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BOUND TO SLAVERY:  
ECONOMIC AND BIOGRAPHICAL CONNECTIONS TO ATLANTIC SLAVERY  
BETWEEN THE MARITIMES AND WEST INDIES AFTER 1783

A Thesis Presented

by

Sarah Elizabeth Chute

to

The Faculty of the Graduate College

of

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## Abstract

Born in Africa, shipped to the West Indies, enslaved in the American colonies, and promised freedom in Colonial Canada: this well-known narrative traces a journey from tropical climates to northern temperate zones, from slavery to freedom. However, in the late eighteenth century, thousands of Black people experienced a journey from slavery in the American and West Indian colonies to continued enslavement in the Maritimes (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island). Their stories challenge our understanding of the more familiar narrative that traces the lives of free Black Loyalists who went from slavery to freedom in the Atlantic world as a result of the opportunities and obstacles presented by the American Revolution. In the midst of Black people's physical migrations, daily commercial exchanges for Caribbean slave-produced products characterized the Maritime economy. These historical facts shatter the illusion that the region was a bastion against enslavement and the falsehood that they were far-removed from slavery in the British Atlantic world. Slavery and its consequences, products, and threats were important parts of the region's history.

Grounded in documentation from the Maritimes, this thesis investigates how slavery bound the Maritimes to the West Indies after the American Revolution and into the early nineteenth century through economic and biographical connections. Investigation of these economic ties (including trade activity, the presence and use of slave-produced products from the Caribbean in the Maritimes, and noncommercial pecuniary interests) and biographical connections (through enslaved people's migrations, the re-enslavement of free Black Loyalists, and Black people's attitudes about the West Indies) allow us to better our understanding of these regions, their place within the British Atlantic, and how they were inextricably bound to slavery. It also enables us to recover the perspectives of the inhabitants and their own understandings of life, death, Loyalism, resistance, slavery, and freedom in an increasingly connected empire.

## Acknowledgements

There are many people who have supported me during my time at the University of Vermont—two years of growth, challenges, surprises, and innumerable blessings.

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through the sharing of sources and advice on writing. In particular, Jared Hardesty deserves special thanks for his sharp perspective and visionary suggestions for an early version of this project. Cory Lavender indulged me—a stranger on the Internet—with a story and documentation about his family’s history.

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I like to think that my late father, Harvey Chute, would have listened to the stories on the following pages with all the inquisitive attention and encouragement that I received from him during his lifetime. I am especially grateful to my mother, Carrie Chute, who has lovingly offered me her patient support, brilliant advice, and sensible wisdom over the last two years as she always has.

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## **Introduction: Historical Context and Historiography**

In the summer of 1789, the brig *Providence* waited at the port of Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Its captain accepted the embarkment of an enslaved girl named Betty Anna. Probably from Grenada, she had spent the last three years becoming familiar with life in Nova Scotia. In Shelburne, she had been in the company of another young enslaved woman named Nancy. The two had labored together daily as they carried out domestic duties for their enslaver. At the port, Betty Anna probably understood very well that the footsteps she took towards the vessel would be her final ones on Maritime soil. In the time it took for her to make those liminal steps aboard the brig, the experiences, knowledge, and familiarities that had so recently been her everyday reality transformed to become a part of her past. Young, clever, and already well-acquainted with the fact that voyages along the Atlantic brought drastic changes to one's life, Betty Anna may have been occupied in deep thought or overwhelmed by emotion. On the *Providence*, Captain Wheeler's responsibility was to ensure Betty Anna made it safely to Grenada once the ship docked in the Bahamas. A captain for the Corps of Royal Engineers in Shelburne had paid for her passage to the Caribbean, but this was no benevolent act of generosity. When this man, Captain William Booth, paid for Betty Anna's voyage, he did not consider her a passenger of the *Providence*. He considered her his property, to be bought and sold for his pecuniary benefit.

After her departure, Booth wrote his brother-in-law Samuel Proudfoot, "I have sent back one of the Negress's; she went by way of the Bahama Islands, I paid all charges

to that Place, and the Capt<sup>n</sup>: of the Vessel promised to forward her safe to our Brother. I have one still with me who turns out well, the other was clever, but somewhat inclined to be a Teefee, Teefee according to their own language, however, she is young and to be easy reformed, as she never did anything serious.”<sup>1</sup> Booth was sending her “back” to the plantation of Edmund Proudfoot in Grenada, possibly her birthplace.<sup>2</sup> This single moment in Betty Anna’s life is representative of a broader phenomenon that determined countless lives in the British Atlantic. It might be strange for historians to think about the northern reaches of the British Empire as a place where enslaved West Indians of African descent lived and labored. Strange, too, is the idea that Black people in the Maritimes lived daily with thoughts and threats of Caribbean enslavement. Their lives, however, testify to the intertwined histories of these parts of the British Empire. Atlantic slavery—whether it took place in the Maritimes or the West Indies—generated the links between these regions. As the example of Betty Anna shows, these bonds, rooted in overlapping cycles of enslavement, migration, and trade, had deeply personal consequences for human lives. In the midst of Black people’s physical migrations, daily commercial exchanges for Caribbean slave-produced products characterized the Maritime economy.

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<sup>1</sup> William Booth to Samuel Proudfoot, Shelburne, August 31, 1789, in William Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums: Captain William Booth, Corps of Royal Engineers, Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1787, 1789*, ed. Eleanor Robertson Smith (Shelburne: Shelburne County Archives and Genealogical Society, 2008), 131-132. See also Bonnie Huskins, “‘Shelburnian Manners’: Gentility and Loyalists of Shelburne, Nova Scotia,” *Early American Studies* 13, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 151-188. Huskins credits Barry Gaspar for providing the definition of *Teefee*, likely meaning “small/young girl, taking her age into account. The Creole term is a reduced form of the French term PETITE FILLE: PETITE becomes TEE or TI, and FILLE becomes FEE or FI”; e-mail correspondence, 7 September 2012, quoted in Huskins, “‘Shelburnian Manners,’” 187–8n80.

<sup>2</sup> Barry Cahill, preface to Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, vi. It seems very likely that Betty Anna was born in the West Indies, but she may have been born in Africa.



To understand the Maritimes, we must understand their relationship to the West Indies—a relationship forged by empire and fostered by slavery.

In 1783, the British Atlantic colonies underwent a dramatic shift as the Empire adjusted to a post-American Revolutionary world. The influx of at least 30,000 Loyalists (including free Black Loyalists) and roughly 1,500 to 2,000 enslaved people from the new United States sent tremors into every aspect of Maritime society.<sup>3</sup> Enormous migrations to places like Shelburne temporarily transformed settlements into populous hubs.<sup>4</sup>

While the Loyalists' sheer population numbers expanded the Maritime economy, such extensive growth was solely the product of the influx and not robustly productive.<sup>5</sup> By the late 1780s and early 1790s, poor investment decisions and “the growing British tolerance for American trade with the West Indies” had an injurious effect on the Maritime fishing and timber industries.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, farms struggled to produce enough for the local community, let alone for export.<sup>7</sup> In spite of social and economic turbulence and hardship, the trade with the Caribbean persisted. Every spoonful of sugar, drop of molasses, and sip of rum that colonists consumed linked the Maritimes inextricably to

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<sup>3</sup> Harvey Amani Whitfield, *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016), 119–20.

<sup>4</sup> Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia 1783–1791* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 39.

<sup>5</sup> Julian Gwyn, *Excessive Expectations: Maritime Commerce & the Economic Development of Nova Scotia, 1740–1870* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1998), 8.

<sup>6</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 152.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 150–51.

West Indian slave labor, just as Maritime-shingled houses sheltered slaveholders and as Atlantic cod fed enslaved people. The ubiquity of the Maritimes' connection to West Indian slavery demonstrates the power of empire and commerce to form bonds between these two regions. Furthermore, the lived experiences of enslaved people reveal a crucial component of the social and economic context in which free and enslaved Black people found themselves; it reveals a part of the world they knew—a world in which they grappled with their own unfreedom and the oppression of their West Indian counterparts.

Contemporary Canadians and Americans are generally not aware of the history of slavery in Canada.<sup>8</sup> The most common narrative concerning slavery and Canada is a linear one that ends in liberty. Born in Africa, shipped to the West Indies, enslaved in the American colonies, and promised freedom in Colonial Canada: this journey from tropical climates to northern temperate zones—from slavery to freedom—is well known. It dominates the North American imagination in stories of Black Loyalists migrating to the Maritimes after the American Revolutionary War, as well as Black Refugees fleeing the United States during the War of 1812 and enslaved African Americans who escaped the Antebellum South in the years leading up to the Civil War.

This narrative is not necessarily false—thousands of African and African-descended people courageously took risks, challenged their state of bondage, and encountered degrees of freedom in British North America. Rather, this narrative is

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<sup>8</sup> For works on slavery in Canada outside of the Maritimes, see Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2012); Frank Mackey, *Done with Slavery: The Black Fact in Montreal, 1760–1840* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010); Afua Cooper, *The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Montréal* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007); Marcel Trudel, *L'esclavage au Canada français: histoire et conditions de l'esclavage* (Quebec: Presses universitaires Laval, 1960); Charmaine A. Nelson, "A 'tone of Voice Peculiar to New-England'," *Current Anthropology* 61, no. S22 (2020): S303–316.

incomplete. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, thousands of other Black people experienced a simultaneous journey from slavery in the American colonies to continued enslavement in the Maritimes. These people of African descent displayed equal courage and resilience to the free Black Loyalists who successfully cast off their shackles in the wake of the American Revolution. The fact that slaves travelled along the same routes as free Black Loyalists complicates the notion that one of their destinations, the Maritimes, was a place of freedom; the re-enslavement of free Black Loyalists there uproots this idea.

The historical facts shatter the illusion that the region was a bastion against enslavement and the falsehood that they were far-removed from slavery in the British Atlantic world. Despite being readily apparent in the archive, the relationship between the Maritimes, the West Indies, and slavery has not been well-studied. This study seeks to remedy this by examining ties to slavery between the two regions, first through records of economic exchange, and secondly, through fragmentary documentation about the individual lives of enslaved, free, and re-enslaved Black people in the Maritimes. Slavery and its consequences, products, and threats were important parts of the region's history and in the lives of its inhabitants.

By linking the regions of the Maritimes and the West Indies through the context of slavery, this project aims to fill a gap in the scholarship of Canada's history of enslavement. There are several reasons for this historiographic lacuna. First, scholars have had to define Maritime slavery in order to confront Canada's "historical amnesia"

about its history of enslavement.<sup>9</sup> In order to do this, most transnational histories of slavery in the Maritimes focus on the largest and most direct origins of Loyalist slavery: the American colonies. As such, historians have not turned as often to the tropics in their endeavors to define Maritime slavery. Second, references to slavery in the Maritimes exist in commonplace documents within a fragmentary archive. These “scattered” newspaper advertisements, legal documents, and church records have pertinence to local processes, and their Caribbean connections, if they exist at all, are often slight and easily overlooked.<sup>10</sup> Lastly, recent inquiries of the connection between slavery and Maritime institutions of higher education, such as University of King’s College and Dalhousie University, have unveiled links to the West Indies, but no inquiry has traced the impact of those ties through the stories of individual Black people.<sup>11</sup>

The transnational approach and conceptualization of this project means this is not, strictly, a history of slavery *in* the Maritimes, although that is the region this thesis primarily seeks to better understand. Rather, this is an economic and social history of the

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<sup>9</sup> Harvey Amani Whitfield and Barry Cahill, “Slave Life and Slave Law in Colonial Prince Edward Island, 1769–1825,” *Acadiensis* 38, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2009): 29–51, especially 31.

<sup>10</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 5-6; see also Harvey Amani Whitfield, “White Archives, Black Fragments: Problems and Possibilities in Telling the Lives of Enslaved Black People in the Maritimes,” *Canadian Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (2020): 323-345, especially 328; Gloria McCahon Whiting, “Race, Slavery, and the Problem of Numbers in Early New England: A View from Probate Court,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (July 2020): 405–40; Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Shirley Tillotson, “How (and how much) King’s College benefitted from slavery in the West Indies, 1789–1854,” *King’s & Slavery: University of King’s College*, last modified 30 January 2020, accessed 1 March 2021, [https://ukings.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/202001TillotsonKingsSlaveryIndirectConnections\\_Secure.pdf](https://ukings.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/202001TillotsonKingsSlaveryIndirectConnections_Secure.pdf); Karolyn Smardz Frost and David W. States, “King’s College, Nova Scotia: Direct Connections with Slavery,” *King’s & Slavery: University of King’s College*, last modified September 2020, accessed 1 March 2021, [https://ukings.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210211KingsSlaverySmardzFrostStates\\_Secured.pdf](https://ukings.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210211KingsSlaverySmardzFrostStates_Secured.pdf); Afua Cooper *et al.*, *Report on Lord Dalhousie’s History on Slavery and Race* (Halifax: Dalhousie University, 2019).

relationship amongst slavery, the Maritimes, and the West Indies. This study examines events and patterns that occupied overlapping themes; it employs an economic and biographical lens, but we must bear in mind that many instances were often simultaneously political, gendered, racial, and colonial in nature. Likewise, our evaluation of slavery should not be too narrow. It was a multilocal and multidimensional affair. The following investigation acknowledges that the enslavement of people of African descent was not a practice exclusive to either the Caribbean or the Maritimes. It recognizes that slavery—through trade goods, print culture, legislation, for example—could be a present and impactful force even where the practice of human bondage was absent or rare. As such, this essay’s titular employment of the term “slavery” denotes its systemic, British Atlantic context, and it is not concerned with investigating the practice within a confined, particular geographic milieu. Whether we choose to observe it at its local setting in either region, survey its existence at the imperial and transnational levels, or examine the material products associated with it, Atlantic slavery existed in numerous forms through the commercial and migratory ties between the Maritimes and West Indies. Incorporating this understanding into the study of Maritimes, then, enriches our grasp of the British Atlantic world as a whole.

This project often refers to its tropical area of focus as the “British West Indies” (or simply “West Indies”), signifying the British-occupied colonies on the islands in the Caribbean Sea. At times, the scope of this thesis extends to the “greater Caribbean,” incorporating places not technically in the Caribbean Sea but traditionally considered part of the West Indian subregion (such as the Bahamas). One example from 1784 even

extends to Suriname, which was a Dutch colony at the time.<sup>12</sup> Although the different landscapes and crops of each colony resulted in unique experiences for enslaved people, generally, the variations between, for example, Dutch Suriname and British Grenada were not nearly as stark as the difference between either of those places and Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, or Prince Edward Island. For that reason, incorporating several illustrative examples from the greater Caribbean contributes to our broad understanding of the lived experiences of enslaved people in both the northern and tropical regions of the Atlantic. Still, inclusive of the greater Caribbean, all of the examples in this thesis relate to the British Empire either by territorial jurisdiction or because they involve connections between British subjects. As such, this project intends to ultimately demonstrate that the imperial bonds in the British Empire formed an essential backdrop—perhaps, even an explanation—for the connections that the Maritimes had to slavery and the West Indies.

Ultimately, natural, political, and economic circumstances contributed to the region's entrenchment in the world of Atlantic bondage; the Maritime colonies had oceanic access to the West Indies, were culturally familiar (if not comfortable) with slavery, and were determined to profit. These conditions ushered in the entrenchment of Atlantic slavery within the economy of, and human experiences within, the Maritimes. The natural world played a palpable role in shaping how and why these regions were connected. Land, waterways, and meteorological conditions were important. Geography influenced the fortunes and losses of settlers who sought to survive off the few areas with

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<sup>12</sup> See John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth or his attorney, 24 February 1784, Wentworth Letters, vol. 49, Nova Scotia Archives [hereafter NSA], Shelburne, Nova Scotia.

agricultural potential, primarily along the Bay of Fundy, as well as what one Shelburne ballad lyricized as “Scotia’s barren rocky shore.”<sup>13</sup>

Differing levels of organization, resources, and visions of settlement created unique outcomes where the Loyalists populated. Most Loyalists in Nova Scotia moved to Shelburne or Halifax where they had good opportunities to take part in the Caribbean trade.<sup>14</sup> As “less unified” and “more commercial” than their New Brunswick counterparts, Nova Scotian Loyalists populated the ports, hoping to fulfill their mercantile aspirations.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, a number of powerful, wealthy Loyalists moving to what would become New Brunswick in 1784 hoped their elite landowning class would develop the colony’s potential for cultivation.<sup>16</sup> These Loyalists promoted a hierarchical agricultural society under strong military protection directly in reaction to “the commercial hustle of Saint John and its proximity to the American border.”<sup>17</sup> Still, that urban settlement at the mouth of the St. John River nevertheless remained an increasingly important site for the military, shipbuilding industry, and maritime trade. As the colony’s largest port city, Saint John tethered the rest of New Brunswick to the larger Atlantic world.<sup>18</sup> Loyalist migration to the smallest of Maritime colonies, Prince Edward

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<sup>13</sup> A Shelburne Song, in William Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 18.

<sup>14</sup> Ann Gorman Condon, “1783–1800: Loyalist Arrival, Acadian Return, Imperial Reform,” in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, ed. Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 185–209, especially 193.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 193–4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 191–192.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>18</sup> Graeme Wynn, “1800–1810: Turning the Century,” in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, ed. Buckner and Reid, 209–33, especially 209.

