, multiple court trials, and difficult seasons for sugar production. For the white management, there was a great deal of friction as they navigated how best to implement Goulburn’s regulations without conveying to the slave population that abolition was impending. Bayley navigated this while keeping the estate’s expenses as low as possible. The years were ones of trial and saw more communication between the white management than significant ameliorative policy implemented on the estate. As Bayley and Goulburn determined the “real interests” of Amity Hall- reform with profit- they faced challenges such as fluctuating sugar prices, slave discontent, and unideal weather. This resulted in financial loss, and less income to

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<sup>227</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 4 July 1829, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>228</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>229</sup> The church’s capacity was only 300 people in a parish of over 7,000 slaves as Reverend Smith pointed out, making full capacity less of an achievement than Bayley insinuated. This is an example of how agents would distort or misrepresent the truths of a situation to absentees. Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1830, Goulburn Papers.

apply to improving work conditions. Slave mortality, or their rate of depletion, was of rising concern to Goulburn, and he pressed Bayley to identify the reasons for falling birth rates and rising deaths. Amity Hall's goals mainly surrounded slave reproduction and keeping the estate's costs low. Turner's evaluation, "he expected that routine short-term production and profit could be pursued in tandem with the long-term intent to maximize reproduction" remains just.<sup>230</sup> Goulburn simply did not create conditions on his estate conducive to an increased birth rate, and most importantly, he did not intend to lose money doing so.<sup>231</sup>

Turner notes that Goulburn was, apparently, prepared to reverse traditional priorities and put reproduction before production.<sup>232</sup> I would remark that while Goulburn did prioritize reproduction in his own mind- doing so by allowing a reduction in the acreage of cultivation, requesting the observance of new regulations on his estate such as abolishing the flogging of women, and voicing his intentions for increased levels of reproduction to Bayley, he did little in the way of ensuring it was actually effected at Amity Hall. Bayley would not have followed such regulations without direct orders to do so. This is exhibited further in the next chapter. Goulburn asked Bayley to take every measure to ensure a higher birth rate but was reluctant to sacrifice more of his income than he had already, consequently limiting the measures Bayley was able to take. One notable difference, however, was as Turner identified, Goulburn's eventual departure from his comfortable reliance on Bayley's word.<sup>233</sup> His more extensive inquiry into the events surrounding the fire of 1830 demonstrated how serious his concern was over such charges of mistreatment. This inquiry was not extended into the implementation of new regulations Goulburn had sent in 1827 however, and many of the same practices continued at Amity Hall. If

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<sup>230</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 248.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

anything, this reveals that Goulburn was most concerned with political optics. As Turner has noted, Goulburn accepted assurances from Bayley and the testimonies he provided and made no further mention of sacrifices to content the slaves until 1831.<sup>234</sup> He showed greater attention and concern to his private estate only when challenged in the public sphere. His station in high office, and that of society, was put in jeopardy by the very source of livelihood which made that position possible.

Ultimately, these years saw more discussion than tangible reform introduced on Goulburn's estate. While this was mostly due to financial constraints on Goulburn's part, the lack of progress in reforming the conditions of his slaves was also a result of his management's lack of zeal. While Goulburn sent more regular and lengthier letters to his managers and was on paper more involved in his estate affairs, his small efforts were again undercut by people on the ground. The regulations Goulburn requested be implemented on his estate were met with the bare minimum of managerial consent and initiative. However, as Dierksheide has suggested, focusing only on plantation management linked to West Indian colonial policy in order to determine whether amelioration improved or worsened slaves' conditions reduces amelioration's broader purpose: colonization and the expansion of plantation society.<sup>235</sup> "In reality," she argues, "violence and the treatment of slaves simply provided the departure point for amelioration-mitigating violence and improving material conditions was a primary way to refashion slavery as a progressive tool that would ensure broader social development for entire 'peoples.'"<sup>236</sup> In this way, Dierksheide explains that the "real" goal of amelioration was not the improvement of race relations, but rather "the expansion of plantation empires- the accumulation of property,

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>235</sup> Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 17.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

connection to markets, exploitation of the land, democratization of slave holding, and the civilization of society.”<sup>237</sup> Therefore, Goulburn had not only failed at improving the living and working conditions of his slaves to meet his interest as a planter, but also at advancing Britain’s imperial agenda as a conservative Parliamentarian. Goulburn’s failure, exposed and critiqued from within the House of Commons, reveals that he was falling short of metropolitan expectations as well as those of abolitionists; the optics of his situation did not bode well for pro-slavery arguments. In the same way, Bayley and other Jamaican whites were forced to defend their actions on-the-ground, demonstrating problems, inherent and incurable, in Jamaican slave society. Bayley’s failure to improve conditions on the estate and mitigate violence (unless pushed for by the slave population), did not aid in portraying slavery as more progressive or an area for social development. The foundation upon which Amity Hall would eventually enter into the apprenticeship period in 1834 was being reinforced during these years. Amity Hall’s slaves had pushed Bayley and lower management to sustain their reduced work routines through the hiring of jobbers, and they continued to make their discontent known. 1831-1833, the years leading up to emancipation, would bring heavier prices for Goulburn to pay for his inaction.

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 18.

## Chapter 4

### Effecting Improvement: 1831-1833

“Slavery is not merely an abuse to be mitigated, but an enormity to be suppressed; that it involves the exercise of severities on the part of the master, and the endurance of sufferings on the part of the Slave, which no laws can effectually prevent...”<sup>1</sup> Such read the fifth of seven resolutions unanimously adopted at a general meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society held in London in April of 1831. Only five days later, on April 28, they would circulate a broadsheet addressed “The attention of the members of the University of Cambridge, who are inclined to support Mr. Goulburn at the approaching election, is earnestly requested to the following communication which has been transmitted this day to one of their number, but which *materially concerns them all*.”<sup>2</sup> Only about a week prior, Bayley had written a letter to Goulburn noting amongst his usual account of the weather and state of the crops, “I have only to add that the Negroes are healthy, and the business of the estate going on quietly.”<sup>3</sup> Ironically, he was forced to add after that closing comment:

Since writing the above I have had a messenger from Vere, I regret to say that a trash house, with two heaps of trash near it, have been burned at Salt Savannah Estate, belonging to Mr. Wildman, and appearances give a suspicion of it being intentionally done- but I rejoice to say the neighbours soon effected a speedy suppression of the fire, as appears by a letter of thanks I have seen from Mr. Taylor the attorney to Mr. Wood of Amity Hall. The dreadful dry state of the parish creates on account of fires, the most distressing anxiety, even under the greatest precaution to prevent them, and dismissing all apprehensions of any evil design.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831-May 1832), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831-May 1832), Goulburn Papers [emphasis added].

<sup>3</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 April 1831, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

The fire disrupted the last moments of any relative peace Bayley would find at Amity Hall before his death the following year. Bayley would die on July 14, 1832 of a malignant fever.<sup>5</sup> Until that time, he would be tasked with bringing to trial a slave named Roger who committed repeated violent acts against other slaves. Also of concern to Bayley were falling sugar prices, feigned pregnancies, stolen cattle, a wave of smallpox, various fires, and the usual duties and responsibilities that accompanied the attorneyship of a sugar work. He would soon face concerns of a much greater nature, however. Goulburn would again come under political fire for failing to ameliorate conditions on his estate to the standards of the Anti-Slavery Society. The charges would prove ineffectual, as Goulburn was returned to head of the poll.<sup>6</sup> This prompted him to directly order Bayley to instate reforms influenced by James Wildman, a sugar proprietor with several Jamaican properties, one of them being Salt Savannah estate in Vere. Goulburn dedicated much of his time and epistolary efforts during 1831 to refuting charges laid against him- some 200 pages of letters of correspondence- prompting Bayley to do the same, and finally, set about effecting improvements on his estate. Soon after Goulburn required stricter adherence to his new reforms, a new Order in Council effected much of the same resolutions in the colonies.<sup>7</sup> This “evolution of amelioration” was not sufficient for abolitionists in Parliament, and their cause was provided with additional ammunition by the Jamaica Rebellion of 1831.<sup>8</sup> While Bayley and Goulburn navigated themselves out of the woods of scandal, various acts of resistance would erupt across the island, and finally, rebellion would ensue in Jamaica. This chapter exemplifies

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<sup>5</sup> William to Goulburn, 14 August 1832, Letter from Alexander M. William, Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Turner, “Planter Profits and Slave Rewards: Amelioration Reconsidered.” In *West Indies Accounts: Essays on the History of the British Caribbean and the Atlantic Economy in Honour of Richard Sheridan*, edited by Roderick A. McDonald (Kingston, Jamaica: Press, University of the West Indies, 1996), 243.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn, 1784-1856: A Political Biography*. DesLibris. Books Collection. (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 249.

<sup>8</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 249.

how freedom and slavery could “emerge and evolve in tandem” under what Dierksheide calls the “rubric of amelioration.”<sup>9</sup>

The Jamaica Slave Rebellion, also known as the Baptist War, or Christmas Rebellion, occurred on December 27, 1831.<sup>10</sup> A fire on Kensington Estate in St. James parish marked the outbreak of the rebellion, which swept across the western parishes.<sup>11</sup> Turner notes that political excitement agitated by rumours of emancipation, economic stress, revolutionary philosophy circulating amongst the slaves, and finally, the presence of groups of whites whom the slaves could identify as allies all contributed to the rebellion.<sup>12</sup> Vere parish remained relatively unaffected or involved in the insurrection. The rebellion took place in the western parishes where there were more missionaries and independent religious meetings.<sup>13</sup> Manchester parish, adjoining Vere, saw several estates in which the slaves refused to work.<sup>14</sup> Bayley observed the anxiety felt by whites as well as the suspension of business on the island and sugar making at Amity Hall, but remarked that Goulburn’s plantation was as good in a state as could be expected given the events.<sup>15</sup> Through the rebellion, Bayley and Goulburn communicated about the political charges and how to go about implementing further ameliorative regulations at Amity Hall.

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<sup>9</sup> Christa Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire: Progress and Slavery in the Plantation Americas* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Reckord, “The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831.” *Past & Present* 40, no. 1 (1968), 108; Contemporaries labelled the rebellion “the Baptist War”. This identified the Baptist missionaries as “agents provocateur,” reflecting the Baptist connections among rebel leaders and the rebel body. Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834*. Blacks in the New World. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 153.

<sup>11</sup> Reckord, “The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831,” 108; Turner notes that the Baptists were particularly popular among the slaves in St. James. Wesleyans and Presbyterians were well represented in the north, and the Moravians dominated Manchester, St. Elizabeth, and Westmoreland. Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 148.

<sup>12</sup> Reckord, “The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831,” 108.

<sup>13</sup> Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 148.

<sup>14</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 January 1832, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854.

<sup>15</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 January 1832, Goulburn Papers.



The rebellion took place, Turner explains, “in a society under both internal and external pressure.”<sup>16</sup> Jamaica suffered a six-month long drought in 1831, the worst since 1796.<sup>17</sup> Provision harvest was badly affected, and successive heavy rains were followed by the smallpox and dysentery epidemics.<sup>18</sup> By the 1830s, slave workers were in short supply to the point where in some cases it was impossible to carry out spring planting while taking off the sugar crop. Demographically, the rebellion area had about 92 men to every 100 women; the dwindling and increasingly female labour force required more creole slaves labour in the field, undermining their claim to privileges.<sup>19</sup> Hunger and drought amplified slave discontent with increased and harder work.<sup>20</sup> Severe protests from whites on the island in response to the threat of abolition compounded with the 1830 Jamaican Assembly decision to grant the demands of free coloured and blacks for equal rights with whites, as well as news of the emancipation campaign launched in 1831, all contributed to hope and excitement amongst the slaves.<sup>21</sup> The promise of freedom exacerbated political discontent expressed in the network of independent religious meetings which also took place in the mission churches.<sup>22</sup> Slaves believed that freedom had been granted already, but was being withheld by the whites, and Christianity became a “positive justification” for action.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 149.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>18</sup> Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 149; Amity Hall lost a child to dysentery in 1831. Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>19</sup> Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 149.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>22</sup> Sam Sharpe, a domestic slave “highly regarded by his owners,” emerged as a leader of the rebellion. Turner observes that the network of religious connections gave rebels contact with the headmen, drivers, and skilled workers on some of the largest estates in the affected parishes, namely St. James and Hanover. “The whites were chagrined to observe that ‘the head and confidential slaves, and consequently the most intelligent, have been the most active rebels.’” This parallels John Gale’s leadership role in the 1826 strike at Amity Hall. Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 151, 152.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

While preparations for the rebellion began in the autumn, conflict began at Salt Spring estate near Montego Bay a week before Christmas. On the road to the estate, its attorney accused a slave woman of stealing sugar cane and flogged her. When they reached Salt Spring, he ordered the driver to flog her once more, but the woman was the driver's wife and he refused. The second driver offered assistance and the whole body of slaves challenged the whites and removed their weapons.<sup>24</sup> Subsequently, Kensington estate was set afire on December 27, and slaves organized into companies, collected recruits in the country, destroyed property, blocked roads against the military, and utilized strike action to stop work.<sup>25</sup> Two main tactics were used: "armed resistance to the militia and military, and strike action against plantation management."<sup>26</sup> The rebellion was suppressed relatively quickly, and many slaves faced violent backlash from white militias and authorities; ringleaders and involved slaves were tried ruthlessly in court and executed.<sup>27</sup> After the rebellion of 1831, Baptist and Wesleyan missionaries were no longer allowed to continue their work in the slave system and became active abolitionists, while the Anti-Slavery Society abandoned its gradualist position on slavery and moved for immediate emancipation.<sup>28</sup> Although the rebellion was unsuccessful, Turner argues that it marked a significant stage in Jamaica's political development.<sup>29</sup> Slaves sought to redefine the authority of the planters and claim legal rights through organized resistance; "subject populations made the principles embodied in the ideology of their oppressors into a weapon to use against them."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 156- 157.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 160-161.

<sup>28</sup> Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 149; Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 86.

<sup>29</sup> Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 162.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 164.

This was the first step towards universal suffrage, pushing Jamaica into the “revolutionary mainstream of the time”: the struggle for individual liberty sanctioned by law.<sup>31</sup>

This chapter focuses largely on the ameliorative policies Goulburn finally set about implementing at Amity Hall during this period in time. The year 1831 provides an interesting juncture, at which Goulburn was faced with political scandal once more during a period when Jamaica saw the tensions manifested between slaves and planters over the past decade culminate in a general rebellion across the island-utilizing arson, armed resistance, and strike action to demand free status and wage work.<sup>32</sup> This finally provided the catalyst for Goulburn to set about producing tangible reform at Amity Hall. This chapter, aided by evidence of the past years, traces Goulburn’s proliferated attempts at amelioration. Jenkins, Goulburn’s political biographer, concedes that Goulburn’s motives for mitigating the evils of slavery at Amity Hall remain opaque.<sup>33</sup> His assessment, that Goulburn’s humanitarian concerns were at times no more influential than a desire to protect his public reputation and maintain his income remain appropriate.<sup>34</sup> Jenkins argues, as Bayley did, that reputation and morality eventually began to take precedence over income, indicated by Goulburn’s appointment of Richards as attorney at Amity Hall.<sup>35</sup> I argue that this change occurred much later than Jenkins posits. Goulburn was concerned over his reputation and the morality of slavery, but it would not be until 1831 until those things were concretely prioritized over income. Goulburn attended to amelioration mostly in theory prior to this: suggesting reform, tolerating losses in income, and vocalizing his desire

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Mary Turner, “Slave Workers, Subsistence and Labour Bargaining: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1805-1832” in Ira Berlin, and Philip D. Morgan, *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London, England; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 1991), 92.

<sup>33</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 128.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>35</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 128; Bayley to Goulburn, 6 May 1826, Goulburn Papers.

for improvements-but largely failing to be proactive or apply his pocketbook to ensure outcomes.<sup>36</sup> His appointment of Richards suggested his dedication to the amelioration of his slaves, but only in theory, as he did not adequately monitor or supervise Richards' efforts. This appointment conveniently served Goulburn's concerns about optics and his reputation. Goulburn claimed he dismissed Richards because his slave population had decreased under his management, but as Turner has pointed out, production had also declined, forcing Goulburn to intervene. In practice, it was Amity Hall's slaves who pressured management through collective actions to ensure their better treatment prior to Bayley's instatement and during his tenure as attorney.

This chapter explores the years 1831-1833 at Amity Hall and considers the charges laid against Goulburn, and his subsequent attempts to emulate James Wildman's reforms on his own estate as a result of the publicity. Goulburn's goals for his estate at this time finally transitioned to reform, though not fully. His finances remained top priority, influencing the extent to which he chose to enact reform at Amity Hall. John Ashley assumed Bayley's position as attorney at Amity Hall in 1832 and was replaced by Evan McPherson just a few months before provisional emancipation came into effect in August 1834. Ashley's correspondence with Goulburn illuminates even further the state of Amity Hall and its working conditions under Bayley. The events covered in this chapter were essentially the outcome of Goulburn's decisions regarding reform over the past decade. He was forced to confront his failings in these areas and subsequently navigated how to move forward as emancipation loomed. This chapter traces incidents occurring at Amity Hall in 1831, including the outbreak of smallpox, fire-fighting

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<sup>36</sup> This parallels the Jamaican Assembly's commitment to amelioration through the passing of laws recommended by Parliament but revising them in the interests of planters so that they were largely ineffectual and unenforced.

exercises, and a slave named Roger brought to trial. It then provides an overview of Amity Hall's situation in relation to the Jamaican Slave Rebellion of 1831, sometimes called the Baptist War or Christmas Rebellion, and moves to a comprehensive discussion of political charges brought against Goulburn, his response to them, and his subsequent attempts to ameliorate conditions and introduce reforms at Amity Hall. A brief overview of how Amity Hall transitioned into the apprenticeship period concludes the chapter.

### **More than Compensated**

Business went on as usual for Bayley and Amity Hall following the events of 1830. Feeling satisfactorily defended by fellow members of the community, and confident of the kind treatment of the slave workforce, Bayley continued his routine visits to Amity Hall, and carried out his usual responsibilities. The increase and decrease of slaves, for example, was still of high priority. He notified Goulburn in March that of the twelve pregnant women he had written to him about in July 1830, only three had had children in that year.<sup>37</sup> In 1831 another miscarried, and one lost her child to lockjaw.<sup>38</sup> He wrote to Goulburn that the rest of the women “will give no other account of themselves, than simply saying they are not pregnant, and have returned to their work of their own accord at different periods.”<sup>39</sup> The women feigned their pregnancies, in Bayley's understanding, to get out of work. This reveals the continual pressure applied by the slave workforce- in this instance, primarily from the women- to draw a hard line over levels of labour extraction.

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<sup>37</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 March 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>38</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 March 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>39</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 March 183, Goulburn Papers.

Alongside the birth rates of slaves and concerns over reproduction came a new threat to slave mortality: smallpox swept the island in 1831. Bayley noted in July that smallpox had appeared in Kingston and was making its way into the country:

Every precaution has been used in having the negroes vaccinated, but I fear implicit reliance cannot be placed on it, as the failures are frequent, and such subjects as have apparently taken the disease, the character of it, is not so strongly marked as to remove all doubt of its being the genuine cow pox. When the small pox appears on an estate, resort must be had to inoculation- the reluctance of having recourse to this unpleasant alternative, will be relieved from the circumstance of the small pox being observed to be very mild, in all cases, where there has been reason to suppose that the vaccination had been effectual. The mortality has been very considerable in Kingston and some loss of lives have taken place in Spanish Town.<sup>40</sup>

Smallpox was a huge concern to planters because it was a highly contagious disease that could devastate populations of both free and enslaved people, proving especially fatal to children.<sup>41</sup> Bayley was deeply worried about smallpox spreading, but noted that its progress was slow, giving them enough time to repeat vaccinations where there “have been doubts.”<sup>42</sup> Goulburn felt considerable alarm at the prevalence of smallpox in Jamaica after its near eradication by 1820 due to the Jamaican vaccination campaign, and his greatest concern was that the children on his estate were vaccinated.<sup>43</sup> After years of stressing to Bayley the necessity of encouraging higher birth rates, it was possible smallpox would wipe out their efforts (albeit minimal ones) to promote reproduction in one fell swoop. Planters prioritized inoculating children not just because of high mortality rates due to disease and material impoverishment, but also because they lost the labour of mothers if their children fell ill.<sup>44</sup> Some would leave work earlier than other labourers,

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<sup>40</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>41</sup> Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica*. Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 201.

<sup>42</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>43</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 30 August 1831, Goulburn Papers; Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 201.

<sup>44</sup> Turner notes that there is uncertainty surrounding infant mortality because planters had no legal obligation to report the cause of death in public records- even private inventories rarely listed causes of infant death. However,

or would remain home to care for their children.<sup>45</sup> Goulburn believed vaccination was a more effectual method of prevention against the disease than that which could be “naturally communicated.”<sup>46</sup> Vaccination was in Goulburn’s view, a protection of his personal property, and the abolition of the slave trade made it necessary to avoid any loss of life. It was also a safeguard against weakening the strength of the labour force, and thus productivity and profit, to absent mothers. By November, the disease had still not reached Vere, and Bayley communicated that it was leaving their part of the island.<sup>47</sup> Amity Hall fortunately avoided the threat of smallpox.

The discontent of estate slaves and the legalities surrounding insolent behaviour were problems of a more familiar nature to Bayley by this period in time. A slave belonging to Amity Hall named Roger was of great nuisance to him: “Ever since the estate has been under my care, his life has been a continued scene of some misdemeanor or the other.”<sup>48</sup> Apparently, Roger was also a nuisance to the other slaves, “breaking open their houses.”<sup>49</sup> In December 1830 Bayley had him brought before two magistrates for injuring two Amity Hall slaves who were tasked with securing him and bringing him home.<sup>50</sup> Roger was sentenced to six weeks in a workhouse instead of being put on trial. Bayley lamented to Goulburn:

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Turner observes that “Epidemic diseases indigenous to the West Indies and imported from Africa and Europe, ‘exposure to the elements, teeming insect life, poisonous flora and fauna, accidents, corporal punishment,’ poor nutrition, overwork, and ineffective health treatments combined to make the survival of adults, let alone infants, precarious.” Mortality rates were highest among children from birth to age four, but children aged five to fourteen also struggled to survive. Smallpox was one highly contagious disease that especially plagued children under age ten. Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 169, 200, 201. Turner identifies a mortality rate of 250 per 1,000 newborns in Jamaica from 1817-1832 in Higman’s *Slave Population*. Higman shows in age-specific mortality profiles that for children aged ten to fourteen, mortality was roughly 10 per 1,000. B. W. Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834* (Kingston, Jamaica: Press, University of the West Indies, 1995), 109.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>46</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 30 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>47</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>48</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 27 December 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>49</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 27 December 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>50</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 27 December 1830, Goulburn Papers.

