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Author focuses on the governing élites and argues that salient features of their behaviour and attitudes were responses to the emancipation process. They objected to the abolition of slavery and the divergence of the society they lived in from the ideals they envisioned. Concludes that the élite's harsh responses to change exacerbated rather than strengthened their fragile political and economic status.

In: New West Indian Guide/ Nieuwe West-Indische Gids 70 (1996), no: 3/4, Leiden, 255-281

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R. BERLEANT-SCHILLER

THE WHITE MINORITY AND THE EMANCIPATION
PROCESS IN MONTSERRAT, 1807-32.¹

INTRODUCTION

Most recent studies of the emancipation process in the formerly British Caribbean have treated such topics as the plight and progress of free persons of color; the role of metropolitan politics and humanitarian ideologies in emancipation; the role of slaves in achieving their own legal freedom; and the links between the sugar economy, rising capitalism, and emancipation.² The white population, by contrast, and especially the governing elite, has tempted few scholars of the emancipation period since the 1960s and early 1970s, when studies of slavery and hitherto silent groups – slaves, women, free persons of color – began to flourish. The literature shows clearly that white elites in the British Caribbean during the first third of the nineteenth century have attracted but little research since Lowell Ragatz's seminal work of 1928, *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British West Indies*. Between 1928 and 1950, only two major works dealt deeply with any aspect of planter society and economy: Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) and Richard Pares's *A West India Fortune* (1950). D.J. Murray's work on colonial government (1965) and Claude Levy's on pre-emancipation Barbados (1959) returned to the 1800-34 period, and in 1968 Roger T. Anstey's critique of Williams appeared, followed by William Green's critique of Ragatz in 1973. Richard Sheridan's work is confined to the eighteenth century (1961; 1970; 1971; 1976). Otherwise, the burst of research on slavery and plantations in the Americas in the 1970s and 1980s rarely treated planter classes and white society.³ Indeed, in 1985 J.R. Ward emphasized the need for research on

New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids vol. 70 no. 3 & 4 (1996): 255-281

the behaviors and attitudes of planter elites during the pre-emancipation period, pointing out that even though the causes of West Indian decline are no longer disputed, there is still a "main area of doubt concern[ing] the planters' performance and state of morale in conditions of adversity" (Ward 1985:18). Nothing substantial has been done exclusively on this topic since 1973, even though it is treated briefly in a few works with other emphases.⁴ The one exception is a recent conference paper by Karl Watson (1995), which possibly indicates a revival of interest in white segments during the emancipation period.

We may therefore profitably return to the study of the white population in the British Caribbean colonies during the early nineteenth century with insights gained from recent research on slavery and plantation economies. This paper examines white society on the island of Montserrat in the period between 1807, when the British slave trade was abolished, and 1832, when Montserrat was forced to pass legislation that ensured voting rights for free persons of color.⁵ This period encompasses the intermediate steps in the emancipation process that culminated in legal slave emancipation and apprenticeship of slaves in British territories from 1834 to 1838: the abolition of the slave trade, slave registration, legal recognition of free colored citizenship, and amelioration of slavery. It is also the time when global political and economic processes squeezed Montserrat and the other old British sugar colonies (but not Trinidad and British Guiana) out of the prosperity and economic centrality they had enjoyed in the eighteenth century. New cane production in the Americas and elsewhere (for example, Cuba, Trinidad, Java, Mauritius); sugar beet competition; new Spanish and Portuguese policies for colonial economic development; rising industrialization in the temperate Americas and its effect on immigration and population distribution; and the end of favored status in Britain all had their effects on the West Indies. There were also humanitarian assaults on British slavery and the ridicule and vilification of West Indian planters. Other influences on West Indian prosperity included the profitability of slavery, mounting slave resistance, and planter agricultural practices.

During this socio-economic upheaval the white segments of Montserratian society were neither homogeneous nor solidary, as they are reported to have been in the eighteenth century (Goveia 1965:204-7). This essay focuses particularly on the governing elites, and argues that salient features of their behavior and attitudes were responses to the emancipation process, which they resisted and tried to thwart, and to the divergence of the society they lived in from the ideals they envisioned. These features included increasingly tough treatment of slaves and free persons of color, illegal and criminal behavior on both institutional and individual levels,

governmental incompetence, and self-serving images of themselves that clashed with their management of the island's legal, governmental, and economic affairs as well as with the perceptions of the Colonial Office. It also argues that these responses exacerbated rather than strengthened their fragile political and economic status.

But why focus on Montserrat? The island has always been obscure and marginal to the other members of the former Leeward Islands Colony, and today is unique among them in choosing colonial rule over independent statehood. Montserrat is not typical, but neither is any other Caribbean island. All are mixes of distinctiveness and likeness. A close look at any of the Leewards during the emancipation process can refine the history of the British Caribbean, which has too often been perceived as the history of the larger and more politically central colonies of Jamaica and Barbados. This examination of Montserrat illuminates individual behavior that generalizations obscure and yields new material for regional syntheses. A new assessment of white society on Montserrat can enhance collective versions of history and society in the formerly British Caribbean and augment the growing literature on its smaller islands.

ECONOMY, DEMOGRAPHY, AND WHITE SOCIAL STRUCTURE BEFORE EMANCIPATION

The sugar economy in the British West Indies had been shrinking since at least the late 1770s, and Montserrat was part of the regional pattern (Carrington 1987). During the period from 1756 to 1780, the mean annual export of sugar from Montserrat was 2136 tons. This was not great by comparison with Antigua or St. Kitts, but encompasses Montserrat's peak years. By contrast, from 1807 to 1832 the mean annual export was 1360 tons, a drop of 36.4 percent.⁶

The pangs of this decline were intensified by grave economic mismanagement. Because Montserrat lacked a deep water harbor, freight was carried between shore and vessel by lighter. Most of it passed through either Antigua or St. Kitts, which added delay and expense. This situation did not in itself cause Montserrat's problems; rather, the absence of planning and foresight in dealing with it repeatedly sabotaged the import and circulation of necessary goods. Montserrat's improvidence was sharply exposed when a hurricane struck on September 16, 1816. The storm washed out the hillside gardens of the poor and the enslaved, destroying their staple foods – cassava, bananas, and plantains. It wrecked most other food supplies as well, but no trading vessel was due from the North

American mainland until Christmas, leaving a three-month period during which there were no "flour, bread, or provisions of any description." The storm razed houses and sugar works, but there were no stocks of material for even stopgap repairs.⁷ Montserrat's legislative council begged the Colonial Office to ease the disaster by lifting trade barriers, but its pleas had become tiresome: within the previous six months the Colonial Office had twice opened the port because – even without a hurricane – food, lumber, and plantation goods were almost gone.⁸

The hurricane taught nothing: in 1819, for example, the council claimed an "alarming" shortage of the building supplies necessary for agriculture and shipping, and complained of the "ruinous" cost of getting them from other British colonies.⁹ Critical shortages persisted into 1821, when the island had had no shingles, lumber, provisions, or mules for a year. "Cash is extremely scarce and Provisions very dear, owing to the long drought and little trade ... It is said there are but two or three barrels of Flour now on the island." Montserrat pleaded lack of ships and high freight costs, but the Colonial Office thought that "want of precaution and timely exertion" was a more likely explanation.¹⁰

In 1824 the governor of the Leeward Islands Colony described Montserrat as "impoverished and ruined," while the council reiterated its usual complaints. Sugar brought in a "mere nothing"; there was almost no commerce; and the costs of bringing goods in from Antigua in small vessels "often exceed the value of the goods."¹¹ Yet, no positive responses to the island's routine calls for help and open trade ever shook the legislature out of its lax planning or established Montserrat securely.