Island (called the Island of Saint John before 1798) was unique because of its smaller population, conflicts over land between new Loyalist settlers and absentee proprietors, and the colony's "role as an agricultural heartland."<sup>19</sup> Still, wartime settlement had enlarged Charlottetown's urban population towards the end of the eighteenth century, and news from other Atlantic places from Halifax and London to Barbados and St. Vincent appeared in Prince Edward Island's gazette.<sup>20</sup> In short, the Maritimes were just that: connected to the sea. As environmental historian and geographer Graeme Wynn has shown, the region's social geography by 1800 was diverse, but overall, the rugged, rocky land tended to galvanize settlement along the coasts.<sup>21</sup> Thus, networks between the West Indies, Britain, and the United States served as economic, political, and cultural lifelines for the Maritimes.

The natural world occupied an important position in the Maritimes' intercolonial, transatlantic relationships in other ways, distinguishable through accounts of weather. In the 1780s, Simeon Perkins began diary entries describing the "Cloudy & Calm," "Cold," and "very rainy" weather, and William Booth likewise kept note of the temperatures—sometimes a "Mild Thaw," "Frost" or "Cold with appearance Snow"—in many of his

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<sup>19</sup> Condon, "Loyalist Arrival, Acadian Return, Imperial Reform," 190.

<sup>20</sup> J.M. Bumstead, "1763–1783: Resettlement and Rebellion," in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation*, ed. Buckner and Reid, 156–183, especially 175; see for example, *Royal Gazette and Miscellany of the Island of Saint John*, 29 April 1793.

<sup>21</sup> Graeme Wynn, "The Geography of the Maritime Provinces in 1800: Patterns and Questions," in *They Planted Well: New England Planters in Maritime Canada*, ed. Margaret Conrad (Fredericton, N.B.: Acadiensis Press, 1988), 138–150, especially 141.



journal memos.<sup>22</sup> Not mere anecdotes, these climatic records point to a deeper concern in the Maritime and British Atlantic mindset. Weather was a capricious, powerful variable for Atlantic settlements. A tropical tempest could devastate a ship, her cargo, and crew.<sup>23</sup> A northern storm could potentially delay the arrival of provisions and correspondence. In at least one case, these miserable conditions brought frostbite to an enslaved person migrating north.<sup>24</sup> Recognizing the significance of weather in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island enables us to see how the Atlantic ties colonists valued and depended upon were sometimes quite fragile. Loyalists attempted to take advantage of and control what Atlantic opportunities their coastal geography afforded them, but even as these ties developed, they remained vulnerable to nature's caprice.

Poor political organization did not help these struggles. One engineer with the rank of lieutenant-colonel informed Guy Carleton, as "timely provision not having been made by escheating and laying out lands, in which great delays and irregularities have happened" and "a sufficient number of surveyors not having been employed," he feared many of the refugees would "perish."<sup>25</sup> Disillusioned and weary white Loyalists bemoaned their dreary reality, "Consign'd to labour and be poor."<sup>26</sup> The Loyalists'

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<sup>22</sup> Diary entries, 1–3 January 1785, in D.C. Harvey, ed., *The Diary of Simeon Perkins 1780–1789*, vol. 2 (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1969), 258; Entries, 21–24 January 1789, William Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 26-27.

<sup>23</sup> For stories of storms damaging ships see, for example, *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 21 April 1785 and 9 November 1786.

<sup>24</sup> Runaway slave advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 15 July 1784.

<sup>25</sup> Col. Morse's Report, *Public Archives of Canada Report*, 1894, note C, xi, quoted in MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 26.

<sup>26</sup> A Shelburne Song, in Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 18.

hardscrabble history has been explored by many historians. Produced by local archivists and public and academic historians alike, publications often include meticulous detail about specific Maritime places. Some foundational works coming out of the second half of the twentieth century contributed enormously to the historiography of the Loyalist Maritimes. In 1955, Esther Clark Wright published *The Loyalists of New Brunswick*.<sup>27</sup> Using local, provincial, and national archives and secondary materials, she found information on the Loyalists in newspapers, muster rolls, land grant and church records. *The Loyalists of New Brunswick* is one of Wright's most popular scholarly works, but she also wrote about other aspects of the region's history, including Planters, the St. John River, and about local individuals and families.<sup>28</sup> For Nova Scotia, Marion Robertson's 1983 *King's Bounty: A History of Early Shelburne, Nova Scotia* covers the arrival of white and Black Loyalists to Shelburne in 1783, the town's institutional, economic, and social developments, and its eventual decline.<sup>29</sup> Robertson cites diaries, returns, newspapers, and court records. Her focus on settlement, provisions, and livelihood makes this a critical piece of scholarship for the history of Loyalists in Nova Scotia, particularly Shelburne. Published in 1986, Neil MacKinnon's *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia, 1783–1791* examines the challenges, attitudes, and economic

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<sup>27</sup> Esther Clark Wright, *The Loyalists of New Brunswick* (Fredericton.: E.C. Wright., 1955).

<sup>28</sup> Keith Grant, "Esther Clark Wright and Recent Themes in Historiography," *Acadiensis* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 120–23; see, for example, Esther Clark Wright, *Planters and Pioneers* (Wolfville, N.S.: E.C. Wright, 1978); Esther Clark Wright, *The St. John River and Its Tributaries* (Wolfville, N.S.: E.C. Wright, 1966); Esther Clark Wright, *Alexander Clark, Loyalist: A Contribution to the History of New Brunswick* (Kentville, N.S.: Kentville Publishing, 1940); Esther Clark Wright, *Samphire Greens: The Story of the Steeves* (Kingsport, N.S.: E.C. Wright, 1961).

<sup>29</sup> Marion Robertson, *King's Bounty: A History of Early Shelburne, Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1983).

development of the Loyalists in the colony. MacKinnon's selection of letters and personal journals flavors this historical overview with numerous specific, individual examples to demonstrate larger trends experienced by Loyalist society.

Other historians have concentrated on the economic networks that Loyalists and their predecessors cast from their coastal settlements to the greater Atlantic world. David Sutherland's research from the 1970s explores the commercial role of merchants in the development of the Halifax between 1783 and 1850.<sup>30</sup> Julian Gwyn's 1998 *Excessive Expectations: Maritime Commerce and the Economic Development of Nova Scotia, 1740–1870* examines how cycles of war and peace shaped the ability of Nova Scotians to engage in commercial opportunities throughout the British Atlantic world.<sup>31</sup> With the growth of Atlantic studies in recent years, scholars of Maritime regional development have asked important questions about how Loyalism and the area's urban and rural activities fit within a larger Atlantic framework, and have also examined the roles of settler colonialism, race and ethnicity, gender, migration, the military, and capitalism in the social and economic development of the Maritimes.<sup>32</sup> These studies reveal not only the numerous interpretations and challenges in defining the Maritimes and its society and

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<sup>30</sup> David Sutherland, "Halifax Merchants and the Pursuit of Development, 1783–1850," *Canadian Historical Review* 59, no. 1 (March 1978); David Alexander Sutherland, "The Merchants of Halifax, 1815–1850: A Commercial Class in Pursuit of Status," (PhD diss., Dalhousie University, 1975).

<sup>31</sup> Gwyn, *Excessive Expectations*.

<sup>32</sup> Jerry Bannister, "Atlantic Canada in an Atlantic World? Northeastern North America in the Long 18th Century," *Acadiensis* XLIII, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2014): 3-30; Buckner and Reid, eds., *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan, eds., *The Loyal Atlantic: Remaking the British Atlantic in the Revolutionary Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Knopf, 2011); Fred Burrill, "Re-developing Underdevelopment: An Agenda for New Histories of Capitalism in the Maritimes," *Acadiensis* 48, no. 2 (Autumn 2019): 179-189.

economy within an Atlantic framework, but also the difficult experiences of and violent interactions between white settlers, Indigenous people, and Black people.<sup>33</sup> The history of the Maritimes during the Loyalist period demonstrates that, despite the trials the white settlers faced—or, perhaps more accurately, because of them—they did not attempt to exploit merely the land and sea. Some also exploited other people.

Among the thirty thousand refugees who came to the Maritimes after the Treaty of Paris ended the American Revolutionary War in 1783, at least three thousand were Black Loyalists.<sup>34</sup> Some of these people had been born free, but most had been enslaved in the American colonies until they freed themselves by running away from their Patriot enslavers. Enticed by British promises of freedom for fleeing from their rebel owners, the Black Loyalists evacuated New York with other British troops and white Loyalists. Many settled in Birchtown, just outside of Shelburne, which became the largest free Black community in Nova Scotia.

They faced difficult prospects. Having escaped American slavery, they came with few resources “to bargain for the privileges and bounties freely accorded to white

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<sup>33</sup> For the history of Indigenous-settler relations in the Maritimes, see, for example, John G. Reid, “Empire, Settler Colonialism, and the Role of Violence in Indigenous Dispossession in British North America, 1749-1830,” in *Violence, Order, and Unrest: A History of British North America, 1749-1876*, ed. Elizabeth Mancke, Jerry Bannister, Denis McKim, and Scott W. See (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 117-34; John G. Reid, “Imperial-Aboriginal Friendship in Eighteenth-Century Mi’kma’ki/Wulstukwik,” in *The Loyal Atlantic*, ed. Bannister and Riordan, 75–102; Julian Gwyn, “The Mi’kmaq, Poor Settlers, and the Nova Scotia Fur Trade, 1783-1853,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 14, no. 1 (2003): 65-91; Jennifer Reid, *Myth, Symbol, and Colonial Encounter: British and Mi’kmaq in Acadia, 1700-1867* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995); Stephen E. Patterson, “Indian-White Relations in Nova Scotia, 1749-61: A Study in Political Interaction,” *Acadiensis*, XXIII, 1 (Autumn 1993): 23-59. A robust and up-to-date bibliography on Indigenous history in the Maritimes comes from John R.H. Matchim, “A Bibliography on Indigenous Peoples and the History of the Atlantic Region,” *Acadiensis* 49, no. 2 (Autumn 2020): 223–264.

<sup>34</sup> Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty’s Exiles*, 352–53.

Loyalists.”<sup>35</sup> The British rarely fulfilled their promises to distribute land and provisions to these free Black people who had served in the war or had pledged their allegiance to the British cause. Acreage, if granted at all, was offensively meager. Records show white Loyalists of varying ranks receiving fifty, two hundred, five hundred, and even one thousand acres, while grants for Black Loyalists often only measured forty, twenty, or even—and not uncommonly—one acre of generally the least desirable land.<sup>36</sup> Noticing this dire situation, the abolitionist John Clarkson described “the scandalous and shameful conduct shewn to the free Blacks by many of the White people in both provinces and although Government allowed to many of them from 60 to 100 acres of land, the greatest part have never been in possession of more than one or two acres, and they have so completely worked the land up that it will not yield half crops.”<sup>37</sup>

Without the essential resources to become self-sufficient, many Black Loyalists became indentured servants or tenant farmers to white landholders. To survive, some drew on skills they had used in slavery, becoming fishers, sailors, artisans, and tradespeople.<sup>38</sup> A corps of Black Loyalists, called the Black Pioneers, were significant in the clearing and construction of lots in Halifax, Shelburne, and Saint John.<sup>39</sup> Although

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<sup>35</sup> James W. St. G. Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783–1870* (1976; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 42.

<sup>36</sup> Walker, *The Black Loyalists*, 43. For the disparity in land grants between white and Black Loyalists, see Marion Gilroy and D.C. Harvey, *Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1937; Baltimore: Clearfield, 2002).

<sup>37</sup> C.B. Fergusson, ed., *Clarkson’s Mission to America, 1791–1792* (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1971), 46.

<sup>38</sup> Walker, *The Black Loyalists*, 45–50.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

these and other contributions were instrumental in the development of these settlements, the Black Loyalists faced harsh treatment from their white neighbors. This was particularly exacerbated in the Shelburne area. Upper-class white Loyalists exploited the former slaves' disadvantaged position and paid cheap wages for labor that Black Loyalists, with no land or livelihoods of their own, were in no position to refuse. In the meantime, poor white Loyalists grew frustrated as they waited to receive their own land grants. Their lack of employment festered into contempt toward Black Loyalists, who they blamed for taking jobs.<sup>40</sup> This, of course, was unfair, as the Black Loyalists had no choice but to accept any wage offered to them, however small. Unfortunately, their destitute condition, the racial discrimination against them, and the resentment of the poor white Loyalists coalesced into a race riot in 1784, terrorizing the Birchtown community and its leaders, like Baptist preacher David George.<sup>41</sup> Eventually, under the leadership of Black Loyalist Thomas Peters and British abolitionist John Clarkson (brother of Thomas Clarkson, a founder of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in England), nearly twelve hundred Black Loyalists immigrated to Sierra Leone in 1792.<sup>42</sup>

The Black Loyalists defied white desires for control and power in other ways. Their sizable settlements in Birchtown, Brindley Town, Preston, and elsewhere posed a threat to slave-owning white Loyalists, who worried their slaves would run away to these

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–9.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 137. Some Black Loyalists, like Colonel Stephen Blucke, were opposed to emigration; see Skinner to Dundas, enclosing Petition of the remaining free Black People in and about the Town of Shelburne and Birch Town in the Province of Nova Scotia, Colonial Office 217/63, The National Archives, microfilm copy of transcript at Library and Archives Canada.

free Black communities. Enslaved people had relatives and friends amongst the Black Loyalists. The region, then, existed as a site of freedom while it simultaneously functioned as a site of enslavement. Although the legal differences between slavery and freedom were real, Black people in the Maritimes experienced racism and inequality regardless of their status. This was the case throughout much of northeastern North America. As Jared Hardesty describes of eighteenth-century Boston, “rather than the traditional dichotomous conception of slavery and freedom, colonial-era slavery should be understood as part of a continuum of unfreedom.”<sup>43</sup> Through exploitation, indentured servitude, and slavery, many Black people in the Maritimes were unfree.

Historians have long acknowledged and incorporated evidence of local enslavement into their scholarship of the Maritimes. In the final years of the nineteenth century, two important works centered upon the region’s history with the institution. In 1898, I. Allen Jack wrote “The Loyalists and Slavery in New Brunswick.”<sup>44</sup> As a lawyer in Saint John, it is unsurprising that Jack focuses a great deal on the legal workings of slavery in the colony. His work centers on a court case, *R. v. Jones* (1799–1800), which concerned an enslaved woman named Nancy who sought “to procure her liberation” from Caleb Jones of Fredericton. A writ of *habeas corpus* was issued upon the question of the legality of Jones’ possession of Nancy.<sup>45</sup> In his explanation, Jack weaves in biographical details of the participants of the case, highlighting their connections to prominent

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<sup>43</sup> Jared Ross Hardesty, *Unfreedom: Slavery and Dependence in Eighteenth-Century Boston* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 2.

<sup>44</sup> I. Allen Jack, “The Loyalists and Slavery in New Brunswick,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada* 4 (1898): 137–85.

<sup>45</sup> *Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser*, 18 February 1800.

members of society and their family history.<sup>46</sup> Jack also includes the contemplative correspondence between Ward Chipman (Nancy's attorney) and Sampson Salter Blowers (the Chief Justice of the Nova Scotian Supreme Court). Citing a case he had worked on, Blowers advised Chipman to not tackle the question of slavery as an institution, but rather to challenge the legal integrity of Jones' claim to Nancy.<sup>47</sup> In the end,

the Court were divided in their opinions, the Chief Justice [Ludlow] and Judge Upham being of the opinion that by the existing Law of this Province, Negroes may be held as Slaves here, and Judge Allen and Judge Saunders being of the opinion, that the Law upon that subject is the same here as in England and therefore that Slavery is not recognized by the Laws of this Province.—The Court thus being divided, no judgement was entered.<sup>48</sup>

With this “non-decision” permitting Caleb Jones to hold Nancy in bondage, another similar case involving a woman enslaved by Stair Agnew was dropped.<sup>49</sup> Like many historians to come, I. Allen Jack held an interest in understanding how slavery and the law fit into Loyalist history.

The following year, the Methodist preacher T. Watson Smith produced “The Slave in Canada,” a foundational study of slavery in the region.<sup>50</sup> Written for the Nova Scotia Historical Society, this three-chapter publication examines slavery before 1783, after the Loyalists arrived in 1783, and finally the treatment of enslaved people and the decline of slavery. Although Smith also discusses slavery in Ontario and Quebec, he

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<sup>46</sup> Jack, “The Loyalists and Slavery in New Brunswick,” 141–5.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 148–52.

<sup>48</sup> *Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser*, 18 February 1800.

<sup>49</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 103–4. The case was *R. v. Agnew*.