I have done everything I can in vain, to reform him, he is a fine young negro and always appears very mild and persistent, but never keeps his promises of behaving better- he has a brother whose conduct was the same, but I am glad to say that he has for some time been doing very well. Should Roger continue in his bad practices, it will be necessary to dispose of him by bringing him to trial as an incorrigible runaway, if he should previously commit some other fault that will subject him to an equally heavy punishment in sentence...<sup>51</sup>

For two months after his release from the workhouse Roger behaved to Bayley's satisfaction.<sup>52</sup>

Wood noted in his account of the year 1831, however, that Roger "has been guilty of many felonious acts and will be indicted (when taken) for chopping a Negro belonging to Stretton Hall Estate with the intent to kill."<sup>53</sup> Bayley noted right before his death that Roger had escaped from jail, delaying the trial.<sup>54</sup> It would not be until Ashley took over Amity Hall's affairs that Roger would be tried in Vere and "sentenced to be transported for life."<sup>55</sup>

Roger's case is significant because it sheds light on the climate of the period leading up to emancipation in the British West Indian colonies. Historian John Savage explains that "demographic trends, economic uncertainty, legal reforms, the demands of freedmen and slave unrest all contributed to a context that fed planters' proclivity for anxiety and paranoia, and all pointed to the need for increased slave discipline."<sup>56</sup> Savage notes that faced with metropolitan demands to improve standards of legal procedures in the colonies, Colonial Councils turned to the use of forced emigration to punish slaves.<sup>57</sup> "Transportation to other parts of the Caribbean, North America and even Africa was used recurrently between the 1820s and the 1840s as a last

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<sup>51</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 27 December 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>52</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 10 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>53</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 6 July 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>55</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 8 September 1832, Letters from John Ashley (August 1832-May 1833), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>56</sup> John Savage, "Unwanted Slaves: The Punishment of Transportation and the Making of Legal Subjects in Early Nineteenth-Century Martinique." *Citizenship Studies* 10, no. 1 (2006), 37.

<sup>57</sup> Savage, "Unwanted Slaves," 37.



ditch form of punishment for unruly slaves.”<sup>58</sup> He notes that execution was viewed with ambivalence by slave owners who were concerned about the implications over their “most valued form of property,” but transportation “repeatedly proved to be the final recourse for disciplining dangerous, unwanted slaves when all else failed.”<sup>59</sup> What is notable about Roger’s case at Amity Hall, as well as other trials explored in this thesis, is how the court system was utilized. Ward notes that slave testimony became a great threat; customarily, attorneys might be willing to hear complaints from slaves under their management in order to limit ill-treatment from lower-level managers.<sup>60</sup> Absentee owners consulted by the government for its amelioration scheme did not object to formally recognizing the practice, but those in charge of day-to-day management on estates felt their authority was under challenge.<sup>61</sup> Savage explains that the colonial court system became a site of struggle between a centralizing empire and the demand for colonial autonomy during the 1820s.<sup>62</sup> He notes that slaves gained a key role in the changing dynamic of colonial relations: the appropriate legal regime for colonies came under question- the intent was to maximize slave discipline and allow for metropolitan oversight.<sup>63</sup>

Slave bargaining was also once again acknowledged by Bayley in 1831 as an essential part of slave labour extraction.<sup>64</sup> In March, Vere parish was alarmed with two fires. One of them did not result in much loss, destroying canefields that had already been cut belonging to other estates adjoining Amity Hall.<sup>65</sup> The other was more serious- it destroyed the stillhouse at Hillside

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<sup>58</sup> Savage, “Unwanted Slaves,” 37.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>60</sup> J. R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration* (Oxford [England]: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1988), 274.

<sup>61</sup> The bill was voted out by the island’s assembly in the mid 1820s. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834*, 274.

<sup>62</sup> Savage, “Unwanted Slaves,” 37.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>64</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 102.

<sup>65</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 13 March 1831, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

Estate. Bayley remarked that it was surprising that the estate had not been entirely burned, which he thought would have inevitably been the case “had it not been for, I may say the unparalleled exertions, of the negroes of the estate and the prompt assistance offered from the neighbouring properties.”<sup>66</sup> He regarded the loss of the building as “trifling” as it was an old structure and was intended to be taken down after the crop.<sup>67</sup> “Were the estate my own,” Bayley proclaimed, “I should feel more than compensated for it in the demonstration of a feeling and disposition displayed, and of which I cannot speak too highly, by the negroes in this occasion.”<sup>68</sup> However, he noted it would be unjust not to mention the aid afforded from other “classes of the community” that repaired the damages in less than a week, so much so that they could still process the rum crop.<sup>69</sup> Bayley offered praise for the slaves in their assistance with the fire, most likely as a pre-emptive measure to ensure that Goulburn would not be impressed with the idea that the fires were the result of slave unrest. The last fire that had occurred in the vicinity of their neighbourhood resulted in charges of mistreatment from Goulburn’s political peers in 1830.

Bayley noted upon sending Goulburn accounts of stock that several cows and calves had been lost after the fire: “I have little doubt but that they have been stolen, however I have thought it better to let them go as strayed, than to punish those that were keeping them, without positive proof of the theft, and which would not have restored the stock- they certainly were amenable for negligence in looking after the cattle.”<sup>70</sup> Slaves raised livestock in order to supplement the insufficient rations they were given alongside inconsistent planter-dispersed meat and fish.<sup>71</sup> The

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<sup>66</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 13 March 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>67</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 13 March 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>68</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 13 March 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>69</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 13 March 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>70</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 March 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>71</sup> Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 200.

strayed cattle would be valued highly by a chronically underfed slave worker.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, Ward asserts in his work that although theft continued to be seen as a slave characteristic, its share of punishable offences fell and it became less immediately associated with hunger.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, theft was an aspect of discipline where “planters clearly felt able to relax their vigilance.”<sup>74</sup> Bayley may have been unconcerned with such instances of theft, and the slaves may have used the cattle either for food or for trading at markets.<sup>75</sup> Turner asserts that Bayley’s decision signified his acknowledgement that bargaining was essential to slave labour extraction.<sup>76</sup> Bayley may have decided that because the slave workforce turned out so readily to help fight the fire, he would overlook the indiscretion of disappeared cattle, or even let them keep the cattle as a reward to encourage such behaviour. For Bayley, who had in such recent memory dealt with various fires he did not believe to be accidental, as well as other collective action from the slave population, the cattle were a small price to pay for the pacification of the slaves. Interestingly, Bayley offered such leniency at this particular period, but was unhappy when Wood offered the slaves an extra day after they assisted in putting out a fire at Amity Hall in 1828 (which Bayley believed to be the result of arson). Bayley may have been strict in maintaining a managerial hierarchy at Amity Hall in order to communicate to the slaves that his system would remain unchanging in power dynamics even as the British empire transitioned. However, he may have

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<sup>72</sup> Beckles notes that the appropriation of plantation stocks as a way to obtain items for Sunday markets were difficult to separate from scavenging by malnourished slaves looking to improve their diet. Hilary McD. Beckles, “An Economic Life of Their Own: Slaves as Commodity Producers and Distributors in Barbados.” In *The Slaves’ Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas*, edited by Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (London, England; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 1991), 36.

<sup>73</sup> Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834*, 199.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>75</sup> Beckles discusses a “moral economy” in which slaves asserted a legitimate right over a share over the produce of their labour. It is possible at Amity Hall the slaves felt it was their right to appropriate the cattle they cared for. Interestingly Beckles notes “The slaves’ perception of the planter as the guilty party may have fueled the highly organized system through which they sought redress by the clandestine redistribution of resources. The lavish over-consumption by the planter elite also enhanced the moral imperative implicit in the slaves’ responses.” Beckles, “An Economic Life of Their Own,” 36.

<sup>76</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 102.

realized after the slaves sat down in the field in 1827, and committed arson in 1828, that it was necessary to yield to their wishes in certain capacities in order to avoid larger collective protests. Bayley was also no doubt aware of the charged atmosphere of the island as slaves anticipated emancipation. As Savage noted the need for increased slave discipline in a changing political climate, Bayley walked a tightrope of maintaining order through discipline alongside granting indulgences in order to sustain labour levels.<sup>77</sup> The slaves' assistance in putting out the fires signalled to Bayley less reason to worry and increased compliance. In any case, Bayley's extensive praise regarding the slaves' assistance in putting out the Hillside Estate fire in his letter to Goulburn intended to show that the slaves were cheerful and content at Amity Hall.

Bayley noted that he would personally feel more than compensated for the loss of a building on his property for the improved disposition of the slave population. This was an echo of statements Goulburn himself had made in 1826 and 1829. Cane ground was converted to allotment grounds for the slave population under Richards' attorneyship. In response to a political attack in 1826, Goulburn noted that assurance of his slaves' happiness was ample compensation for the reduction in his income due to the low crop yield.<sup>78</sup> In 1829 when the cane fields were reduced from 280 acres to 260 acres, Goulburn concluded once more that the improved state of his slaves was compensation enough for a smaller yield.<sup>79</sup> With a changing political environment, Goulburn and Bayley recognized that material sacrifices were at times admissible, if even for only a more compliant, or less discontent workforce. Bayley was becoming more adept at identifying where a hard line should be drawn in negotiations with the

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<sup>77</sup> Savage, "Unwanted Slaves," 37.

<sup>78</sup> Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Copy letters re opposition to Henry Goulburn's parliamentary candidature (February-May 1826), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>79</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 22 April 1829, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

slave workforce, and where it was possible to let things go. While Goulburn was not, until this time, committed to substantial changes aimed at ameliorating the conditions of his slaves, his willingness to tolerate losses in income and lower crop yields may have worked to his advantage. The greatest compensation for lower levels of labour extraction and smaller crops would be the lack of involvement Amity Hall's slaves would have in the slave rebellion in 1831- possibly a direct result of Bayley and Goulburn's managerial approach. While Bayley and Goulburn did not substantially ameliorate conditions at Amity Hall, at the very least, their capacity for understanding that the system around them was changing allowed them to make some conciliations such as increased rations, less corporal punishment, and more time to work allotment grounds. Bayley also understood the slave workforce's ability to protest as a collective. If the slave population had remained under, for example, Samson's brutally violent and cruel management, they may well have joined the insurrection, and much more may have been lost for Amity Hall's managers than a few strayed cattle.

### **The Hopes of One Class and the Fears of the Other**

The largest slave rebellion in Jamaica's history, known as the Baptist War or the Christmas Rebellion, occurred on December 27, 1831.<sup>80</sup> On December 29, Bayley wrote to Goulburn noting of the state of the island only "I rejoice to say the holydays so far, have passed over quietly, but there is still some very unpleasant feelings in the mind of the public and you will observe the Lord Belmore (Governor of Jamaica) has deemed it prudent to issue a

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<sup>80</sup> Turner provides a comprehensive account of the Baptist War in her book *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834* and in her 1968 article "The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831" under the name Reckord. A more recent revisitation of the topic can be found in Richard Hart, *Blacks in Rebellion*. Hart, Richard, 1917- *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery* v. 2. (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002). A contemporary account of the rebellion by a white planter who owned Saltspring estate in St. Elizabeth parish can be found in Bernard Martin Senior, *Jamaica, as It Was, as It Is, and as It May Be: Comprising Interesting Topics for Absent Proprietors, Merchants, &c., and Valuable Hints to Persons Intending to Emigrate to the Island*. (London: T. Hurst; [etc., Etc.], 1835).

proclamation for the purpose of removing any idea among the slaves as to the time being arrived for their emancipation.”<sup>81</sup> Bayley’s next letter of January 16 noted that had he known the packet would be detained he would have more than alluded to “the unpleasant state of things here and I regret to say now that all the accounts you have heard by her, will be fully confirmed and a rightful addition of calamity and misfortune added to them since her departure.”<sup>82</sup> He informed Goulburn that he would find a faithful account of the entire event in the Jamaican newspapers, containing no exaggeration “of this sad state of things.”<sup>83</sup> Bayley wrote that the cause of the rebellion was generally attributed to the Sectarian preachers, with ample grounds, at least, for suspicion.<sup>84</sup> He was confident that shortly the truth would be revealed through “a fair and full investigation.”<sup>85</sup>

The opinions expressed, both in and out, of parliament in England have doubtless had an influence on the minds of the negroes, but I do not think they have acted alone on these- it yet remains to be explained, why so different a disposition as appears to be among them in different parts of the island should exist. The white people being all taken from the estates to attend to military duties it has been deemed prudent to delay the commencement of the crops on account of the great responsibility of putting the mills about without them in the event of any unpleasant results taking place, and which may arise from a variety of causes- however the risques must be incurred shortly, should it be unfortunately found necessary to keep out the whole of the militias. The negroes in the whole of the tranquil parishes are behaving very well and indeed all that is doing on the properties is performed under the inspection of the head people on them.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 December 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>82</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 January 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>83</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 January 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>84</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 January 1832, Goulburn Papers; Turner notes that formally, planters traditionally had respect for religion, although they suspected the “sectarians.” Missions gained foothold in Jamaica initially because outright opposition to them “would have been impolitic.” Planters could not support benevolence to the slaves and at the same time hound preachers out of the island. They correctly perceived that missionaries were connected to the attack on the slave trade, and suspected that missionaries were agents of the antislavery party. It did not help that Anglican clergy in Jamaica, largely engaged in slave management, did not regard the slaves as potential church-goers and largely ignored them as their English counterparts did. Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 10.

<sup>85</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 January 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>86</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 16 January 1832, Goulburn Papers.

By February, Bayley noted that the island was in a much better state than it was during the time of his last letter, but it was still perilous, and “much indeed remains to be done before the slightest confidence can be restored.”<sup>87</sup> This could be accomplished, Bayley believed, only through a change of measures and opinions in England. While they remained as they were, “the exertions of the inhabitants of the island will be made in vain, and a sacrifice of all classes of persons and of everything that is valuable in it....as to render the now contemplation of the destruction of this fine and beautiful country painful in the extreme and to produce feelings in its unfortunate inhabitants which I have not the power of expressing.”<sup>88</sup> He noted that at Amity Hall, nothing unpleasant had happened in any respect, “but from the state of confusion that has prevailed everywhere as regards the usual routine of business I cannot say much in this respect.”<sup>89</sup> Bayley thought the public prints recounting the insurrection were a bit exaggerated, and noted that although martial law still continued, more whites were being dismissed to attend to their estates.<sup>90</sup> In Vere parish, the guinea corn and cane were yielding well.<sup>91</sup> Bayley wrote that the crop promised to be good if taken off in time, “but a good deal of time is invariably lost already.”<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, he felt that they would do the best they could in their power and leave the rest to “those hands, in whom our reliance should always be.”<sup>93</sup> By the time Bayley finished writing his letter, he noted that martial law had been repealed.

Goulburn’s response of March 10 noted that if the necessary inquiries were conducted, they would result in a removal of “much of that prejudice which has latterly been so capricious

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<sup>87</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 February 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>88</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 February 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>89</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 February 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>90</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 February 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>91</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 February 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>92</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 February 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>93</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 February 1832, Goulburn Papers.

to colonial interest and colonial character.”<sup>94</sup> He concluded his letter bluntly, stating “I hope to receive from you by the next packet satisfactory accounts of the state of the island and of the commencement of the crop nor shall I permit myself to indulge those gloomy anticipations which recent events have impressed on the minds of many West Indian proprietors.”<sup>95</sup> By the end of March, Bayley reported that the rebellion had been suppressed and the whole of the island was tranquil.<sup>96</sup> However, he noted that the disposition shown by the slaves in the districts that had undergone disruption were “by no means favorable and there is little doubt but that a general feeling of disappointment at the results that have taken place prevails throughout the island.”<sup>97</sup> Additionally, public opinion as to the cause of the insurrection had not changed, and he was confident that the inquiry put forth by a committee of the House of Assembly, although not yet concluded, was more likely to confirm than alter it.<sup>98</sup>

Interestingly, Goulburn left an outline of a response to Bayley, his thoughts sketched out on the final page of Bayley’s letter of February 12. He drafted, “Thanks for communication. Satisfactory that nothing occurred on Amity Hall. A satisfactory evidence of the absence of any just cause of complaint on part of negroes and in so far a contradiction of the statements which have been made to the contrary. Anxiety as to his next letter.”<sup>99</sup> This glimpse into Goulburn’s private thoughts, rather than a formally written letter, reveal that though the rebellion and its effects throughout the whole of the British empire were of serious concern to Goulburn, his focus was altogether directed at something different, though not entirely apart: his own strife as a proprietor of slaves in the public sphere. Bayley’s reports of Amity Hall during the insurrection

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<sup>94</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 10 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>95</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 10 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>96</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>97</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>98</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>99</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 12 February 1832, Goulburn Papers.



were of direct consequence to Goulburn- the communications were both evidence and testimony against the charges that had been made. That Goulburn's slaves remained uninvolved in the insurrection meant to him that they were relatively well managed and content in their position in the status quo. The contradiction Goulburn was referring to was in response to revived charges from the Anti-Slavery Society that he had failed to ameliorate conditions on his estate since their last exposure in 1826 of his failure to do so. The absence of complaints from Amity Hall slaves reinforced Goulburn's belief that the claims were baseless and untrue- they contradicted what the Anti-Slavery Society had claimed. Those charges, however, and the threat of more to come, were what eventually forced Goulburn to act.<sup>100</sup>

### **Useless Correspondence and Bandyng Hard Words**

Goulburn was a Parliamentary candidate once more for the University of Cambridge in the election of 1831.<sup>101</sup> On April 28, 1831, an anonymously circulated broadsheet, signed only W. X. Y., began with recounting an address at an Anti-Slavery Meeting at Exeter Hall which expressed the unanimous opinion of the meeting: "That no Candidate should obtain their support, who professed, only on general terms, to disapprove of Slavery, but is not determined to assist in carrying measures through Parliament for its speedy annihilation."<sup>102</sup> The resolutions accompanying the address declared: "That the buying, or selling, or holding our fellow men as slaves, is contrary to the Christian religion, and to the principles of the British constitution."<sup>103</sup> Focusing on voters in favour of Goulburn, the anonymous author provided extracts from his replies to many correspondents, which he believed "will be found to apply with equal force to

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<sup>100</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 243.

<sup>101</sup> Goulburn won the seat for University of Cambridge. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 228.

<sup>102</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831- May 1832), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>103</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

1831, as to 1826.”<sup>104</sup> The broadsheet put forward many of the same claims that were made in 1826: that Amity Hall was destitute of religious instruction, that no marriages had taken place, that men and women toiled under the lash from morning to night and in crop time for half the night. “The women equally with the men, being subject to have their bodies shamelessly exposed and lacerated with the cart whip.”<sup>105</sup> The plough had still not been adopted, “though Mr. Goulburn’s estate is peculiarly adapted for the use of that instrument. And in consequence of these evils of the slave system, evils unredressed to this hour, the population of his estate had continued to decrease.”<sup>106</sup> Sasha Turner explains that abolitionists’ use of slave population growth “as an index of slavery reform” contributed to conflict with planters, largely because, as has been highlighted in previous chapters, slaveholders could not fully control women’s fertility.<sup>107</sup> “Diet, disease, place of birth, and women’s attitudes towards childbearing combined with hard work and punishment to determine demographic stability.”<sup>108</sup> This is evident in the charges laid against Goulburn. His slave population continually declined which meant to abolitionists that he had not adequately ameliorated conditions on his estate.

The author provided two pages of his own correspondence in order to convince others to withdraw their support from Goulburn. He noted “I have no doubt that Mr. Goulburn may have felt a humane desire to benefit his slaves, and to improve their condition; and I no more think him destitute of right feeling than I think every other West Indian so, who having entertained, and I believe sincerely, a similar desire, has allowed it to languish in inaction, and has chosen to be overcome by his difficulties rather than to labour to overcome them.”<sup>109</sup> Observing that

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<sup>104</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>105</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>106</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>107</sup> Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 73.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>109</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

Goulburn was dependant on West Indian information and agency, the author commented that the fate of Goulburn's plans was not likely to be different from what had been the actual result.<sup>110</sup> The slaves "may have had a little more or a little less work, or a little more or a little less food" but all the bad features of the system remaining unchanged.<sup>111</sup> The author, admitting that his last date of intelligence was January 1830, argued that Goulburn had produced no favourable change in the condition of his slaves and that their condition remained the same as it was in 1826.<sup>112</sup> He sized Goulburn's efforts up succinctly: he was less "determined in his purpose" as he was "sincere in his wishes."<sup>113</sup>

The claims were published publicly in April, but Goulburn spent two months corresponding with various political actors in order to ascertain more information. The Anti-Slavery Society's secretary, Mr. Pringle, directed Goulburn to communications with Zachary Macaulay, a founder of the society (alongside Wilberforce), which Goulburn later referred to as "useless correspondence."<sup>114</sup> Goulburn learned that Macaulay was behind April's anonymous letter, as well as the attack in 1826. Goulburn was upset that the charges had been circulated to many of his peers, under what he claimed was "an injunction of secrecy," but not to him personally.<sup>115</sup> He requested evidence of the claims put forward and asked for names of the correspondents providing information to Macaulay, so that he could be privy to more details and subsequently make necessary changes at Amity Hall. Goulburn was asked to make one preliminary pledge before the informants were revealed: that he would not reveal their names

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<sup>110</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>111</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>112</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>113</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>114</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 3 July 1831, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854.