In the midst of their fading sugar economy, economic incompetence, and dwindling prestige, white Montserratians also saw what must have been to them a disquieting change in the island's population composition. Whites had first become a numerical minority in Montserrat early in the eighteenth century. By then the expanding plantation system had forced out white small farmers, and white servitude all but disappeared as the Atlantic slave trade supplied plantation labor (Sheridan 1974:173; Berleant-Schiller 1989). By the early nineteenth century, white Montserratians had seen within their lifetimes their own numbers shrink alarmingly, and a formerly insignificant population group loom large.

As Table 1 shows, the white population halved between 1805 and 1822 while the free colored population grew by 274 percent to outnumber it. Similar changes occurred elsewhere in the British Caribbean, but unlike the whites of Jamaica and Barbados, the white oligarchy in Montserrat stubbornly excluded free persons of color and did not recruit them as allies against the slave majority.¹²

TABLE 1. POPULATION OF MONTSERRAT 1787-1851

Year	Free White	Free Colored	Enslaved	Total
1787	1300	260	10,000	11,560
1805	1000	250	9,500	10,750
1811	444	?	6,728	?
1822	421	685	6,586	7,692
1824	398	550	6,395	7,337
1828	315	818	5,986	7,119
1834	312	827	5,026	6,165
		all free persons of color		
1851	150	6,903		7,053

Compiled from Davy 1854; Montgomery 1839:90; PRO, CO177/17, February 16, 1811; PRO, CO10/8, Montserrat Bluebook, 1824.

Tabel 2 shows that adult women outnumbered adult men. White children were few; in 1811, for example, there were only 91 children out of the 444 whites present.¹³ The white population fluctuated, but remained few in absolute numbers. Despite its minuscule size it was stratified, discordant, and divided, as it also was in Barbados (Watson 1995).

TABLE 2. WHITE POPULATION OF MONTSERRAT 1811-33

Year	White Men	White Women
1811	154	199
1822	197	224
1824	175	213
1828	139	176
1833	150	162

Compiled from Davy 1854 and PRO, CO177/17, February 16, 1811.

The top of Montserrat's white hierarchy was much the same as the top in the other Leeward Islands: an elite oligarchy made up of planters and merchants, with resident attorneys and managers just below. The power of this planter oligarchy emanated from its control of capital and labor, and from the consequent governmental authority granted it within the British colonial structure. Until the later nineteenth century Montserrat had, as did other British legislative colonies, a bicameral legislature that included an assembly elected by and made up of white male freeholders, and a council, which was the upper chamber, also white and male, appointed by the crown through the agency of the Colonial Office (Thomas 1988:24-25). The council had both judicial and legislative powers, whereas the assembly had only legislative powers. The white men who made up these chambers were both a tiny fraction of the population and minuscule in absolute

numbers (see Tables 1 and 2). Other public offices were filled by appointees from the same minuscule pool.

Montserrat also had in theory, though not in practice, a full system of British courts and legal officers, drawn from the same pool. Beyond these, there were no public institutions or public life, unless the established Anglican church, which received public funds, is counted.

Outside the oligarchic and managerial groups were white women and poor, non-elite whites, categories that overlapped. Indeed, most of the poor were women and children, which fits with the skewed sex ratio of whites (Table 2). Charles Lanion, Methodist missionary in 1822, mentioned a scattering of "poor white Families, in a most ignorant and almost barbarous State," who lived in the northeastern mountains.¹⁴ Some of the poor, mainly town-dwellers, lived on poor relief that the legislature doled out. Of nine grantees in "very great Distress" in 1815, seven were women. The legislature qualified need by moral judgment: Mrs. Perry, for example, was stricken from the poor list because of her "immoral and disgraceful conduct." Elizabeth Weldon was exempted from taxes as a "destitute orphan" receiving assistance from local benefactors.¹⁵ Poor white children were of no account. In 1811 the Council considered Francis McNemera's plan for a boarding school for poor boys. His plan gives us a peephole into the marginalized life of poor whites in the British Caribbean of the time. McNemara proposed to keep the boys "neat and clean" and to "reclaim" them from "Cursing, Swearing, Gaming, and drinking." They would be taught good behavior, Catechism, reading, figures, and English grammar. The cost for the twelve white pauper boys on the island was to be £720 currency per year, plus "extraordinary" expenses, such as castor oil and "wine of the Doctors desire." McNemera concluded, "To instruct the Ignorant and Inferior, I may say, the lost, members of Society, is a design equally well founded in Religion, Humanity, and Civil Policy." The Council tabled the plan, and did not consider it again.¹⁶ This incident illustrates Gordon Lewis's (1983:97) contention that the planter mentality "mixed up" its class and race prejudices.

Outside the categories of planter elites, attorneys and managers, women, and poor whites were a few transient Methodist missionaries and their families. They constituted a very small white group that the other segments of white society did not easily accommodate. They were English representatives of an aspiring middle-class and religious way of life who came with the stated purpose of teaching slaves to read and write in order to convert them to Christianity. Their latent functions were more complex. Certainly they tried to inculcate English, nineteenth-century, middle-class values and ways of life. Whether they helped maintain the slave system by

teaching Christian resignation, or challenged it by teaching literacy is debatable; Lewis (1983:200) argues that the missionary enterprise was "basically quietistic." Probably both functions went on at once. Methodist missionaries also acted as brokers between the slave majority, which was their main target, and the white minority. They did not proselytize whites, who presumably were already Christians, but offered them Christian education. Neither were they openly abolitionist. Thomas Hyde, for example, was horrified at the public auction of an old woman for 42 shillings (while a horse went for £60), but restrained himself from buying and freeing her because of the risk to his reputation and work.¹⁷

Since women and free persons of color were barred from public service, and the transient Methodist missionaries were also excluded, the handful of other white men on the island – planters, merchants, managers, and attorneys – filled all offices. Thus the members of the two legislative chambers along with holders of one or more key positions in the judiciary and civil establishment made up a powerful oligarchy with interlocking personnel. The inevitable holding of multiple offices by a single person and the conflicts of interest that followed had a predictable and corrosive influence on governmental and legal functioning. We have already seen the economic mismanagement that resulted. Most other British Caribbean colonies, also short of competent white men and rejecting free persons of color, were in the same pass (Ragatz 1931).