<sup>50</sup> T.W. Smith, “The Slave in Canada,” *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, 10 (1899): 1-161.



devotes significant attention to the Maritimes. Smith helpfully situates Maritime slavery within a continental framework through comparisons to the American states, but he oversimplifies the small-scale and often domestic nature of slavery in the Northern regions, including New England and the Maritimes, by describing it as “mild.”<sup>51</sup> Comparing it to the brutal toil of a Southern plantation, Smith conflates Northern domestic slavery with benevolence. Rather than a refuge, however, the slaveowner’s house could be a prison. As Harvey Amani Whitfield has more recently reminded us, “family slavery” and the intimacy of master-slave relations in the North meant enslaved people suffered from the burden of proximity to their demanding enslavers.<sup>52</sup> Enslaved people in northern North America were vulnerable to acts of physical and sexual violence since their labor in households and on farms offered little distance from their enslavers. Although T. Watson Smith views these examples as anomalies, he nevertheless remained transparent about instances of abuse in the Maritimes.<sup>53</sup> “The Slave in Canada” is a particularly important piece in the historiography of Maritime slavery for its assemblage of primary sources. Smith combed through the local archives to find newspaper advertisements, letters, court cases, and wills relating to slavery in the Maritimes. This work contributed to subsequent scholarship on the subject in the early twentieth century and historians continue to use Smith’s research to this day.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>52</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 72-3.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, “Slave in Canada,” 76–81.

<sup>54</sup> William Renwick Riddell, “The Slave in Canada,” *Journal of Negro History* 5, no. 3 (July 1920): 261–377, especially 360n3.

Through much of the mid-twentieth century, historians devoted much attention to understanding the history of the free Black community. These works did not center upon slavery, but contextual chapters about the experiences of enslaved people demonstrates how this history overlapped with those of free Black people in the region, namely the Black Loyalists after the American Revolutionary War and the Black Refugees during the War of 1812. C.B. Fergusson, author of the 1948 publication *A Documentary Study of the Establishment of the Negroes in Nova Scotia*, gathers numerous primary sources to describe the situation of the Black Refugees.<sup>55</sup> Although Fergusson does not emphasize Black agency, this study served as a crucial documentary resource for later historians of free Black people in the Maritimes.<sup>56</sup>

Following Fergusson and the advent of the Civil Rights Movement, other scholars sought to outline Black history in their provinces. In 1972, W.A. Spray's *The Blacks in New Brunswick* examined the Black experience in New Brunswick, and with greater analysis than Fergusson.<sup>57</sup> Keen to illustrate a chronological history shaped by migration and race relations, Spray's concise chapters focus on slavery, Black Loyalists, Black Refugees, schooling, and twentieth-century developments. Although not as robust as Fergusson's collection of documents, the appendix for *The Blacks in New Brunswick* includes several reproductions of important primary source documents like Thomas

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<sup>55</sup> C.B. Fergusson, *A Documentary Study of the Negroes in Nova Scotia Between the War of 1812 and The Winning of Responsible Government* (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1948).

<sup>56</sup> Harvey Amani Whitfield, "The African Diaspora in Atlantic Canada: History, Historians, and Historiography," *Acadiensis* 46, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2017): 213–232, especially 219–220.

<sup>57</sup> W.A. Spray, *The Blacks in New Brunswick* (Fredericton: Brunswick Press, 1972).

Peters' petitions and an advertisement for the Sierra Leone Company.<sup>58</sup> Fergusson and Spray's scholarship came before and during the zenith of social history, respectively. Their research of the origins and history of the Black population of the Maritimes reveal a slow but growing scholarly and public interest in the region's diverse history.

These historiographical developments reflect historians' deep attention to the free Black population in particular, and Maritime slavery became a contextually significant but sidelined field of research. The most notable studies of the Black Loyalists came in the 1970s, around the time of Spray's publication. Robin Winks, a history professor at Yale, published *The Blacks in Canada* in 1971.<sup>59</sup> This ambitious monograph traces the long Black presence in the country, beginning with New France in the 1600s and ending with modern Canada in 1970. Winks' chapters on slavery, the Black Loyalists, the exodus to Sierra Leone, and the Black Refugees are particularly pertinent to historians of Black history in the Maritimes. This book holds an important place in the historiography for being among the first sizable studies of Black Canadians, but it is not without serious flaws.

In James Walker's review of Winks' monograph, he criticizes Winks' "too-trusting use of official documents."<sup>60</sup> Winks' uncritical treatment of these materials presents some problems. For example, he neglects to nuance his analysis of the Maritime archive when he claims there was "far more positive evidence of humane treatment" of

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Appendix I, II, III.

<sup>59</sup> Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971; Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).

<sup>60</sup> James W. St. G. Walker, "Review of Robin Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*," *Dalhousie Review* 50 (Summer 1971): 282–7.

enslaved people in Canada, citing instances of enslavers offering gifts, medical treatment, protection, and sometimes freedom.<sup>61</sup> Rather than examining such “evidence” as part of the cyclical and messy process by which enslavers simultaneously maintained control over and acquiesced to the demands of the people they held in bondage, Winks takes the sources at face value and interprets the bias in which they were written as the historical truth. At times, he also appeals to the absence of evidence. For instance, he states, “there are only two records of a husband and wife being separated for sale, and but one instance of a young child being sold apart from his parents.”<sup>62</sup> The very documentation that Winks cites, however, indicates that Black families in the Maritimes regularly feared separation and suggests such tragedies were not so rare.<sup>63</sup> Winks also does not acknowledge friendships, kinship ties, and unknowable relationships between enslaved people that were broken as a result of other sales.<sup>64</sup> This thesis aims, in part, to demonstrate the prevalence of these separations. Most notably, Winks has been criticized for portraying “African Canadians as somehow deficient in comparison to their African American counterparts.”<sup>65</sup> Focused on African American examples of unity and elite leadership,

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<sup>61</sup> Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 52.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Black Boy Carried Off, 22 April 1794, Shelburne County Court of General Sessions of the Peace, RG 34-321, J 145, NSA.

<sup>64</sup> For example, when John Wentworth sent nineteen of his slaves to Suriname, he kept two others with him Nova Scotia; John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth or his attorney, 24 February 1784, Wentworth Letters, vol. 49, NSA.

<sup>65</sup> Whitfield, “The African Diaspora in Atlantic Canada,” 221–223.

this standard by which Winks considers Black Canadians was most heavily challenged by James Walker.

In 1976, James W. St. G. Walker produced *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783–1870*, five years after Winks' major book was published.<sup>66</sup> *The Black Loyalists* is a thorough monograph that covers the American Revolutionary origins of these people, their experience of settlement in Nova Scotia, and their exodus to and settlement in Sierra Leone. *The Black Loyalists* overlaps with a significant portion of the subject matter in *The Blacks in Canada*, but Walker's interpretation of Black agency, distinct communities, and resilience despite discrimination rebuts Winks' claim that the source of Black Loyalist misfortunes was their disunity, rather than the racism pitted against them. This book is an essential piece of Black Loyalist historiography.<sup>67</sup> Walker's chapters on the simultaneous existence of and relationship between enslaved and free Black people in the region make this study a valuable contribution to the historiography of slavery in the Maritimes, as well.

The final decades of the twentieth century produced several works that focused on the legal history of slavery in the region. The most significant piece of scholarship from the 1980s on Maritime slavery comes from David Bell, who wrote "Slavery and the

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<sup>66</sup> Walker, *The Black Loyalists*. As a graduate student at Dalhousie University, Walker worked on his research of the Black Loyalists as he engaged in local politics and helped lead a university program designed to enable African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq students to pursue higher education through the transition year program at Dalhousie; see Whitfield, "The African Diaspora in Atlantic Canada," 222.

<sup>67</sup> For other works on the Black people in the Maritimes, see Ruth Holmes Whitehead, *Black Loyalists: Southern Settlers of Nova Scotia's First Free Black Communities* (Halifax: Nimbus, 2013); Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Blacks on the Border: The Black Refugees in British North America, 1815-1860* (Burlington: University of Vermont Press/University Press of New England, 2006); Jim Hornby, *Black Islanders: Prince Edward Island's Black Community* (Charlottetown: Institute of Island Studies 1991); Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976).

Judges of Loyalist New Brunswick.”<sup>68</sup> This 1982 publication harkens back to I. Allen Jack’s 1898 article, but Bell’s work gives greater emphasis to a key peculiarity about Maritime slavery.<sup>69</sup> Despite there being no statute protections for slavery in New Brunswick, Bell demonstrates how enslavers were able to continue to enslave people even when challenged in court. Studies of legal history continued in the 1990s, with Barry Cahill explaining the decline of slavery in Nova Scotia through two articles, “Slavery and the Judges of Loyalist Nova Scotia” and “Habeas Corpus and Slavery in Nova Scotia.”<sup>70</sup> He demonstrated how judges in Nova Scotia did not offer rulings for immediate abolition, but rather, they contributed to the slow demise of the institution by challenging the integrity of an enslaver’s claim to a slave piecemeal: through individual court cases.

More contributions to the historiography in the 1990s and early 2000s focused on defining slavery in particular places. Most notably, Ken Donovan’s original research focuses on enslaved people in French Île Royale (Cape Breton). In his articles, “Slaves and Their Owners in Ile Royale,” “A Nominal List of Slaves and Their Owners in Ile

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<sup>68</sup> D.G. Bell, “Slavery and the Judges of Loyalist New Brunswick,” *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 31 (1982): 1-42. Another important publication during this decade was H.T. Holman’s article about Jupiter Wise, although it is somewhat wanting in analysis; H.T. Holman, “Slaves and Servants on Prince Edward Island: The Case of Jupiter Wise,” *Acadiensis* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1982): 100–104.

<sup>69</sup> Nova Scotia and New Brunswick did not have statute protection for slavery. In Prince Edward Island however, a law concerning slave baptisms gave legal recognition to slavery in the colony. See Whitfield and Cahill, “Slave Life and Slave Law in Colonial Prince Edward Island,” and D.G. Bell, J. Barry Cahill, and Harvey Amani Whitfield, “Slavery and Slave Law in the Maritimes,” in *The African Canadian Legal Odyssey: Historical Essays*, edited by Barrington Walker, 363–420 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

<sup>70</sup> Barry Cahill, “Slavery and the Judges of Loyalist Nova Scotia,” *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 43 (1994): 73–135; Barry Cahill, “Habeas Corpus and Slavery in Nova Scotia: *R. v. Hecht, ex parte Rachel*, 1789,” *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 44 (1995): 179–209.

Royale,” and “Slaves in Île Royale,” Donovan provides examples of Black and Indigenous enslavement in the region.<sup>71</sup> This work, coupled with his 2014 article “Female Slaves as Sexual Victims in Île Royale” is especially important because it elucidates the presence of slavery in the region well before the Loyalist arrival.<sup>72</sup>

Over the last twenty years, historians have continued to devote energy to unpacking the contours of slavery in the Loyalist Maritimes. A major yet largely unarticulated theme driving these most recent works seems to be the question of how historians ought to tell the story of Black slavery and freedom in the Maritimes. In 1999, a debate between Barry Cahill and James Walker on the term “Black Loyalist” produced a fruitful analysis of the multiple meanings of Loyalism.<sup>73</sup> In “The Black Loyalist Myth in Atlantic Canada,” Cahill argues that escaped American slaves running to British lines should not be considered Loyalists because, he contends, instead of being moved by a sentiment of loyalty to the Crown out of “political principle,” prospects of individual freedom chiefly motivated these people to join the British.<sup>74</sup> Most controversially, Cahill insists on calling Black Loyalists “*freed* Blacks,” contending that “the Blacks collectively were freed, not free, and they were not Loyalists, but fugitive slaves who absconded from

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<sup>71</sup> Kenneth Donovan, “Slaves and Their Owners in Ile Royale, 1713–1760,” *Acadiensis* 25, no. 1 (Autumn 1995): 3–32; Ken Donovan, “A Nominal List of Slaves and Their Owners in Ile Royale,” *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 16 (1996): 151–62; Kenneth Donovan, “Slaves in Île Royale, 1713–1758,” *French Colonial History* 5 (2004): 25–42.

<sup>72</sup> Ken Donovan, “Female Slaves as Sexual Victims in Île Royale, 1713–1758,” *Acadiensis* 43, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2014):147–56.

<sup>73</sup> Barry Cahill, “The Black Loyalist Myth in Atlantic Canada,” *Acadiensis* 29, no. 1 (Autumn 1999): 76–87; and James W. St. G. Walker, “Myth, History, and Revisionism: The Black Loyalists Revisited,” *Acadiensis* 29, no. 1 (Autumn 1999): 88–105.

<sup>74</sup> Cahill, “The Black Loyalist Myth,” 83.

the rebels in order to secure their liberty at the invitation of the British military.”<sup>75</sup> James Walker’s persuasive rebuttal in “Myth, History, and Revisionism” calls attention to the circularity of Cahill’s argument and his denial of agency.<sup>76</sup> Walker holds that “the African-American fugitives freed themselves, by running away from their enslavement.”<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, Walker calls attention to the fact that white Loyalists often had diverse personal motivations to be Loyalists, not always stemming from political ideology; “there is, unfortunately, no universal consensus, no historical ‘sense’ that everyone accepts,” but numerous Canadian scholars openly acknowledge that white and Black Loyalists alike had varied motivations to side with the British.<sup>78</sup>

Following this debate, historians have continued to innovate approaches to Black history in the Maritimes. New methodologies stirred up important questions about migration and settlement, and with it, the transnational history of Maritime Loyalists and enslaved people came to the fore. Carole Waterson Troxler’s “Re-enslavement of Black Loyalists: Mary Postell in South Carolina, East Florida, and Nova Scotia” reminds us that the Atlantic backstories of free and enslaved (or in Mary Postell’s case, re-enslaved) Black people had consequences for their lives in the Maritimes.<sup>79</sup> In this 2008 article, Troxler outlines a court case where Postell, a free Black Loyalist, had unsuccessfully

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 81. Emphasis mine.

<sup>76</sup> Walker, “Myth, History, and Revisionism,” 92–5.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 97–8.

<sup>79</sup> Carole Watterson Troxler, “Re-enslavement of Black Loyalists: Mary Postell in South Carolina, East Florida, and Nova Scotia,” *Acadiensis* 37, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2008): 70–85.



sued for her freedom against white Loyalist Jesse Gray, who claimed he owned her in Nova Scotia. Published the following year, Harvey Amani Whitfield's article "The American Background of Loyalist Slaves" examines the nature of slavery in colonial America and traces its influence in the Maritimes through the lives of individual enslaved people.<sup>80</sup> As these publications suggest, historians became increasingly interested in looking at the Maritimes within a larger North American and Atlantic framework.

Additionally, the use of case studies like that of Mary Postell allowed historians to acknowledge the individual experiences of Black people. In her 2014 article "Searching for the Enslaved in Nova Scotia's Loyalist Landscape," Catherine Cottreau-Robins approaches her study of slavery through a lens of historical archeology to uncover what the archive does not reveal.<sup>81</sup> In her words, "How to find records of the invisible, the marginalized, the dehumanized? The approach had to be from multiple directions and layered: in other words, interdisciplinary."<sup>82</sup> To accomplish this, Cottreau-Robins looks at archeological evidence and the landscape of the land owned by Nova Scotian enslaver Timothy Ruggles.

After decades of scholarship had dealt with Maritime enslavement in journal articles or contextual chapters of monographs, Harvey Amani Whitfield's *North to*

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<sup>80</sup> Harvey Amani Whitfield, "The American Background of Loyalist Slaves," *Left History* 14, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2009): 58–87.

<sup>81</sup> Catherine M.A. Cottreau-Robins, "Searching for the Enslaved in Nova Scotia's Loyalist Landscape," *Acadiensis* 43, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2014): 125–36; Catherine M.A. Cottreau-Robins, "Exploring the Landscape of Slavery in Loyalist Era Nova Scotia," in *The Consequences of Loyalism: Essays in Honour of Robert Calhoun*, ed. Rebecca Brannon and Joseph S. Moore (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2019): 122–132.

<sup>82</sup> Cottreau-Robins, "Searching for the Enslaved in Nova Scotia's Loyalist Landscape," 133.

*Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes* was the first book-length study of slavery in the region.<sup>83</sup> Building on themes that had interested historians for years, Whitfield examines the American context of Maritime slavery, the arrival of Loyalists and the people they enslaved, slave labor, the communities of enslaved people and their relations with enslavers, and the legal background of slavery's demise in the region. Through his inclusion of runaway advertisements, slaveowner petitions, and court cases, Whitfield demonstrates the complex forces that shaped Maritime enslaved life while emphasizing enslaved people's active and numerous forms of resistance. By meticulously analyzing the fragmentary archive and synthesizing the existing historiography, this 2016 monograph is an indispensable and illuminating guide to the complex history of slavery in the Maritimes.<sup>84</sup>

More recently, Whitfield has directly confronted the issue of retelling Black stories through the Maritimes' biased archive in his 2020 article, "White Archives, Black Fragments: Problems and Possibilities in Telling the Lives of Enslaved Black People in the Maritimes."<sup>85</sup> By selecting an array of sources that vary in description and detail about enslaved people, Whitfield's efforts to "demonstrate the possibilities and problems of using a biographical approach to study slavery in the Maritimes" places this piece in

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<sup>83</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 5–6.