<sup>115</sup> Goulburn to Pringle, 19 May 1831, Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831- May 1832), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

without their or Macaulay's consent, so that they "shall not be unnecessarily exposed to any vindication proceedings in their return to Jamaica by having their names divulged without their consent or mine."<sup>116</sup> Goulburn believed that the information circulated in the anonymous letter was offered without any reservation, and that under those circumstances, he had perfect right to request the names of the men without any pledge on his part.<sup>117</sup> He noted that he only wanted to establish the truth of the information given, and if "the party giving it had a good bona fide ground for believing it to be true" he would not reveal the name of the informant.<sup>118</sup> If the information was proved false or appeared to be maliciously invented, Goulburn wrote that he would be obliged to disclose his name and "punish him for his malymity in falsehood."<sup>119</sup> Goulburn's refusal to pledge to withhold the names was not well received by Macaulay who replied to Goulburn's letter that he "read it with no small surprise."<sup>120</sup> Macaulay wrote that he believed Goulburn's object "in calling for proof of the correctness of my statements, was to ascertain the real condition of your slaves, and whether your agents had faithfully executed or neglected your instruction respecting them, in that you might be better able to apply suitable remedies to the evil which might be found to exist among them."<sup>121</sup> He shrewdly called into question the distinct difference between intention and action, remarking of the reliability of agents again: "You must be aware of the wide difference which exists between the issue of an order by a West India proprietor in this country and the due execution of that order by his agent abroad."<sup>122</sup> Goulburn's refusal to adhere to Macaulay's terms however, implied to Macaulay that Goulburn's desire to use the information to the benefit of his slaves was not his true purpose.

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<sup>116</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 25 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>117</sup> Goulburn to Macaulay, 20 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>118</sup> Goulburn to Macaulay, 20 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>119</sup> Goulburn to Macaulay, 20 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>120</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 25 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>121</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 25 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>122</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 10 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

“Otherwise I think my proposal would hardly have been rejected. A person really desiring of knowing whether, in defiance of the order he may have given to his distant agents, his slaves continued to work during the night in crop time, and when without any effectual religious instruction or Christian education, would not be unwilling I should have supposed to listen to the testimony of gentleman professing themselves to be cognizant of the facts of the case...”<sup>123</sup>

Macaulay did not sympathize with Goulburn’s position:

I did not suppose, for one moment, that you could be so unacquainted with the state both of the cause and the practice of slavery in Jamaica, as to require proof to satisfy you that your slaves were coerced to their labour by the impulse or the dread of the driver’s lash; or that your overseer, whatever may be his character, was armed by law with an unlimited and indispensable power to inflict as his own discretion, on the naked limbs of every man and woman on your estate, thirty nine lacerations of the cart whip. These and other points which I could name are too notoriously the law and the practice of Jamaica to be questioned by one who has so long been an owner of slaves in that island, and who so long held a high station in the colonial department.<sup>124</sup>

Macaulay directed Goulburn to turn to the Anti-Slavery Reporter- a monthly publication founded by Macaulay- in order to find a “striking illustration” of the state of the law and its administration in Vere as recently as August 1830.<sup>125</sup> Macaulay identified volumes 69 and 71, which detailed a case at John Morant’s Bog Estate in Vere, of which Bayley was also the attorney. Macaulay commented that Morant and Goulburn would not have been cognizant of the occurrence, because their agent would be among the last to inform them of it.<sup>126</sup> The Reporter presented the case of George Ankle, a slave who was a carpenter at Bog Estate, described as “a very good working man, a moral man; never knew him to get into faults, or run away; always

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<sup>123</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 25 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>124</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 25 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>125</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 30 May 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>126</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 30 May 1831, Goulburn Papers.

pleased every one.”<sup>127</sup> Anacle was found guilty of preaching to his fellow slaves in defiance of the 51<sup>st</sup> clause of the island slave law and was tried and sentenced to six months hard labour in a Clarendon workhouse.<sup>128</sup> A woman of the name “Richards” (Of George Richards, the ex-attorney), was also confined- she a Methodist, Anacle a Baptist.<sup>129</sup> The report stated “The ‘Custos,’ after some conversation with your Attorney, Mr. Bayley, handed this woman her manumission paper, with a severe reprimand for her conduct, and discharged her.”<sup>130</sup> The case noted that there were reports that the late Richards left her free, and “If so, why has she been kept in bondage upwards of two years since his demise?”<sup>131</sup> The author argued that she should be compensated for her services on the property during that time. Of Anacle’s confinement the Reporter asked “And now, Sir, if death should be the consequence of his sufferings, I would humbly ask- Who is to answer for his life? The watchman who informed against him? The attorney and overseer who prosecuted him? The jury who gave their verdict against him? The judge who awarded the sentence? Or will his blood be upon his own head for daring to worship his God, and invoking others to follow his example?”<sup>132</sup> The author challenged Morant as unaware of the loss he sustained- the value of a good tradesman was high, “and if an overseer does not know how to appreciate their services, he is very unfit for his business.”<sup>133</sup> This case would have proven familiar to Bayley: he had John Gale, a long-time driver at Amity Hall,

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<sup>127</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III: Commencing June 1829, and ending December 1830*. London: Samuel Bagster, Printer, 1830. Printed for the London Society for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions, 439.

<sup>128</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 439.

<sup>129</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 489.

<sup>130</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 489.

<sup>131</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 489.

<sup>132</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 490.

<sup>133</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 490.

sentenced in 1826 to four months in a workhouse. In 1825, Wood noted that many of Amity Hall's people were congregating in the woods and were instructed by Sectarian preachers.<sup>134</sup>

The Reporter argued that although planters were not inimical to the religious instruction of their slaves, they objected to their instruction being given by Sectarians because they received money from slaves and deprived them of their little earnings, injured their health by nightly meetings, and afforded, "under pretence of religious worship, opportunities for communicating designs of a nature dangerous and destructive to the well-being of the island!"<sup>135</sup> The testimony given in Anacle's case refuted these objections, however. Anacle pleaded not guilty, while the head watchman of Bog Estate testified "The prisoner is a preacher; he has been in the habit of praying many years. Since old massa's time, myself and others go and hear him; they meet on Sunday afternoons, and Friday nights, at dark; can't say the time; the candles were lighted. We did not know it was any harm to go and hear of our duty to God."<sup>136</sup> However, "There was never any money collected; never saw or heard of the prisoner getting paid for his preaching, either by money, fowls, pigs, or any other thing else."<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, the Reporter alleged that planters only *pretended* they wanted their slaves to be instructed in religion, insinuating that because it seemingly had to be imparted on the master's terms, it was only another method aimed toward subjugation, and not religious advancement.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, the parish of Vere was quiet and did not take part in the slave rebellion. The summary of Morant's case paralleled Goulburn's situation closely:

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<sup>134</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 26 February 1825, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825-July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>135</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 490; Turner has shown that planters and resident whites were often suspicious of sectarian preachers because they believed they were subversive agents of the antislavery party. Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 10.

<sup>136</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 490.

<sup>137</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 439.

<sup>138</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 439.

Mr. Morant, no doubt, supposes that his negroes are happy and contented, and living in the enjoyment of liberty of conscience. The foregoing, however, but too clearly proves that he is mistaken! Benevolent and kind as he is, too kind to entertain for a moment the supposition that one of his negroes is doomed to six months' hard labour in a workhouse for endeavouring to make his fellow-slaves better men and better servants, and worshipping in company with them the Being that gave them existence... he perceives that the fancied happiness of his slaves was at best but a dream, and that whilst he has reposing on the *artful* representations of his underlings, the iron yoke of tyranny, and, worst of all, religious tyranny, is pressing hard upon those whose comfort and happiness he is bound, by every principle of justice, to attend to and ensure.<sup>139</sup>

The Anti-Slavery Reporter was correct in stating that Anglican religious instruction was used as another method of subjugation. Conservatives like Goulburn valued religion for teaching subordination, “providing another bulwark both of social control and of the existing social hierarchy.”<sup>140</sup> Turner explains that in contrast, preaching missionaries in Jamaica offered slaves a new world view in which men of all colour were “in the hands of a universally powerful god who called them, equally, to judgement.”<sup>141</sup> After the Haitian revolution of 1791, all preachers to the slaves and free blacks and coloured people were seen as a threat to Jamaica’s security.<sup>142</sup> In Kingston, the mission was strongly supported by free coloureds and blacks who formed almost half of the congregation in 1803.<sup>143</sup> Riots were held in Kingston by whites to prevent church services from being held after dark, and in 1791 an attempt was made to destroy the Wesleyan chapel.<sup>144</sup> In comparison, Anglican churches upheld social segregation where blacks and free coloured people could only sit in the back pews or in the organ loft with the slaves.<sup>145</sup> Mission churches and preachers helped to exacerbate the tension between the contradiction of plantation

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<sup>139</sup> *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter Volume III*, 491.

<sup>140</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 21.

<sup>141</sup> Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 39.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.



slavery: slaves as both estate chattel labourers and individual producers. Turner argues that they helped to develop the slaves' function as free peasants:

To their established right to leave the plantation and trade at the Sunday market was added the opportunity to attend the mission churches; to their ability to earn money and buy goods was added the opportunity to contribute to their church and achieve status within it. The missionaries, moreover, addressed themselves to the slaves as people with souls to be saved, capable of intellectual and moral judgments, and the activities they encouraged were presented in a philosophical framework that posited the spiritual equality of all men.<sup>146</sup>

In this way, slaves' rights as producers and traders encouraged them to develop their rights as labourers on estates.<sup>147</sup> Mission work was an innovation with disruptive potential and could never become an adjunct of the planter class as the Anglican clergy was; they taught slaves that "no man could serve two masters," a slogan adopted among the slaves.<sup>148</sup> When the Baptist War broke out on December 27, 1831, the missions proved what slave owners had long suspected: they were "subversive of the slave system."<sup>149</sup>

After his fruitless attempts to procure more information from Macaulay, and dissatisfaction with Bayley's testimonies, Goulburn sought veracity from other sources. He wrote to Mr. Smith, the Rector of Vere, in order to ascertain whether the claims that his slaves were without religious instruction were true. He asked for information regarding "the religious instruction which you as a Rector of the Parish have afforded to my negroes; if the people and which they appear to you have derived from it; of the time at which such instruction has been communicated and of the effects produced by such instruction as evidenced either by an

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 65, 66, 149, 155.

<sup>149</sup> Turner notes that slaves used Christianity as their revolutionary ideology, and subsequently, identified the missionaries as their allies. None of the missionaries were aware that their teaching was inciting political action. Through their conflict with the planters, the missionaries emerged as men slaves believed were in contact with forces in England capable of granting them freedom. Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 148, 151.

increased attendance at the Church or by an improvement in their general morality or religious knowledge of the persons entrusted.”<sup>150</sup> The Rector replied giving as much information as he could,

I am in the habit of visiting your estate for one hour on the Tuesday or Saturday in each week, when, above 24 children from the age of 5 to 14 years attend me. I have been engaged in teaching them in Church catechisms, and impressing on their minds the religious and moral duties which it contains. The children are very regular in their attendance, and it affords me much pleasure to have an opportunity of informing you that the Bishop of Jamaica, on his last visit to this parish (in the months of March last) when he examined about 400 or 500 Negroe children collected for that purpose from different properties, was pleased to express himself particularly gratified with the progress of the Amity Hall children. The instruction given is entirely oral; at the same time I take particular pains to make them understand what they learn; they are not taught merely to repeat the words like a parrot: but are taught to give an explication of what they have learned or are learning. My instruction is so confined to the children only. As to the number of negroes from Amity Hall attending divine service in the Church it is impossible for me to state. I believe the number to be in the same proportion as from other properties. I am convinced that your slaves are now much better in their conduct, they bear a better character than they did about four years ago when I took charge of this parish; indeed I can state this from my own experience as they are very close neighbours of mine. There is however, yet a desperate character among them, a man named Roger. It would be a great public good if he was removed from our parish as he is a very bad example, being utterly irreclaimable.<sup>151</sup>

Goulburn also wrote to the Bishop of Jamaica in order to confirm Bayley’s assertion that Amity Hall’s slaves had made adequate advancement in their religious instruction.<sup>152</sup> The Bishop expressed satisfaction at the progress made by Goulburn’s slaves, but noted that Vere had been “particularly unhealthy and so fatal to the clergy that this is the 8<sup>th</sup> Rector since my appointment in 1824.”<sup>153</sup> The Bishop wrote that he had given very particular directions to Smith (the Rector) for the regular instruction of Goulburn’s slaves, and that he was “well aware” of Goulburn’s

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<sup>150</sup> Goulburn to Smith, 2 August 1831, Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831- May 1832), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>151</sup> Smith (Rector of Vere) to Goulburn, 9 February 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>152</sup> Goulburn to the Bishop of Jamaica, 13 January 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>153</sup> Bishop of Jamaica to Goulburn, 19 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

anxiety to promote it.<sup>154</sup> He also identified the insurrection as hindering such progress: “The parish of Vere has fortunately escaped the effects of the late insurrection- but I cannot conceal from you that the present state of fearful excitement and irritation in the colony and the violent manner in which this long agitated insurrection is discussed in England retarded those measures of improvement which can only be imparted to the slave through the medicine of his master.”<sup>155</sup> A month later, Goulburn received another letter from the Bishop noting that Smith had sent him a letter informing him “he has always met with every fertility and encouragement both from Mr. Bayley the attorney of Amity Hall and the overseer of the property in instructing the slaves.”<sup>156</sup> A regular catechist, Mr. Moodie, had also been appointed to aid Smith in instructing the children- 25 were regularly assembled twice each week for instruction- but the recent rebellion made it difficult for them to do their duties. The Bishop lamented that liberal and enlightened sugar proprietors were met with obstacles, and that “Violent discussions of the subject in England always produce bad effects here, and lead only to impede the progress of that civilization which to be sure, ought to be gradual, consistent with the safety and preservation of these islands.”<sup>157</sup> Goulburn’s response also lamented the state of society in the West Indies:

I sensibly feel how much its evils have been aggravated by the proceedings which have recently taken place in this country and I cannot but fear that the excitement which has thus been given to the hopes of one class and to the fears of the other may lead to a general divestation of property and to the destruction of all the hopes entertained by reasonable men of the improvement of the slave condition. But I also feel that it is not the less incumbent on West Indian proprietors to do all that they can safely do for ameliorating the situation of the negroes who have devolved in their case and I therefore assure you that so far as my means enable me I shall always be eager to meet your wishes and to forward your benevolent views.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Bishop of Jamaica to Goulburn, 19 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>155</sup> Bishop of Jamaica to Goulburn, 19 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>156</sup> Bishop of Jamaica to Goulburn, 7 April 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>157</sup> Bishop of Jamaica to Goulburn, 7 April 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>158</sup> Goulburn to the Bishop of Jamaica, 30 May 1832, Goulburn Papers.

Goulburn's relationship with his close friend John William Cunningham, an evangelical clergyman of the Church of England, was damaged by the attack of 1831. This demonstrates how the issue of abolitionism divided not just metropole and colony, but also those existing side by side in the metropole- similar in their dedication to Anglicanism, the British empire, and serving their government. Cunningham accused Sir Robert Peel, Goulburn's close peer as being "a man who does not fear God."<sup>159</sup> Goulburn retorted that the only grounds for such a sweeping condemnation was a difference of opinion, and that Peel was dealing with "the greatest moral and political difficulty which legislature was ever called upon to decide," and was more effective than the "wiseacres who now rule us."<sup>160</sup> Goulburn did not appreciate that Cunningham had been showing private statements Goulburn had sent him regarding his West Indian estate to Macaulay. Goulburn marked his letters to Cunningham as Private for emphasis and requested all copies of his statements be returned to him. Cunningham responded with a letter marked "Public- as the day of it will assist to shorten in a day the slavery of a simple African."<sup>161</sup> Goulburn subsequently concluded both their correspondence and friendship and wrote to Cunningham "If either of us rest on our own merits either as an abolitionist of slavery or as an owner of colonial estates we shall equally have little ground for hope."<sup>162</sup> This suggests Goulburn's self-awareness at his failings as a sugar proprietor- or at the very least, the limiting nature of distance on his effectiveness as an owner and ameliorator.

Ultimately, Goulburn evaded responsibility for the conditions at Amity Hall, although he paradoxically admitted to Cunningham, that "such a possession imposes great responsibility on

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<sup>159</sup> Goulburn to Cunningham, 1 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>160</sup> Goulburn to Cunningham, 1 June 1831, Goulburn Papers; Goulburn to Cunningham, 10 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>161</sup> Cunningham to Goulburn, 4 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>162</sup> Goulburn to Cunningham, 10 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

the possessor.”<sup>163</sup> With respect to his West Indian property Goulburn wrote that he kept his slaves in order to treat them better than he believed another proprietor would: “I can only say I sought not the possession of it. It was intrusted to me and if I have not long since divested myself of the possession it has only been because I preferred on what I thought a natural principle of humanity to reduce the produce and consequently the labour of the negroes below what I thought a purchaser from me might have been disposed to do.”<sup>164</sup> For that, he felt undeserving of being selected as the object of a “libellous and false attack.”<sup>165</sup> Indeed, Goulburn approved of smaller cane yields and subsequently lower labour levels- but this was done in part to appease the slave population and keep them working rather than directed towards solely humanitarian considerations. Goulburn untruthfully refuted the charges that conditions on his estate were the same as they were in 1826. Night work had not ceased, and Goulburn had not made adequate provisions for the religious instruction of his slaves. As Turner has put it, Goulburn’s letters to Macaulay and others were “shadow boxing.”<sup>166</sup> The broadsheet had illuminated to him the weakness of his positions as an absentee owner, reliant on information from his attorney and “the witnesses his employee recruited.”<sup>167</sup> Goulburn’s understanding of this vulnerability is what prompted him to seek information from various other sources: Christian authorities in Jamaica, and from Macaulay’s informants- though the latter attempt was unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, Goulburn’s correspondence with Macaulay was reaching a stalemate.

Goulburn eventually conceded that “I quite participate in the feeling which you express ‘that no useful end can be answered by our continuing to bandy hard words on the subject of our

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<sup>163</sup> Goulburn to Cunningham, 1 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>164</sup> Goulburn to Cunningham, 1 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>165</sup> Goulburn to Cunningham, 1 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>166</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 244.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

correspondence.”<sup>168</sup> The tenor of their letters evolved into civility, and Macaulay eventually gave Goulburn the name of a man who had the power to give him correct information on the subject, “having resided in the immediate vicinity of your estate.”<sup>169</sup> William Taylor had been employed as the attorney of James Wildman, a fellow Member of Parliament whose Jamaican estate was located close to Goulburn’s. “Mr. Taylor is well known to Mr. Wildman and Mr. Wildman I understand is well known to you; so that you can satisfy yourself of his respectability.”<sup>170</sup> Goulburn shortly got in touch with Wildman, who had just returned from four years in Jamaica reforming his three estates- Papine, Low Ground, and Salt Savannah. Salt Savannah was close in proximity to Amity Hall, also located in Vere parish. Wildman offered his personal insight into the state of Amity Hall, as well as guidance on how Goulburn could effectively ameliorate conditions on his estate, achieving in tandem both of Goulburn’s highest ambitions: reform and profit.<sup>171</sup>

### **The Wildman Reforms**

Goulburn’s correspondence with Wildman would yield a great deal of insight into groundwork processes of reform. Upon visiting his Jamaican estates for the first time, like Goulburn’s brother, Major Archibald Goulburn, Wildman was deeply shocked. Turner notes that while Major Goulburn perceived the day-to-day conduct of the estate as a management problem, Wildman described to Goulburn “a system of such oppression and licentiousness not only practiced but maintained on principle by the Attorney and every individual under him down to the very children of the Blacks.”<sup>172</sup> He decided to take up residence in Jamaica so that he could

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<sup>168</sup> Goulburn to Macaulay, 6 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>169</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 1 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>170</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 1 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>171</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 246, 248.

<sup>172</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 244; Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

“adopt an entire new course, better suited to the feelings of an Englishman and a Christian”- a sentiment which made an impression on Goulburn, who shared those values.<sup>173</sup> One of the first complaints Wildman dealt with was from an overseer regarding a woman he believed was pretending to be pregnant in order to escape work.<sup>174</sup> She reported that she had lost three children to the overseer’s treatment, and the overseer confirmed that she had lost them.<sup>175</sup> This led Wildman to abolish the flogging of women, and instead punish them only by confinement. Wildman commented that the woman who had complained had birthed three children by the time he returned to England.<sup>176</sup> The whip was also removed from the drivers and instead “is only used in bad cases of theft, neglect, and repeated crime by the order of the attorney,” and recorded when used.<sup>177</sup>

The abolition of night work was Wildman’s next area of focus. He wrote to Goulburn that night work was decidedly the greatest cause of injury to the health of the slaves- both morally and physically.<sup>178</sup> He noted that working in the heat of a tropical sun and then exposure to vapours produced in the mill by the dampness of the cool night air was affecting the slaves while they slept during their night shifts.<sup>179</sup> Simultaneously, while they huddled together before the stoke hole fires the “debauchery carried on at this time among all ages exceeds all belief” and Wildman considered this to be the reason for the decrease in their numbers.<sup>180</sup> The mill was stopped at 8 o’clock every night, and the boiling house soon after when the skips were taken, to

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<sup>173</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>174</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>175</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>176</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>177</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>178</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>179</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>180</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers; Turner explains that implicit in writings of slaveholders like Wildman was an ignorance of the sociocultural practices of enslaved people. Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 65.

resume with the next morning at 4 o'clock.<sup>181</sup> This gave the slaves eight hours rest, rather than "being obliged as is the case in very many parishes to work 35 hours out of 48."<sup>182</sup> It was only during crop time that the slaves would work the "long spell"- every day as well as every second night, or on large estates, third night.<sup>183</sup> This reform, Wildman declared to Goulburn, greatly improved the strength, morality, and increase of his slaves, while the diminution in sugar made in a week was trifling due to the mill breaking down less often- it now only stopped at night.<sup>184</sup>

Wildman's third reform concerned religious instruction, to which he was "very anxious."<sup>185</sup> He had the Church Missionary Society send a young man and his wife to reside on each of his estates to instruct the slaves. He insisted the slave population attended service at the chapel twice a day, ensured by calling attendance at each service, in return for half of each Saturday free. Wildman noted that this was found insufficient by his slaves and only worked when increased to a full Saturday.<sup>186</sup> Roll call was eventually discontinued when his slaves attended church of their own accord.<sup>187</sup> The chapel became a school during the week where the children attended classes and were taught to read. Marriages had greatly increased- which Wildman owed to the abolishment of the flogging of women and discouraging the licentiousness of white people. No white employee was allowed "on any account to live with the women of colour and if he persists in doing so after the first caution he is immediately discharged."<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers; In the West Indies sugar-making process, copper skippers were used to scoop up hot syrup in one swoop, which would be poured into coolers, usually wood or copper, through a valve. Each cooler held two or more skips, amounting to approximately one-half to one hogshead of sugar. Linda Gail France, "Sugar manufacturing in the West Indies: A Study of Innovation and Variation." Masters Thesis, The College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1984, 120.