Not all white men, however, had the same opinions and interests. There were competing views on such urgent issues as the amelioration and ultimate end of slavery, the rights of free persons of color, and local as opposed to colonial control of government. On an institutional level the legislature was the main locus of strife, the crown-appointed council attempting to control the elected assembly and the assembly routinely balking the council. In 1815, for example, the issue of colonial and local control was highlighted when the council, incensed if not punctuated, accused the assembly of sneaking off to the governor in St. Kitts "to dispute deny infringe the priviledges Power and Authority" of the council, which was the "Representation of Majesty," and protested the

Feuds ... which have for a few years prevented Public Business being carried on with harmony disunited Individuals drawn down the Animadversion of our Sister Colonies and thrown the Public Funds in the greatest discredit.¹⁸

The antagonism in the legislature was structural, since it persisted through personnel changes in the assembly and even when former assemblymen became councillors.

Matters concerning slave amelioration and rights for free persons of color were especially bedeviling. One clash concerned the cost of extraditing and prosecuting Joe Blake, a white man who had fled to St. Martin after committing "one of the most atrocious murders that ever was committed on an unfortunate Slave." The responses of the two chambers expose significant oligarchic attitudes. The council was as much concerned with the "everlasting Stigma" of failing to prosecute as it was with justice, but the assembly thought that neither Montserrat's reputation nor justice for the murder of a slave warranted an expense of £19/7s.¹⁹ Another serious and ongoing wrangle concerned voting rights for free persons of color. Let us see how these two issues stoked oligarchic resistance to the emancipation process and influenced the overlapping systems of government and justice.

"MERELY CONSTITUTIONAL": RIGHTS FOR FREE PERSONS OF COLOR

Montserrat's white oligarchs not only conflated their class and color prejudices, they also confused color and citizenship status. Free persons of color, whether landed or not, suffered pervasive and daily discrimination on both institutional and individual levels. White men, for example, outraged missionary Enoch Wood by their refusal to bear the coffin of a man "tainted by colour."²⁰ People of color were not eligible for poor relief.²¹ They were fined and imprisoned without jury trials. The assembly refused to administer the oath of office to a colored appointee to the custom-house and rejected a qualified colored constable (Great Britain 1826:35). One incident especially encapsulates the oligarchy's obstruction of reform and its subversion of law and constitution.

In 1813 the governor of the Leewards directed Montserrat to hold its first assembly election in thirty-one years.²² Freeholders of color took this opportunity to exercise for the first time their constitutional right to vote. It also gave the assembly an opportunity to thwart that constitutional right. The newly-convened assembly immediately expelled Dudley Semper, a white man, because the votes of free persons of color had elected him. It justified Semper's expulsion on the grounds of "immemorial custom": it had always been the "undeniable right of the assembly to be the sole Judges of what concerns themselves" and to determine their own privileges. The right of colored freeholders to vote for assembly members was, they argued, "merely constitutional" and liable to abuse. The members argued that the election officer had violated unwritten law – the "ven-

erable Custom of the Country" – by accepting the votes of colored freeholders and had thereby sabotaged proper caste barriers, and thus dismissed the constitution as a guide to legal behavior.²³

Twenty-four white male freeholders promptly repudiated the assembly's action and supported the freeholders of color, who petitioned the Leewards governor for their rights.²⁴ Governor D'Urban lacked power to intervene in the matter, and the Colonial Secretary, Lord Bathurst, declined to. He urged D'Urban to dissolve the assembly so that the white supporters could elect their own candidates to a new assembly, and closed further discussion.²⁵ Bathurst must have known that the attorney general of the Leewards had advised against dissolution, and that his rebuff insulted Montserrat's colored freeholders and embarrassed D'Urban.²⁶ I think he wished to avoid ruffling the Montserratian oligarchy, whose cooperation he needed for the urgent amelioration legislation that loomed. Semper's expulsion expressed the gathering anxiety of the oligarchy and intensified factionalism within the legislature.

Another petition, one of many between 1813 and 1822, vividly exposes the continuing resistance to the rights of free persons of color in Montserrat. In 1820, forty-nine colored freeholders protested once again to the governor that the election officer had refused their ballots in the election of that May. They declared

That your petitioners although undistinguished from the White Inhabitants by any incapacity, either actually to to enjoy or duly appreciate the Liberties and immunities which are granted by the British Constitution to its meanest Subjects, are yet deprived of exercising in this Island the Right of Elective Franchise.

They pointed out that Antigua did not bar colored freeholders from voting, but that the Montserrat legislature treated them as a

class of beings entirely distinct, (though Sprung, from the white Inhabitants) whose advancement in Wealth and respectability it was advisable to retard, and whose enjoyment of Political privileges, it was their bounden duty and Vital Interest to Prevent.²⁷

The assembly that threw out Dudley Semper in 1813 rebelled against the violation of custom. By 1820, their outrage had become an unshakable political position founded on a change that surely seemed to them ominous: in 1798 only two freeholders of color had existed on the island. Since then their numbers had grown and they had become educated, skilled contributors to the welfare of the island, maintaining a crack militia

corps and successfully repulsing French privateers.²⁸ The assembly formally conceded the voting rights of freeholders of color only in 1822. In fact, the election officers continued unhindered to reject their ballots (Wesley 1934:149).

Montserrat continued to thwart the rights of free persons of color after most other British Caribbean colonies had begun to yield. In Jamaica free persons of color had gained the rights to testify against and inherit from whites in 1796, and full legal equality by 1830 (Sio 1976:8). By 1832 all British Caribbean colonies except Montserrat and St. Kitts had purged their legal codes of discrimination. The Montserrat legislators passed a citizenship bill in May 1832 but tied it to a new import duty to offset the tax losses and pauper payments that they claimed would follow, and the bill was therefore rejected in the Colonial Office. Six months later the legislature finally gave in (Wesley 1934:160-66). Within two years, at least four out of twelve elected assembly members were free men of color, an event that to white Montserratians would have seemed to justify their resistance.²⁹

THE JUSTICE SYSTEM AND OLIGARCHIC BACKLASH

During the period from 1807 to emancipation in 1834, the interlocking and overlapping governmental and legal systems in Montserrat grew increasingly inept and corrupt. The report of a commission sent by the Colonial Office in 1822 to examine justice in the colonies bears this out. The report, written in 1823 and published in 1826, summarizes the West Indian justice systems as inconsistent, unpredictable, discriminatory toward slaves and free persons of color, and in general "rash, crude, and discordant" (Great Britain 1826:32).