<sup>85</sup> Whitfield, "White Archives, Black Fragments."

conversation with recent scholarship on slavery in the Atlantic world that examines the limitations and potential of the archive.<sup>86</sup>

With these historiographical trends, it seems likely that the field will continue to bring novel approaches, methodologies, and deeper investigations into Maritime slavery with new evaluations of Loyalism and the region's Atlantic ties. After all, in the early modern period, slavery was an Atlantic event, and the Maritimes were part of an Atlantic world. Furthermore, as scholarship has demonstrated, plenty of primary sources attest to these connections. Newspaper advertisements, court cases, letters, legislative acts, petitions, diaries, and journals from the Maritimes include countless references to the West Indies in the context of slavery or slave-produced products. In addition to places like Britain, New England, and Quebec, the Maritimes had important trading connections with the British West Indies. Advertisements in local gazettes heralded the latest imported products like rum and molasses from places such as Jamaica, Grenada, and Antigua. The brutal working environment on Caribbean sugar plantations meant enslaved people suffered immensely as they grew, harvested, processed, and distilled these cane products, all because their enslavers were eager to satisfy consumer demand from other parts of the Atlantic, including the Maritimes. As diaries, letters, and other documents reveal, some Loyalists in the Maritimes were related or associated with West Indian planters. Other archival records such as government records, petitions, and newspaper stories also evince the region's links to the tropics.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 328; See also Whiting, "Race, Slavery, and the Problem of Numbers in Early New England"; Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*.

Equipped with an established and growing historiography, it is time to investigate these sources in this light. Primarily grounded in documentation from the Maritimes, this study will put forth an original emphasis on the diverse extent to which slavery connected the Maritimes and the West Indies through two historical processes. One process is economic; the other is biographical. The structure of this investigation is comprised of distinct sections for each of these approaches, along with a third section that examines how these economic and biographical elements reinforced imperial connections. Several thematic questions guide this study: What role did trade, including the exchanges of enslaved people and slave-produced products, play in the lives of white and Black people in the Maritimes? How did experiences of migration and individual attitudes about the West Indies impact the lives of unfree Black people in the Maritime region? And how did these instances of movement—exchange, migration—impact the way people in the Maritimes related to other parts of the British Atlantic and regarded their identities within such a world?

Highlighting these stories allows us to critically consider the multifaceted role of slavery within the British Atlantic along individual, societal, economic, regional, continental, imperial, and global scales. As the example of Betty Anna demonstrates, the Maritimes' and West Indies' mutually reinforcing involvement in Atlantic slavery had profound impacts on individuals connected to the Maritimes, and none more than enslaved people. Critical examination of these stories is important because it embraces diverse definitions of connection between the regions and enriches our understanding of the British Atlantic as a whole. Additionally, such inquiry amplifies the stories of individuals who endured oppression, enslavement, toil, violence, and loss while they

strove to survive, persevered against hardships, negotiated within the system, advocated for their natural rights, and sought freedom.

## Economic Connections

William Booth's early deliberations about sending Betty Anna to the West Indies suggest that arranging such transportation in Shelburne was not difficult. A diary entry from April 1, 1789 reads, "A Mr. Ferguson, part owner of a Schooner, w<sup>th</sup> Capt<sup>n</sup> Wilson, call'd to let me know he was going to Barbados and perhaps should take his route for Grenada- He offers to take my black servants, and, should he not go to Grenada, promises to send them thither."<sup>87</sup> Distrusting the conditions of payment when Ferguson's partner Wilson later came to speak with him, Booth ultimately declined this particular offer.<sup>88</sup> The availability and willingness of ship captains to transport enslaved people to the Caribbean meant enslavers like Booth could afford to pass up offers that did not entirely meet their satisfaction and wait for something more acceptable. He later agreed to the terms and promises of Captain Wheeler, who brought Betty Anna to the West Indies by July.<sup>89</sup> The dependability of the trade with the West Indies meant enslaved people in the Maritimes were vulnerable to the volatile decisions of their enslavers. New ships pulled into the harbor regularly, but there is no reason to believe that enslaved people were numbed to their presence. It is very possible that the vessels caused enslaved people to feel anxious and uneasy. At the same time, some may have seen a moored ship and felt emboldened to slip aboard and escape their enslavers. Numerous runaway slave

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<sup>87</sup> Memo, 1 April 1789 in Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 65.

<sup>88</sup> Memo, 4 April 1789 in Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 65.

<sup>89</sup> Booth to Cambel, 5 September 1789 in Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 133.

advertisements indicate that Maritime enslavers feared masters of vessels might try “to harbor or carry [off]” the fugitives, whether in cooperation with an escaped enslaved person or through force or deceit.<sup>90</sup>

If we are to acknowledge that the existence, substance, and motivations of the economic relationship between the Maritimes and West Indies harmed enslaved people, and that enslaved people found ways to take advantage of this system, then the regularity, patterns, and complexity of this trade are crucial to understand. This chapter asks several questions about this economic relationship: How were free and enslaved people in the Maritimes involved with trade to the West Indies, and what connections did these exchanges have to slavery? What role did natural resources, trade goods, and print culture—generally, material products—concerning or related to West Indian slavery play in Maritime society? And lastly, how were the Maritimes connected to slavery and the British Caribbean economically, but outside of commercial exchange, such as through families, institutions, and the military?

The answers to these questions illuminate four important things. First, the trade connection to the West Indies was a critical facet of the Loyalist Maritime economy. Free white participants in the commerce made profits from slave-produced products; Black people in the Maritimes experienced exploitation and enslavement as their lives overlapped with the West India trade. Second, the trade with the West Indies had diverse consequences in the lives of enslaved people. For some, the state of their bondage had beginnings or endings in the Caribbean, while others’ presence and activity in Maritime

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<sup>90</sup> Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 20 May 1783.

society and economy meant slave-produced West Indian consumer goods became part of their daily lives. Recovering these varied degrees of connection allows us to get a robust sense of what the West Indies as a place signified to enslaved people in the Maritimes, beyond the obvious menace of enslavement. Third, an examination of primary sources, especially newspaper advertisements, illustrates how imports to and exports from the Caribbean formed a part of everyday life in the Maritimes, occupying both private and public spaces. West Indian trade goods were relevant and widespread in Maritime consumer society, and their presence suggests the significance of the imperial network to make these connections possible. Fourth, economic connections outside of commerce, such as those in the familial, institutional, and military spheres, demonstrate the wide pecuniary interests and involvement of the Maritimes with West Indian slavery. By exploring the interconnected relationship between these regions through slavery at an economic level, we not only better our understanding of these regions, their place within the British Atlantic, and how they were inextricably bound to slavery, but we also recover the perspectives of the inhabitants and their own understandings of life, death, slavery, freedom, and identity in an increasingly connected empire.

### *Maritime Commerce, The West Indies, And Slavery*

White people in the Maritimes, especially merchants, engaged with and profited from commercial ties to the Caribbean. While free and enslaved Black people were also part of this trade, their involvement was frequently tied to exploitation and enslavement. To understand how people in the Maritimes were connected to slavery through trade with the West Indies, we must first examine the history of these connections and their post-



American Revolutionary context before we investigate the direct and indirect roles of free and enslaved people in the commerce.

Maritime trade connections with the West Indies had existed well before the Loyalist arrival. As historian Ken Donovan has shown, the re-exportation of French West Indian cane products from Île Royale (Cape Breton) in the Maritimes to the British North American colonies between 1713–1760 was “extensive” and significant to the economy.<sup>91</sup> In addition, over ninety percent of the enslaved population in Île Royale was Black, signifying “close trade links with the French West Indies.”<sup>92</sup> In the early eighteenth century, Acadians obtained a few goods from the West Indies through trade with New England.<sup>93</sup> When the British founded Halifax as a military base in 1749, merchanting newcomers like Malachy Salter supplied the West Indies from there as he had in Boston, while English trader Joshua Mauger sold Caribbean sugar products and at least six slaves in Halifax.<sup>94</sup> With the arrival of the New England Planters in 1759, these ties persisted. Many white Planters, some bringing enslaved people, focused most of their attention on constructing “agricultural and fishing communities,” but newspapers from

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<sup>91</sup> Donovan, “Slaves and Their Owners in Ile Royale,” 8. In 1763, Île Royale was ceded to the British and joined the colony of Nova Scotia. They were separated in 1784 and remained so until 1820.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>93</sup> Gwyn, *Excessive Expectations*, 16.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 19; Stephen E. Patterson, “1744–1763: Colonial Wars and Aboriginal Peoples” in Buckner and Reid, *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, 125–155, especially 128; Slaves for sale advertisement, *Halifax Gazette*, 30 May 1752.

the Maritimes illustrate the existence of a regular trade with the West Indies through the 1760s and beyond.<sup>95</sup>

After the Loyalist influx, the importation of Caribbean goods in the Maritimes did not cease, but the relationship between the regions altered. According to historian Julian Gwyn, the destruction of the Acadians' self-sufficient agricultural economy, Nova Scotia's lack of desirable exports to Britain, and post-war tariffs and restrictions inhibiting Nova Scotians' access to American markets disadvantaged Maritime economic development.<sup>96</sup> Neil MacKinnon notes that although American independence and exclusion from the British West Indian market meant merchants in the Maritimes could now attempt to overtake the United States' dominance in the provision of fish, lumber, and other supplies to British West Indian markets, it also meant that taxes and constraints interfered with their ability to export to the expanding American market.<sup>97</sup> Unable to match New England's productivity or profit from it, Maritime merchants were left to play "middlemen" for the more fruitful regions of the Atlantic world.<sup>98</sup> Since Maritime economic success was contingent upon other colonies' production of trade goods, "Not much was left over for Nova Scotians at home to generate for this market," and the

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<sup>95</sup> Karolyn Smardz Frost, "Planting Slavery in Nova Scotia's Promised Land, 1759–1775," in *Unsettling the Great White North*, ed. Michele A. Johnson and Funké Aladejebi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming); Bumstead, "Resettlement and Rebellion," 162.

<sup>96</sup> Gwyn, *Excessive Expectations*, 7–8.

<sup>97</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 143; Condon, "Loyalist Arrival, Acadian Return, Imperial Reform," 187; Gwyn, *Excessive Expectations*, 8.

<sup>98</sup> Sutherland, "Halifax Merchants and the Pursuit of Development," 3.

imperial shifts from a mercantile to an industrial economy, underway since the 1740s, left little room for Nova Scotians to prosper.<sup>99</sup>

Disadvantaged in some places with poor land for farming, the Loyalists also struggled to produce enough foodstuffs for their domestic market.<sup>100</sup> As a result, trade restrictions necessarily lessened as “American grain, livestock, and lumber were allowed into Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in the 1780s.”<sup>101</sup> Poorly situated to dominate the Atlantic economy, Maritime merchants did their best to take advantage of the lean opportunities they faced after 1783, but they could not supply the West Indies as New England had done prior to the American Revolution. For the West Indies, as historian Eric Williams stated, “Nova Scotia could not be built up overnight, and nothing could compensate for the loss of America.”<sup>102</sup>

Although the economy struggled immensely, the West India trade was still acutely important for the Maritimes and had an enormous impact upon livelihoods and lives of free and enslaved people. The arrival of the Loyalists included a significant rise in the Black population in the Maritimes. The role of free white people in the trade with the West Indies will be discussed before that of formerly enslaved, enslaved, and re-enslaved Black people. Because the sources lend themselves more readily to the white hegemonic experience, these stories can introduce us to the social and economic contexts

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<sup>99</sup> Gwyn, *Excessive Expectations*., 8–9.

<sup>100</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 39.

<sup>101</sup> Wynn, “Turning the Century,” 218.

<sup>102</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944; repr., Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 121.

that Black people navigated. Whether involved directly (through the sale and use of slaves and the exports and imports between Caribbean slave plantations and the Maritimes) or indirectly (through auxiliary trades and the consumption of information and products), white people participated in and profited from the Maritimes' commercial connections to the slave society in the West Indies.

First, the most obvious example of direct involvement comes from their participation in the slave trade. In 1789, William Booth wrote in his journal that his friend Reverend John Hamilton Rowland "sold his Negress for 30£ of this Currency, and 'Tis said she will fetch 300 dollars at New Providence [Jamaica]."<sup>103</sup> We know these financial details were important to Booth because just four months later he sent Betty Anna to Grenada.<sup>104</sup> As the actions of Nova Scotian enslavers like Rowland and Booth demonstrate, the sale of humans from the Maritimes to the West Indies occupied thoughts and conversations in the Maritimes. For enslavers, time spent thinking and acting on these matters resulted in profits.

The Intra-American Slave Trade database from the SlaveVoyages website confirms these strong connections between the Maritimes and Jamaica and indicates there was an important trade going from south to north, too. In 1784, for example, forty-six people embarked the brig *Swift* in Kingston, Jamaica for transport to the Maritimes.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Memo, 3 June 1789, in Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 91. See also Huskins, "Social Sets, Sociability, and Community in the Journal of William Booth, Shelburne, 1787 and 1789," 119.

<sup>104</sup> William Booth to Samuel Proudfoot, Shelburne, August 31, 1789, in Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 131-132.

<sup>105</sup> Voyage ID #102955, CO 142/19, 64, The National Archives [hereafter TNA] (Kew), <https://www.slavevoyages.org/american/database>.

Only forty-four people disembarked, meaning two people probably died on the voyage. This enterprise seems to have been a family affair: D. Bannalyne owned the brig, and Alexander Bannalyne was the captain. Apparently, the enslaved people were delivered in Halifax for their original owners. In 1785, the ship *Grand Valley* brought seventeen enslaved people from Montego Bay, Jamaica to Nova Scotia.<sup>106</sup> In 1787, eleven enslaved people migrated on the brig *Kitty* from Kingston to Halifax.<sup>107</sup> Some ships came from the Windward Islands; for example, two people survived a voyage on the British ship the *Thomas* from St. Lucia to Halifax in 1787.<sup>108</sup> Although the slave trade from the West Indies to the Maritimes was never as large as it was to places like South Carolina or even New England, these migrations had enormous consequences for the individuals who experienced them. These voyages also allow us to see that the Maritime played a small but significant role in the West Indian economy as an export market.

Additionally, other white people in the Maritimes had ties to the West Indies and profited from slavery not in the trading of enslaved people, but by using enslaved people to support their business operations or their domestic lives. In 1794 an enslaved man in Nova Scotia named Bill (or Belfast) had been temporarily “in the service” of (but not bound to) the merchant William Forsyth when he ran away to escape enslavement.<sup>109</sup> Forsyth regularly sold West Indian products in Halifax. The fact that he used another person’s slave suggests the labor benefitted him; possibly, Bill enabled Forsyth to focus

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<sup>106</sup> Voyage ID #103475, CO 142/22, 81, TNA (Kew), <https://www.slavevoyages.org/american/database>.

<sup>107</sup> Voyage ID #103173, CO 142/20, 62, TNA (Kew), <https://www.slavevoyages.org/american/database>.

<sup>108</sup> Voyage ID #103170, CO 142/20, 55, TNA (Kew), <https://www.slavevoyages.org/american/database>.

<sup>109</sup> Runaway advertisement, *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 15 March 1794.

on his trade by taking care of noncommercial tasks, but Bill also could have directly participated in it. If he had indeed been involved with Forsyth's Atlantic enterprise, proximity to the harbor would have aided his escape. Seeking to recapture Bill, Michael Wallace, another Halifax merchant and Bill's enslaver, published an advertisement and cautioned "vessels bound to sea... from carrying him off at their peril, as they will be prosecuted, if discovered."<sup>110</sup> Likewise, when Captain John Wilson informed newspaper subscribers of the escape of "a Negro Lad named Ben," he warned other masters of vessels "not to ship him as he is my own property."<sup>111</sup> Merchants like Forsyth, Wallace, and Wilson could augment their profits from trading slave-produced goods by simultaneously capitalizing on the labor of enslaved people directly.

Third, some merchants took every possible opportunity to make as great a profit as possible on slave-produced West Indian trade goods. For example, in 1785, alongside other Halifax merchants Joseph Niles and Andrew McGill— "Importers of Rum, Molasses, and other Articles"—Forsyth requested exemption from some duties imposed for importing these goods.<sup>112</sup> The Nova Scotia House of Assembly council, recognizing that Forsyth, Niles, and McGill had paid double the necessary duties for their Caribbean goods, approved their petition. Likewise, in 1789, Halifax trader John Stairs requested relief from duties for importing goods from the Caribbean.<sup>113</sup> A certificate that would

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 20 May 1783.

<sup>112</sup> Petition of William Forsyth, Joseph Niles, and Andrew McGill, 11 January 1785, RG 5, Series A, vol. 1b, no. 137, NSA.

<sup>113</sup> Petition of John Stairs, 16 March 1789, RG 5, Series A, vol. 2, no. 149, NSA.

have exempted him from these fees had been momentarily out of his possession, so he explained that the “Rum ship’d [to Halifax] on Board the Schooner Hope, was purchased with the Produce of this Province [fish, lumber, and cod oil], which had been exported [to Grenada] in the Sloop Joanna.”<sup>114</sup> On April 6, the Nova Scotia House of Assembly resolved to “give Mr. Stairs credit for Twenty two pounds... as prayed for in his Petition.”<sup>115</sup> Merchants involved in the West India trade like Forsyth, Niles, McGill, and Stairs were eager to eliminate unnecessary costs upon these slave-produced products through whatever means possible.

Lastly, free white people were directly involved in this commerce through their efforts to supply the Caribbean with Maritime fish and timber and through their consumption of products and information from the tropics. This material exchange will be discussed in detail in the following section of this chapter.