<sup>182</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>183</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>184</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>185</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>186</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>187</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>188</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.



Indeed, the promiscuity which prejudiced whites alleged ran rampant among slaves mainly existed as the sexual exploitation of black women by white overseers and managers.<sup>189</sup> Wildman was convinced that “the abandoned character of the white people more hinders the improvement of the negroes than all the vicious habits they have themselves contracted.”<sup>190</sup> He noted that this also promoted an increase in births. At Papine Estate, Wildman noted that the increase for the three years previous to him going to Jamaica was three births each year. Three years subsequent to his reforms they increased to nine, to eleven, and then currently, to thirteen in a year.<sup>191</sup>

Significantly, Wildman believed that earning the goodwill of his slaves was a key component of the success of his amelioration scheme. He noted that the whip was altogether unknown to his people, where it “used to be in constant exercise.”<sup>192</sup> Wildman prioritized the healthcare of his slaves- care was taken that proper persons “are found to wash for them, attend them in sickness.”<sup>193</sup> The “good will of the people has been proved” Wildman noted, by his successful relocation of upwards of 100 of his slaves from Papine, just above Kingston with its plentiful and accessible markets, to Low Ground in the Clarendon Mountains, 14 or 15 miles from a market and about 45 miles from their houses “without the slightest difficulty.”<sup>194</sup> This was a task, Wildman stated, that could prior to his reforms, only have been “performed by force and extreme harshness” and at the risk of the lives of his slaves.<sup>195</sup> Finally, Wildman introduced

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<sup>189</sup> Kenneth Morgan, "Slave Women and Reproduction in Jamaica, C.1776–1834." *History* (London) 91, no. 2 (302) (2006), 242; Fuentes states that deflecting the responsibility for the conditions causing low birth rates and disavowing the dangers to enslaved women in refusing the sexual predation of white men render enslaved women deviant and deficient. Fuentes shows that this is how they remain in the archive. Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 134.

<sup>190</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>191</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>192</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>193</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>194</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>195</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

task work with success, endorsed by the government in 1823.<sup>196</sup> He advocated to Goulburn an incentive scheme in which slaves were paid in cash rather than the imported salt meat and fish from Britain that planters traditionally supplied their slaves with.<sup>197</sup> A “less sum paid for labour would be a most efficient stimulus” rather than “to send out £2000 worth of supplies mostly useless.”<sup>198</sup>

As Turner has noted in her work, Wildman’s success story made an impression on Goulburn because it achieved what he desired most: reform with profit.<sup>199</sup> However, it also lent weight to Macaulay’s charges against him.<sup>200</sup> In contrast to the state of Wildman’s properties, and opposite his own claims, Goulburn had dismally failed to produce reforms at Amity Hall prior to 1831, and particularly, to provide religious education for his slaves. Macaulay reminded Goulburn in their private correspondence of Goulburn’s Vice-Presidency of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the British West India Islands.<sup>201</sup> As a politician, Goulburn established a public profile as an advocate for slave religious instruction along with other Tories and absentees- he had helped to send men to work in six of Jamaica’s thirteen parishes to aid the Anglican church, but no curate was appointed to Vere or Amity Hall.<sup>202</sup> Macaulay noted that he had omitted such a fact from his public broadsheet- to Goulburn’s benefit- but recalled the Incorporated Society’s report of 1829.<sup>203</sup> Indeed, the Society’s 1829 report did not identify Bayley as having expressed his desire

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<sup>196</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 246.

<sup>197</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers; Turner, “Planter Profits,” 246.

<sup>198</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 31 June 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>199</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 246.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>201</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 1 November 1831, Goulburn Papers; Turner notes that this society was aided by funding from the West India Committee. Its goal was to “supplement the manpower of the Anglican church in the West Indies with auxiliary curates,” alongside the stipendiary curates the imperial government appointed in 1824. Turner, “Planter Profits,” 237.

<sup>202</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 237, 238.

<sup>203</sup> Macaulay to Goulburn, 1 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

for the instruction of Amity Hall's slaves. Its overview of Vere parish noted that congregation at the parish church on Sunday's was increasing: "There is no market, nor any place where persons assemble on that day for traffic or diversion. The children, and other slaves, who attend at the Sunday school, are taught to read, and average 35 persons. Marriage is becoming more frequent among this class; 14 having been solemnized within the last six months."<sup>204</sup> Another catechist had been licensed to attend estates in Vere, frequenting about 10 estates.<sup>205</sup> However, a catechist resided on Salt Savannah Estate- one of Wildman's properties- something Goulburn had failed to ensure at Amity Hall. The report lauded Wildman's efforts: "All the arrangements of the proprietor, Mr. Wildman, bear ample testimony to his earnest desire to promote religious knowledge among his slaves."<sup>206</sup> The report stated that all of the Salt Savannah people were assembled every Sunday for service, adults were prepared for baptism, children aged 4 to 6 were constantly under care, and children from 6 to 8 years old were taught for two hours every other day.<sup>207</sup> They were described as remarkable for their proficiency in reading and for their knowledge of the catechism.<sup>208</sup> The report identified two proprietors, Dr. Murchison of Milk Spring Estate and Mr. Ashley of Ashley Hall, as well as two attorneys: Mr. Ridley of Pusey Hall and Mr. Smith of Morelands as all having expressed their desire at having their slaves instructed.<sup>209</sup> Alexander Bayley of Amity Hall was not mentioned. The Clarendon report noted Wildman was forming a school at Low Ground Estate, a plan he had also adopted at Salt

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<sup>204</sup> *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the West India Islands, for the year MDCCCXXIX* (1829). London: Printed by William Clowes, Stamford-Street, 11-12.

<sup>205</sup> *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the West India Islands, for the year MDCCCXXIX*, 12.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

Savannah in Vere.<sup>210</sup> Additionally, the Incorporated Society's report of 1831 noted that in Vere, a catechist resided at Morant's Bog Estate and also attended Hillside, Braziletto, and Sutton's Pasture Estates.<sup>211</sup> These estates all surrounded Amity Hall, and yet, no catechist was employed by Goulburn for his slaves. Effectually, Goulburn's involvement in the Incorporated Society was a good political cover for his failure to act.<sup>212</sup>

While Wildman happily obliged Goulburn's request for information, Taylor was more difficult to convince. In November 1831, Wildman noted that he tried to get Taylor to write to or call upon Goulburn in England, but "was unable to persuade him to do so from the persuasion on his mind that any observations he might make would be reported in Jamaica and 'draw down upon the poor Negroes a greater degree of severity.'"<sup>213</sup> This Wildman lamented as "too frequently" the result of similar communications, which cost proprietors valuable information.<sup>214</sup> It seems Goulburn was not the only absentee owner who struggled to procure necessary information from his West Indian agents for fear of retribution from other white residents. The gap between the metropole and colony was exacerbated by tensions between whites with differing political agendas.

Goulburn's correspondence with Wildman also sheds light on the real day-to-day experiences at Amity Hall. Wildman's attorney in Jamaica, Matthew Farquharson, noted that he would "be rejoiced if Mr. Goulburn would send out instructions to his attorney to have his

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<sup>210</sup> *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the West India Islands, for the year MDCCCXXIX*, 12; Charles Ellis, an influential absentee owner who chaired the Special Committee of West India Planters and Merchants which advocated reforms incorporated in the 1823 government program, employed a curate on his St. James property. Turner, "Planter Profits," 236-38.

<sup>211</sup> *Report of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the West India Islands, for the year MDCCCXXXI* (1831). London: Printed by William Clowes, Stamford-Street, 12.

<sup>212</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 248.

<sup>213</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>214</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

Negroes instructed. I regret their being so near Salt Savannah they are I understand very bad disposed People the Salt Savannah Negroes have very little intercourse with them.”<sup>215</sup> Wildman directly challenged Goulburn to consider the reason: “Why is this?”<sup>216</sup> From his own inquiries, Wildman identified once cause he regretted to state, “though I am firmly convinced of its truth... the Negroes on your Estate have been under overseers of very dissipated habits, the estate has been conducted to the extent of the driving system and the People have been treated with extreme rigor and harshness such as you would not be induced to tolerate for an hour longer were it possible to present the facts to your own sight or within the hearing of your own ears.”<sup>217</sup> The driving system prioritized maximum immediate profit over the proprietor’s long term interests: the mortality rates of his slaves.<sup>218</sup> He still encouraged Goulburn that as he had experienced, with alterations a loss should be anticipated and felt, but “a different system can be presumed with profits.”<sup>219</sup> When Farquharson last visited Amity Hall, he was informed by an overseer that the slaves dug from 100 to 110 holes each a day “which is great work,” the overseer surmised, and done “most cheerfully.”<sup>220</sup> One hundred cane holes per day was estimated by planters as the average for a healthy slave, though it was the hardest work on the estate and contributed to murdering enslaved people.<sup>221</sup> Radburn and Roberts calculate that by

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<sup>215</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>216</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>217</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>218</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 247; Turner writes that the working out of colonial reform came second to planter interests who prioritized production: “Because concerns for day-to-day productivity and profitability of sugar estates dictated reproductive interventions, abolitionists moral ambitions were subordinated to the economic ambitions of plantation agents and owners.” Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 43.

<sup>219</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>220</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>221</sup> Studies of seasonal mortality and morbidity rates on British Caribbean sugar plantations reveal that both were highest from October through January, the end of the holing season and immediately thereafter. Slaves typically holed in the rainiest months of the year- May to November- because young cane required a great deal of water. Nicholas Radburn and Justin Roberts, “Gold versus Life: Jobbing Gangs and British Caribbean Slavery.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no.2 (2019), 230, 231.

such a measure, each slave shifted 182 cubic feet of soil- about seven tons of dirt- per day.<sup>222</sup>

Farquharson wrote to Wildman that “no more work than that can be extorted by any severity which my people give me of their own accord.”<sup>223</sup> Wildman encouraged Goulburn to make changes, writing that after giving his slaves Saturdays free until his estate was put in order again, they had since given them up of their own volition. He believed that the spirit with which they worked was good proof of their sincerity.<sup>224</sup> “Why should not your Negroes do the same? Were a similar course adopted no doubt they would...”<sup>225</sup> Wildman’s next letter to Goulburn reified the importance of the sacrifice of income as the first step in producing reform on any estate:

I can assure you that I do not make a loose assertion when I say that I should not be deterred from any real improvement by considerations of the loss of income likely to result from it; for I have long since and before the subject of West India affairs was brought as prominently forward either as a political inquirer or as a question of humanity and religion divested myself of a very large proportion of my income with a view to secure the comfort and improvement of the Negroes.<sup>226</sup>

Wildman’s sentiments were echoes of what Richards had told Major Archibald Goulburn back in 1818: adjustments in management practices could improve reproduction and maintain production.<sup>227</sup> With confirmation from Wildman that changes at Amity Hall were necessary, Goulburn finally set about implementing reforms at Amity Hall inspired by Wildman, though they would prove to be heavily modified. Turner points out that Wildman’s experience demonstrated the fragility of the balance between reform and profit, however.<sup>228</sup> Within months of Wildman’s return to England, “productivity on his estates fell catastrophically” reinforcing Macaulay’s 1826 assertion that “the vices of the system are not to be reformed by a mere change

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<sup>222</sup> Radburn and Roberts, “Gold versus Life,” 230.

<sup>223</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>224</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>225</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>226</sup> Wildman to Goulburn, 15 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>227</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 247.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 248

of agents, or by a few exhortations to moderate work, and adequate food.”<sup>229</sup> Indeed, the fire at Salt Savannah mentioned earlier in this chapter which Amity Hall’s slaves helped to extinguish occurred after Wildman’s departure from Jamaica, believed to be intentionally lit. It seems that Wildman’s slaves did not possess the goodwill towards him or other management that he believed.

### **Your Strictest Adherence**

By August, a few months after the Anti-Slavery Society circulated the broadsheet with a comprehensive summary of their claims against Goulburn, and now equipped with Wildman’s experience to emulate, Goulburn finally began to implement reforms at Amity Hall. Goulburn sent a letter to Bayley and requested that he join his efforts to come to both of their defenses. He called for evidence from Bayley to refute Macaulay’s charges and stated that he intended to make such information public “for the sake of both of us.”<sup>230</sup> He specifically drew Bayley’s attention to the state of (mis)management at Amity Hall, as well as to the religious instruction of his slaves. Goulburn noted of religious instruction that “this is of all points that upon which I have always felt the greatest anxiety.”<sup>231</sup> That the men and women toiled alike under the lash from morning to night and in crop time for half the night Goulburn wrote that he thought the practice had ceased since Samson had a steam engine installed, and he did not believe that night work had been re-established.<sup>232</sup> He requested Bayley send copies of the estate book which kept the hours of employment of each slave, thinking it would be the best means of disproving

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<sup>229</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 248; Image 5, Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831- May 1832), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>230</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 30 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>231</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 30 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>232</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 30 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

Macaulay's charges with hard fact.<sup>233</sup> Regarding the assertion that the plough had not been adopted at Amity Hall, Goulburn noted that Richards "in one of the few letters which I received from him" mentioned his wish to introduce the plough, and Goulburn approved it.<sup>234</sup> He could not find any further letters with information on the subject, and asked Bayley if the plough had been put into use.<sup>235</sup>

In Goulburn's urgency to refute all charges and discover the identity of his anonymous assailant, he had not responded to Bayley's letters of March, April, and May. Eventually, the only one he felt anxious to make any observations on was that from March, which included the annual accounts of the estate up to January 1831. Goulburn's main priority, his finances, are once more revealed and reinforced by this letter. He noted "In the present state of West India affairs the first point to which the attention of a proprietor is naturally directed is the possibility of reducing the expenses of the Estate. The price of produce is now so low and there is so little prospect of improvement that the time may soon come at which it will be a question whether it be worth while to carry on cultivation."<sup>236</sup> This echoed his worries over continuing to operate his sugar estate he had made to Bayley almost exactly a year prior.<sup>237</sup> A crossed out section of his letter, characteristic of Goulburn when the subject caused him stress, read "The Estate therefore has ceased to afford any adequate return for the capital invested."<sup>238</sup> Goulburn noted that 1829's sugar sales did not exceed £500, and it was therefore obvious with decreasing sugar prices that the present year would be no better." (Figures 4.1 and 4.2)<sup>239</sup> Goulburn left the task of reducing

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<sup>233</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 30 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>234</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 30 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>235</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 30 July 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>236</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

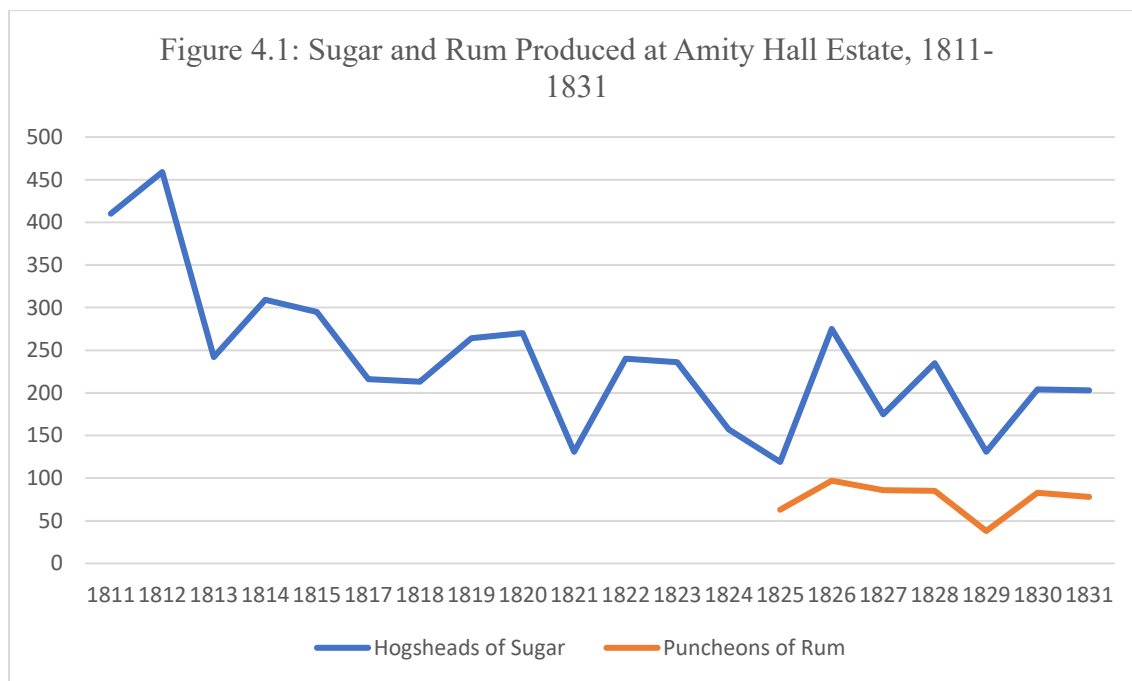
<sup>237</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 2 June 1830, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>238</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>239</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.



any expenditure possible up to Bayley, remarking that his distance inhibited him from observing any areas in which that might be feasible, although he did identify sums paid for cattle and for carpenters as charges that appeared, to him, too high.<sup>240</sup> Bayley answered: “I hope the crop of 1830 will be more productive to you than that of 1829 the former being 75 hogsheads and the present upwards of 80 more than the latter.”<sup>241</sup> He was not aware, however, of how he could make any reduction in contingencies consistent with the well being of the slaves and the “carrying on of the estate.”<sup>242</sup>

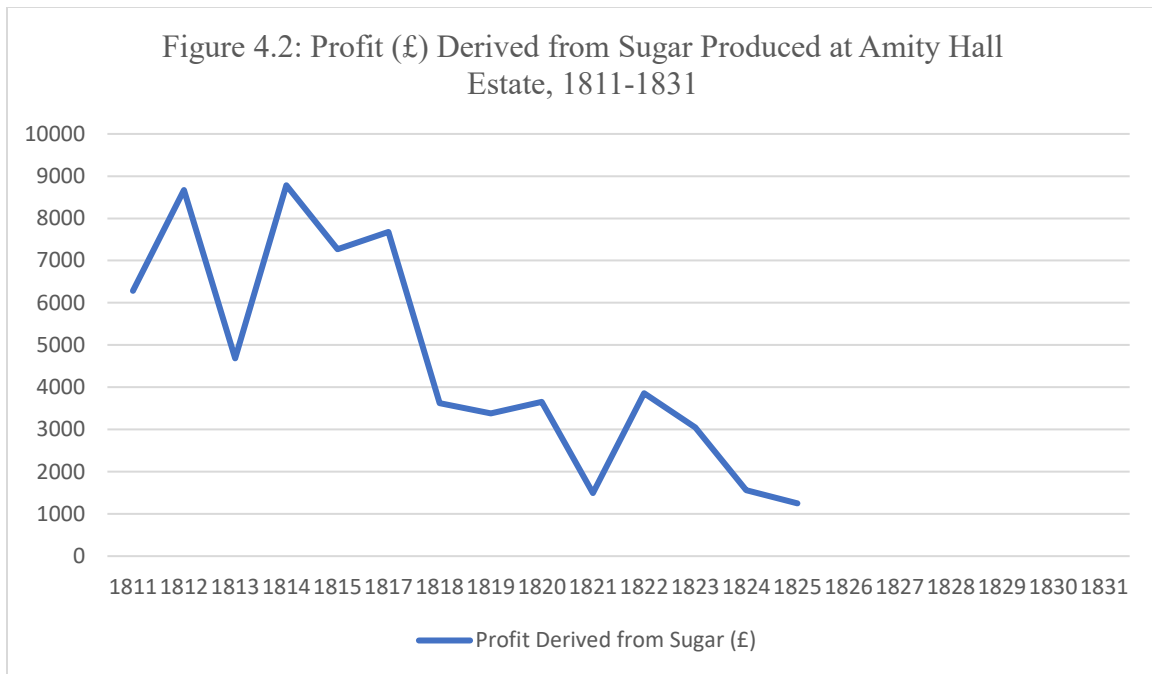


*Source:* 304/J/1/21/6, Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letters from Wood 1825-1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>240</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers; Bayley notified Goulburn that the carpenter had also acted in the capacity as bookkeeper for the estate, hence his higher salary. He also hoped that in future the cattle sold from the estate would pay for ones that were purchased. Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>241</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>242</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.



*Source:* 304/J/1/21/6, Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letters from Wood 1825-1831, Goulburn Papers.

Account lists note that the average annual crop between 1811-1818 was 370 hogsheads, averaging income over £6000 per year.<sup>243</sup> Turner identifies the average during Samson’s management under Henry Goulburn (1805-1818) as 336 hogsheads.<sup>244</sup> The average annual crop between 1819-1825 was 200 hogsheads, averaging about £2500 per year. Morgan found that between 1820-1833 the average was 200 hogsheads, with an average profit of £1,850.<sup>245</sup> It is apparent that since 1811, Amity Hall’s production was virtually cut in half, and barely profitable.

There is a noticeable spike in production in 1825 (Figure 4.1) when Bayley took over Amity Hall’s management and took a more active role in managing the estate than Richards had. This

<sup>243</sup> 304/J/1/21/6, Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letters from Wood 1825-1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>244</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 94.

<sup>245</sup> Kenneth Morgan, (2008) Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House: An introduction to the British Online Archives edition, <https://boa.microform.digital/collections/14/view>.

eventually tapers off over the course of Bayley's attorneyship as the slave workforce established limits to the levels of their labour. Subsequent spikes in production can also be attributed to the use of jobbing gangs, and lower production to poor weather conditions.