Montserrat was no exception. The commissioners who visited the island investigated the entire legislative, court, and justice system; they took testimony from whites, free persons of color, and, as far as they could, slaves. The evidence exposes the chronic disorder and corruption in Montserratian institutions, as well as the oligarchy's judicial tactics for resisting change, and deepens our understanding of local society and the white oligarchy in the years before emancipation.

We have already seen how the assembly fought the voting rights of free persons of color. Their judicial participation was also abridged. In 1811, for example, a jury of five had included a free person of color, and a woman too.³⁰ But by 1828 the courts barred both colored and female freeholders, and, in defiance of law, summoned white men to duty whether they were

freeholders or not.³¹ The effects of this discrimination were ruinous.

Without colored freeholders it was impossible to assemble able and disinterested juries. The court of King's Bench and Common Pleas, which heard civil suits and acted as superior court of common law, could not make "dispassionate" judgments. Peter Wheatland, who was coroner, assembly member, and leader of white support for the rights of free persons of color, testified that he often attended trial there "without meeting a competent jury" (Great Britain 1826:35).

Illegal barriers against the service of free persons of color affected the bench as well as the juries. Suitable, trained white candidates were almost non-existent. The justices were "men of fortune," untrained in law, who served part-time. Their appointment was haphazard and expedient. For example, the single person on the island in 1823 who was qualified by training to be a justice was the resident Crown Officer (the legal representative of Britain in the colonies). The legislature did not appoint him to the bench, even though it was usual to do so in the other British Caribbean colonies. This dereliction was surely the intentional weighting of the system in favor of oligarchic interests (Great Britain 1826:34).

The Court of Error was also undermined to benefit the oligarchy. As the appeals court, it potentially challenged the council's judicial authority. The council therefore failed to appropriate funds for its meeting. The legislature also set high fees which deterred people from using the courts (Great Britain 1826:35).

Thus a tiny coterie of white oligarchs made up the overlapping civil and legal establishments. Their resistance to citizenship rights for free persons of color was a first line of defence against parliamentary pressure toward the amelioration of slavery. They bolstered their own authority by hobbling the judicial system and, in effect, blocking the rights of all Montserrians to fair trial and judicial relief.

SLAVES' RIGHTS AND THE WHITE OLIGARCHY

Parliamentary action toward the amelioration of slavery in the British colonies began with the slave registration requirements of 1815. In 1823 Parliament imposed other measures, but only in the Crown Colonies, where there were no legislatures. These included limits on physical punishment, abolition of Sunday markets, religious education, recognition of slave marriage, and limited legal rights for slaves, such as the acceptance of slave testimony in court (Rice 1975:251-54). The legislative colonies, which made their own laws, were pressured to pass similar legislation. Many

balked, but Montserrat was the last of the Caribbean colonies to recognize the rights of slaves even though, as C. Duncan Rice (1975:252) points out, quiet acceptance of amelioration might well have staved off emancipation for many years.

Nevertheless, Montserratians obsessively mulled amelioration issues, which could not be separated from the question of emancipation. In 1826 missionary Thomas Hyde wrote that amelioration and the "aniliation" of slavery were an "endless theme" discussed behind the closed doors of the council and assembly and out among individual whites and free persons of color. Most slaveholders, he wrote, were afraid of losing slaves without compensation and prophesied "immediate destruction" if slaves were to get wind of any possible emancipation.³² Resistance to amelioration of slavery may account for the increased severity of sentences that the council meted to slaves around 1823, even though slaves were at that time supposedly entitled to jury trials rather than council hearings. Early in the century the council had not been especially harsh toward slaves committing first offenses.³³

By 1823 the council was treating slave matters more harshly. It sentenced one slave to death for stealing a goat, although the sentence was commuted to hard labor in the street gang. Another was barred from suing or prosecuting the white woman who had cheated him of his freedom by accepting his £200 manumission payment while knowing that her own creditors would never allow his manumission (Great Britain 1826:36-37). The courts also hardened against slaves, just as they had hardened against free persons of color ten years earlier. The legislature bolstered judicial resistance by defying Colonial Office mandates and quashing acts to ensure slaves' judicial rights.³⁴ Court discrimination against slaves continued: free persons accused by slaves did not need to take oath; slaves could not make depositions and could not be bailed; and slaves' houses could be searched without warrant, although an owner or overseer was supposed to be present (Great Britain 1826:36-38).

The courts did not even take slave deaths seriously. Peter Wheatland told the justice commission that inquests were almost never held, no matter how suspect the death. In ten years there had been but one, and the defendant was acquitted. The commissioners saw that everywhere in the West Indies "the exclusion of slave testimony" was a chief cause of injustice.³⁵ Later in the year the legislature did pass a bill, presented by Richard Dyett, admitting slave testimony under oath and conceding jury trials to slaves accused of criminal offenses.³⁶

But once more, just as in the case of voting rights for free persons of color, legal rights were not achieved in practice, since juries were partial

and illegally constituted. In 1828 three slave defendants, backed by white supporters, challenged the court on the grounds that they could not get a fair trial because the jury members were not qualified freeholders. The court adjourned in consternation. It summoned every white man on the island in an attempt to assemble a jury, but Montserrat was breaking its own laws by calling white men without property to serve while snubbing colored freeholders.³⁷

Not all white persons shared the dominant oligarchic attitudes and behaviors concerning amelioration. The behavior of a few whites such as Peter Wheatland, Richard Dyett, and those who backed rights for free persons of color shows that the white segment was not monolithic, and that individual whites varied in their treatment of and attitudes toward slaves. However, the personal behavior of most whites reflected the institutionalized illegality and resistance that prevailed on a societal level. The letters and diaries of Methodist missionaries in Montserrat expose some of these behaviors and attitudes.

In 1822 Lanion wrote of "this ignorant and unstable people"; his successor Thomas Hyde called Montserrat a land of "darkness."³⁸ The barbarous punishments and the physical and religious neglect that slaves suffered appalled both of them. They abominated the sexual exploitation of women of color, both bond and free. One old slave woman told Hyde, "*bad* knocks all the *good* out of me heart on this Estate." One manumitted woman explained why she could not join his Methodist society:

I live with a man. A white man ... how can I help it? He bought me, and ... when white man free negroe woman he only free we for *that purpose*. Massa they make us wosse than beasts when them do so and if I was to leave him the world would say me ungrateful.³⁹

Hyde was grieved and angered to find on his return from a three weeks' absence that two or three girls in his congregation had "fallen" to the "acursed lusts and cunning of the Whites," "heathen" who exercised a "filthy abominable influence." The children born of such "unlawful intercourse," he reports, "are in dirt and rags and are often driven to and fro" between their parents for food, and given nothing by either. One manager's will, he recounts, directed that his family by a slave woman be freed. The executor ignored the will, used the money as he pleased, and kept the children as his own slaves. Hyde contrasted this behavior to that of many slave husbands, who took on extra work to secure a wife's freedom.⁴⁰