The indirect impacts of both slavery and the West Indies within the Maritime economy were even more far-reaching than the direct instances of involvement in these connections. We can see how free people in the Maritimes were indirectly tied to slavery and the West India trade through industries that supported merchant’s businesses and through print culture.

The mutual interdependence between trades that met the demands of merchants and merchants themselves meant that slavery in the West Indies indirectly supported these auxiliary industries. Historian T.W. Smith stated that the sale of these natural

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Resolve on the Petition of John Stairs, 6 April 1789, RG 5, Series A, vol. 2, no. 164, NSA.

resources “by these provinces to the West Indies formed an important, if not the larger, part of their export trade—a trade that, directly and indirectly, gave employment to an immense number of industrious men.”<sup>116</sup> One of these industrious men was John Stairs, the same merchant who submitted the petition against duties.<sup>117</sup> Historian James Frost states that although Stairs was not the city’s most prominent trader, “by 1787-88 he was sending cargoes of fish, hogsheads (barrels), salmon, shingles, lumber, and cod liver oil to Grenada, in exchange for rum... Much of what John was shipping to Grenada was either to construct houses for slave masters... and much of the food went to feeding the slaves.”<sup>118</sup> The primary processes of Stairs’ commercial enterprise from the port of Halifax—the purchasing of goods, arrangement of their transport, and management of income—revolved around its placement within a larger context of Atlantic slavery. All of the indirect participants in this commerce—the fisherman, lumberjacks, coopers, sailors, and captains—benefitted from the “business of slavery” Stairs and others maintained with the West Indies.<sup>119</sup>

Like these auxiliary trades (or, perhaps, as a part of them), Maritime printing offices benefitted from their indirect connections to slavery and the West Indies. When residents of the Maritimes were not watching sloops, schooners, and brigs pull into their harbors, newspapers reminded them of their connections to the tropics. The comings and

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<sup>116</sup> Smith, “The Slave in Canada,” 123.

<sup>117</sup> James D. Frost, “The Stairs Fleet of Halifax, 1788–1926,” *The Northern Mariner* 22, no. 3 (July 2012): 283–310, especially 284–6.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>119</sup> Christy Clark-Pujara, *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island* (New York: NYU Press, 2016), 2.



goings of vessels engaged in the West India trade served to inform invested Maritime merchants of current port affairs. In addition, the status of incoming and outgoing vessels was useful to local residents, who sometimes requested captains to forward letters to their relatives living in the tropics. Printers, seeking to distribute news from nearby towns, neighboring colonies, and countries overseas, snagged the latest publications that captains brought with them into port.

Word of these voyages appeared across local gazettes. On May 8, 1785, the *Saint John Gazette* printed information from Halifax that Captain Jones had returned to the Maritimes on April 21 in the schooner *Brothers* “in twenty-two days, from Barbadoes.”<sup>120</sup> Sometimes, newsworthy encounters on the seas made it to print. On August 21, 1795, the *Saint John Gazette* published news from Kingston, Jamaica regarding a privateering attack upon a brig from Halifax called the *Mary*.<sup>121</sup> These types of news stories demonstrate people were intellectually invested in the trade. Other ads show not only an interest in obtaining information and products from the West Indies, but also in having the means to trade and travel there themselves.<sup>122</sup>

Caribbean journals sometimes included information about the Maritimes, too. In a 1784 issue of the *Bahama Gazette*, an “Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman in Halifax, dated August 31” was copied on the third page: “Our port is now shut against the New-England people, who are not permitted to enter, neither to buy nor sell; what the

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<sup>120</sup> Halifax news, *Saint John Gazette*, 8 May 1785.

<sup>121</sup> Kingston news, *Saint John Gazette*, 21 August 1795.

<sup>122</sup> Wanted advertisement, *Port-Roseway Gazetteer and Shelburne Advertiser*, 12 May 1785. The advertisement reappears on 21 April 1785. See also *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 2 November 1786 and 16 November 1786; Passage advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 28 September 1792.

consequences may be is uncertain, but, we may suppose they will retaliate. There are great disturbances amongst the people at Shelburne, so much that the 17th regiment is ordered there immediately to keep them in order.”<sup>123</sup> These “disturbances,” in fact, were the Shelburne riots, which occurred from late July to late August of that year. It is interesting this excerpt does not indicate the racist motivations of the riots or the main victims of these attacks, the Black Loyalists of Shelburne and Birchtown. Still, its inclusion in the *Bahama Gazette* demonstrates the how these different regions of the Empire liked to be kept abreast of current affairs and economic activity. Whether through news of regular exchange or noteworthy encounters, the printed word attests to the quotidian connections between the Maritimes and the Caribbean. Their presence in the journals reveals that West Indian happenings and exchanges—however distant, geographically—held a close and vital place in the minds of Maritime subscribers. A holistic understanding of the sociocultural character of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, then, must amplify these imperial connections, whether tangible (through trade) or imagined (through ideas and information). The printed record alone demonstrates how people in the Maritimes understood themselves to be completely integrated within a networked, Atlantic world, particularly in connection to the Caribbean, and vice-versa. Through these ties, slavery in the West Indies indirectly contributed to the vitality of Maritime print culture.

As we have seen, exchanges through the West India trade offered to white Maritime merchants and consumers profits and goods whose *raison d'être* was chained to

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<sup>123</sup> Extracts from American Papers, *The Bahama Gazette*, 16 October 1784.

Atlantic slavery. These direct ties reverberated to support auxiliary industries and Maritime newspapers, which thereby indirectly benefitted from West Indian slavery.

Like their white counterparts, free Black people participated in the Maritime economy and society; of course, they were aware of, engaged with, and consumed trade goods from the Caribbean. Existing archival materials such as court records and personal accounts, however, do not illuminate much about how Black Loyalists *who were able to maintain their freedom in the Maritimes* interacted with the West India trade and its goods.<sup>124</sup> Instead, these records are better suited to exploring how Atlantic slavery directly connected formerly enslaved, enslaved, and re-enslaved Black people (including some Black Loyalists) to the Caribbean. In other words, for Black people, slavery was virtually always the common denominator of their diverse ties with the West Indies. Often victims within the system of Atlantic slavery, these Black people were living examples of the economic connections between slavery, the West Indies, and the Maritimes through the commodification of their bodies and through their own presence and activity within the trade.

The trafficking of Black people between the Maritimes and West Indies was the most immediate connection between the regions and Atlantic slavery. Some Black people arrived directly from the Caribbean as purchasable slaves to enter the Maritime market.<sup>125</sup> Other times, prospective enslavers ordered individual enslaved people from the West

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<sup>124</sup> For an interesting exception, see Account, Thomas Prior to Joseph Foster, 2 October 1831, MG 1 vol. 3478 A/235, NSA.

<sup>125</sup> The best-known examples of this occurred in the pre-Loyalist Maritimes. In 1750, nine enslaved men arrived in Halifax from Antigua by Captain Bloss; Donovan, "Slaves in Ile Royale," 32. Two years later, Halifax merchant Joshua Mauger advertised the sale of six enslaved people from the West Indies; Slaves for sale advertisement, *Halifax Gazette*, 30 May 1752.

Indies and shipped them up the Atlantic. One enslaved couple, Kate and Manuel Jarvis, migrated to Nova Scotia as a result of their individual sales.<sup>126</sup> “Dr. Bond” in Yarmouth bought Manuel in December 1801 for thirty-nine pounds from Colonel Lewis Blanchard in the West Indies, and by March of the next year, he purchased Kate from the same owner.<sup>127</sup> Manuel and Kate were married shortly after her arrival to Nova Scotia.<sup>128</sup> We do not know why Bond sought to enslave these people from the West Indies. Perhaps he knew Blanchard personally, did business with him, wanted individuals who were accustomed to the rigors of West Indian labor, or maybe, simply, he found the prices reasonable. Regardless, both Manuel and Kate experienced their connection between the regions and slavery through their direct position within the slave trade.

Other people had been enslaved in the Maritimes and then were sold to the West Indies. This was actually the most common direction of movement. Relative to the Maritimes, the value of an enslaved laborer was higher in the Caribbean because sugar production was so lucrative; as a result, enslavers “sometimes sent them to the islands to capitalize on this fact.”<sup>129</sup> In Windsor, Nova Scotia, merchant Benjamin DeWolfe recorded in his account book the “sales in [the West Indies] of slaves from Hants County [Nova Scotia].”<sup>130</sup> Commanders of vessels were eager to get involved in their own right.

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<sup>126</sup> Smith, “The Slave in Canada,” 63–4. See also Sharon Robart-Jackson, *Africa’s Children: A History of Blacks in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, a Member of the Dundurn Group, 2009), especially 48–9.

<sup>127</sup> Smith, “The Slave in Canada,” 63–4..

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>129</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 52.

<sup>130</sup> Smith, “The Slave in Canada,” 119.

William Booth noted the captain in charge of Betty Anna's transport remarked that Lord Dunmore provided ship captains with two guineas for every enslaved Black person who entered the Bahamas.<sup>131</sup> As historian Marion Robertson writes, slaves living in Shelburne, Nova Scotia "were bought by captains going to the West Indies for resale or were sent to the Islands for sale."<sup>132</sup>

Perhaps because the profitability of these sales to the West Indies were practically guaranteed, enslaved people were not the only ones whose fate lay in the tropics. People of African descent experienced shipment to the West Indies regardless of their status. Black Loyalists, who came to the Maritimes during the Revolution after British officials promised to guarantee their freedom if they ran away from their American Patriot masters, were frequent victims of abductions, re-enslavement, and illegal shipments. Repeated offenses against the freedoms of adults, such as the re-enslavement of a man named Dick Hill to the West Indies in 1787, characterize the notion of Black freedom in the Maritimes as insecure, at best.<sup>133</sup> Children, too, were victims. In 1794, "a Negro Boy formerly bound to John Stuart, & by him transferr'd, to some person in Liverpool, has lately been Carried off to the West Indies, & left Bound (as it is said) to some person there."<sup>134</sup> Gainful opportunities in the slaving West Indies enticed captains, merchants,

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<sup>131</sup> Robertson, *King's Bounty*, 94; Entry, 3 June 1789, in Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 91.

<sup>132</sup> Robertson, *King's Bounty*, 94.

<sup>133</sup> Paper Respecting Dick Hill, a Free Negro Man sent to West Indies from Shelburne in Joshua Wise's Schooner Commanded by Captain McDonald, 1787, Shelburne, #25.3, RG 60, NSA, in Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes: A History in Documents* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2018), 128.

<sup>134</sup> Black Boy Carried Off, 22 April 1794, Shelburne County Court of General Sessions of the Peace, RG 34-321, J 145, NSA.

and enslavers to partake in these sales, shipments, and illegal enslavements. These violations, intimately rationalized within the system of Atlantic slavery and by the commerce between the British colonies, produced a powerful and direct link between the West Indies and Maritimes, especially for unfree Black people. These stories will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter for what they reveal about the personal impact of these experiences.

When people of African descent were not directly involved in the commercial links between the Caribbean and Maritimes as the chattel of European-descended people, their daily lives brushed against this commerce. Primary sources allow us to understand the role of Black people in the West India trade through their presence within maritime (nautical) activities, their own consumption of slave-produced goods, and instances where their labor indirectly supported trade with the West Indies.

Numerous runaway slave advertisements reveal how enslaved people in the Maritimes faced both threats and opportunity through the existence of the trade with the Caribbean. Some labored on the high seas as sailors, such as Tom, who ran away in 1786 from James McDonald, a captain in the West India trade.<sup>135</sup> The transient nature of sailing meant some unfree people could slip away amid the hubbub of busy ports, but they also faced dangers of re-enslavement. The fugitive slave advertisement for Tom (and most runaway advertisements in the Maritimes), for instance, implored masters of vessels not to conceal, abduct, or sell him for their own profit.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 6 July 1786.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

Secondly, Black involvement in the commerce with the West Indies also included the consumption of slave-produced products. Jupiter Wise, once free according to the *Book of Negroes* but apparently re-enslaved in Prince Edward Island by a Captain George Burns, assembled a group of slaves in 1785 to secretly party with stolen West India rum and then try to escape from slavery in a sloop bound for Boston.<sup>137</sup> Wise apparently assaulted Sylvester Petty, a white servant to a garrison doctor, and John Clark, the enslaver of Thomas Williams (one of Wises' co-conspirators), after the two white men discovered Wise and Williams sitting around the stolen liquor.<sup>138</sup> For the assault against Clark, the court sentenced Wise to death, but he plead "the Benefit of Clergy," which, as Jim Hornby describes, "allowed first-time convicts of some felonies to escape the usual hanging... [Wise] was spared a gallows hanging and received the lesser sentence of transportation (deportation by ship)" to the West Indies.<sup>139</sup> Jupiter Wise's story is unusual but important. It stirs up questions about how often enslaved people had access to spirits and the means by which they got them. What did the products of enslaved labor from the Caribbean mean to enslaved people in the Maritimes? Wise's consumption of the rum and the resulting brawl ultimately sentenced him to the region where that drink was produced, so, once in the West Indies, did rum mean something different to him? While the answers to those questions may be difficult or impossible to extract from the

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<sup>137</sup> Hornby, *Black Islanders*, 16; *King v. Jupiter Wise*, 1786, RG6, Public Archives and Records Office of Prince Edward Island [PAROPEI], Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; "Jupiter Wise," in Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Enslaved Black People in the Maritimes: A Biographical Dictionary of African and African American Slaves in Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island* (forthcoming). See also Holman, "The Case of Jupiter Wise."

<sup>138</sup> Hornby, *Black Islanders*, 18.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–8.

historical record, posing them enables us to envision the deep impact of slave-produced goods in the lives of enslaved people in the Maritimes. The case of Jupiter Wise demonstrates the powerful place West Indian goods like rum held in the eyes of Wise and his fellow slaves—a symbol of celebration, defiance, and disorderly power—and that the West Indies as a place for Wise functioned as a substitute for death, albeit likely a miserable one.

In addition to their opportunities for movement and access to goods, the output of labor that indirectly supported the West India trade constitutes a third element in which unfree Black people in the Maritimes had economic connections to the Caribbean. Sometimes the tropical trade used the products of their work, while other times, their coerced labor helped maintain those economic connections between the Maritimes, West Indies, and slavery. Examples that support the former situation sometimes have to be inferred. For example, a man named Hector, who spoke “English like the West India negroes,” ran away in 1784.<sup>140</sup> His master noted he was a cooper by trade. The record does not provide more details about his labor, but it seems possible that the barrels Hector built in the Maritimes could be have been used to transport cod to feed enslaved people in the West Indies. As involved members of the Maritime economy, the labor of Black people there had reverberations around the Atlantic world of enslavement.

For the latter situation, where the labor of Black people maintained commercial ties, we can look to Sable Island for an example. This life-saving station off the coast of Nova Scotia was in close proximity to the site of many shipwrecks, so mariners and

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<sup>140</sup> Runaway slave advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 15 July 1784.



merchants probably highly valued its role in rescuing crewmembers and valuable trade goods. James Morris, the superintendent of Sable Island, purchased an unfree, possibly indentured Black “servant” (officially bound to Michael Wallace, one of the commissioners of the settlement).<sup>141</sup> The archive suggests this person possibly received wages, but he was certainly unfree and apparently unnamed in the sources as well; as a Black man he was probably not treated much differently from an enslaved person. Whether this man participated directly in rescues or aided the settlement in a less conspicuous manner, Morris and Wallace believed his unfree labor would benefit the site and its mission to protect the goods and people directly involved in trade throughout the Atlantic world, including the Caribbean.

Regardless of how unfree a person in the Maritimes was, commerce with the West Indies involved Atlantic slavery and was an important part of the daily lives of free and enslaved people. For free white people, especially merchants and enslavers, this commerce afforded opportunities to pull together a profit through direct and indirect enterprises, even in the midst of the Maritimes’ challenging, post-American Revolution market circumstances. Black people in the region participated in the West India trade and consumed slave-produced goods from the West Indies. Unfortunately, their most immediate experience with Caribbean commerce came in the form of sales, threats of sale, abductions, and shipments to the tropics. Tangentially, the West Indies were a part of their lives through trade-related environments like merchant vessels that sometimes

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<sup>141</sup> Letter from James Morris to Michael Wallace, 26 July 1806, RG 31, series 120, vol. 2, no. 160, NSA; Lyall Campbell, “Morris, James Rainstorpe,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/morris\\_james\\_rainstorpe\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/morris_james_rainstorpe_5E.html).

aided or arrested their escapes from slavery, through their consumption of sugar products like rum, and by the products and purposes of their labor which sometimes related to trade with the Caribbean.