Apart from his finances, a point which Goulburn attached "paramount importance" to, was the excess of deaths above births "making a total decrease in the last 10 years of 24." (see Table 3.2)<sup>246</sup> He described such a decrease as "at variance with the laws of nature" and inquired with those who had personally attended to the management of his estates the probable cause of it.<sup>247</sup> The result of his inquiry, he wrote to Bayley, was that it arose from either excess of labour, the ill treatment or want of care of the women, or the profligate habits and relations of the sexes.<sup>248</sup> That there could be an excess of labour, Goulburn remarked that it appeared to him most improbable, as the extent of land to be cultivated had been much decreased and the produce had since diminished in a much greater proportion.<sup>249</sup> Therefore, he assigned the decrease either to the want of care of the women and the licentiousness of the slaves.<sup>250</sup> He did not believe that the care of the women had been ignored, as Bayley had "so often assured me that it is paid to them that I am compelled to assign the continued decrease of the Negroes to the last cause namely profligate habits and indiscriminate intercourse of the sexes."<sup>251</sup> Goulburn's assignment of the low birth rate on his estate to the sexual habits of his slaves was either consciously or unconsciously, a response to abolitionist pressures, alongside his personal prejudices. Sasha Turner observes that the emphasis on sexual habits shifted attention away from "strenuous labour

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<sup>246</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>247</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>248</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>249</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>250</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>251</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers; Fuentes writes that depictions of enslaved women (like those of Goulburn and Bayley) which blamed the decline of the slave population on their immorality deflect the violence of slavery onto them and enact a form of archival violence. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 137.

regimes, cruel punishments, and neglect of enslaved people's material needs" which abolitionists stressed as contributing factors to population decline.<sup>252</sup> Due to Goulburn's belief that his attorneys prioritized the care of slave women and were not overworking them, he believed that material conditions had been bettered enough to prove conducive to higher birthrates. The only reason that the population had not increased was in Goulburn's mind, the sexual habits of the slaves.

Without waiting for Bayley's reply to his first letter of July as he customarily did, Goulburn immediately sent a second letter with an attached set of rules of which he required, not requested, Bayley's "strictest adherence."<sup>253</sup> This was a departure from his proposals and suggestions for change he had sent Bayley in the past.<sup>254</sup> Goulburn's attached rules were influenced by the regulations that Wildman had implemented. He promised Bayley that they had for some years been in successful use on another Jamaican estate and cited Wildman's increase in slaves. Explaining each reform, Goulburn noted that it was hopeless to attempt a reformation of the slaves' habits unless a moral example was afforded by the whites on the estate. Goulburn wrote that any white person found to engage in relations with any women of colour was to be dismissed immediately. Additionally, no punishments were to be inflicted upon females, except confinement, when found necessary. If night work still prevailed on the estate, it would be immediately prohibited. This was done not to limit excessive levels of labour, but because of its moral corruption.<sup>255</sup> No more debauchery would be permitted by way of night work and the mill would be shut down by 8 o'clock at night and resumed the next morning. Furthermore, Goulburn

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<sup>252</sup> Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 64.

<sup>253</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>254</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 246; Goulburn's letter to Bayley of July 5 1827 suggested he remove women from field labour, to Bayley's consternation.

<sup>255</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 247.

desired that marriage and religious advancement should be promoted and incentivized by every “practicable indulgence” such as better clothing as a mark of favour, or increased time for “their own recreation and employment.”<sup>256</sup> These rules were only meant to supplement religious instruction; only “the truths of religion” could impose a permanent restraint on the disposition of the slaves, in Goulburn’s mind. Bayley was instructed to employ a catechist on the estate if the rector was unable to attend to it.<sup>257</sup> As Turner succinctly put it, “Thus Goulburn belatedly endorsed the fundamental tenet of the amelioration programme to promote reproduction.”<sup>258</sup> He had never before required that Bayley employ a catechist for his estate, as so many other planters had taken steps to do.

These regulations proved to still be modifications of the reforms suggested by Wildman. Goulburn’s attached copy of regulations influenced by Wildman totalled 6 in number. The first, was that women were not to be punished with the whip. The second, that night work was to be abolished. The third required slaves to attend chapel twice a day. The fourth stipulated that children were to attend school for instruction by the catechist for 2 hours each day. The fifth directed that no whites were to be with women of colour, and the sixth, that slaves were not allowed to work their grounds on Sundays and would have Saturdays instead.<sup>259</sup> Though a limit was imposed on the slaves’ working week during crop time, it was not extended to the whole

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<sup>256</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 246; Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers; It is important to note that “Enslavers were not interested in the welfare of enslaved people as an end in itself. Estate agents promoted slave couples to secure their own economic interests. Biological reproduction as a means of amelioration exploited enslaved women.” Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 67. Dierksheide notes that Christianity was viewed as the “ultimate ameliorator” in the British West Indies. “Christian principles, embraced by both masters and slaves, would help to assure the ‘gradual improvement of society’ in the West Indies,” ensuring the humane treatment of slaves. Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 5.

<sup>257</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 247.

<sup>258</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 247; Ward notes the declared objective of the government’s 1823 reforms was preparation for liberty. To be plausible at achieving this, any amelioration scheme needed to raise the slaves’ moral character, largely approached through Christian instruction. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834*, 273.

<sup>259</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 17 August 1831, Goulburn Papers.

year.<sup>260</sup> Goulburn's incentive scheme to promote marriages relied on material rewards rather than "the truths of religion."<sup>261</sup> Turner notes that Goulburn's rules were subsidiary to the object of moral improvement.<sup>262</sup> A resident missionary like those Wildman employed, would be more effective than a catechist, but Goulburn evidently wanted to avoid spending money on a resident missionary due to his financial strains.<sup>263</sup> Eventually, in December 1831, the Bishop licensed a catechist to instruct the slaves twice each week, for £25 per year.<sup>264</sup> Turner has already surmised that as a reformer, Goulburn was a minimalist- "he did not intend to lose money creating conditions conducive to an increased birth rate."<sup>265</sup> Goulburn's chosen reforms proved that Macaulay's charges were well informed- night work had continued and was now abolished, and he had made no provisions for the religious instruction of his slaves.<sup>266</sup>

### **On the Ground**

Upon receiving Goulburn's letter of July, Bayley set to work refuting the charges one by one, but also conveyed to Goulburn the limitations of several of his new reforms. In response to Goulburn's request for evidence, Bayley recalled the testimonies he had already provided to Goulburn in 1830 to refute charges from within the House of Commons that Amity Hall's slaves were mistreated.<sup>267</sup> He wrote, "I am quite satisfied that you cannot and do not give credit to what

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<sup>260</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 247.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 247; Goulburn told Godfrey in refuting the 1826 charges against him that he could not afford a £200 stipend for a resident missionary due to his reduced income. Goulburn to Godfrey, 15 May 1826, Copy letters re opposition to Henry Goulburn's parliamentary candidature (February-May 1826), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>264</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 December 1831, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>265</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 248.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>267</sup> Twelve testimonies were collected in support of Bayley and Woods' character and sent to Goulburn on 9 October 1830.

is stated in the letter by this writer after the various testimony you are in possession of.”<sup>268</sup>

Bayley’s refutation of all charges began, “First, that the slaves are destitute of religious instruction, to this charge you are already in possession of a letter from the Rector of Vere of no very distant date showing that they are under his instruction and I believe stating the nature of it and I trust you will receive from him further and more detailed proof of this- the Bishop of Jamaica can also give testimony of this fact.”<sup>269</sup> Second, “It is untrue that not a single marriage has taken place among the negroes.”<sup>270</sup> He conceded that while there certainly had not been very many (only four since Bayley took possession of Amity Hall), such an object could not be effected with coercion of any kind, and it was never discouraged and always met with approval.<sup>271</sup> Third, regarding the charge that men and women toiled under the lash from morning to night, Bayley insisted that the use of what was known in England as the “cart whip” was entirely abolished as an instrument of punishment.<sup>272</sup> The sexes still worked together, Bayley admitted, but the women performed no work that they were not competent enough to do, and no more work than they “can with the greatest ease do.”<sup>273</sup> Bayley also noted that they were no longer forced to work by the whip. As for night work, “the Negroes in crop time do attend to the manufacturing of sugar at night, this could be avoided if they were anxious to abolish it, and would exert themselves in the day, but this is not the case, and the enforcement of doing away with it, would be attended with much inconvenience from those causes.”<sup>274</sup> On some estates, Bayley noted, the crops could not be taken off in time to preserve them in the day, unless the

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<sup>268</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>269</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>270</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>271</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers; Bayley to Goulburn 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>272</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>273</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>274</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

establishment were to be greatly enlarged, the cost of which would be “excessively heavy.”<sup>275</sup> Fourth, that the plough had never been used, Bayley wrote that the plough was indeed used to break up the soil previous to the slaves farming the cane holes with the hoe, which relieved them of the most laborious part of the work. Additionally, guinea corn was planted in furrows made by the plough, when the state of the land admitted its use. However, Bayley noted that “canes may be planted after the operation of the plough with very little aid of the hoe, but in this case the product would be greatly lessened and the replanting must soon take place from this superficial manner of planting them.”<sup>276</sup> Finally, regarding the general charges of excessive labour, lack of morality, and “others relating to the management of the estate, which are artfully interspersed throughout the whole of this anonymous composition, I think I have in noticing the leading points of its charges sufficiently shown that they are also destitute of truth but I will state that the field labour does not occupy more than from nine to ten hours in the day.”<sup>277</sup> Bayley expressed surprise at the charge that Amity Hall’s slaves were not given Sundays, calling it the most nefarious accusation of all.<sup>278</sup> As for Goulburn’s request for evidence, Bayley, like Goulburn had done with Macaulay, placed responsibility for evidence on their adversaries, noting that everything he had written was fact and would be evident to anyone who would present

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<sup>275</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>276</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers; Ward provides a useful discussion on the use of the plough in the British Caribbean. He notes that some planters found them impractical due to geographical reasons like mountainous geography, or for example, “The failure of ploughing at Blue Mountain, Jamaica, was blamed on the need to maintain drainage trenches, obstruction from the cane trash which lay about the fields, and the over-exposure of the soil to the sun.” At times, however, no grounds at all were given for policies pursued on individual estates. Ward repeats, “it is unclear what choices were in fact made.” Bayley clearly states that he undertook the plough to relieve the workforce from holing but notes that manually holing with the hoe produced a better crop. Concerns over Amity Hall’s sugar quality were made in 1825, 1827 and 1828 suggesting that the plough could have been in use, producing a worse crop. It is also possible Bayley stopped the use of the plough or only used it for planting guinea corn. This idea is reinforced through Ashley eventually finding Amity Hall’s plough “quite useless.” J. R. Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: Technical Change and the Plough.” *New West Indian Guide* 63, no.1/2 (1989), 48.

<sup>277</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>278</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.



themselves at Amity Hall to ascertain the truth.<sup>279</sup> He did come to Goulburn's personal defence, writing "your correspondence with me has always expressed the strongest desire for the amelioration of the condition of your negroes, in all respects, and show the greatest anxiety to have it carried into effect, as far as it is practicable, and consistent with the well being of the Negroes themselves."<sup>280</sup>

Bayley attached statements made by Wood- a "crude production"- but something Bayley had asked him to provide upon informing him of the charges regarding Amity Hall's management.<sup>281</sup> Wood had resided on Amity Hall Estate since 1826, and previously lived in its vicinity. Wood included a summary of the events at Amity Hall for each year spanning 1825 to 1831, which have been referenced in previous chapters. He also listed the increase and decrease of the slave population, as well as the number of hogsheads of sugar and puncheons of rum produced in each year. His report for 1831 offered testimony against charges of overwork: "in order to ease the labour of the people no plants have been put in for this year in place of which the cane fields were regularly supplied where required."<sup>282</sup> Additionally, Wood reported that the Bishop of Jamaica had examined the children and "expressed his high approbation of the improvement made since last year and complimented the young people," which also verified Bayley's claims.<sup>283</sup> He wrote that the Rector attended to the religious instruction of the young people, and when examined by the Arch Deacon, they were found to have made suitable

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<sup>279</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>280</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>281</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>282</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>283</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1831, Goulburn Papers.

progress in their knowledge of the Christian religion.<sup>284</sup> Wood reported that since 1825 there had been one hundred and twenty eight baptisms at Amity Hall.<sup>285</sup>

Bayley concluded, “It does not appear to me that I can send you any documents more satisfactory than what I have done, I fear they will not answer the purpose, for which you require them- and indeed it will be almost impossible to send any that will satisfy persons predetermined to receive everything as true on the one side of the question and to view with suspicion and doubt all that can be said on the other.”<sup>286</sup> This disposition, Bayley thought, extended itself throughout the West Indies, not only among a particular class of people, but with the public in general.<sup>287</sup> Bayley believed the time would come in the not too distant future when public opinion would undergo a change, but he feared not until “results have taken place which must of necessity silence all reports, of the tendency of those of the present day, and display truths that are now treated with so much indifference, in a light too strong to be observed by any prejudices.”<sup>288</sup> Indeed, such a time would come sooner than Bayley expected. In only a few months, rebellion would break out across Jamaica, resulting in a re-evaluation of whether emancipation could be safely pursued. On December 29, 1831, two days after the rebellion began, Bayley wrote to Goulburn that there were “some very unpleasant feelings in the mind of the public” and that Lord Belmore, Governor of Jamaica, issued a proclamation in denial of the circulating rumour that the slaves would be free by Christmas time.<sup>289</sup> By May of 1832, the House of Commons made a commitment to produce an inquiry into the causes of the rebellion and report upon “the

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<sup>284</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>285</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, attached letter from Wood dated 1 January 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>286</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>287</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>288</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 5 October 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>289</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 December 1831, Goulburn Papers.

extinction of slavery.”<sup>290</sup> Goulburn felt that their inquiry was calculated to produce the “most fatal consequences” by “giving use to inordinate expectation on the part of those who are slaves and exciting great alarm among those who are the resident overseers of them.”<sup>291</sup> Therefore, Goulburn felt it became incumbent upon managers in the West Indies to “carefully watch what is going on and to endeavour to discover some mode of providency for the culture of our Estates though probably a more limited and less profitable culture by other means than slave labour.”<sup>292</sup> He asked Bayley “Have you ever turned your thought to the subject? If you have I should be happy to know whether you consider it within a limited period practicable to obtain such means or by what cause any preparation could be made for it. I have my own opinions on the subject but I prefer to hear your unbiased opinion.”<sup>293</sup> Goulburn would never hear Bayley’s thoughts on the matter; he would die of fever a few months later. The question he posed to Bayley was common discussion amongst planters in the British West Indies; they endeavoured to find a way to carry on the cultivation of their sugar estates, such as inexpensive paid labour from Asia.<sup>294</sup> Managers in Vere found it difficult to import slaves even from surrounding parishes because “‘mountain’ negroes ‘will not take to Guiney corn’” as one attorney from Amity Hall stated.<sup>295</sup> This was a judgement by the slaves on the ration-allotment system, and demonstrates their political distaste for a system that was not conducive to transforming their condition, and the difficulties planters faced in procuring labourers to work in a less than advantageous system.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 29 May 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>291</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 29 May 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>292</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 29 May 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>293</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 29 May 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>294</sup> The British government allowed planters to import indentured labourers from East Asia and India, known as “coolies.” Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 222.

<sup>295</sup> Turner, “Slave Workers,” 104.

<sup>296</sup> Slaves with provision grounds could become self-subsisting traders with influence on owners and management for demands regarding informal contract terms, task work, and cash and material rewards for work over and above established routines. Conversely, Turner notes that the ration-allotment system enhanced management’s control as they commanded the food supply. Turner, “Slave Workers,” 104.

Now that Goulburn's regulations were communicated, their instatement at Amity Hall was in the hands of his Jamaican managers. Bayley resigned himself to the reforms, assuring Goulburn that he would lose no time in informing him of a plan to instruct his slaves as soon as he conferred with Smith, the Rector. Bayley was still keen to avoid blame for any resulting consequences of the new reforms, just as he evaded accountability for Goulburn's 1827 regulations:

I must however hope that you will not hold me responsible for any defalcation in the crops that may arise from the change of system- nor impute my making this observation to a conviction that such a result will take place. It may, or it may not, but as some difficulties most probably will arise, I think it but fair when I promise seriously to adopt your instructions that I should in the same spirit of candour be exonerated from any blame for the consequences that may ensue from their adoption.<sup>297</sup>

Other managers were also disinclined to assume responsibility for such drastic reforms. Bayley communicated Goulburn's new regulations to Wood, the overseer, reinforcing that it was also his own "fixed determination" that they should be "rigidly and in reality observed."<sup>298</sup> Bayley's phrasing reinforces that prior to this period, Goulburn's suggested regulations such as those he sent Bayley in 1827, were only adhered to on a discretionary basis. Bayley warned Wood that if he could not or would not abide by them, he would be dismissed.<sup>299</sup> By the end of his letter to Goulburn, Bayley tacked on a note after his signature stating that he had just received Wood's resignation letter.<sup>300</sup> Wood left the estate in "very good condition and accounting satisfactorily for stock, stores and for all matters that had been entrusted to his care, and without any of those demonstrations of ill will and displeasure among the negroes, which they would not have failed

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<sup>297</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831 Goulburn Papers.

<sup>298</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>299</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>300</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

to show, had they really disliked him or had they rejoiced at his removal.”<sup>301</sup> He was replaced by Mr. Thomas Taylor, who lived as overseer at Wildman’s Salt Savannah Estate, and then at John Ashley’s Exeter Estate, both in Vere.<sup>302</sup> Wildman’s reason for dismissing Taylor was the “small quantity of sugar made in one week’s work, from which it was assumed that something was wrong.”<sup>303</sup> However, Bayley noted that “his having been accustomed to live on Mr. Wildman’s properties where similar regulations are carried on to those which you wish to be observed on yours renders him I think from experience a fit person to be placed on Amity Hall.”<sup>304</sup> Goulburn approved of the decision to hire Taylor, but instructed Bayley to observe him closely. He was concerned about the optics of a change of overseer so soon after public charges had been made about the mistreatment of his slaves. “Every change of overseer is more or less an evil and judgement is so essential to the proper management of the Negroes.”<sup>305</sup>

Goulburn had assured Bayley of the success of similar reforms on other Jamaican estates but did not give him the name of the properties. Forebodingly, Bayley wrote to Goulburn that he was not aware of similar regulations being enforced on any estate on the island, save that of “Mr. Wildman’s- one which, Salt Savannah is very near your own. I have heard that this estate has done very little since these regulations have been put into practice. I believe there are somewhere about 260 Negroes on it and I understand the last crop did not exceed 60 hogsheads and 20 puncheons.”<sup>306</sup> Bayley’s prediction of a small crop was realized- only 52 hogsheads by the time of his letter- though the crop did not commence until halfway through February of 1832.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 December 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>302</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 December 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>303</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 December 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>304</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 29 December 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>305</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 10 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>306</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 November 1831, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>307</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

Nevertheless, he obediently instated Goulburn's reforms: the making of sugar in the night was abolished and he dutifully reported back on his plan for religious instruction. "A catechist has been appointed, according to the plan I wrote to you of in January, and is instructing the Negroes at Amity Hall, this is independent of the instruction that Mr. Smith gives- the catechist attends twice in each week and I should hope the result would be much as might be expected, from means fully adequate to effect the purposes desired."<sup>308</sup> Goulburn was very pleased with Bayley's progress in reforming Amity Hall's conditions, but noted in one letter that it was "far from my object... to authorize any relaxation of necessary discipline...firmly and regularly but humanely enforced is as essential to the improvement of the moral character as instruction or example."<sup>309</sup>

Justin Roberts has asserted that with improvement came management schemes that were presented as benevolent and an increase in paternalistic rhetoric which advocated for restrictions on slaves' autonomy as way to develop civility and moral progress.<sup>310</sup> In this way, amelioration involved in some cases, greater restrictions on slaves' autonomy, with discipline and control at the heart of the moral improvement project.<sup>311</sup> "For most planters," Roberts argues, "the path to greater humanity and benevolence would be found through greater discipline and restrictions on the slaves' freedom and autonomy."<sup>312</sup> This was seen in the metropole as well: shifting ideologies regarding a transition from a moral to political economy took place against a backdrop of growing political divisions and changes accompanying a shift from an agrarian to increasingly

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<sup>308</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 19 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>309</sup> Goulburn to Bayley, 10 March 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>310</sup> Justin Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 279.

<sup>311</sup> Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment*, 48.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

commercial and industrialized economy.<sup>313</sup> Work, confinement, and discipline became central motifs that reflected harsher attitudes towards the poor; workhouses were lumped together with penitentiaries, poor houses, hospitals, and prisons to deter the poor from seeking relief and instead offered them “improvement” through discipline and work.<sup>314</sup> Goulburn’s change of system on his estate was an altogether more benevolent scheme than any Amity Hall had been under in the past, emphasizing the better treatment of his slaves. However, it was also more restrictive and dictated that his managers regulate slaves’ time and autonomy in a larger capacity in order to sustain production levels. Goulburn evidently did not intend to sacrifice the foundation of coercion slavery rested upon. Roberts notes that because amelioration was rooted in part in the agricultural movement, the planter-driven movement in Jamaica was rarely a critique of freedom, although it shared commonalities with abolitionism: humanitarian reform and similar cultural and intellectual origins.<sup>315</sup> Dierksheide notes that slaveowners were devoted to protecting their vision of a progressive society while at the same time preserving the subordination of their slaves.<sup>316</sup> This explains why it is at times difficult to distinguish Goulburn’s intentions. He shared common ground with abolitionists: moral progress and enlightened civilization, but ultimately, he pursued ameliorative reforms that were compatible with slavery.<sup>317</sup>

The intersection between Goulburn enacting reforms and his adamant refutations of the charges against him highlights the extent to which he had not improved conditions on his estate.

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<sup>313</sup> David R. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Farnham: Routledge, 2010): xiii, 5.

<sup>314</sup> See Green’s *Pauper Capital* for a comprehensive history and detailed study of the significant changes to poor laws in Great Britain. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 had far reaching impacts but structural inequalities that resulted in the Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867 which recognized collective metropolitan responsibility to provide relief to the poor and reformed the administrative machinery. Green, *Pauper Capital*, 6, 11, 23.

<sup>315</sup> Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment*, 48.

<sup>316</sup> Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 13.

<sup>317</sup> Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment*, 48.

While he cast off accusations that his slaves went without religious instruction, he pressed Bayley to employ a catechist. While he denied the charge that night work continued, he wrote to Bayley asking him whether it had been. While asserting that the plough had been put into use on his estate, Goulburn could not find any verification from Richards as to whether such a statement was true and once more had to inquire with Bayley. Macaulay's allegations underlined the areas Goulburn had neglected; if they were not, he would not have set right to work rectifying them. The extent of Goulburn's actions in enacting reform only emphasized the scope of his previous inaction.