Hyde had little hope that whipping could be checked, even if outlawed. Some slaveholders had already replaced the outlawed whip and the driv-

er's lash by solitary confinement, but others talked of replacing them by cat and tamarind switch. "It will take great care to prevent the introduction of these things," Hyde cautioned, and pointed to their sadistic-erotic attraction: many young men of the estates "would sooner see a woman flogged than go out to a good dinner."⁴¹ It came about as he feared. In 1828 William Darliss Furlonge, a member of the council, beat his slave Patrick Ryan almost to death with a tamarind switch as punishment for a missing wooden board. The switch was said to sound more gentle than the cat, but to cut as cruelly.⁴²

The Colonial Office also pressed mandatory religious instruction for slaves. Governor D'Urban told Bathurst that Montserrat, in its "ruined" state, could hardly meet the expenses of government, much less the burden of clergymen and teachers for 6,000 slaves. Hyde, who had met with council and assembly to discuss the mandate, was skeptical: "It has appeared quite evident to me that they wish to make the matter as deterring to Government as possible."⁴³ A report of 1829 confirms Hyde's judgment about Montserrat's indifference to schooling (Incorporated Society 1828:33).

On a societal level, Montserrat refused to educate slaves at public expense. Individually, slaveholders responded diversely when Methodist missionaries attempted to provide education at Methodist expense. Some forbade, some cooperated, and some merely allowed missionaries to teach their slaves. Methodist teachers (and there were no others) insisted on basic literacy so that potential converts could read scripture. They depended on slaveholders' good will in making space and time available for education. In 1821 Lanion wrote to all Montserrat planters and managers asking permission to teach the slaves on their estates. Few replied. John Queely Fagan, attorney, refused politely on behalf of the owners of seven plantations. Robert Dobridge, proprietor and council member, agreed half-heartedly but would not release time. Francis Willock considered providing both time and chapels for religious education on his plantations, and by 1824 his manager had actually built a school on Willock's largest estate, and planned for schools on three others.⁴⁴

Only in Plymouth town, where slaves could attend by their own decision on their own free time and where masters were not asked to provide facilities, did Lanion and Hyde have any success with their intermittent classes and Sunday schools for adults and children. There was some progress: by 1826 the two missionaries had established a regular day school in Plymouth. Twenty to thirty children attended twice a week – black, white, colored, bond, and free – without "disapprobation" expressed anywhere. By 1830 the Plymouth school gained publicly funded teachers and a rented building for ninety-four boys and girls, with books supplied by the

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.⁴⁵ Thus some members of the Montserrat white elite began to bend individually if education could be provided without trouble or expense to themselves, but on a societal level continued to thwart universal education long after the end of slavery in 1834 (Berleant-Schiller 1995).

White slaveholders also held opposing positions on slave marriage. Missionary John Maddock married a slave couple in 1820. One proprietor (fortunately not the groom's owner) told the groom he deserved "nine and thirty" for daring to marry, and talked of throwing Maddock off the island. Other "respectable" whites, however, were "disgusted" by him.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, the Montserrat legislature continued to block amelioration legislation. For two years after mandate it stalled the act against transporting slaves between British colonies, passing it only in 1825.⁴⁷ It stopped Sunday markets in 1826 only when Richard Dyett, council member, discovered an applicable act of 1786. Then it subverted the intent of the mandate by ignoring its requirements for religious education and a different market day.⁴⁸ The third amelioration measure that Bathurst had demanded was the admission of slave testimony, which Dyett succeeded in pushing through in 1823.⁴⁹ As late as 1834, however, justice for slaves was careless and haphazard.⁵⁰

CORRUPTION AND CRIMINALITY IN THE OLIGARCHY

As we have seen, all civil and judicial offices were filled by the tiny number of white men on the island, many of whom held multiple and unrelated jobs, with and without salaries. Peter Wheatland was both customs wailer and coroner in 1822, in addition to being an elected assembly member. Henry Dyett was for many years King's Counsel (the public prosecutor), Clerk of the Assembly (the keeper of minutes and journals), and Powder Officer (the supervisor of the magazine). These two were, at least, able and honest in a system that countenanced conflict of interest and incompetence. Others were corrupt or inept or both. James Masters held eight offices in 1821, ranging from Captain Gunner (harbormaster) to Registrar of Slaves, and collected the salaries while passing off the work to hired deputies.⁵¹ Ragatz (1931:15-16) blamed absentee landlordism for poor governance and multiple office-holding in the Leewards, arguing that competent whites departed. A new perspective provides another explanation: a significant population of educated free people of color was excluded; further, as Douglas Hall (1964) argued, the problem was systemic.

Also striking, and inseparable from institutionalized squabbling in the

legislature and stymied legislation for social change, is the corrupt and criminal behavior of individual legislators. Four out of eight councillors – the highest officers on the island – were charged with, and had probably committed, misconduct, serious crimes, or both between 1816 and 1818: Bernard Gordon, Henry Hamilton, George Herbert, and Dudley Semper.

The Colonial Office had appointed Semper in 1814 to the council. He was also island treasurer and sat on the Bench of Justices. But on November 29, 1816 the council summoned him to answer charges of fraud, suborning, and violation of the Navigation Acts. He was accused of securing false papers for his brig, *Marquis of Wellington*, in Martinique in March 1816. He dodged a customs seizure in Montserrat on December 7 and made for St. Thomas, where he sold both vessel and cargo. The supercargo, called before the chief justice of the court of King's Bench and Common Pleas on December 13, denied that Semper had ordered him to get false papers or to smuggle anything from Martinique. The council agreed that the charge of fraud lacked merit, but found Semper guilty of suborning the supercargo to forgery and perjury. It also found him guilty of violating the Navigation Acts in his office as treasurer of the island.⁵²

Governor Ramsay suspended Semper from all his offices on December 20, 1816. The Prince Regent reinstated him to the council the following May, even though his innocence had not been established. Four councillors immediately resigned in protest: Henry Hamilton, Thomas Hill, William Shiell, and Bernard Gordon, members respectively of twenty-five, fourteen, nine, and eight years' standing. These were the same councillors who had allegedly helped organize Semper's expulsion from the assembly in 1813.⁵³ Governor Ramsay persuaded them to withdraw their resignations so that they could facilitate the vital Slave Registry bill, which was passed on July 10, 1817. Ramsay did not believe that Semper was innocent, but the Colonial Office stonewalled him, just as it had done to D'Urban when he sought justice for colored freeholders.⁵⁴ Once again, the priority Bathurst placed on legislation that would forward the emancipation process overrode malfeasance in Montserrat.