***“The advantages derived from fish and Lumber”***

The major processes of the West India trade had significant impacts upon the lives of free and enslaved people, but mercantilist visions of the Maritimes supplying the Caribbean with fish and lumber for rum and molasses—and, the actual products themselves—were what drove and characterized those larger processes. A 1785 letter from Samuel Goldsbury to Edward Winslow sheds light on the poverty in New Edinburgh, Nova Scotia, as well as the enthusiasm for and dependency upon the West Indies trade:

We have at present few Vessels, and those small, except a Brigg of 120 Tons and a Sloop of 80 Tons, which are now employed in the West India Trade.... The Settlers are generally Poor but industrious, their exertions cramped for want of Provisions, but should Government continue their Bounty a little longer, I am persuaded that the fertility of the Soil, and the advantages derived from fish and Lumber would soon restore them to those agreeable Circumstances they sacrificed in consequence of the Late War.<sup>142</sup>

That the two most significant vessels of New Edinburgh’s dwindling supply of boats were devoted to trade with the West Indies tells much about the Maritime economy. Specifically, the persuasion that “fish and Lumber” would be the Maritimes’ saving grace is one reason why these particular resources feature so heavily in archival records. In seeking to answer the question about what role material products concerning or related to

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<sup>142</sup> Samuel Goldsbury to Edward Winslow, 1 March 1785, in *Winslow Papers, A.D. 1776-1826*, ed. W. O. Raymond (St. John: The Sun Printing Company LTD, 1901), 271.

West Indian slavery played in Maritime society, we must break down our examination first in terms of the natural resources the Maritimes exported, and next by the sugar products they imported from the West Indies. Then, we can observe how the optimism of white people in this trade reveals the cultural and economic power of these products, with detrimental effects upon enslaved Black people in the West Indies.

One of the reasons men like Goldsbury believed the region could become a “‘new’ New England” and develop a successful trade to the greater Caribbean was because the Maritimes had certain imperial advantages in the fishing industry.<sup>143</sup> Hope and optimism initially reigned over Maritime and West Indies perspectives on this partnership, and print culture reflects this. A Barbadian newspaper reported in 1783 that the “principal object” of the Haligonian Loyalists “is said to be the fishery... several other loyalists are going to establish themselves in various branches, which will doubtless greatly contribute to the prosperity of the above neglected colony.”<sup>144</sup> Although some provisions of the 1783 Navigation Acts allowed Americans to export certain goods (including lumber), MacKinnon notes that, in theory, “This omission [of Americans from the British market] gave Nova Scotians, along with other British colonies, a basic monopoly in the supply of fish.”<sup>145</sup> Maritime merchants enjoyed the fact that Americans were not legally allowed to trade with the West Indies. The *Barbados Mercury* ran an advertisement for Samuel Avery’s importation “from *Halifax* and *Newfoundland*...

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<sup>143</sup> Sutherland, “Halifax Merchants,” 2.

<sup>144</sup> *The Barbados Mercury, and Bridge-town Gazette*, 27 September 1783.

<sup>145</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 143-4.

WHITE PINE BOARDS, PLANK and JOIST, SHINGLES, COD FISH.”<sup>146</sup> In 1787, it informed subscribers that “ODWIN and FIREBRACE Have just imported from Halifax, and New Brunswick. Best cod fish, salmon, mackerel, herrings, shads and lamp oil.”<sup>147</sup> The importance of the Empire in affording the Maritimes with protected trading advantages cannot be understated. Without such protections, Maritime merchants had little reason to be optimistic about their new role as Britain’s only remaining mainland American colonies.

Despite some success, problems in fishing arose. By the 1790s, Britain “relaxed restrictions against the entry of American vessels” into the Caribbean to increase imports and reduce expenses, which hurt the market in Halifax.<sup>148</sup> In 1792, the speaker of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly wrote, “the Trade and fisheries of this province will suffer most materially for want of protection on the Sea Coasts, the reduction of the Squadron on the Station has left the whole shore open to Americans who under sanction of the Treaty of Peace will in a short time put an end to that business being carried on by English Subjects.”<sup>149</sup> As a result, the West Indies flourished, attaining “a height of productivity it had not enjoyed previously,” while concerns in the Maritimes continued to manifest.<sup>150</sup> By 1800, the Nova Scotian committee on fisheries lamented the “almost

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<sup>146</sup> Advertisement, *The Barbados Mercury, and Bridge-town Gazette*, 4 December 1784.

<sup>147</sup> Advertisement, *The Barbados Mercury, and Bridge-town Gazette*, 18 December 1787.

<sup>148</sup> Sutherland, “Halifax Merchants,” 3.

<sup>149</sup> Copy of a letter from Speaker of Assembly to Richard Cumberland, 20 September 1792, RG 1, vol. 302, no. 13, NSA.

<sup>150</sup> Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650-1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 222.

annihilated” state of the industry, woefully naming fish as “the principal staple from whence Springs the Revenue of the Province.”<sup>151</sup> Success and profits became increasingly more difficult to come by, but Maritime interest in supplying the West Indies persisted. As Maritime merchants sent quintals of cod to the Caribbean, they fed and fueled plantation slaves.

Lumber was another important export to the Caribbean. In Shelburne, sawmills processed timber destined for the West Indies.<sup>152</sup> Merchants like Alexander Gay sought the means to transport wood products. In 1785, he advertised to owners of “vessels that would wish to load boards, staves, shingles, and scantling, for the West-Indies.”<sup>153</sup> Maritime wood was used to build West Indian structures, including the houses for enslavers.<sup>154</sup> British traders were interested in the profitability of this industry. For example, in the mid 1780s, Benjamin Marston of Shelburne responded to some questions from London merchant Israel Mauduit about the lumber trade:

Whether Nova Scotia can supply the British Islands with lumber is a question I cannot take upon me to absolutely determine in the affirmative, but when it is considered that some of the finest lumber countries in the Bay of Fundy are still within the British lines, and that the peninsula of N. Scotia and the Island of St. John's do likewise abound in the same article, I think there can be no doubt of it. A little experiment would determine the question in the best manner, but that perhaps could not be made fairly at

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<sup>151</sup> Report of Committee on fisheries recommending placing bounties on fish, 5 April 1800, RG 1, vol. 302, no. 83, NSA.

<sup>152</sup> Robertson, *King's Bounty*, 194.

<sup>153</sup> *Port-Roseway Gazetteer and Shelburne Advertiser*, 12 May 1785.

<sup>154</sup> Frost, “The Stairs Fleet of Halifax, 1788–1926,” 285.

present, as the wants of the new settlers will for some time occasion a great home consumption.<sup>155</sup>

As Marston's letter shows, the curiosity of Mauduit demonstrates how people in Britain were interested and invested in the economic potential of the Maritimes because of how it could be connected to the slaving in the West Indies. British subjects on either side of the Atlantic viewed the Maritime colonies as an important piece of the puzzle to supply Britain's valuable sugar islands.

The Nova Scotia House of Assembly actively incentivized Maritime participation in this trade, recommending that "In order to secure to ourselves the supplying of the West India Islands with Lumber on reasonable terms... a Premium of £20 be given for any saw mill... constructed and erected within the Province in the Year 1786."<sup>156</sup> In New Brunswick, in addition to supplying lumber to the West Indies, carpenters also crafted "local black birch trees and the mahogany readily available from the Caribbean" into quality furniture.<sup>157</sup> Mahogany, considered a luxury wood since the early eighteenth century, was harvested by enslaved people in West Indian rainforests, and the resulting deforestation served to enable the establishment of plantations.<sup>158</sup> Whether as exports or

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<sup>155</sup> Benjamin Marston to Israel Mauduit, 1784[?], in W.O. Raymond, "The Founding of Shelburne: Benjamin Marston at Halifax, Shelburne, and Miramichi," *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society* 3, no. 8 (St. John, N.B.: Barnes & Co., 1909): 204–277, especially 270.

<sup>156</sup> Report of the committee on agriculture and commerce to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, 24 December 1785, RG 1, vol. 301, no. 71, NSA.

<sup>157</sup> Condon, "Loyalist Arrival, Acadian Return, Imperial Reform," 206.

<sup>158</sup> Jennifer L. Anderson, "Nature's Currency: The Atlantic Mahogany Trade and the Commodification of Nature in the Eighteenth Century," *Early American Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 47–80, especially 49 and 54.

imports, the lumber trade enmeshed the Maritimes in an Atlantic system of slavery. And, like the fishing industry, it also struggled by the early 1790s.<sup>159</sup>

In exchange for these exports, the Maritimes imported West Indian goods: sugar, molasses, and rum. Primary source accounts and newspaper advertisements chronicle the post-Revolutionary changes to rum importation, as well as the longstanding tradition of consuming cane products in the Maritimes. A 1787 account on Nova Scotia explains that, prior to American independence, most of the rum consumed in the Maritimes was “manufactured to an immense extent in Boston, and other places, now under the dominion of the United States” out of cheap molasses from the French West Indies.<sup>160</sup> The author, S. Hollingsworth, explained why sourcing the rum underwent a shift: “The British islands generally make their melasses [sic] into rum, which the French do not,” so, with restrictions against foreign trade, people in the Maritimes had two possible ways to procure rum after 1783.<sup>161</sup> One option was to increase the number of distilleries in Nova Scotia. Alternatively, “the fisheries and remaining colonies [could] receive their supply of spirits immediately from our islands.”<sup>162</sup> The latter option, which would “compensate the planters and West India merchants for any partial injury they may have

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<sup>159</sup> Shelburne’s lumber trade to the Caribbean suffered from the remoteness in which existing local timber stood and, subsequently, from the exorbitant prices to ship southward. Robertson, *King’s Bounty*, 197.

<sup>160</sup> S. Hollingsworth, *The present state of Nova Scotia: with a brief account of Canada, and the British Islands on the Coast of North America* (Edinburgh: Printed for William Creech, Edinburgh; sold by T. Cadell, and G. Robinson & Co., London, 1787), 169.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

received from the wise and salutary restrictions laid upon their commerce with the subjects of the United States,” enjoyed the most success.<sup>163</sup>

As the means to procure rum shifted and settled, West Indian goods flooded the Maritime market and the pages of its newspapers. Merchants and auctioneers exchanged cane products with the public. Detail-oriented traders emphasized the origins and qualities of their products. On the front page of the January 24, 1785 issue of Shelburne’s *Royal American Gazette*, for instance, the first item listed in Reilly and Braine’s advertisement was “FIRST quality Jamaica sugar, in barrels.”<sup>164</sup> Likewise, New Brunswick enslaver James Hayt announced his stock of “Choice Old Antigua SPIRITS, in 60 and 40 gallon casks” and “Antigua RUM of the first quality in puncheons.”<sup>165</sup> If Maritime consumers chose not to visit the stores of these merchants, they could purchase West Indian products at public auctions. Sometimes, these events exclusively sold (or at least, exclusively advertised) slave-produced sugar products. On May 12, 1785, Robertson and Rigby announced their auction of “12 Hogsheads SUGAR” alongside half a dozen puncheons of rum.<sup>166</sup> In February of 1796, William Donald felt it was worthwhile to publish a small advertisement solely for his sale of “A few PUNCHEONS of High Proof Jamaica Spirits.”<sup>167</sup> As these documents demonstrate, West Indian goods

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 170-1. For more on rum procurement, see Parr to “My Lord,” September 2, 1787, MG 11, NS-A vol 108, Public Archives of Canada, quoted in MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 144.

<sup>164</sup> Advertisement, *Royal American Gazette*, 24 January 1785.

<sup>165</sup> Advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 15 June 1787.

<sup>166</sup> Advertisement, *Port-Roseway Gazetteer and Shelburne Advertiser*, 12 May 1785.

<sup>167</sup> Advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 12 February 1796.



were not simply present in Maritime newspapers: they were featured. While locally distilled rum in Halifax was, in the words of Governor Parr, “generally preferred by the Indians, and lowest Class of People,” newspapers promoted West Indian liquor as a product of exceptional importance, quality, and status.<sup>168</sup> When Maritime merchants and consumers took advantage of the connections endowed by empire and purchased West Indian rum, they bolstered or maintained their social status and deepened their economic and social investment in the Caribbean. As a result, Maritime consumer culture was entrenched in Atlantic slavery.

Expensive tropical wooden furniture, quality rum, poor grades of cod fish, and profits from lumber—the goods exchanged with the West Indies carried cultural meanings and encouraged white participation and optimism in the trade. Maya Jasanoff writes that the Loyalist influx into Nova Scotia “juxtaposed *hopeful* visions of colonial prosperity against spectacles of appalling hardship.”<sup>169</sup> The root of this optimism was not just the prospect of profits from these products but also a heightened sense of imperial connection (explored in the upcoming conclusion). The Maritimes helped to sustain slavery on West Indian islands as they profited from it, even during troubled economic times. Material products like print culture, natural resources, and cane products that were tied to slavery and the West Indies maintained a widespread, quotidian presence in the Maritimes. The market demands between these places for trade goods determined the

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<sup>168</sup> Parr to “My Lord,” September 2, 1787, MG 11, NS-A vol 108, Public Archives of Canada, quoted in MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 144.

<sup>169</sup> Jasanoff, *Liberty’s Exiles*, 165. Emphasis mine.

livelihoods of Maritime merchants and, as a result, dominated the lives of enslaved West Indian laborers.

### *Noncommercial Spheres*

Although actual commercial ties were the most prevalent and well-documented economic links between the Maritimes, the West Indies, and slavery, noncommercial economic connections had a significant impact upon the personal lives of enslaved and free inhabitants of the Maritimes. We can observe how Atlantic slavery functioned in noncommercial economic settings through three different spheres. First, relational connections between Loyalist families and friends in the West Indies enabled free people in the Maritimes to concern themselves with the system of slavery in the Caribbean, at the expense of the will and lives of enslaved people in the Maritimes. Second, public interest has recently driven scholarship to uncover how institutions afforded pecuniary connections outside of the traditional channels of commerce. Lastly, as a force instated to uphold the imperial bonds that made commercial exchanges possible, the British military constitutes a final sphere of noncommercial economic connection. Not quite directly involved in market activity, these three arenas of Maritime and West Indian economic ties illuminate the widespread and sometimes hidden place Atlantic slavery held in Maritime society.

Familial linkages ensured that economic connections to the West Indies became a personal matter for free and enslaved people in the Maritimes. We can see how relational ties fostered cooperation between the Loyalist inhabitants of both regions and how resulting economic connections had serious consequences for enslaved people through one illustrative example from 1784. John Wentworth, formerly the governor of New

Hampshire, sent his nineteen slaves to a relative, Paul Wentworth, in Suriname, to offset a debt owed to Paul.<sup>170</sup> Rather than the usual quid pro quo exchange of natural resources for cane products, the fact that “the largest shipment” of slaves to the greater Caribbean between these regions was leveraged by a debt reveals two things.<sup>171</sup> On one hand, it shows the ways noncommercial economic matters could have profound implications, especially for the nineteen individuals. On the other hand, it reveals how familial relations between the regions cooperatively engaged in economic activities that sometimes resulted in debts between them. As subjects under the same British Crown, Maritime and West Indian relations drew upon their familial connections in their economic ventures, circumventing the need to go through traditional channels such as the market. For enslaved people, the whims of their enslavers and their financial situations meant even if commercial threats were stable or predictable (they were not), the uncertainty of these extra-commercial affairs and their ability to determine lives was an added burden for enslaved people.

Some Maritime families received compensation from the British government “for relinquishing their ownership” of enslaved Black West Indians around the time of British abolition in 1833.<sup>172</sup> Compensation reached individuals in the Maritimes who were the executors of deceased awardee’s estates, like the Almon and Johnston brothers-in-law of

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<sup>170</sup> John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth or his attorney, 24 February 1784, Wentworth Letters, vol. 49, NSA, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 74; Karwan Fatah-Black, *White Lies and Black Markets: Evading Authority in Colonial Suriname, 1650–1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 164.

<sup>171</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 52.

<sup>172</sup> Cooper *et al.*, *Report on Lord Dalhousie’s History on Slavery and Race*, 11.

Nova Scotia.<sup>173</sup> Some slaveowners in the Caribbean, like Jamaican attorney John Innis Gunn, eventually settled in the Maritimes after abolition.<sup>174</sup> Ties to the West Indies enabled Maritime families to collect compensation claims, thus increasing their wealth.

In contemporary times, Maritime colleges and universities are reckoning with a second sphere of noncommercial economic connection with the Caribbean: the institutional. Dalhousie University's *Report on Lord Dalhousie's History on Slavery and Race* acknowledges these ties:

The West India trade is another example of Dalhousie's entanglement with slavery and the slave trade... The West India trade was, thus, a mainstay of the economies of Nova Scotia, the broader Atlantic Region, and Upper and Lower Canada... A coterie of Halifax merchants, some with connections to Dalhousie College/University, grew wealthy from this trade... These revenues not only funded provincial infrastructure, but they funded the construction of Dalhousie College and provided an endowment that contributed to the salaries of its teaching staff... The official residence of Dalhousie's president was also connected to this trade: its original owner, Levi Hart, was a West Indian merchant.<sup>175</sup>

The Dalhousie report identifies "five distinct areas of Lord Dalhousie and the University's entanglement with race, slavery, and anti-Black racism": discriminatory policies against the Black Refugees, Dalhousie's experience in Martinique, the West India trade, compensation to former West Indian slaveowners who had roles at Dalhousie

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<sup>173</sup> "Jamaica St Andrew 494 (Mount Salus)," Legacies of British Slave-ownership database, accessed 20 February 2021, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/24202>.

<sup>174</sup> "John Innis Gunn," Legacies of British Slave-ownership database, accessed 20 February 2021, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146643741>. According to this database, "John Gunn spent nearly 20 years in Jamaica where he worked as an attorney, operating primarily in the parishes of Trelawny and St James. In 1831 he was responsible for 5 plantations on which a total of 1,163 enslaved people lived and worked. He resided in St James, being recorded in the 1831 Jamaica Almanac as owning 4 enslaved persons... Upon leaving Jamaica in the early 1830s Gunn returned to Wick, Scotland where he married Jessie Old [Auld] in 1834. They had three daughters Johnina (1837), Catherine (1839) and Jessie (1840). The family subsequently emigrated to Pictou, Nova Scotia, Canada, where John Gunn died in 1841."