### **A Sad State of Cultivation**

"I am glad to say that the island is tranquil and there is nothing amiss at Amity Hall," Bayley reported to Goulburn in April of 1832.<sup>318</sup> Bayley's letter of April would be one of his last: he would die on July 14 after contracting a malignant fever in Spanish Town. Over the course of the past two years Goulburn and Bayley had navigated political attacks, the issue of slave rebellion, and new reforms instated at Amity Hall. Over the past twelve years they had deliberated how best to ameliorate conditions for the slave population, but ultimately not very much had been done until the year before Bayley's death. Goulburn would receive a letter from Alexander M. William, who would inform him of "the melancholy death of my much-respected friend Mr. Bayley."<sup>319</sup> John Ashley, vested with dormant power of attorney at Amity Hall, immediately took over its charge. In settling Bayley's affairs, William also received Goulburn's letter inquiring into the possibility of cultivating sugar by means other than slave labour. He offered his views on the subject, noting that he would in answer state a simple fact: the island of

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<sup>318</sup> Bayley to Goulburn, 9 April 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>319</sup> William to Goulburn, 14 August 1832, Letter from Alexander M. William, Correspondence with agents and others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.



Grenada had for five years by that time offered at the rate of five shillings sterling per day to any number of free labourers to hole the land, weed the canes, and cut them.<sup>320</sup> He noted that “all the numerous rewards” were annually bestowed on slaves such as the best provision grounds or stock, but “not one free person has applied, or can be got to engage in the cultivation of the cane, even at such enormous wages, and I furnish it would be as difficult to get them to do so here.”<sup>321</sup> This was unsurprising; Morgan has observed that labourers were able to exercise a wider range of choices about their work and leisure preferences than had been possible under slavery.<sup>322</sup> They were able to participate more fully in the exchange economy and sought alternative ways of living off the land beyond plantations.<sup>323</sup> In the apprenticeship period, labourers wanted “freedom and access to land, control over their lives, and autonomy for their families and communities.”<sup>324</sup>

This would have come as an unpleasant observation to Goulburn, whose financial struggles from an increasingly less profitable estate, and pressures from abolitionists to improve working conditions left him with few options. Even more disappointment would come with Ashley’s first wave of correspondence. On August 18 he notified Goulburn “I scarcely know how to state to you the wretched state of cultivation in which I found Amity Hall- it is generally said every man finds fault with the management of his predecessor- but your cane pieces show this sad state of cultivation besides being overrun with grass and not a fence on this estate.”<sup>325</sup> He wrote, “Amity Hall has the finest lands in the parish and excepting Mr. Morant’s property the

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<sup>320</sup> William to Goulburn, 14 August 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>321</sup> William to Goulburn, 14 August 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>322</sup> Kenneth Morgan, "Labour Relations during and after Apprenticeship: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1834-1840." *Slavery & Abolition* 33, no. 3 (2012), 472.

<sup>323</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 472.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 459.

<sup>325</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 18 August 1832, Letters from John Ashley (August 1832-May 1833), Correspondence with agents and others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

Bog, capable of making the largest returns; and the last has been the finest season in the memory of anyone and in this parish we may not have such another for years to come- and yet Amity Hall will not make more than above 230 hogsheads sugar and not one third rum.”<sup>326</sup> Ashley stated that the present crop was injured which would prove ruinous to the next one, and that would also be the cause of losing the guinea corn.<sup>327</sup> The shaft of the breeze mill was carried away and was decayed, and compounded with all of that, Mr. Moodie, the new catechist, had died.<sup>328</sup>

Goulburn replied expressing his “extreme” disappointment in regards to the state of cultivation, but noted that he was led to believe by Bayley that the low amounts of sugar produced had arisen more from a consideration for the morals and comfort of his slaves.<sup>329</sup> Those were “the most essential points” Goulburn submitted to Bayley, but he confessed he never expected that the culture of the canes would be permitted to “fall off” or that “the whole interior economy as regarded cultivation would be so entirely neglected.”<sup>330</sup> He requested a fuller report, including new measures adopted by Ashley, to bring back the estate to a degree of cultivation which would ensure a fuller return than “it has heretofore made for the capital expended upon it,” as well as description of the physical and moral condition of his slaves.<sup>331</sup> To that, Ashley noted that it was not necessary that the crops should decline from “any kind consideration you might have towards your people” and noted that there was no peasantry in England “that do so little work that have so many comforts and generally so well treated as in this parish.”<sup>332</sup> He did

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<sup>326</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 18 August 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>327</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 18 August 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>328</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 18 August 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>329</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 13 October 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>330</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 13 October 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>331</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 13 October 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>332</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 15 December 1832, Goulburn Papers; Jenkins notes that in response to abolitionism, the Society of Planters and Merchants financed a counter-campaign of petition and public information that depicted slaves as enjoying a greater degree of domestic comfort well-calculated to excite envy and resentment among the British lower-classes. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 42.

not think there was an estate on the island where the people were treated with more kindness and consideration and whose every comfort had been attended to than Amity Hall.<sup>333</sup> This was a common sentiment expressed by attorneys to planters: the managers of Mesopotamia Estate in Westmoreland parish, one of the largest sugar plantations in the island, claimed the same thing, but chronically overworked their slaves and failed to achieve good reproductive rates.<sup>334</sup> Ashley, speaking from “sad experience” stated that the “falling off of our proprietors” was owed to the neglect of attorneys and the negligence of and misappropriation of the labour of the Estate.”<sup>335</sup> He noted that when an estate fell out of order it usually took years to bring it back, but Amity Hall would take less time because the soil was so good and so easily cultivated.<sup>336</sup> Ashley stated that the estates he had charge of generally increased both in population and crop yields- he had increased one estate’s crop from 75 hogsheads annually to 251 hogsheads in 1831 and 307 hogsheads in 1832.<sup>337</sup> Ashley reported that Amity Hall’s slaves were a fine group behaving well, but “have borne a bad character in the parish,” echoing several other reports from Jamaican agents regarding Amity Hall’s people.<sup>338</sup> In reality, Amity Hall’s slaves, increasingly creole, were expected by their white managers to become more tractable. However, evidence shows that they were a group determined to limit the levels of labour extracted from them, and they were not interested in making themselves easy to manage: most likely a result of Samson’s brutality

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<sup>333</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 15 December 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>334</sup> Morgan, “Slave Women and Reproduction,” 237-238.

<sup>335</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 15 December 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>336</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 15 December 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>337</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 15 December 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>338</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 15 December 1832, Goulburn Papers; Bayley informed Goulburn that it was generally thought that Amity Hall’s people were the most difficult slaves in the parish to manage. Bayley to Goulburn, 11 September 1830, Letters from Alexander Bayley (February 1825- July 1832), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers; One testimony attested that Amity Hall’s people were notorious in the parish for their bad behaviour. Bayley to Goulburn, 9 October 1830, attached letter number 6, Goulburn Papers; Wildman informed Goulburn that Salt Savannah’s people refused to associate with Amity Hall’s slaves, as they were “very bad disposed people.” Wildman to Goulburn, 7 November 1831, Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831- May 1832), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

and the higher levels of autonomy they experienced under Richards, as well as mistrust of whites during his management who consistently stole from them.

Ashley, like Bayley, found it difficult to procure a catechist. The rural dean had been for some time looking out for one for Amity Hall, but it was difficult to find an eligible person for the situation.<sup>339</sup> Eight couples had been married and were “living very respectably together,” and Ashley promised to continue to pay every attention to the moral and religious instruction of the slaves.<sup>340</sup> The plough Ashley found at Amity Hall was “quite useless” but he promised he would get one in order by the time the next cane piece would be ready for it, because he had used the plough with great success and “all your lands at Amity Hall can be opened with it.”<sup>341</sup> Goulburn was pleased with Ashley’s intention of using the plough, hoping it would lead to better cultivation by saving labour.<sup>342</sup> Soon after, upon hearing that his cattle were physically unfit to use the plough, Goulburn suggested purchasing new cattle would be preferable, rather than forgoing the plough’s advantages altogether- the alleviation of cane holing, the severest part of slave labour.<sup>343</sup> Goulburn was not willing to pay for a resident missionary to instruct his slaves in religion, but he was eager to provide funds for new cattle if it meant a larger crop and the preservation of his diminishing workforce from the most physically taxing labour. As Turner put it, Goulburn allowed himself to respond to the same lure- reform with profit.<sup>344</sup> He hoped Ashley could produce a larger profit as he promised, forgetting what Wildman had told him about sacrificing his income for the benefit of his slaves. Goulburn’s first priority was protecting his

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<sup>339</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 15 December 1832, Letters from John Ashley (August 1832-May 1833), Correspondence with Agents and Others, 1790-1854, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>340</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 15 December 1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>341</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 5 January 1833, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>342</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 6 March 1833, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>343</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 20 April 1833, Goulburn Papers; Ploughing made extra demands on livestock, which were difficult to maintain in the West Indian climate. Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834,” 46, 50.

<sup>344</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 248.

finances- amelioration came second. At the end of April, Ashley informed Goulburn he had at last found a proper catechist to instruct Amity Hall's slaves, and by May Amity Hall was attended to three times a week.<sup>345</sup> Ashley's approach to management would not be long-term, however. His intention since he took possession of Amity Hall was to return to England, and he made suitable arrangements for Evan McPherson to take charge as attorney upon his departure from Jamaica at the end of May 1833.

Goulburn's correspondence with Ashley ended with the peculiar incident of a freed slave named Francis Hutchins seemingly returning to Amity Hall. Goulburn noticed his name in the record books sent to him by Ashley, which caused him alarm. Goulburn recalled that in 1822 Hutchins had presented himself at Goulburn's home in London, but he was in the countryside at the time and all subsequent efforts he made to communicate with Hutchins were unsuccessful.<sup>346</sup> Goulburn noted that he was quite anxious to know how Hutchins had occupied himself and what reasons induced him "after an enjoyment of freedom for more than 10 years to place himself again in a state of slavery."<sup>347</sup> He also wanted to know "whether his trial of freedom has made him more or less reconciled to his original and present situation."<sup>348</sup> Goulburn thought that the details of a case such as Hutchins' would prove invaluable evidence as to the "real state of slavery on my estate at least if not generally in the island."<sup>349</sup> A crossed out portion of Goulburn's letter noted that Hutchins' circumstances would afford proof that he was not chargeable with cruelty as the Anti-Slavery Society has attested.<sup>350</sup> Ashley notified Goulburn that he was mistaken. Francis Hutchins did not return to Amity Hall. His name was left out of the record

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<sup>345</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 26 April 1833, Goulburn Papers; Ashley to Goulburn, 11 May 1833, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>346</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 6 March 1833, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>347</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 6 March 1833, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>348</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 6 March 1833, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>349</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 6 March 1833, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>350</sup> Goulburn to Ashley, 6 March 1833, Goulburn Papers.

books but Ashley had it replaced for the Triannual return, otherwise Hutchins could not be claimed as Goulburn's property if he ever did return to the island. Ashley assured Goulburn that there were however, "innumerable" instances of slaves going to England with their owners and requesting to be sent back "from that land of freedom to a state of slavery."<sup>351</sup> In fact, a woman from Vere named Ellen Mackenzie was brought to England by her attorney, and after four years she requested to be sent back and became a slave once more on Exeter Estate.<sup>352</sup> Ashley recounted that he happened to be on the property the evening of her arrival; "and I think the good people of England would not have been a little astonished to hear her having gone to the Negroes," and she compared "their lot with the poor people of England who had often times without shoe or stocking, begged of her for one halfpenny" and did more work in one day than any six of them.<sup>353</sup> What Hutchins' case shows is that Goulburn still very much prioritized optics- he had not enacted substantial reform on his estate until his failure to do so was made public.<sup>354</sup> He eagerly identified Hutchins' case as an opportunity to show his peers and members of the electorate that Amity Hall's slaves lived in preferable circumstances, and were treated well enough that a free man would willingly choose to place himself into slavery once more. Ashley was of the same mind: he believed that "innumerable" cases, or at least those he had heard, of freed slaves returning back to slavery meant that the institution was not so morally compromised as to be beyond salvation.<sup>355</sup> What Ashley could not see is that, if anything, Ellen Mackenzie's

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<sup>351</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 11 May 1833, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>352</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 11 May 1833, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>353</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 11 May 1833, Goulburn Papers; Petley observes that in Taylor's stated view, the enslaved in Jamaica "lived 'infinitely better than the lower class of white people at home', being better fed, better lodged, and cared for in sickness." Taylor suggested that critics of planters should "endeavour to regulate their own police, and shew humanity to their own poor." Christer Petley, *White Fury: A Jamaican Slaveholder and the Age of Revolution*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 156.

<sup>354</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 248.

<sup>355</sup> Ashley to Goulburn, 11 May 1833, Goulburn Papers.

case highlighted inequality and subjugation as the foundation of the British Empire- in both the metropole and colony.<sup>356</sup>

### **Transitioning into the Apprenticeship Period**

Amity Hall's labourers continued to exercise their skill at negotiating and collective action into the apprenticeship period. Evan McPherson took over as attorney and saw Amity Hall through the beginning of the apprenticeship period starting on August 1, 1834 and then into restricted freedom in 1838. Morgan has provided a detail overview of the apprenticeship period at Amity Hall in his article "Labour Relations during and after Apprenticeship: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1834-1840." He notes that different negotiations and outcomes occurred on plantations as a result of the transitions to new working conditions at the beginning and end of apprenticeship.<sup>357</sup> Labour relations lay at the heart of this system, as planters and workers had differing views about the operation of the apprenticeship system.<sup>358</sup> Planters focused on output and profits, requiring continual labour, while apprentices wanted freedom and access to land: in short, autonomy for themselves and their communities.<sup>359</sup> Morgan found that most of Amity Hall's workforce remained on the plantation during apprenticeship. Sugar output did not decline significantly, and it increased from 165 hogsheads in 1834 to 221 hogsheads in 1836 and

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<sup>356</sup> The 1772 legal case known as *Somerset vs. Steuart* saw Lord Mansfield judge that "Negroe slaves emigrating from our plantations in this kingdom are to be deemed free subjects of the realm..." Antislavery was aided by this ruling and the spread of free-soil principles, suggesting that Britain was a land without slavery or slaves. In asserting that inequality and subjugation characterized the British empire in the metropole as well as colony, I refer to whites suppressing lower class whites in British society, as well as people of colour, in order to capitalize off of their labour. Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650-1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 217.

<sup>357</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 458.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, 458, 459.

eventually to 291 hogsheads in 1838. It declined after 1838 to levels less than any year between 1834 and 1838.<sup>360</sup>

Amity Hall's apprentices brought into apprenticeship their skill at labour negotiations, and agreements were needed between the labourers and management in order for the estate to maintain output.<sup>361</sup> Morgan observed that the apprentices worked reluctantly in the first five months of apprenticeship and then displayed a capacity for bargaining over work arrangements—working for 9 hours per day, four days per week, from Monday to Thursday.<sup>362</sup> Apprenticeship afforded Amity Hall's workers more bargaining power, and the apprentices were clear about when they would work and when they would not.<sup>363</sup> Jenkins observed Amity Hall's labourers as “disconcertingly adept negotiators” who declined to discuss wages before the first day of freedom, then increased pressure on McPherson by taking the balance of the month as vacation.<sup>364</sup> They requested a full day's wage for as little as five hours of work, and when the Governor of Jamaica, Sir Lionel Smith, stayed with McPherson during a visit to Vere, he offered his assistance and advised the labourers to return to work.<sup>365</sup> After freedom came into effect, labourers would take two days to complete tasks that they had under apprenticeship completed in one.<sup>366</sup> They used strike action to raise wages, and refused to pay their rents.<sup>367</sup> As for Amity Hall's owner, during apprenticeship: “Goulburn advocated a cooperative approach between managers and workers over wages.”<sup>368</sup> Morgan suggests that “implementing the labour regimen for estate workers during apprenticeship involved walking a tightrope between restraint and

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<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, 460.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 461.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 462.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, 463.

<sup>364</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 277.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>368</sup> Morgan, “Labour Relations,” 462.



intervention by managers and overseers over work practices and allowances that had changed since the official end of slavery.”<sup>369</sup> In this respect, relations between Amity Hall’s workforce and its managers had not widely changed since Bayley’s attorneyship, though work practices did. Workers demonstrated their well-developed ability to advocate for wage compensation and negotiate the terms of their labour. When apprenticeship ended, Amity Hall’s labourers held out for higher wages than were first offered.<sup>370</sup> This period was marked by frequent negotiations, contested compensation, and various arrangements offered for housing, provision grounds, and medical attendance.<sup>371</sup>

Regarding Amity Hall’s slaves’ disposition as they transitioned into the apprenticeship period, Evan McPherson, Ashley’s successor, wrote to Goulburn that “On those estates where they were most kindly treated they have generally turned out the worst since they have become free.”<sup>372</sup> Morgan writes that this could suggest that the treatment of Amity Hall’s workers prior to apprenticeship was inversely related to their commitment to work, but that such a correlation is illogical and unverifiable.<sup>373</sup> I contend that while it is indeed unverifiable and agree McPherson’s comments are more reflective of his personal frustrations, Amity Hall’s people’s commitment to labouring during and after apprenticeship was most certainly influenced by their treatment in the years leading up to provisional emancipation in 1834. As Spence has argued, the ideas behind amelioration survived the abolition of slavery.<sup>374</sup> The reforms attempted by the government, and by Goulburn and his managers came to inform the regulation of labour

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid., 465.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid., 466.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., 467.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., 467-468.

<sup>374</sup> Caroline Quarrier Spence, “Ameliorating Empire: Slavery and Protection in the British Colonies, 1783-1865” (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2014), iii.

relationships in the wake of emancipation.<sup>375</sup> Ward, too, notes that the legacy of amelioration helped to determine the symbiosis between plantation and peasantry after abolition was enacted.<sup>376</sup> Turner has observed the under-development of grievance procedures at Amity Hall during slavery and highlighted the destruction of the slaves' customary rights. This thesis has also emphasized such instances. However, it may have been exactly those circumstances which made them better situated or more capable than other estates' workforces to advocate for better working conditions during apprenticeship. Dierksheide explains that amelioration helped transform the master-slave relationship from an "unnatural 'state of war' that impeded economic efficiency and production into a more natural and sympathetic relationship that became a source of social and economic progress" with the goal of making slaves more industrious and domesticated workers.<sup>377</sup> I argue that the exact opposite happened at Amity Hall. The lack of ameliorative reforms until 1831 facilitated Amity Hall's slave population compulsion to continually reject the terms of work set by management, causing them to become less industrious and domesticated as workers in protest. This is evident from Bayley's complaints over their work ethic. The underdevelopment of ameliorative schemes at Amity Hall saw impeded economic efficiency and production for the plantation, and the estate only became more progressive as a result of slave protest and action. The dynamism of amelioration as an "instrument of colonization and economic development" saw it being put to use by slaves as a clear indicator of the ways in which their lives had not been improved.<sup>378</sup>

Amity Hall's workforce had shown themselves as a force to be reckoned with under slavery: utilizing collective action, and overt and covert methods of disruption to sugar

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<sup>375</sup> Spence, "Ameliorating Empire," iii-iv.

<sup>376</sup> Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834*, 279.

<sup>377</sup> Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 17.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

cultivation. Their determination to limit the levels of labour extracted under slavery carried into the apprenticeship period. They remained at Amity Hall and negotiated with its managers for better wages and other stipulations. During apprenticeship, however, the bargaining occurred on their terms.<sup>379</sup> Labourers had the upper hand negotiating with white personnel over wages, especially during crop season when the harvest was time sensitive.<sup>380</sup> They had developed their ability to lobby for better working and living conditions during a time period in which amelioration was spotlighted in the public sphere and their owner and white managers were more inclined to acknowledge their efforts and grant indulgencies. If it were not for the surge of abolitionism in the 1820s, violent managers such as Samson may have remained standard and labourers would not have been able to pursue change in the same capacity or with the same determination. While Goulburn's personal passivity and limitations as an absentee owner did not make him an effective ameliorator, his concern over public opinion as well as his reliance on his West Indian agents contributed to allowing negotiations between managers and slaves to flow more freely. The push for amelioration in the British colonies created an atmosphere where the status quo was challenged directly and indirectly, and planters' normalized practices underwent a great deal of transformation, both willingly and unwillingly. Parliamentary policies of reform such as a resident Protector of Slaves and magistrates who would hear slave grievances contributed to upending a system of subjugation and allowed slaves more agency. Amity Hall's "kindly treated" slaves became apprentices and then free labourers who would not and did not allow their labour and lives to be valued at less than they knew they were worth.

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<sup>379</sup> Morgan, "Labour Relations," 471.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, 471.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

As the anonymous broadsheet circulated in 1831 had accused, Henry Goulburn was decidedly less “determined in his purpose” than “sincere in his wishes.”<sup>1</sup> This thesis has detailed how and why Goulburn failed at his ameliorative pursuits on his Jamaican estate. Goulburn was not determined in his purpose to enact reform, at least until the year 1831. Archival evidence shows that his reluctance to implement reforms mainly stemmed from financial concerns. Goulburn did not have large amounts of capital, as other successful planters like Wildman did, to expend on improvements as emancipation drew nearer and was mainly worried about keeping his estate afloat. He continually placed profit and production over reform at his estate, allowing himself, as Turner has stated “to be turned from his intention by cost.”<sup>2</sup> Goulburn’s evangelicalism and the political pressures of a changing world turned Amity Hall and the people he owned into a moral burden for him. As a result of his piety, Goulburn consistently impressed upon his attorney his anxiety for the well-being of his slaves and their religious instruction. However, he was unwilling to offer substantial assistance by way of monetary investments as his estate became less profitable, and his agents were largely left on their own to implement reform while struggling to manage the slave population and produce sugar without so much as compensatory salary increase.<sup>3</sup> In sum, Goulburn chose profits over the welfare of his slaves.

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<sup>1</sup> Image 5, Letters and printed papers relating to Henry Goulburn's parliamentary candidature (April 1831-May 1832), Miscellaneous papers relating to Henry Goulburn’s parliamentary candidature, 1826-1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Turner, “Planter Profits and Slave Rewards: Amelioration Reconsidered.” In *West Indies Accounts: Essays on the History of the British Caribbean and the Atlantic Economy in Honour of Richard Sheridan*, edited by Roderick A. McDonald (Kingston, Jamaica: Press, University of the West Indies, 1996), 246.

<sup>3</sup> Turner, “Planter Profits,” 248.