Gordon and Hamilton could hardly claim the moral high ground. Michael Semper, Dudley's brother, pointed out that Henry Hamilton had recently been charged with the murder of a free man of color. The coroner's inquest and the grand jury had found against him, but he had been "acquitted in this world" by the petit jury. Bernard Gordon had been found guilty of beating "a poor white inhabitant and I believe a freeholder of the Island," and fined 50 guineas in currency. Michael Semper implied that Ramsay colluded in smearing Dudley Semper and charged that the four councillors had plotted the rejection of colored votes "in order that

they may pack the assemblys as they please.”⁵⁵ That charge is plausible, given the assembly’s routine obstructionism. By March 1818 Bathurst had not only reaffirmed Dudley Semper’s seat on the council, but restored him to his other offices as well.⁵⁶

Despite Dudley Semper’s high standing with the Colonial Office, neither he nor his brother, both of whom were merchants, come across as savory or principled persons. They had a reputation for bill-buying and lending at high interests, and appear in many contexts as sharp operators motivated by political or financial expedience.⁵⁷ Dudley’s politics were limber, too. He did not sign the whites’ petition in support of the colored votes that had elected him, slipping smoothly from under the assembly’s denunciation of his “dangerous ideas of Equalization.”⁵⁸

Dudley Semper was also meddlesome and contradictory. In 1823 he threatened to spread damaging tales at the Colonial Office about Methodist missionary work among slaves, even though he had helped buy a horse to facilitate the missionary’s work.⁵⁹ He was certainly the unnamed assistant justice who had “reprobated” Peter Wheatland for taking slave testimony, since the bill to allow slave testimony had been introduced by the only other assistant justice at the time, Richard Dyett. Nonetheless, in 1826 the Colonial Office appointed Dudley Semper to be Chief Justice of Montserrat, perhaps because no other white man of intelligence and energy was available.⁶⁰

George Herbert, council president throughout the Semper affairs, undoubtedly transgressed in 1818, probably without criminal intent. Herbert owned a slave named Tom Dexter who, he claimed, repeatedly robbed Herbert and tried to poison him. Herbert forbore from prosecuting Dexter “from motives of humanity,” but finally hustled him onto a vessel and told the captain to take him away. When the captain found he could not legally transport a slave he brought Dexter back to Herbert, whom the council then charged with slave trading. Herbert insisted that he was only attempting to save Dexter’s life, but he was bailed and suspended from his offices. He went to England to clear himself, and half a year later was acquitted and reinstated.⁶¹ He apparently had not grasped that deporting Dexter amounted to illegal slave-trading, but witlessness does not excuse the highest official in the legislature. Interestingly, Dudley Semper’s name is missing from the list of the councillors who pursued Herbert’s prosecution. Perhaps he foresaw conflict without political gain.

These cases add up to a great deal of corruption in the governing elite: four out of eight councillors accused, and probably guilty, of serious offenses, including smuggling, suborning perjury and forgery, assault, slave-

trading, and murder. Each offense both reflected and intensified the rifts in the governing elite, small as it was and beleaguered as it felt itself.

THE OLIGARCHS REVEAL THEMSELVES

Neither politics nor ideology fully explains the self-defeating behavior of the white elites, as the case of Peter Wheatland suggests. Although Wheatland, in contrast to the Sempers and Hamiltons of the island, defended the voting rights of free persons of color, tried to seek (belated) justice for a slave who died of starvation, and openly described to the justice commissioners the shameful state of the courts, missionary Enoch Wood said in 1827, "How this man hates everything good." Perhaps by "good" the missionary meant "Methodist," for Wheatland provoked the remark by calling his slaves to fiddle, sing, play the tambourine, and beat a kettle in his yard while his next-door neighbor, Richard Dyett, entertained Wood at a soiree of hymn-singing. It is hard to know Wheatland's motive. He had contributed money to Methodist efforts toward slave education, and had sided with Dyett in support of admitting slave testimony in court. He also led a pack of sports to fire off old cannons at midnight just for fun.⁶² He was at once a slaveholder and a proponent of slaves' rights, and clearly a complicated person. Others are more transparent.

Both Henry Hamilton and Joseph Herbert have left evidence about how white oligarchs perceived themselves and interpreted their own predicament. Both were, or had been, planters and both were long-time members of the council. Indeed, Herbert had been council president for thirty years, except for his half-year's suspension over the Dexter affair in 1818-19. Both had been acquitted of grave offenses – murder and slave-exporting – that they in all likelihood committed. The fortunes of both were shriveling.

Joseph Herbert, who had been acquitted of slave trading, wrote to the colonial secretary in 1822. He had gone to Demerara when his Montserrat plantation no longer supported him, but was back again in a year and a half, administering the island in 1822 at no salary as before. Hearing of the need for officers to protect the interests of slaves, he presented himself for the job, explaining that he does not "own a slave or an acre of land." Happily for the slaves, Herbert was denied the office.⁶³ Hamilton, acquitted of murder, also wrote to the colonial secretary. By 1824 his property had sunk in value while his debts mounted. Nevertheless, he thought well of himself and considered himself an appropriate spokesman on the unsettling matter of slave emancipation. In this self-appointed capacity he wrote to Lord Bathurst offering suggestions for dealing with rumors of eman-

cipation among the slaves. "Humanity" and "security," he wrote, demand that slaves be disabused of any notion that emancipation could be on the way. He proposed a "conciliatory measure" that would show the slaves – "sensible creole people" – that coercion was still necessary, but that good behavior might earn indulgence. Hamilton suggested that slaves could become "His Majesty's Plantation labourers," or perhaps indentured servants. He conceded that their comfort should be improved, and suggested a wage in proportion to the crop. Finally, he proposed, the British government could purchase the slaves to form a fund for the aid of planters.

Resident planters were, he argued further, the people best suited to solve West Indian problems precisely because of "their present unparalleled distress," the consequence of high sugar taxes and London merchants who mortgaged and then devalued their property. They "feel their privation considerably augmented by not having the means of giving their slaves that liberal allowance of clothing they were in the habit of doing in their day of prosperity."

Hamilton offered himself as an example of West Indian hardship. His eight children had no provision. He could sell his property for only one third of its value. His own hardship was linked with that of his London merchant, Henry Dyett, who was himself without funds. "I trust that through your Interest, with the Treasury, I may be relieved from the pressure of my London merchant." Hamilton detailed a plan for the Colonial Office to rescue himself and Dyett. He also described how he lost both his paid positions – judge of Admiralty Court and Searcher of Customs. Since both were not to be held by same person, he resigned Searcher only to see the Admiralty Court withdrawn from the island. He closed by asking that he be remembered if any position should arise.⁶⁴

Even though he was transparently motivated by class and self-interest, and not very astute, Hamilton probably saw this letter as balanced and thoughtful. At the root of his self-serving and disingenuous proposals were the realities of a declining sugar economy, fear of slave revolt, and the dread of emancipation that obsessed all white Montserratians.⁶⁵ He is an excellent illustration of Lewis's (1983:119) contention that the West Indian planter "lived in a world of self-sustaining myth" that included "the myth of African degeneracy, the myth of Negro happiness, the myth of King Sugar."