<sup>175</sup> Cooper *et al.*, *Report on Lord Dalhousie's History on Slavery and Race*, 11.

University, and anti-Black racism from Dalhousie University's first presidents.<sup>176</sup> One outcome of the report is the recommendation for specific "reparations that could take place within the university in relation to its responsibility to admit its past shortcomings vis-a-vis Black people and forge a path toward reconciliation and repair."<sup>177</sup>

Similarly, the University of King's College in Halifax had ties to the Caribbean.<sup>178</sup> Shirley Tillotson's essay on how the university benefitted from West Indian slavery carefully traces how merchant profits, family ties, donations, taxes on slave-produced trade goods, investments, and other connections reflect the important role of the Caribbean in the history of the university. As important regional institutions for centuries, these universities' economic involvement with the West Indies warrants reflection and demonstrates the far-reaching nature of these ties. Not merely to be understood in a historical vacuum, the Maritimes' institutional ties to the Caribbean continue to have an impact and significance in contemporary times.

Lastly, the role of the British military to defend these colonial regions of the empire also meant they protected the economic system of Atlantic slavery in the Maritimes. In addition, some sectors of the military even enslaved people of African descent. For instance, Caesar, Jeffrey, Plenty Platt, Harry Savage, Samuel Smith, Charles Swinney, Mary Swinney, S. Vanburne, George Young, and York were all Black people enslaved to the Department of the Army and Navy at Chedabucto, Nova Scotia in

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>178</sup> Tillotson, "How (and how much) King's College benefitted from slavery in the West Indies"; Smardz Frost and States, "King's College, Nova Scotia: Direct Connections with Slavery."

1784.<sup>179</sup> Roger Buckley explains this practice in the West Indies: “A corps of slave laborers, for instance, was officially designated as the ‘King’s Negroes,’ and units were attached to each principal fortification in the British Caribbean by the 1770s... these men were the property of the British government and were quartered in barracks set aside for their use.”<sup>180</sup> Through many forms, it is clear that the British military defended Atlantic slavery and practiced it directly. Alongside existing familial and institutional noncommercial connections, the military, too, was a conduit for economic connections with the West Indies and slavery. Britain was eager to protect the lucrativeness of her sugar colonies, and the loyal subjects of the Maritimes contributed to that goal through different spheres that bound together the economy, slavery, and the West Indies as an interwoven system with profound consequences.

Ever since the arrival of the Loyalists in 1783, the Maritimes were economically connected to slavery and the West Indies in both longstanding and new ways. The commerce gave merchants and enslavers the chance to profit from Atlantic slavery, while free and enslaved Black people cautiously navigated an economy tied to exploitation and enslavement. These exchanges ushered in trade goods from the Caribbean that were widespread, regularly consumed, and familiar to both free and enslaved inhabitants. Finally, familial, institutional, and military aspects of the economy strengthened the noncommercial economic connections between the Maritimes, slavery, and the West

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<sup>179</sup> Muster Roll of Settlers at Chedabucto, Chipman Papers, Muster Master General’s Office, Loyalist Musters, 1776–1785, MG 23, D1, series I, vol. 24, Library and Archives Canada, microfilm copy at NSA.

<sup>180</sup> Roger N. Buckley, “The British Army’s African Recruitment Policy, 1790–1807: Some Further Thoughts on the Abolition Issue,” *Contributions in Black Studies* 5, Article 2 (1981): 5–16, especially 6. See also Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

Indies. In short, Atlantic slavery was a crucial component of the Maritime economy. But just as it made its mark on merchants' ledgers and local storehouses, slavery impacted the lives of thousands of free, enslaved, and re-enslaved Black people in the region.

## Biographical Connections

Black people in the Maritimes were confronted with Caribbean connections on a daily basis. They lived near busy ports where brigs bound for the West Indies sailed out with their holds packed with pine and cod, passed by townspeople haggling over the prices of puncheons of rum, and slaved away in the dwellings of their owners who kept pantries stocked with sugar and spirits. What they thought about these connections, however, can only be inferred. The archive in the Maritimes, like so many throughout former British colonies, silences voices from enslaved and formerly enslaved people. Sources “produced in a system of violence against racialized and gendered subjects” tend to obscure the stories of enslaved women, in particular, as Marisa J. Fuentes describes.<sup>181</sup> Writing of the New England probate court records, Gloria Whiting reminds us that if “[d]ealt with carefully, however, these sources are enormously powerful... Together these slivers of information, flotsam in the ocean of data generated by the probate court, have meaning.”<sup>182</sup> Like in New England, the archival silencing of enslaved people’s stories in the Maritimes reflects and is a byproduct of the historical suppression of enslaved people there. To circumnavigate the limitations of a biased archive, we must pose questions about what the archive does not reveal. By doing so, we can contemplate the movement of people outside of the finite, pecuniary exchanges in which their

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<sup>181</sup> Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 123.

<sup>182</sup> Whiting, “Race, Slavery, and the Problem of Numbers in Early New England,” 406.



transfers often took place and instead, craft a biographical sketch in terms of their personhood.

The use of the terms “biographical connection,” “biographical fragment,” and “biographical sketch” in this chapter is not an effort to assert a complete and authoritative biography of an enslaved person’s life. Rather, these terms are intended to signify the faint archival traces of enslaved people’s lived experiences as well as the real, forceful reverberations that connections between the Maritimes and West Indies had upon past human lives. As such, the employment of the word “biographical” in this chapter simply refers to any written source that relates to enslaved people’s lived experiences. Here, “biographical connections” often refers to broad historical patterns and processes involving enslaved human lives, such as migration; “biographical fragments” are sources with brief or subtle mention of enslaved people; “biographical sketches” are, by nature of the fragmentary archive, vignettes that piece together the lives of enslaved people. The assembly and analysis of these documents, then, seeks to subvert the violent, suppressive, and dehumanizing context in which these sources were recorded and preserved. As Whitfield writes, “Despite their brevity, biographical sketches of enslaved black people are significant because they speak to several different strands of Maritime slavery. These fragments shine historical light on... slave migration to the Maritimes from various points in the African diaspora, slave labour, slave community, slave/slaveholder encounters, and slave resistance.”<sup>183</sup> When historians assemble biographical sketches, we invert the purposes of documents originally meant to uphold subjugation and exploitation

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<sup>183</sup> Whitfield, “White Archives, Black Fragments,” 327.

and instead use them to center the experiences of enslaved people—stories that the archive has silenced for too long.

This chapter presents biographical sketches of Black people in the Maritimes to highlight the diversity of their connections to the West Indies and the long-term consequences induced by finite events. But free and enslaved people of African descent did not have to spend any time in bondage in the Maritimes or West Indies to be conscious of slavery's menace. Thoughts and ideas about Atlantic slavery pervaded the minds of Black people in the Maritimes and represent another form of connection between the regions that, although less tangible, was no less impactful than the physical event of migration and concrete experience. We must go beyond an examination of the momentary physical migrations and ask, how did enslaved and free people of African descent carry their lived experiences between the West Indies and the Maritimes in a dynamic, ongoing manner? And how did Black people in the Maritimes actively consider the West Indies as a place, as an idea?

The history of Black people's movement between, biography within, and attitudes about the Maritimes and West Indies attest to the important role of these places in society. It also reveals the immense power of Atlantic slavery to shape human lives in ways far more profound than the physical transfers of money, goods, and even bodies. To understand the diverse experiences of Black individuals in the Maritimes and West Indies, we must first examine the stories of bonded people trafficked between the two regions, and then those of free and re-enslaved Black Loyalists.

### *Movement in Bondage, Part I: From the Maritimes to the West Indies*

Considering what the documents reveal—and what they obscure—uncovers the myriad of potential and plausible experiences of enslaved people in the Maritimes. The sale of slaves from the Maritimes to the West Indies was common, especially out of the busy harbors of Shelburne and Halifax.<sup>184</sup> Maritime enslavers knew they could sell their enslaved people to the West Indies because Caribbean sugar plantations needed a continuous supply of labor.<sup>185</sup> As was briefly mentioned in the previous chapter as a familial, noncommercial economic connection, we can see this in the example of John Wentworth sending his nineteen slaves to Paul Wentworth in Suriname in 1784.<sup>186</sup> John recorded this event in a letter. As “the largest shipment” of enslaved people between these regions this is a somewhat unusual example, but it deserves a close study.<sup>187</sup> Detailed archival records relating to this event allow us to envisage the impacts of this migration in a way that ordinary snippets about Maritime slavery do not. By drawing together a biographical sketch for the group that focuses on the personal history and individuality of the enslaved, we can attempt to comprehend the complex, personal contexts that colored their experience of being sent to the greater Caribbean.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Smith, “The Slave in Canada,” 119.

<sup>185</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 52.

<sup>186</sup> John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth or his attorney, 24 February 1784, Wentworth Letters, vol. 49, NSA, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 74; Fatah-Black, *White Lies and Black Markets*, 164. Paul’s precise relation to John is obscure (they were possibly cousins), but it is certain the two had a close friendship; see entry for “Paul Wentworth (Counsellor)” in John Wentworth, *The Wentworth genealogy: comprising the origin of the name, the family in England, and a particular account of Elder William Wentworth, the emigrant, and of his descendants* (Boston: Press of A. Mudge & Son, 1870), 338–44.

<sup>187</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 52.

<sup>188</sup> Under British control from 1651–1667, Suriname was a Dutch colony at the time of Wentworth’s letter. Although this essay concentrates on the British West Indies, I have decided to include this example in part

Wentworth, who eventually became the governor of Nova Scotia in 1792, praised the personalities and skills of these individuals, who he described in a letter as “perfectly stout, healthy, sober, orderly, Industrious, & obedient.”<sup>189</sup> Some of these people were “American born” while others had been “well seasoned” elsewhere, likely in the West Indies following their survival through the Middle Passage.<sup>190</sup> One of the enslaved men, Quako, probably had West African roots in present-day Ghana, where children were often named for the weekday they were born; Quaco is the Akan male day name for Wednesday.<sup>191</sup> The diverse origins of these people matter because during their voyage to Suriname, they bore past histories of migration, knowledge from other locations, and memories tied to specific places and people. As a result, the voyage was an experience that held unique meanings for each of them.

Wentworth’s detailed letter sheds light on the character of specific individuals and their role in the group. He praised Isaac’s leadership qualities and in the short document

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because of Paul Wentworth’s Anglo heritage. “Paul Wentworth of Suriname,” Legacies of British Slave-ownership database, accessed 12 May 2020, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146652129>. Additionally, although Suriname is not technically part of the Caribbean, scholars sometimes include it in Caribbean studies and I consider it to be part of a “greater Caribbean.” For the English presence in Dutch Suriname, see Alison Games, “Cohabitation, Suriname-Style: English Inhabitants in Dutch Suriname after 1667,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (April 2015): 195–242.

<sup>189</sup> John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth or his attorney, 24 February 1784, Wentworth Letters, vol. 49, NSA.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.; Jerome S. Handler and JoAnn Jacoby, “Slave Names and Naming in Barbados, 1650–1830,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (1996): 685–728, especially 699n2. For a table of Akan day names, see Walter Rucker, “Conjure, Magic, and Power: The Influence of Afro-Atlantic Religious Practices on Slave Resistance and Rebellion,” *Journal of Black Studies* 32, no. 1 (September 2001): 84–103, especially 88. Parents of Caribbean-born children also “followed certain principles and practices of African naming procedures even though these procedures were torn from the social and ritual contexts that had existed in Africa,” so it is possible that Quako had been born in the West Indies, or Africa; see Handler and Jacoby, “Slave Names and Naming in Barbados,” 689.

twice emphasized Isaac's aptitude for overseeing the others, noting that he was "capable of... conducting the rest."<sup>192</sup> From an enslaving perspective, the group must have functioned relatively well together, as Wentworth advised this "most useful lot of Negroes... be employed together."<sup>193</sup>

As a group, they shared a few common experiences. Thirteen days before the sailing, Wentworth arranged for Dr. John Breynton to baptize the nine men, six women, and four children destined for Suriname, as well as two slaves named Matthew and Savannah who he "reserved at home."<sup>194</sup> One of the group's final memories in the Maritimes, then, was undergoing this ritual together. The group of nineteen also endured a split from their fellow slaves, Matthew and Savannah, which possibly severed relationships, friendships, and a sense of community.

Wentworth considered the adults in terms of gender, production, and reproduction. In his eyes, the virtues of the women were not only that they were "stout" and "able," but also that they "promise well to increase their numbers."<sup>195</sup> His assertion of the women's fertility suggests that he and his letter's recipient valued female slaves especially for their reproductive potential. It is impossible to ignore the possibility that these women may have experienced pressure to reproduce, either from Wentworth, his

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<sup>192</sup> John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth or his attorney, 24 February 1784, Wentworth Letters, vol. 49, NSA.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. Breynton, the rector of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Halifax, had sold his own slave seven years prior; see Bill of sale for slave named Dinah, 19 November 1776, MG 100, vol. 113, no. 51, NSA; John Wentworth, *The Wentworth genealogy*, 344.

<sup>195</sup> John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth or his attorney, 24 February 1784, Wentworth Letters, vol. 49, NSA.

relative, or both. Enslavers throughout the Atlantic world harried their slaves with these demands, seeking to multiply their profits by increasing the numbers of their slaves.<sup>196</sup> Some enslavers encouraged forced coupling between their enslaved men and women or raped the women themselves. Documentation from the Maritimes suggests this was not uncommon.<sup>197</sup> As slaveholders, John and Paul Wentworth could have sexual access to these enslaved women if they desired. They probably took advantage of this; in 1804, John had a son named George Colley Wentworth with Sarah Colley, a Jamaican Maroon and one of his domestic servants.<sup>198</sup>

For his descriptions of the enslaved men, Wentworth emphasized how their strengths and abilities were well-suited for the demanding plantation environment in Surinam. Fated to arrive at one of Paul Wentworth's estates along Suriname's Cottica and Commewijne rivers, these men had been "expert" boatmen in Halifax.<sup>199</sup> They were also skilled in carpentry, sawing, and axing. The natural environment and raw materials of the Maritimes, therefore, significantly shaped the nature of their work, their known experiences, and possibly resembled the resources and labor that surrounded them in

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<sup>196</sup> Brenda Stevenson, "What's Love Got To Do With It? Concubinage and Enslaved Women and Girls in the Antebellum South," *The Journal of African American History* 98, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 99–125, especially 105.

<sup>197</sup> Donovan, "Female Slaves as Sexual Victims in Île Royale," 149; Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 76–78.

<sup>198</sup> Anya Zilberstein, *A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 140.

<sup>199</sup> A. de Lavaux, *Algemeene kaart van de Colonie of Provintie van Suriname ... [etc.]*. 60 × 89 cm. Amsterdam, Covens en Mortier, [after 1758]. Allard Pierson, University of Amsterdam, HB-KZL 105.20.03, accessed 22 October 2020, <https://hdl.handle.net/11245/3.38619>; John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth or his attorney, 24 February 1784, Wentworth Letters, vol. 49, NSA.

Suriname, at least to a small degree. Surrounded by winding rivers and a dense jungle, these men had skills that, in all probability, Paul Wentworth found desirable.

A map allows us to interpret how the Maritimes-based skills and experiences of the company of nineteen likely translated in their Surinamese context (see Figure 1).

According to a 1758 cartograph by Alexander de Lavaux, the surveyor for the Society of Suriname, Paul Wentworth owned two plantations.<sup>200</sup> We do not know where, specifically, the nineteen were sent. The smaller plantation, Nieuwe Hoop, was located on 500 acres off the north bank of the Cottica River approximately 2.5 miles from its confluence into the Commewijne River, which is about a dozen miles upriver from the Atlantic coast.<sup>201</sup> The plantation, which was later renamed Kleinhoop, produced sugar by at least the 1820s, so it seems likely this had been the crop in 1784, when Wentworth's slaves arrived in Suriname.<sup>202</sup> The acreage of the larger estate is not given but appears to be roughly 1200 acres. This second plantation, called Sorghooven, was quite far up the Commewijne, roughly 30 miles south-southeast of Nieuwe Hoop as the crow flies.<sup>203</sup> Undoubtedly, however, the bends of the rivers made for a journey of even greater distance between the two estates. If the members of the group were separated between the

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<sup>200</sup> Lavaux, *Algemeene kaart van de Colonie of Provintie van Suriname*, OTM: HB-KZL 105.20.03, Allard Pierson Handbibliotheek, University of Amsterdam.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> "Plantages / Kleinhoop," Suriname Plantages, accessed 22 October 2020, <https://www.surinameplantages.com/archief/k/kleinhoop>.

<sup>203</sup> "Plantages / Sorghooven," Suriname Plantages, accessed 22 October 2020, <https://www.surinameplantages.com/archief/s/sorghooven>.

two plantations, they would have lived relatively far away from one another. In that case, reunions would have been difficult, if not impossible.