Jenkins describes Goulburn's defense of the various conditions adopted by the British colonies to improve the conditions of slaves: "I bore a willing part," Goulburn wrote.<sup>4</sup> "I introduced and carried the Slave Registration Bill to which the abolitionists attached great value. Orders in Council were passed for the Crown Colonies. Legislatures of the other colonies were induced to pass laws abridging the hours of labour and restricting corporal punishment."<sup>5</sup> Goulburn was also an enforcer of the law to abolish the slave trade, which was in his mind "the first point from which an amelioration in the condition of the slaves must follow."<sup>6</sup> Jenkins determines that Goulburn's contribution to the cause of amelioration was, if anything, understated. Contrastingly, Turner asserts that Goulburn's attitude towards amelioration on his own estate reflected the attitude he brought to efforts to raise the standard of West Indian institutions in general.<sup>7</sup> She observes that when Goulburn opposed an inquiry into the abuse of justice in Tobago, Goulburn told the House of Commons that he struggled with questions of that nature, "because West Indian legislatures operated with diminished influence and diminished moral authority."<sup>8</sup> As well, the lies and distortions which comprised much of Goulburn's correspondence with Macaulay, showed abolitionism as an increasingly powerful political force, "and the absolute determination of their enemies to fight them every step of the way."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Brian Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn, 1784-1856: A Political Biography*. DesLibris. Books Collection. (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 128.

<sup>5</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 128; Goulburn's part in creating the Registry Act was brushed aside by his attackers. They noted that it was modeled on the Trinidad Registry Act but deviated so much and underwent so many "vital mutilations" that it became ineffective to its main purpose. "The form of the Trinidad Registry Act without the substance." The author wrote that this was explained and demonstrated to the government in 1819 in an elaborate report of "the African institution" but the statement produced no effect. February 1826, Copy letters re opposition to Henry Goulburn's Parliamentary candidature (February-May 1826), Miscellaneous papers relating to Henry Goulburn's parliamentary candidature, 1826-1832, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>6</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 128.

<sup>7</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 248.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 249.

Abolitionism influenced many aspects of Goulburn's failure. The gap between metropolitan and colonial interests was exacerbated by the abolitionist agenda and Goulburn's agents in Jamaica undercut his ameliorative efforts in order to protect their interests. Additionally, his slaves were influenced by missionaries and the climate of abolitionism leading them to advocate for better work and living conditions which came with higher production costs for the proprietor of the estate. Dierksheide argues that declining sugar production and slave reproduction rates after 1807 indicated that the Caribbean sugar regime was contracting.<sup>10</sup> Amity Hall's diminishing production and shrinking population certainly aligns with her argument. However, Ahmed Reid shows that it was actually high productivity, not fear of the abolition bill, that underpinned the upward movement in slave prices prior to 1807, thus making sugar cultivation a more costly endeavour, as more planters wanted to capitalize on high sugar prices.<sup>11</sup> Reid uses indicators such as total factor productivity and national income to suggest that productivity rates of slaves "increased dramatically during the early part of the nineteenth century and that Jamaica's slave plantation economy was powering ahead by 1804."<sup>12</sup> By this time, however, Reid explains that the wider geopolitical context had shifted: British abolitionism and the Haitian revolt were key events that drove antislavery, not the economic outlook in the colonies.<sup>13</sup> Amity Hall's experience shows that the years leading up to emancipation saw population shrinkage and lower profitability due to rising costs and labourers' unwillingness to work at levels as high as in the past. This was most likely a result of changing attitudes transforming the master-slave relationship as well as the climate of abolitionism on the island

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<sup>10</sup> Christa Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire: Progress and Slavery in the Plantation Americas* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 153.

<sup>11</sup> Ahmed Reid, "Sugar, Slavery and Productivity in Jamaica, 1750-1807." *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 1 (2016), 162.

<sup>12</sup> Reid, "Sugar, Slavery and Productivity in Jamaica, 1750-1807," 175.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

that culminated in the Baptist War. Profitability and reproductive rates levelled out during apprenticeship at Amity Hall however, aligning with Reid's assertion that the economic decline was not imminent. Metropolitan abolitionists argued that planters were not improving their slaves' moral and material conditions.<sup>14</sup> Goulburn ultimately did not successfully contribute to debunking such charges, as he did not adequately improve his slaves' conditions and thereby paved the way for emancipation, fitting in with Dierksheide's assertions. Had Goulburn made a more concerted effort to implement ameliorative policies on his estate, he may have helped West Indian planters' efforts to show that the institution of slavery could be reformed and was still a profitable enterprise- supporting Reid's argument.

It was, as Turner has contended in her work, the power of the work force that catalyzed improvements in conditions at Amity Hall. She argues that the Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831 proclaimed to the public, more convincingly than the Anti-Slavery Society could, "the failure of amelioration as process or programme."<sup>15</sup> By this measure, Amity Hall had failed dismally in its own individual ameliorative pursuits. It was the slave workforce who, in order to contest subsistence levels and workloads, utilized many different strategies to bring about change and improve their lives.<sup>16</sup> It was customary for slaves to bargain with their managers, but Amity Hall's people also employed arson, absenteeism (such as feigning pregnancy or illness), collective strikes, and appeals for mediation. When this became known to the public through the Anti-Slavery Society's circulated letters and broadsheets, there could be no doubt that Goulburn had not improved working conditions on his estate. Amity Hall's workforce was able to secure lower cane acreage to cultivate, higher subsistence levels, less corporal punishment, and a more

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<sup>14</sup> Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 153.

<sup>15</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 249.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

respected observance by management of their own time. Most likely as a result of Samson's severe brutality, they became a difficult population to get to overwork, resulting in their labelling as insolent and difficult. Over the course of Bayley's management however, with recurrent conflict between management and the workforce, there became more of an understanding between the two parties of what the labourers would tolerate and what they would not. Over time, Bayley began to structure his management routines around his knowledge of Amity Hall's workforce, and was better able to calculate the levels of labour he was able to extract from them. His recommendations to Goulburn to hire jobbing gangs and reduce cane acreage were strategized to keep the slave population working at acceptable levels, as well as to acknowledge their desire to limit levels of labour extraction. As Roberts has explained, "the plantation was a machine with interrelated parts that could be predicted and controlled if planters could identify sets of universal rules that governed that system. Slaves were an integral and inseparable part of that system."<sup>17</sup>

To other managers like Ashley, Bayley's indulgencies seemed far too generous-even Bayley viewed Richards' more lenient system as completely ineffectual. Upon Ashley taking over Amity Hall, he observed that Bayley left it in a poor state of cultivation but noted that the slaves behaved well and he did not have trouble assuming its management. Bayley eventually managed to navigate relations between the slaves and management to their general satisfaction-that is, absent of overt displays of discontent- and realized that it was necessary to make conciliations in order to get them to work at the levels he desired. However, even with the various indulgencies granted by Bayley, Amity Hall's slaves did not experience significant

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<sup>17</sup> Justin Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 78.



amelioration in the ways that mattered from their management. Their subsistence levels were raised to levels above under-feeding, and the birth rate suggests that even with corporal punishment reduced and eventually abolished for women, and labour levels lowered, the arduous work of cultivating and processing sugar was not improved by a slightly more sufficient diet.

### **The Priorities of Goulburn's Pocketbook**

Goulburn's finances reveal his priorities just as much as his letters with Bayley. Looking at an estate's accounts can shed light on the priorities of its owner. Apart from work routines and the treatment of his slaves by on-the-ground management, it is useful to see whether income was directly invested into ameliorative reform and the material life of his slaves. Goulburn relied more on technological or non-material reform than he did on that brought about by an investment of income into goods or services for their benefit. Of the eleven regulations he sent to Bayley in 1827, most surrounded managerial changes and reforms regarding punishment, religious education (which Bayley responded could only be affected through the slaves' own volition) and changes in terms used for slave workers. Only two outlined incentive schemes, still designed to put money into Goulburn's pocket. Effectually, Goulburn spent more on goods and services related to sugar production from 1825-1833 than he did on provisions that would improve slave life. Even food rations were not prioritized in Goulburn's finances- he and Bayley strategized to keep guinea corn production high enough that they would not have to incur the extra expenditure in coming years after an initial purchase when Bayley became attorney. As was custom, herring was purchased for the slaves at Christmastime, but Goulburn did not extend extra provisions to throughout the year. Amity Hall had a hospital and a doctor's apartment, with doctors residing on the estate. Medical care was included in estate accounts each year, at roughly £80 per year

(slightly more or less depending on the number of slaves attended to), and Goulburn had his slave workers vaccinated when smallpox threatened Jamaica in 1831.<sup>18</sup>

Despite these expenditures, Goulburn was not willing until his failings were made public to invest directly in the slaves' religious education- a foundational principle of amelioration- as Wildman did. He was deterred by the close geographic proximity of a church to his estate, but did not employ a resident missionary or catechist, though the costs were not generally expensive as compared to other estate expenditures. It was not until 1832 that charges for a catechist appeared in estate accounts. Goulburn paid only £9 for 5 months of instruction in 1832 until Mr. Moodie, the catechist, died.<sup>19</sup> In 1833, Goulburn paid £16 to John Thompson, the new catechist, for 8 months of service billed at the same rate of pay, £25 per annum.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, £279 was paid in 1831 for the hiring of slaves to clear pastures in 1829.<sup>21</sup> Goulburn had approved this charge requested by Bayley in order to reduce his own slaves' workloads. However, the investment was made with hopes of better cultivation, and with hopes to preserve his own workforce since the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, not out of entirely humanitarian concerns.

Like many other planters in the early nineteenth-century, Goulburn grappled with soaring production costs, rising debt, fluctuating sugar prices, and insurance rates. This was offset by prioritizing the largest possible returns under Samson's management. Richards advocated for the better treatment of slaves which he told Goulburn would also help achieve the same end. Bayley had the unique challenge of maximizing production while also alleviating

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<sup>18</sup> Estate Accounts, 1825-1833, Statements of Account (1802-1833), Estate Accounts, 1802-1855, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>19</sup> 17 November 1832, Estate Accounts, 1802-1855, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>20</sup> 28 December 1833, Estate Accounts, 1802-1855, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>21</sup> For one day of work on July 4 1829. 2 September 1831, Estate Accounts, 1802-1855, Goulburn Papers.

slave labour, ameliorating their material lives, and prioritizing their moral and religious improvement, all in tandem and without substantial additional resources to do so. Goulburn sought to find cheaper ways to cultivate sugar, suggesting other forms of imported labour toward the end of Bayley's life. Goulburn struggled with the profitability of his estate until it was sold in the 1861.<sup>22</sup> That he did not have a large amount of income to direct at ameliorating the working conditions and lives of his slaves was due to the oversaturation of sugar in the market at the time, and consequently lower sugar prices, alongside rising production costs. In fact, his "sacrifice" of 4/5's of his income, which he made sure to note upon countering the anonymous charges against him in 1826, had more to do with lowering cane acreage and turning it into allotment grounds for his slaves, it was a toleration, not a direct investment. That he would not direct more money than he had into ameliorative measures without an assurance of increased returns, until he was exposed publicly for failing to do so, demonstrates Goulburn's personal choices.

### **Sincere in His Wishes**

Goulburn finally committed himself to gradual abolition, though only in private to his wife Jane, in 1826. He wrote to her "I am satisfied that slavery ought at any price to be abolished as soon as it can be done with consistency & due regard to the interests of the slaves themselves but I have my doubts whether it can be effected without the ruin of all who have anything to do with W. India property. Come however what may it cannot & must not be resisted further than is necessary to effect it with prudence."<sup>23</sup> The reason for this is that the changing climate of public

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<sup>22</sup> 1860 was the final year of production at Amity Hall. Four years after Goulburn's death, Amity Hall produced 300 hogsheads of sugar and 200 puncheons of rum. Output in the 1840s and 50s was aided by the use of the plough for planting cane as well as a cane elevator for the sugar mill, offsetting the reduction in labourers after 1838. Kenneth Morgan, (2008) Papers relating to the Jamaican estates of the Goulburn family of Betchworth House: An introduction to the British Online Archives edition, <https://boa.microform.digital/collections/14/view>.

<sup>23</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 175.

opinion coincided with Goulburn's own aging into adulthood- he took possession of Amity Hall in 1805 when he was twenty-one years old. Over his lifetime as a public figure Goulburn's response was to endorse amelioration and eventually its gradual abolition.<sup>24</sup> Goulburn was an enforcer of the law to abolish the slave trade, noting that it was "the first point from which an amelioration in the condition of the slaves must follow."<sup>25</sup> After emancipation, "he strove tirelessly but ultimately unsuccessfully to prove that sugar could be produced profitably by free labour."<sup>26</sup> Goulburn's attachment to the institution due to his dependence on his income paralleled his concern for his slave workforce. His concern for amelioration was more about protecting his income and reputation, but eventually, morality and reputation took precedence over income.<sup>27</sup>

*The Jamaica Planter's Guide* was written at a time when, in Jamaica and the West Indies, "produce is so much depreciated."<sup>28</sup> It notes the heavy expenses attending the cultivation of the land and manufacturing of sugar and produce, together with capital laid out in the establishment of a plantation and its yearly operating costs.<sup>29</sup> While Goulburn did not personally establish Amity Hall plantation, he inherited the estate with other family property in Jamaica, and assumed its debts.<sup>30</sup> The *Planter's Guide* observes that many factors necessitated the care of an estate by its owner and agents; the failure of crops, the decrease and loss of slaves and stock, the exhaustion of land, trifling returns by shipments or sales, a consequent diminution of capital, and

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide; Or, A System for Planting and Managing a Sugar Estate, or Other Plantations in That Island, and throughout the British West Indies in General* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1823), v.

<sup>29</sup> Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide*, v.

<sup>30</sup> Burnard writes that the average indebted estate had £1,946 in debts. Many Jamaicans lent out much more than that sum. Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650-1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 198.

the inevitable alternative “after many years of toil and anxious hope” of borrowing money through mortgaging to sustain credit.<sup>31</sup> “To these contingencies may be added law charges, interest of money, and per centage to agents.”<sup>32</sup> Certainly, all of the above came with Goulburn’s ownership of Amity Hall from 1805-1856. Amity Hall’s expenses were heavy. Apart from the estate’s monetary cost, it also exacted a price from Goulburn through its weight on his religious beliefs and moral values. As Jenkins observed, it became a moral burden for Goulburn. Goulburn’s response was to, in his mind, practice kindness and magnanimity towards the people he owned. He was limited in his action by his knowledge of West Indian sugar estates, geographic distance, and personal prejudices.

Goulburn’s conduct as an absentee proprietor, Jenkins notes, was shaped by the cumulative pressures under which he laboured.<sup>33</sup> “In an enlightened age and as a devout churchman, he wished his property to be worked in a progressive manner.”<sup>34</sup> After the abolition of the slave trade, Goulburn’s struggle between materialism and mortality was eased for him by his commitment to amelioration and his dependence on prejudices that characterized blacks as licentious.<sup>35</sup> His elevation of human priorities, as Jenkins notes, cannot be divorced from his fear of public embarrassment- as Under-Secretary for the colonies, he could not be exposed as a cruel owner.<sup>36</sup> As a conservative, he was committed to gradualism until the mid 1820s.<sup>37</sup> Jenkins shows that in private, Goulburn lived to regret that he had “compromised with the evil of slavery for so long and had failed to speak out against the institution.”<sup>38</sup> His dependence on its income

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<sup>31</sup> Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter’s Guide*, v-vi.

<sup>32</sup> Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter’s Guide*, vi.

<sup>33</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 357.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

assured his social and political position and his family's future, which Jenkins posits "induced a moral blindness" on the issue of slavery.<sup>39</sup> Jenkins asserts that Goulburn's tenacity in defending himself from Macaulay's attacks in 1826 and 1831 was reflective of a personal realization that "his personal honour had been successfully impugned," and belatedly, he sacrificed more income in the name of humanity.<sup>40</sup> However, ultimately, "He had failed the moral test set by slavery."<sup>41</sup> Jenkins identifies the abrupt termination of apprenticeship as Goulburn's "noblest hour as a plantation owner."<sup>42</sup> He provided for the elderly and sick who were incapable of earning their own subsistence, and extended healthcare to labourers although it was no longer his legal responsibility, telling his attorney, "So long as the Estate produces anything, I hold them to have a claim to support and I should above all things be unwilling because the Parliament has been unjust to be cruel and unjust to them."<sup>43</sup> Goulburn also suggested renting cane pieces to "industrious negroes" who would be guaranteed a price for the canes delivered to the mill.<sup>44</sup> Of course, Jenkins observes the ironic fact that Goulburn's hopes to make his estate profitable depended on the actions of his former slaves.<sup>45</sup>

Goulburn, therefore, could appear as a dedicated ameliorator on paper. On many occasions, he was careful to express his anxiety for the well-being of his slaves and insisted to

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 358; Catherine Hall writes that at the heart of Evangelical belief was the natural corruption of man and his potential redemption. A deep awareness of personal sin went together with faith in God's grace. "A sharp distinction was drawn between this world and the next. Life was 'an arena of moral trial in which all would be tempted, tested, judged'". Evangelicals believed that God had made the world and his providence determined its affairs; yet, individuals had to take responsibility for their lives. Essentially, Evangelicals aimed to develop a faith which could be translated into practice. This explains Goulburn's personal realization through Macaulay's accusations. Macaulay was also a devout Evangelical. Hall, Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 9.

<sup>42</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 276.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

each of his attorneys that their happiness and comfort should be prioritized. As discussed in the introduction, this thesis has emphasized the interplay of words and actions. While an absentee owner's ability to produce change lay in the hands of their agents and thus limited it to a degree, Goulburn was not a stringent proprietor, and it was not until 1831 that he required Bayley's "strictest adherence" to his instructions. Goulburn comfortably relied on Bayley's correspondence for many years without pressing further for details, just as he did with Samson. For instance, in 1826 when political charges were made against him, he accepted Bayley's refutations and did not press him further or continually discuss the charges. Even Richards, who Goulburn rarely heard from, was not dismissed until he failed to reach the goals of sugar production Goulburn desired. It was, as the broadsheet's charges against him articulated, entirely within his power to uphold higher standards and demand an observance of reforms from his managers. Goulburn may have been sincere in his wishes, "Yet good intentions were for too long overborne by the demands of production and profit..."<sup>46</sup> Goulburn was deterred from his humanitarian concerns by self-interest, and perhaps only realized this after such a fact was exposed by the Anti-Slavery Society. Goulburn clearly deployed amelioration policies for his own ends, but his workforce in turn used his "improvements" as a method of improving their circumstances.

### **The Limitations of the System**

Observing the practices of amelioration and lived experiences of the enslaved on individual sugar estates through the archives brings attention back to the subjects of imperial methods of expansion and suppression. The dynamics of change over time on various sugar

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 357.

plantations across Jamaica are important distinctions to make. While not everything can be known, the nuances of how amelioration was pursued on individual estates reveals a great deal. Many scholars are engaged with reading against the grain of the archives to highlight the experiences of slavery on the ground in West Indies. Mary Turner's work has revealed slaves' influence on amelioration attempts; and her insights remain significant decades later. More recent historiography is shedding new light on ameliorative experiences. Halliday's study of Castle Weymss Estate in Jamaica demonstrates the different extent to which planters and their managers took positive action to meet the requirements of the new situation of abolitionist pressures.<sup>47</sup> Halliday observes that Castle Weymss' owner, Gilbert Mathison, was a convinced humanitarian who was primarily concerned with effecting reforms that benefited the slaves themselves.<sup>48</sup> Halliday notes that Mathison was an absentee proprietor, until the abolition of the slave trade and subsequent threat to the supply of slave labour prompted him to visit Jamaica in 1808 in order to take a more active role in estate management and revise management policy.<sup>49</sup> Upon publishing an essay on his return to England, his efforts at amelioration were clearly reflected in his writing, as well as in his priorities for change.<sup>50</sup> Mathison wrote in the advertisement for his essay that "The motive which suggested the publication, is a desire to rouse the attention of planters to a recollection of their own *true* interests," echoing Goulburn's articulation of the "real" interests his own estate.<sup>51</sup> Unlike Goulburn, however, Mathison "delivered his opinions with freedom, and without favour to the enthusiasm nor fear of the

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<sup>47</sup> Ursula Halliday, "The Slave Owner as Reformer: Theory and Practice at Castle Weymss Estate, Jamaica, 1808-1823." *The Journal of Caribbean History* 30, no. 1 (1996), 65.

<sup>48</sup> Halliday, "The Slave Owner as Reformer," 66.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>51</sup> Gilbert Farquhar Mathison, "Notices Respecting Jamaica, in 1808-1809-1810" in *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive. Part 3: The Institution of Slavery*. Pr. For J. Stockdale, 1811, original from the New York Public Library. Digitized 21 August 2009, v.



prejudices of any person.”<sup>52</sup> He first prioritized the care and management of his slave workers instead of technological and managerial changes devised to improve productivity.<sup>53</sup> Halliday describes Mathison’s reforms as a “sincere attempt” to put his ideas into practice at Castle Weymss.<sup>54</sup> Mathison is an example of a sugar proprietor who pursued humanitarian goals, as opposed to profit-oriented ones to effect amelioration.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, Goulburn placed production over the care of his slaves. The greatest difference between him and Mathison is Mathison’s approach to pro-natalist policies. Like Goulburn, Mathison identified the arduous work of sugar cultivation as a reason behind low birth rates.<sup>56</sup> Mathison provided special provisions for nursing mothers, giving them a quart of rice or oatmeal and a quart of sugar each week.<sup>57</sup> A weaning house was established, pregnant women were not overworked, and they did not have to wait until labour to go to the lying-in house.<sup>58</sup> He had no solutions for how to carry on cultivation without including women in the first gang, however.<sup>59</sup> Work pivoted on the first gang, and like Goulburn’s estate, the physically demanding work itself maintained the low birth rate and Castle Weymss’ population consistently declined.<sup>60</sup> Despite this, Mathison enacted reforms to help close the gap between births and deaths, where Goulburn did almost nothing.

Notably, Mathison identified good relations between slaves and their overseers as essential in enacting reforms.<sup>61</sup> The largest obstacle to improvement was in Mathison’s regard, the prejudices and long-established habits of professional agents which facilitated habitual

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<sup>52</sup> Mathison, “Notices Respecting Jamaica, in 1808-1809-1810,” vi-vii.