CONCLUSION

It is hard not to conclude that the white oligarchy of Montserrat participated in its own decline, even while it felt itself imposed upon and victimized by the emancipation process. It is not plausible to argue that plantocratic life made other behavior inconceivable. Within the meager white minority diverse opinions and alternative models for behavior were available: the twenty-four supporters of colored freeholder voting rights; the judge, Richard Dyett, who pressed for the admission of slave testimony in court; Peter Wheatland, a slaveholder who supported legal rights for slaves; the Methodist missionaries working for slaves' rights to literacy, religious opportunity, and marriage; the nameless group of whites who backed accused slaves in their challenge to illegal jury selection. But the influence of such dissenters on institutional decisions and outcomes was minimal. Most members of the legal and legislative oligarchy continued to compound their mismanagement of the island by both institutional and individual resistance to the emancipation process, and as we saw in the period between 1810 and 1827, hardened their resistance to legal and judicial changes toward amelioration, voting rights, and emancipation.

Threatened by the emancipation process, the oligarchy subverted law and constitution to achieve immediate aims. The consequent wrangling, ineptitude, improvidence, misconduct and corruption weakened both the operation of government and its claims to credibility with the Colonial Office. Contempt for law and constitution are not extraordinary, but the behavior of Montserrat's white oligarchy was singularly self-defeating. In July 1834, a month before every British slave was legally freed, the legislature neglected proper procedure and undercut its own emancipation act, even though, as one Colonial official remarked, "all the inconvenience will be suffered only by the inhabitants of Montserrat."⁶⁶

NOTES

1. The University of Connecticut Research Foundation supported the research for this paper; Betsy Hoagg, librarian at the University of Connecticut, rendered essential inter-library loan services; Jay Mandle made useful comments. I thank them all.
2. See for example Sheridan 1961; Aufhauser 1974; Handler 1974; Anstey 1975; Drescher 1977; Ward 1978, 1985; Heuman 1981; Cox 1984; Beckles 1985; Bush 1985; Craton 1985; Solow & Engerman 1987.
3. A summary international conference on slavery in New World plantation societies held in 1976 included only three papers that even touched on white planter classes – in Brazil, Cuba, and St. Kitts (Fernandes 1976; Frucht 1976; Knight 1976).

4. For example, Levy 1980:16-27; Brereton 1981:52-69; Thomas 1988:24-33; Ward 1988:43-60; Olwig 1993:73-89.
5. The main sources are the Methodist Missionary Society (MSS) papers held at London University, School of Oriental and African Studies; Correspondence and Sessional Papers held in the Public Record Office (PRO), Colonial Office (CO), Kew, London; and *The Commissioners' Report on Justice*, which reports the work of a study commission sent to the West Indies in 1822 and published in 1826. The missionary papers relating to Montserrat have not been used in any publication yet.
6. Assembled from Deerr 1941, I:196-97. The years between the two periods are incompletely documented.
7. PRO, CO7/2, Montserrat Council to Captain General of the Leeward Islands, October 2, 1816. The vessel was Dudley Semper's notorious brig; see below.
8. PRO, CO7/3, Ramsay to Bathurst, February 28, 1817; PRO, CO177/1, Sessional Papers, Enclosure 9, Rawlins to Herbert, March 22 and July 4, 1816.
9. PRO, CO7/6, Council to Bathurst, October 22, 1819.
10. PRO, CO7/7, Hill to D'Urban, January 6, 1821; Herbert to D'Urban, July 18, 1821; D'Urban to Herbert, July 21, 1821; MMS, Box 117/2A no. 61, Lanion to MMS, October 2, 1821.
11. PRO, CO7/10, Herbert to Athill, July 24, 1824; D'Urban to Bathurst, March 12, 1824; PRO, CO393/1, Horton to Lowe, May 21, 1824; Council to Governor, October 2, 1816, PRO, CO7/2.
12. Hall 1972; Handler & Sio 1972; Cox 1984:10-32; Fergus 1994:88.
13. PRO, CO 177/17, Sessional Papers, February 16, 1811.
14. One of these rural households consisted of an aged woman and her daughter (herself not so young, since the woman's other daughter had grown children), and another of "two maiden ladies." MMS Box 118 no. 7, Charles Lanion to MMS, January 18, 1822; Box 118 no. 30, March 29, 1822. Lanion's name may possibly be Janion; both his signature and the hand list are ambiguous.
15. PRO, CO 277/18, Sessional Papers, January 7, 1815; CO177/22, Sessional Papers, July 20, 1833.
16. PRO, CO177/17, Sessional Papers, December 7, 1811.
17. MMS, Box 122 no. 78, Diary of Thomas Hyde, May 22, 1825.
18. PRO, CO177/18, Sessional Papers, February 11, 1815.
19. PRO, CO177/18, Sessional Papers, February 4 and February 11, 1815.
20. MMS, Box 126 no. 33, Enoch Wood's Journal, March 20, 1828.
21. MMS, Box 119 no. 97, Hyde to MMS, July 4, 1823.
22. PRO, CO 177/18, Sessional Papers, Proclamation of April 3, 1813.
23. PRO, CO177/18, Sessional Papers, May 22, 1813. Dismissing the constitution was within the English tradition of common law jurisprudence carried to the American colonies before emancipation. See Cover 1975:17-18; 140.