<sup>53</sup> Halliday, “The Slave Owner as Reformer,” 67.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

distrust from slaves, alongside determined opposition.<sup>62</sup> This is evident at Amity Hall, as Samson's severe brutality facilitated dissent and mistrust even as Bayley took charge of the estate. Reforms implemented by even the best-intentioned owners, Halliday notes, were "largely contingent on reforms in the character of slave managers."<sup>63</sup> Much like Amity Hall, the owners of Castle Weymss advocated that the estate must be cultivated on its own strength, meaning no more land was kept in cane than the workforce could harvest and process- just as Bayley advocated to Goulburn. In this way, Castle Weymss avoided the expense of jobbing gangs and its people were not overworked.<sup>64</sup> Halliday notes very few people ran away from Castle Weymss indicating some level of content.<sup>65</sup> Significantly, as Halliday notes, the history of Castle Weymss- and Amity Hall- demonstrates "the very narrow margins available for the improvement of slave work conditions on a sugar estate. Indebtedness necessarily limited technical innovations; capital to install a steam mill, for example, was not available."<sup>66</sup> Even with Mathison's hands-on application of humanitarian slave management, "vigilant attention to these standards from abroad," and help of a sympathetic attorney, they effected as much improvement as the system allowed.<sup>67</sup> The routines of estate work, even when modified, did not allow for the reproduction of the workforce.<sup>68</sup> Halliday judges Mathison's individual attempt at amelioration as comparatively successful when placed alongside the imperial government's amelioration programme.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 79-80.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

Burnard and Candlin's study of Sir John Gladstone highlights him as an unsuccessful ameliorator, but a successful influence on metropolitan politicians, helping to stave off emancipation and offering an alternative to either emancipation or coercion.<sup>70</sup> They argue that Gladstone showed that amelioration and imperialism were compatible, and that abolitionism was not certain of success in the decade preceding emancipation.<sup>71</sup> In comparison to Mathison, Gladstone abolished corporal punishment and provided better access to healthcare and housing for his slaves, but his belief in the necessity of coercion "as a major underpinning of plantation agriculture" did not alleviate the conditions of his slaves.<sup>72</sup> Additionally, Gladstone aimed to discourage African culture among his slaves and encouraged evangelicalism.<sup>73</sup> Gladstone's ameliorative policies were a result of his interest in treating his slaves more humanely. However, he had larger imperial aims; he believed that improving his slaves' conditions made slavery more durable and defensible to "a suspicious metropolitan audience."<sup>74</sup> He aimed to make the empire more efficient and prosperous, evolve the management of slavery into a scientific and contemporary system by way of moral and economic improvements, and ultimately, offer a "third way" that supported the continuation of a reformed form of slavery.<sup>75</sup>

In contrast to Gladstone, Goulburn was not proactive in attempting to create a system that was more defensible and would ensure the posterity of the plantation system. Instead, Goulburn fit more into the role of disinterested owner who cared about his Jamaican holdings only as a

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<sup>70</sup> Burnard and Candlin disagree with Ward that amelioration was largely successful- Gladstone failed in his attempts to modify the system of slavery and gain the support of resident planters. Trevor Burnard and Kit Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone and the Debate over the Amelioration of Slavery in the British West Indies in the 1820s." *The Journal of British Studies* 57, no. 4 (2018), 779.

<sup>71</sup> Burnard and Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone," 779.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 761.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 762.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

source of ready money.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, Goulburn eventually committed himself to the abolition of slavery, acknowledging its inevitability and desirability.<sup>77</sup> Compared to Gladstone, Goulburn was similar in his interest to treat his slaves more humanely but also in his concern above all for maximizing profits.<sup>78</sup> Burnard and Candlin note that a principal complaint made by Gladstone's slaves under his new regime was that they had to work harder for longer hours, and were more regulated than before.<sup>79</sup> Upon Bayley taking over Amity Hall in 1825, the slave population voiced similar complaints when work routines were restructured and more labour was required than under Richards' management. Goulburn voiced to Bayley that he wanted his slaves instructed in Christianity but did little to accomplish that goal. Burnard and Candlin's argument aligns with Dierksheide's: amelioration may have proven successful if more owners took Gladstone's approach to adopt reform, instead of resisting the implementation of amelioration schemes.<sup>80</sup> Dierksheide asserts that abolitionists' most dangerous opponents were not forthright defenders of slavery, but rather enlightened planters who sought to improve the institution.<sup>81</sup> Goulburn was not similar in this way to Gladstone; he eventually recognized that emancipation was desirable and his religious beliefs and struggle with the morality of slavery influenced his acceptance of that fact.<sup>82</sup> Amity Hall's experience aligns with Dierksheide's argument that

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 780.

<sup>77</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 357.

<sup>78</sup> Burnard and Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone," 779.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 761.

<sup>80</sup> Burnard and Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone," 763.

<sup>81</sup> Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 16.

<sup>82</sup> Dierksheide notes that although the Enlightenment introduced the possibility of equality and liberty for all mankind, this did not mean that such ideas would be universally embraced or applied in the nineteenth century. Many planters rejected such universal truths "and instead trumpeted the 'exceptional' nature of national slave systems and embraced the corporate equality of white property holders rather than the individual rights of people, including women and blacks." Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 16; Goulburn was not a proponent of democracy and Jenkins notes that his views on slavery were those of the administration he served: he (initially) regarded slavery as an institution to be ameliorated, not abolished as the "Saints" did. This moderate public position coincided with his private interest, however, Jenkins notes that he was careful to keep his distance from the West India Committee, which "all too often served merely as an apologist for slavery." Goulburn's forwarding of the

shrinking populations and production, supplemented by slave rebellions in the Caribbean, paved the way for emancipation.<sup>83</sup>

In comparison to Mathison, Goulburn was only a slightly less effective reformer. Goulburn provided medical attendance for his slaves. He also erected a steam engine on his estate, although this was done to boost production, not to lessen workloads or abolish night work, as the practice remained through Bayley's attorneyship. Goulburn identified work routines as limiting reproduction as Mathison did, though was unable to identify suitable solutions. Goulburn was not as vigilant in his attention to his property as Mathison was, although he became increasingly more involved in estate affairs over time. Similarly, Goulburn allowed Bayley to reduce cane acreage in order to limit his slaves' workloads. He cycled through various managers in order to find one who had his estate's "real interests" (production alongside amelioration geared towards preserving the workforce) in mind, however, he allowed bad management practices under Samson and Richards to continue for longer than they should have. Goodwill towards his slaves was emphasized to his managers, and runaways and other practices of slave discontent lessened over Bayley's time as attorney. Goulburn voiced his humanitarian interests like Mathison, although placed them second to production and profit. While their intentions may have been slightly differing, Goulburn's lackluster efforts towards amelioration until 1831 seem to be not too far behind Mathison's in effectiveness. The system of slavery could only be "improved" to a certain extent. Even if Goulburn's efforts were deemed "successful" by measure of good intention or slave contentedness, the physical demands of sugar cultivation and the inhumanity of slavery were not in alignment with the reproduction of the

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West India Committee's proposed reforms to Bayley, as well as acceptance of funding from the West India Committee for the Incorporated Society's religious activities in Jamaica suggest otherwise. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 72.

<sup>83</sup> Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 153.

workforce. As Ward concluded, “technical refinements did not preserve slavery,” and it has become a source of debate since whether or not they could preserve slavery.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, Goulburn’s effectiveness as ameliorator is only as significant as the extent to which the system could be ameliorated.

### **The Future of the Debate Surrounding Amelioration**

Ward asserts that anthropometric evidence explored in his article “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery: Anthropometric Evidence” supports “old school” views that the British West Indies slave regime improved substantially during its later years.<sup>85</sup> He observes that anthropometric evidence makes popular agency doubtful.<sup>86</sup> He views the labour bargaining thesis, implying popular agency and a rise in slaves’ negotiating power, as implausible because it suggests long-term, cumulative adjustment, under pressure from an increasingly creolized workforce.<sup>87</sup> Ward finds that the growth of adult creole heights accelerated in the 1820s after a period of no clear change.<sup>88</sup> This means that it would have to have been the planters who catalyzed change through policy, in response to commercial circumstances.<sup>89</sup> Additionally, Ward argues that eyewitness evidence does not have leadership from the “confidential negroes” driving forward amelioration.<sup>90</sup> Instead, they acted as collaborators with the estate regime and assumed greater privilege than the mass of field workers.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> J. R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration*, (Oxford [England]: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1988), 279.

<sup>85</sup> J. R. Ward, "The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery: Anthropometric Evidence." *The Economic History Review* 71, no. 4 (2018), 1223.

<sup>86</sup> Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery,” 1222.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 1222.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

Ward's evidence convincingly shows that slaves' heights increased over time due to improved diet and lowered cane acreage in response to market saturation. I make the case that demographics and anthropometric evidence can be used in conjunction with case studies of individual estates to produce a broader picture of amelioration not solely focused on material standards. Ward finds amelioration successful, while Burnard and Candlin found the opposite; Gladstone failed to modify the system of slavery with support from other planters.<sup>92</sup> Clarity on how amelioration is judged "successful" or "unsuccessful" can be developed through continued discourse on the subject. Amelioration measured through the eyes of the master will always be on his terms- if Amity Hall's slaves were indeed better fed or better treated comparatively to past years, why did they still act collectively? James Wildman, a more effective and dedicated ameliorator than Goulburn, shared similar experiences, demonstrating that successful reform to him was not interpreted in the same way by his labourers. Perhaps the answer is because an improved slave regime is a slave regime still. Mathison's views suggest that Goulburn's contemporaries considered the same thing. Regarding the public expression of his own opinions, Mathison wrote:

His purpose will be fully answered, if, by a statement of facts, and an exposition of faults in the prevailing system, he should be fortunate enough to lead the planter to a clear perception of the naked truth, and thus open the door to the establishment of a system better suited to the exigencies of his present situation, more consonant to the relations between different classes of people in other countries, and less repugnant to the honest feelings of the genuine friends of man.<sup>93</sup>

Ward states that as a rule amelioration worked to strengthen the white man's authority.<sup>94</sup> If the only way to measure amelioration is through the terms of those it was imparted by, Goulburn can

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<sup>92</sup> Burnard and Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone," 779.

<sup>93</sup> Mathison, "Notices Respecting Jamaica, in 1808-1809-1810," vii.

<sup>94</sup> Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834*, 232.

definitively be identified now, as he was by his peers, as an unsuccessful ameliorator. To measure amelioration only by his or other masters' terms, however, would be to ultimately deny the agency of the people they owned.

Amity Hall's records conflict with Ward's findings. Goulburn did not implement reform in any substantial way until 1831- meaning if slave heights increased at Amity Hall in the 1820s, it certainly was not due to policy changes on the estate. Even increased subsistence levels were only improved to levels above under-feeding. Additionally, letters reveal that it was the workforce at Amity Hall who had the greatest influence on limiting labour levels, and that the attorney and owner responded to that influence. Eyewitness evidence from Amity Hall's overseers and Bayley reveals that leadership driving forward amelioration existed at Amity Hall (for instance, the driver John Gale who sacrificed his position of higher status to apply to management on behalf of his fellow slaves). However, it was ultimately collective action from the mass of the field workers who produced changes in labour regimens. Amity Hall's records, spanning a vast time period, show that they achieved this through long-term cumulative adjustment through pressure from an increasingly creolized workforce. Amity Hall may be an exception compared to other estates due to various factors: Goulburn's inaction until the 1830s, his personal beliefs about how his slaves should be treated, his lack of oversight as absentee, etc. As a case study, this thesis has largely focused on the failure of amelioration at the hands of one absentee planter rather than judging the success of ameliorative policy at an imperial level. However, the preceding chapters demonstrate that further studies of how individual plantations experienced amelioration are needed in order to produce a more conclusive understanding of how slave workforces were an active part of the process through slavery and into freedom. Popular agency is not implausible just because it was limited; it was often disregarded by



planters in the moment, and can be tricky to identify in the archive, but its long-term effects are evident at Amity Hall. Its people were active participants in Goulburn's attempts to implement reform, and Bayley relied greatly on their acceptance of new regulations. Goulburn laboured during the last decade of his life to operate Amity Hall profitably through enlightened labour policies.<sup>95</sup> Evidence of this is clear in the Goulburn Papers. If collective agency of the slave workforce is plausible at Amity Hall, it is plausible it occurred on other estates, and although the archive possesses limitations, those instances, when identified, should be considered.

Ward asserts that amelioration was generally a success, judged on its own terms.<sup>96</sup> Burnard and Candlin, like Dierksheide, argue that competing ideas about amelioration and its ultimate aim were running in tandem- they view the debate surrounding amelioration as part of a larger conversation over the shape of British imperialism and the future of the empire, and only in part a conversation about slavery.<sup>97</sup> The terms of the debate surrounding amelioration need to be expanded. Burnard and Candlin suggest that framing the debate in abolitionist terms, or even in terms of the "amelioration of slavery" removes important context about the larger debates circulating at the time about the future of the empire.<sup>98</sup> However, slaves who eventually became free labourers were a part of that empire; their engagement with amelioration schemes are important to include in the terms of the debate. Amelioration meant more than just improved working or living conditions; it became an avenue for slaves to strive towards what they truly desired: freedom and autonomy, the ability to make choices for themselves and their

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<sup>95</sup> Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn*, 358.

<sup>96</sup> Burnard and Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone," 763.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 764.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

communities, their own agency, and their own valuation of their labour.<sup>99</sup> This is why slaves could not be convinced to give up their own time to work the canefields during apprenticeship, or produce sugar when emancipation came into effect, even with higher wages available. Amity Hall's history demonstrates this. As Burnard and Candlin have noted, some planters attempted to transform the master-slave relationship so that slavery became a source of social improvement as well as an area of increased productivity.<sup>100</sup> If, as Ward argues, the slave regime was improved for slaves largely in material aspects (even so, it still claimed a great deal of human life), then attention must be directed to other areas of slave life.

If historians are to use physical measurements, evidence of improved diet, or lowered labour levels to demonstrate that the slave regime was becoming more compatible with physical well-being, it must be considered that the same can be done with livestock- prioritized second in care to slaves for most planters- and that human life ranges beyond the physical sphere.<sup>101</sup> A greater distinction must be made as historiography develops and the debate surrounding amelioration is reengaged with by scholars to determine what amelioration meant not just in terms of the imperial goals of the British government, or those of self- interested planters, but also to slaves. For example, Ward's evidence points to the success of ameliorative reforms made

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<sup>99</sup> Holt notes that in nineteenth-century society, human freedom can be defined as autonomy from the will of others, and that social relations were fundamentally contractual. However, the moral legitimacy of the contract theoretically depended on the freedom and equality of the contracting parties- the notion of contract presupposed individual autonomy and rights; its reciprocity presupposed formal equality. Thomas C. Holt, and American Council of Learned Societies. *The Problem of Freedom Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*. Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 4-5.

<sup>100</sup> Burnard and Candlin, "Sir John Gladstone," 763.

<sup>101</sup> Halliday, "The Slave Owner as Reformer," 74; When Richards increased Amity Hall's corn rations in 1816, he considered it "little enough"; it being no more than a horse was fed after a ten-mile ride. Mary Turner, "Slave workers, Subsistence and Labour Bargaining: Amity Hall, Jamaica, 1805-1832" in Ira Berlin, and Philip D. Morgan, *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London, England; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 1991): 96.

by planters, while the Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831 points to the opposite.<sup>102</sup> Dunkley notes that Fuentes calls for analysis that centres on how gender shaped the production of the archive itself in order to account for enslaved women's perspectives in the imperial debate.<sup>103</sup> Enslaved women were central to debates surrounding abolition, as well as to the slave economy and to planters, parliamentarians, and abolitionists.<sup>104</sup> To expose how they gained such a critical position should be approached with attention to their historical and archival disfigurement.<sup>105</sup> Further studies would help answer questions posed by Ward in his work, notably: "Can the welfare of Jamaica's enslaved population at large be inferred reliably from the workhouse material?" and "What light is cast on the role of slave agency in the amelioration process?"<sup>106</sup> I now inquire, can the amelioration process be considered independently from slave agency? Can the welfare of enslaved populations be inferred reliably from material statistics? Amity Hall's records show that its slave workers were an active part of the amelioration process. A wider discussion that extends beyond material labour conditions or the goals of planters can be introduced as historiography develops to situate slaves in the context of the British empire as important influences in the ameliorative process into emancipation.<sup>107</sup> Ward's work, for example,

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<sup>102</sup> Petley points out that some historians such as Drescher remain skeptical on the influence of slave unrest on the progress of abolitionism. However, Williams contends that enslaved people, by their direct action, forced the issue of emancipation on the political agenda. Petley asserts that Caribbean historians have successfully developed a lesser-known part of Williams's thesis to show that "the subaltern politics of Caribbean slave communities mattered in the transatlantic 'propaganda war' that culminated in the dismantling of slavery." Christer Petley, "New Perspectives on Slavery and Emancipation in the British Caribbean." *The Historical Journal* 54, no.3 (2011), 867.

<sup>103</sup> Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 137.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Ward, "The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery," 1218.

<sup>107</sup> Dunkley argues that it was the response of the enslaved that made amelioration the system of improvement it was actually supposed to be. Daive A. Dunkley, *Agency of the Enslaved: Jamaica and the Culture of Freedom in the Atlantic World*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013): 190.

can be used alongside other measures of improvement to produce a richer discussion of amelioration that intersects with the goals of the enslaved.<sup>108</sup>

In practice, Goulburn altogether did not improve his slaves' working or living conditions in a significant manner. Ultimately, Amity Hall's records serve as an illuminating account of an absentee owner struggling to meet the pressures and requirements of amelioration from all sides; governmental policy, colonial directives, slaves' desires, and resident managers all contributed unique obligations and constraints. Goulburn's responses to these changes were reflective of his attitude towards his life of service to Parliament: he was dutiful and devoted to his work, but he did not shatter expectations and raise the bar. He sought a seat in the House of Commons, but he did not seek to lead as his peers such as Sir Robert Peel did. Likewise, he was not groundbreaking by way of ameliorative reform, he took cues from successful planters such as James Wildman, and only rose to the occasion when pressured instead of leading by example. The demands of high office and limitations of distance no doubt contributed to his reluctance as a sugar proprietor. His religious beliefs and morals, as well as his own personal feelings, were tested by changing public opinion surrounding the ownership of slaves. Considering his personal characteristics and various outside factors, Goulburn's response to amelioration is not at all surprising. As Turner has surmised, as a reformer, Goulburn was a minimalist.<sup>109</sup> He prioritized profits and production over people, as many planters of his time did. Goulburn can show a great deal about the average planter and British constituent of his time; he struggled as many other enlightened, self-interested planters did to ameliorate conditions on his estate. However, he also

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<sup>108</sup> Beckles asserts that slaves' "tradition of anti-slavery activity impacted upon the social culture and polity of the Caribbean world in more fundamental ways than anti-slavery lobbyists ever did in metropolitan societies." Hilary Beckles, "Caribbean Anti-Slavery: The Self-Liberation Ethos of Enslaved Blacks." *The Journal of Caribbean History* 22, no.1 (1988), 16.

<sup>109</sup> Turner, "Planter Profits," 248.

poses a bit of a contradiction. The 1831 broadsheet wrote that the preceding decade “demonstrated incontrovertibly that it is only by a direct intervention by Parliament that an effectual remedy can be applied.”<sup>110</sup> Goulburn was not just a planter, he was also a Member of Parliament; an arm of the metropole, responsible for carrying out his own government’s policies in his private affairs. He grappled between the interests of a planter and a politician, between profits and morality. Goulburn exemplifies what Dierksheide has argued: that amelioration was a failure for both planters and the government.<sup>111</sup>

Though Goulburn did not take on amelioration as proactively as other planters, he eventually participated in the process. How individual planters approached amelioration on their estates warrants further study. How such action influenced slave populations, and vice-versa, over time through the apprenticeship period and into emancipation can reveal a great deal about both plantation life and social change. Although useful for historians, time periods divided into eras of amelioration, apprenticeship and freedom disallows for the continuity of a picture of slave populations enduring through them.<sup>112</sup> As Petley has recognized, “The past does not fit conveniently into compartments. People’s lives and experiences have always been multi-layered, changeable, overlapping; often they were utterly chaotic.”<sup>113</sup> Whether or not Goulburn qualified by various contemporary or historiographic measures as an ameliorator is second in significance to what this meant for the people he owned. The decisions he imparted to his agents and the

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<sup>110</sup> Broadsheet dated 28 April 1831, Letters and Printed Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature (April 1831- May 1832), Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Henry Goulburn’s Parliamentary Candidature, Goulburn Papers.

<sup>111</sup> Dierksheide, *Amelioration and Empire*, 214.

<sup>112</sup> Petley identifies Diana Paton’s recent scholarship as among a number of recent studies to “look across the great divide of the 1830s’ and outline transformation and continuities between slavery and freedom.” Petley, “New Perspectives,” 875.

<sup>113</sup> Petley recalls Sidney Mintz’s statement: “the lifeways of all of the peoples we study are forever subject to influences from elsewhere, and are forever in flux... they are historical products, processual products, such that most categories and continua run the risk of immobilizing and misrepresenting them.” Petley, “New Perspectives,” 856.

reforms he did or did not put into place at Amity Hall had impacts farther reaching than his own pocketbook and his own conscience. Ward argues in regards to the topic of amelioration that “‘decolonized’ narratives of the Caribbean past, writing ‘history from below’, have perhaps been carried a little too far.”<sup>114</sup> This assessment is contested by the experience of Amity Hall. Indeed, as he asserts, planter policy was influenced above all, by metropolitan influences: Goulburn only implemented reform at Amity Hall when pressured by his peers to do so.<sup>115</sup> That it was the main source of change at his estate is untrue. The policies Goulburn did enact on his plantation did not ameliorate the conditions of his slaves’ lives in a significant way. Sugar work under slavery was deadly; it was not compatible with human life, and thus, the success of ameliorative measures was inherently limited by work and the system of slavery itself. The actions of Goulburn’s slaves reveal that amelioration at Amity Hall occurred congruent with their terms, and though it took multiple instances of pressure coming from the top to spur Goulburn to limited action, it was those at the bottom that knew, and made known, what real amelioration entailed.

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<sup>114</sup> Ward, “The Amelioration of British West Indian Slavery,” 1224.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 1224.

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