24. PRO, CO7/7, White Freeholders to D'Urban, June 21, 1820.
25. PRO, CO393/1, Bathurst to D'Urban, February 10 and March 10, 1822.
26. The attorney general in Antigua had already advised D'Urban against dissolution, PRO, CO7/7, Horsford to D'Urban, August 24, 1820.
27. PRO, CO7/7, Petition of Free Coloureds to D'Urban, June 21, 1820.
28. PRO, CO7/7, Petitioners to D'Urban, June 1820.
29. PRO, CO178/4, Montserrat Bluebook for 1834, pp. 58-60.
30. PRO, CO177/17, Sessional Papers, January 31, 1811.
31. MMS, Box 126 no. 57, Hyde to MMS, January 4, 1828.
32. MMS, Box 119 no. 137, Hyde to MMS, August 26, 1826.
33. In 1810, for example, a slave woman allegedly entered a white man's dwelling and stole "a Parcel of Salt fish and other Articles to the Value of fifty Shillings." The council sentenced her to a term in jail. In 1811 Quamina Cooper was charged with stealing a goat valued at £3 from Justin Daly, a free person of color. The council dismissed the charge for want of evidence other than Daly's word. In 1811 and 1812 a few slaves were jailed for stealing from other slaves. None of these cases prompted sentences of hard labor, whipping, or death. Two repeating offenders were whipped, however, for burgling the house of a free black woman. PRO, CO177/17, Sessional Papers, December 1, 1810; January 31, 1811; December 7, 1811; CO177/18, May 25, 1812. One accused slave even had a jury trial in 1811. His five-person jury included a woman and a free person of color. By 1823 no one in either category would have been called. PRO, CO 177/17, Sessional Papers February 16, 1811; March 2, 1811.
34. PRO, CO7/10, D'Urban to Herbert, July 2, 1823; CO7/9, D'Urban to Bathurst, October 10, 1823. Bathurst had directed D'Urban to get the local legislatures to initiate amelioration acts under threat of parliamentary action if they failed or delayed.
35. Great Britain 1826:34-35. Wheatland recounted the case of a slave who had died of starvation. Seeing signs of fatal neglect, he as coroner collected evidence from slave witnesses and pursued the case to King's Bench, the highest court. The court decided to "suppress" slave testimony and refused to transmit it to a grand jury. The commissioners asked Wheatland if perhaps he meant "reject" rather than "suppress," but Wheatland was firm about "suppress." No further inquiry took place and, Wheatland affirmed, "one of the assistant judges of the court, strongly reprobated my conduct in taking the evidence of slaves."
36. MMS, Box 119 no. 137, Hyde to MMS, August 26, 1823.
37. PRO, CO393/1, Bathurst to Administrative Officer of Montserrat, June 30, 1824; MMS, Box 126 no. 57, Hyde to MMS, January 4, 1828.
38. MMS, Box 118 no. 116, Lanion to MMS, September 7, 1822; Box 119 no. 92, Hyde to MMS, July 1, 1823.
39. MMS, Box 121 no. 51, Hyde to MMS, August 6 and 8, 1823.
40. MMS, Box 123 no. 63, Hyde to MMS, March 2, 1826; Box 119 no. 137, August 26, 1823.

41. MMS, Box 119 no. 137, Hyde to MMS, August 26, 1823.
42. MMS, Box 128 no. 133, Journal of Enoch Wood, March 18, 1828; Box 119 no. 137, Hyde to MMS, August 26, 1823.
43. PRO, CO7/10, D'Urban to Bathurst, March 12, 1824; MMS, Box 120 no. 21, Hyde to MMS, October 22, 1823.
44. MMS, Box 117/2a no. 72, Lanion to MMS, October 11, 1821; Box 121 no. 107, Hyde to MMS, September 7, 1824.
45. MMS, Box 118 no. 7, Lanion to MMS, January 18, 1822; PRO, CO7/10, Third Report of the Committee for Conducting the Wesleyan-Methodist Montserrat Schools, January 21, 1824; MMS, Box 123 no. 63, Hyde to MMS, March 2, 1826; PRO, CO10/14, Montserrat Bluebook, 1830.
46. MMS, Box 115 no. 46, Maddock to MMS, March 8, 1820. In 1822 Lanion married two plantation slave couples; the master of one groom wished he had been at the wedding and sent a gift of mutton. MMS, Box 118 no. 116, Lanion to MMS, September 7, 1822.
47. PRO, CO7/10, An Act for the More Effectual Suppression of the Slave Trade, January 1, 1825; D'Urban to Bathurst, March 12, 1824.
48. MMS, Box 123 no. 147, Hyde to MMS, June 7, 1826.
49. PRO, CO7/10, D'Urban to Herbert, July 2, 1823; MMS, Box 119 no. 137, Hyde to MMS, August 26, 1823.
50. PRO, CO395/5, Spring Rice to Macgregor, June 6, 1834; July 1, 1834; September 16, 1834.
51. Assembled from Montserrat statistical Bluebooks: PRO, CO10/5, Bluebook for 1821; CO10/6, Bluebook for 1822; CO10/9, Bluebook for 1825; CO10/14, Bluebook for 1830.
52. PRO, CO7/3, Symons and Shiele to Ramsay, December 7, 1816; Ramsay to Bathurst, February 28, 1817, enclosure dated December 13, 1816; Chambers's testimony; Fergus to Ramsay, November 29, 1816; Ramsay to Bathurst, February 20, 1817, enclosures dated December 12 and 14, 1816.
53. PRO, CO7/3, Ramsay to Herbert, December 13, 1816; Ramsay to Bathurst, May 13, 1817; Members of the Council to Ramsay, May 9, 1817; Semper to Bathurst, July 22, 1817.
54. PRO, CO7/3, Ramsay to Members of Council, June 7, 1817; Ramsay to Bathurst, July 10, 1817; Lack to Goulburne, March 22, 1817.
55. PRO, CO7/3, Semper to Bathurst, July 22, 1817.
56. PRO, CO7/4, Ramsay to Bathurst, March 21, 1818.
57. In a suspicious succession of events in 1823 the two brothers foreclosed a mortgage on the property of Sarah Dowdy. She had put up it up as security for a loan from the Sempers to one of her relatives, who was also kin to the Sempers. When the loan was not paid, the Sempers claimed Dowdy's property. Fearing destitution and arrest, she fled with her twenty slaves on an uncleared vessel to St. Eustatius,

pursued by Dudley Semper. Dowdy was defying the laws abolishing the slave trade, but the Sempers appear to have conspired with their common kinsman to do her out of her property. PRO, CO7/9, Hamilton to D'Urban, January 23, 1823; van Remondt to Hamilton, January 2 and 8, 1823; D'Urban to van Remondt, February 13, 1823; D'Urban to Bathurst, May 14, 1823.

58. PRO, CO177/18, Sessional Papers, March 14, 1814.

59. MMS, Box 121 no. 74, Hyde to MMS, July 30, 1824; Box 118 no. 116, Lanion to MMS, September 7, 1822.

60. PRO, CO393/1, Bathurst's approval of Semper's appointment, October 23, 1826.

61. PRO, CO7/4, Kerby to Herbert, October 27, 1818; Herbert to Kerby and enclosures, October 27, 1818; Kerby to Bathurst and enclosures, November 19, 1818; Kerby to Bathurst, December 3, 1818; Charge and bail of Herbert, December 15-17, 1818; Brown to Council, January 9, 1819.

62. MMS, Box 126 no. 61, Wood to MMS, November 4, 1827.

63. PRO, CO7/11, Herbert to Bathurst, December 3, 1822; CO7/8, Herbert to Horton, April 24, 1824; CO7/11, Bathurst to Horton, undated.

64. PRO, CO7/11, Hamilton to Bathurst, March 12, 1824.

65. Thomas Hyde described these fears and obsessions. MMS, Box 119 no. 137, Hyde to MMS, August 26, 1826.

66. PRO, CO393/5, Spring Rice to Macgregor, June 6, 1834 and July 1, 1834; CO393/15, Spring Rice to Macgregor, September 16, 1834.

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