The map also tells us something about how resistance fits into this geography. A Maroon village, a community of escaped slaves, appears in the densely forested region at the southern head of the Cottica River. Did any of Wentworth's slaves learn about this settlement? Did they attempt to flee to this village through the rivers or the jungle to escape the deadly conditions of their new, horrific labor environment? Their new owner may have continued to exploit their ability to maneuver boats, handle wood, and reproduce as their enslaver in the Maritimes had, but shipment to these plantations destined the group of nineteen for a "much more brutal form of slavery" inherent to the greater Caribbean.<sup>204</sup> Big estates, crops foreign to the Maritimes with onerous cultivation requirements, an oppressive tropical climate, a dangerous terrain separating the plantations from one another and from the settlement of runaway slaves: Lavaux's map testifies to a reality about the biographical history of these enslaved people from the Maritimes. Their migration to Suriname was geographically polarizing and experientially disorienting and demoralizing.

As young people, the children in this group experienced their shipment to the Caribbean differently than the adults. The system of slavery these four children—Celia, William, Venus, and Eleanora—knew in Nova Scotia functioned with "Poultry yards, Gardens," and carpentry occupying the Maritime landscape of labor.<sup>205</sup> Provided they

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<sup>204</sup> Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 74.

<sup>205</sup> John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth or his attorney, 24 February 1784, Wentworth Letters, vol. 49, NSA.



survived to adulthood, the children had grim prospects in store. Even if they lived in Suriname on the same plantation as their parents or guardians, they would have known separation at some point. For example, young children were “raised by other women on the plantation during the day, and... they would reunite with their mothers at night.”<sup>206</sup> Youths generally began to work on the plantation between the ages of five and eight, either in the fields, cooking sugar, or learning a craft.<sup>207</sup> William may have tended livestock or served his owner as a page, while Celia, Venus, and Eleanora may have been vulnerable to rape and pregnancy as soon as they turned ten or eleven years old.<sup>208</sup> Although the actual experiences of these four children in the greater Caribbean are not documented, it is certain that their forced departure from Nova Scotia dramatically altered the course of their lives.

In Suriname, the nineteen enslaved people began new lives or returned to old ones without a choice in their migration. Wentworth’s letter offers a unique, valuable (albeit limited) glimpse into their personalities, origins, skills, strengths, and backgrounds. Given these details, Lavaux’s map complements this information by allowing us to imagine how these individuals may have interacted with their new environment. Rather than a simple transfer of material goods from one estate to another, the shipment of these people southward was enormously consequential because it directly changed the personal lives of at least nineteen individuals, if not countless others. It also changed the personal

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<sup>206</sup> Ramona Negrón, “The Enslaved Children of the Dutch World: Trade, Plantations, and Households in the Eighteenth Century,” (MA thesis, Leiden University, 2020), 44.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-56.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-58.

lives of the two John Wentworth kept behind who went from having a substantial community to one where they were alone and may have lost family members. These involuntary migrations altered many lives and determined the thoughts, emotions, experiences, knowledge, and security of people who had once been enslaved in the Maritimes.

***Movement in Bondage, Part II: From the West Indies to the Maritimes***

It was common for Maritime slaves, like those John Wentworth owned, to be sent to the West Indies, but some migrations occurred in the opposite direction. Enslaved people from the West Indies travelled alone or with their masters to the Maritimes. As enslavers brought or bought slaves from the tropics, the biographical experiences of enslaved people in the Maritimes were, in part, shaped because they carried their own personal histories from the West Indies. As was true for slaves being sent to the Caribbean, the interregional connections forged by northward migrations were significant because they manifested everyday through labor and language, and because they produced, severed, or maintained romantic and sexual relationships.

Through descriptions of language, runaway slave advertisements from the Maritimes offer fragmentary evidence of an enslaved person's heritage, as is the case with Hector, the enslaved man mentioned in the previous chapter. In 1784, when Hector ran away in New Brunswick, his owner Frederick William Hecht placed an advertisement to try to recover him.<sup>209</sup> A skilled slave, Hecht described Hector as "by trade a cooper." As previously stated, it is possible that local merchants used his handiwork to transport

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<sup>209</sup> Runaway slave advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 15 July 1784.

local salted cod to the West Indies. He had arrived in the Maritimes from “St. Augustine... via New-York.” Even during the mildest of conditions, a voyage northward would not promise comfort, but Hector suffered a particularly frigid December sailing. At some point along his journey from the warm shores of East Florida to the chilly coasts of New York and New Brunswick, he “had his feet frost bitten on the passage, and”—perhaps consequentially—“has a very lazy gait.”

Hector had probably been born somewhere in the Caribbean (or possibly Africa) and grew up there, as Hecht noted he “speaks English like the West India negroes.”<sup>210</sup> This brief linguistic detail reveals that this man’s connection to the West Indies produced a recognizable marker in his speech, despite also having lived in numerous other locales along the British Atlantic. As a vestige of their Caribbean backgrounds, enslaved people’s language played a role in how others remembered, recorded, and related them to the West Indies. For example, like Hector, Betty Anna may have spoken with a marked accent, as her enslaver said she and her fellow bondswoman used creole vocabulary, “their own language.”<sup>211</sup> Primary sources show that enslaved people carried West Indian accents to the Maritimes, but they do not tell us other habits, preferences, or memories they brought with them during their voyages north.

In the midst of enslaved people retaining identifying aspects of their Caribbean language and culture, interpersonal forces also shaped their lives. Relationships, broadly considered, dominated if not defined enslaved peoples’ personal experiences in bondage.

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Booth to Proudfoot, Shelburne, 31 August 1789, in Booth, *Remarks and Rough Memorandums*, 131.

These relations could change dramatically with forced migrations from the West Indies to the Maritimes. We already know that Kate and Manuel Jarvis, for example, were married in the Maritimes after their individual sales northward from the same enslaver in the West Indies in 1801.<sup>212</sup> Sold just three months apart, we have to consider why Dr. Bond of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia bought both Manuel and Kate, specifically. Did Manuel petition his enslaver to purchase someone he already considered a partner? Did Kate persuade Blanchard, her enslaver in the West Indies, to sell her to Bond so she could be with Manuel? The couple's relationship may have been strengthened or forged out of their common history in the West Indies, similar (albeit not simultaneous) voyages north, and shared ownership under Blanchard and Bond. These experiences and memories had considerable effect upon both of their lives, and they may have been easier to bear in each other's company.

Rather than experiencing the voyage as a result of sale and separation, some enslaved people in the West Indies migrated to the Maritimes alongside slaveowners with whom they lived and possibly had intimate relations. Betty Hume was one enslaved woman who lived in New Brunswick in 1787. Seven years before her arrival, a man named John Hume purchased her at Carriacou, "one of the Leeward Islands."<sup>213</sup> At the time, Betty was around twenty-six years old. The next year, in 1781, John agreed to work as a mason for a man named James Wilson, who, in return, paid John and offered room

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<sup>212</sup> Smith, "The Slave in Canada," 64.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

and board to him and two Black slaves, one of whom may have been Betty.<sup>214</sup> John and Betty moved to Grenada within the next four years. There, in 1785, Betty gave birth to “a Mulatto boy.”<sup>215</sup> He was born ““in a state of slavery to the said John Hume.””<sup>216</sup> Although we do not know much about Betty’s enslavement, it is possible that she was a domestic slave. Unlike field slaves, enslaved women and men working within a household labored in close proximity to their enslavers. As Stevenson explains, “the labor and domiciles for domestics, of course... allowed slaveholding men greater physical access.”<sup>217</sup> It is very possible that John or another white man may have been the boy’s father, given that Betty’s son was mixed race.<sup>218</sup> The birth of this child in Grenada brought the new responsibilities and supplemental work of motherhood upon Betty, in addition to whatever labor she performed for Hume. The move from “Carriacow,” one of the Grenadine islands, to Grenada was not the last migration in Betty’s life. Within two years of the birth of her son, she moved with her owner to New Brunswick. In May 1787, John emancipated the mother and child in Saint John.<sup>219</sup> It is unknown what happened to Betty and her son after their liberation.<sup>220</sup> Whatever the particularities of their master-slave

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<sup>214</sup> Abstract for John Hume, Wallace Hale’s Early New Brunswick Probate 1785–1835 database, #8304, RS 71, PANB, accessed 29 October 2020, <https://archives.gnb.ca/Search/MC3706/Details.aspx?culture=en-CA&abstract=8304&section=NameIndex>.

<sup>215</sup> Smith, “The Slave in Canada,” 61.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Stevenson, “Concubinage and Enslaved Women and Girls in the Antebellum South,” 108.

<sup>218</sup> “Hume, Betty,” in Whitfield, *Enslaved Black People in the Maritimes*.

<sup>219</sup> Smith, “The Slave in Canada,” 61.

<sup>220</sup> John died in 1805, and his will, written in 1803, shows that he bequeathed his entire estate to a son and two daughters, so it is possible that Betty also knew and travelled to New Brunswick with John’s family. Lorenzo Sabine, *The American Loyalists, or Biographical Sketches of Adherents to the British Crown in the*

relations, it is clear the decisions John Hume made, including moving to New Brunswick and emancipating Betty and her son, significantly impacted the lives of the enslaved mother and child. Experiencing New Brunswick first in bondage and then in some version of freedom, Betty doubtless drew upon the knowledge, skills, and memories she had acquired as an enslaved person in the West Indies.

Relationships—old or new, abusive or romantic, parent-child, master-slave, or between enslaved people—occupied important spaces in the daily lives of slaves in the Maritimes. These people used skills they had exerted in the Caribbean, adapted to different conditions of enslavement, and sometimes entered into a new phase of freedom. Like those of their free Black Loyalist counterparts, biographical sketches of slaves unveil how people of African descent brought and sustained connections between the West Indies and Maritimes consciously and unconsciously through their lived experiences, cultural identities, and relationships in the context of enslavement.

***An Insecure Freedom: Black Loyalists in the Maritimes and West Indies***

Black Loyalists also carried personal connections to the West Indies with them as they entered the Maritimes. Freeborn or self-emancipated, Black Loyalists voluntarily moved to the Maritimes after the British evacuation of New York in 1783. During the war, British officials like Lord Dunmore had promised freedom to the slaves of Patriots who escaped their owners to join British lines. Thus, many Black Loyalists had backgrounds in bondage. Their diverse life stories in the Maritimes sometimes ended in

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*War of Revolution; Alphabetically Arranged; with a Preliminary Historical Essay* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1847), 373; Abstract for John Hume, Wallace Hale's Early New Brunswick Probate 1785–1835 database, #8304, RS 71, PANB.

establishment and entrepreneurship. Other times, however, these free people were illegally enslaved; some, sent to the Caribbean. In short, arrival in the Maritimes did not guarantee freedom. Far from being a safe haven for Black people who escaped slavery in support of the British, the region was a site of regular exploitation, struggle, and possible re-enslavement, often in connection to the West Indies.

*The Book of Negroes*, which recorded the names of Black Loyalists who left the United States with the British evacuation of New York, demonstrates these ties. For example, a “stout boy” named Jack Sweley left in the brig *Kingston* for Port Roseway.<sup>221</sup> Sweley had been “Born free in the Island of Jamaica.” At just twelve years old, he had already spent time in the Caribbean, New York, and soon arrived in Nova Scotia. He had worked as “an apprentice to Robert Lavender,” with whom he traveled to “Port Roseway,” later named Shelburne. This brief entry in the Book of Negroes leaves us to wonder about Sweley’s personal life, such as whether or not he been separated from relatives, what skills he used as an apprentice, and whether he had been obliged to migrate with the Lavenders. Other documents, however, tell us more about this Black Loyalist’s story. After Robert Lavender died, the Jamaican-born young man moved to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia in 1786.<sup>222</sup> It seems as though Jack soon went by John and also started using Lavender as a last name.<sup>223</sup> Poll tax records indicate his occupation of

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<sup>221</sup> Book of Negroes, Guy Carleton Papers, digitized copy at NSA, last accessed 1 March 2021, <https://archives.novascotia.ca/africans/book-of-negroes/>.

<sup>222</sup> Cory Lavender, email message to author, 29 July 2020; Petition of John Lavender for Land in Lunenburg, 20 October 1808, transcription in the author’s possession. I am very grateful to Cory Lavender, a descendant of John, for sharing this petition of 1808 and the undermentioned warrant of 1810 with me.

<sup>223</sup> John Lavender’s 1808 petition states “your Petitioner was born in Kingston Jamaica a British West Indies Island.”

“labourer” in 1793, and records in 1838 list him as a “farmer” with a wife and three children.<sup>224</sup> In 1810, John Lavender was granted fifty acres of land after unsuccessfully petitioning for 300 acres two years prior.<sup>225</sup> The fifty acres were part of a recently escheated lot. (Interestingly, the other 250 acres of the lot were granted to Doctor John Bolman, the infamous enslaver of Lydia Jackson.<sup>226</sup>) These records invite questions: If Lavender’s petition for 300 acres was denied, why were fifty granted two years later? Did the “Respectable People of Lunenburg” listed as character references in the petition ever assist with Lavender’s request for land? Did Lavender and Bolman ever interact? What kind of memories from the West Indies did Lavender carry with him as he established himself, his family, and his farm in Nova Scotia? The details of John Lavender’s life may be obscure, but these documents do tell us about his tenacity to procure his own land, the existence of his connections to other people in the community, and an interesting glimpse into the life of one Black Loyalist whose journey began in the West Indies and ended in freedom the Maritimes.

Although Lavender left the West Indies as an apprentice, other Black Loyalists had been enslaved before their wartime escape from bondage brought them to the Maritimes. One woman named Betsey had previously been the slave of a Mr. Davis in

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<sup>224</sup> John Lavender, Lunenburg, Lunenburg County, 1793, Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 444½, no. 4, NSA; John Lavender, Lunenburg Township, Lunenburg County, 1838, Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 449, no. 163, NSA.

<sup>225</sup> Warrant in favor of Doctor John Bolman and John Lavender, 12 July 1810, transcription in the author’s possession; Petition of John Lavender for Land in Lunenburg, 20 October 1808.

<sup>226</sup> Warrant in favor of Doctor John Bolman and John Lavender, 12 July 1810. Lydia Jackson’s story appears later in this chapter.



the West Indies.<sup>227</sup> At sixty years old, she travelled with “a fine boy 7 years old” to Port Roseway.<sup>228</sup> Were they grandmother and grandson? What sort of life lessons, stories, warnings, explanations, or care did Betsey offer the boy? Once in Nova Scotia, did they remain together? In their journeys northward as free Black Loyalists, generations carried past experiences of enslavement in the West Indies with them.

Following their arrival, Black Loyalists’ consciousness about the West Indies was not restricted to their enduring memories of it. Entering Shelburne, Halifax, or Annapolis Royal, they encountered a peculiar and tragic economic connection between the regions. Historian Robin Winks states that word of them “being carried off to sea and sold in the West Indies” was not uncommon, doubtless causing great anxiety for Black Loyalists who lived in the Maritimes.<sup>229</sup> As Whitfield notes in his study of Loyalist slavery in the region, there are numerous examples where Black people in the Maritimes went south to bondage in the West Indies.<sup>230</sup>

One instance of this insecurity can be seen in the 1787 case of Dick Hill. Hill had received a General Birch Certificate, a certificate of freedom issued in New York “to any black who could prove the minimum residence requirement and status as a refugee.”<sup>231</sup> GBCs promised freedom to the bearer and permitted them “to go to Nova-Scotia or

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<sup>227</sup> Book of Negroes, NSA.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 40.

<sup>230</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 15.

<sup>231</sup> Walker, *The Black Loyalists*, 11.

wherever else He may think proper.”<sup>232</sup> Three years later, Hill experienced first-hand the tenuousness of his freedom and the brutal injustices frequently committed against Black people in the Maritimes. In Shelburne, an individual or group of people forced Hill to board a schooner destined for the West Indies.<sup>233</sup> This was an illegal attempt to enslave a free man. Gregory Springall, the Shelburne justice of the peace, signed a document detailing the event: “Immediately upon hearing of the Complaint of a Negro being put on Board Capt. McDonald [...] a letter was wrote to Capt McDonald to send the Negro on Shore.”<sup>234</sup> This prompt action occurred because “the free pass of Genl Birch [was] produced.” It is not known how or by whom the certificate was furnished. Perhaps Hill had family or friends who, upon his disappearance, searched for his GBC and hurried to present it, hoping the authorities would agree it was sufficient documentation to demand Hill’s release. Had Dick Hill’s champions seen him being taken on board? Or had they noticed a suspicious absence of the man they knew and loved? Sadly, and despite the expeditious efforts of those demanding Hill’s liberty, “the Vessell [sic] was got underway and almost out of the Harbour,” meaning it was too late to stop the schooner.<sup>235</sup> Certainly, the odds for reclaiming freedom were even worse for people who did not possess a GBC. The abduction and re-enslavement of Dick Hill to the Caribbean is just one instance of Black Loyalists losing their freedom in the Maritimes.

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<sup>232</sup> General Birch Certificate for Cato Ramsay, 21 April 1783, Gideon White Collection, MG 1, vol. 948, no. 196, NSA.

<sup>233</sup> Paper Respecting Dick Hill, a Free Negro Man sent to West Indies from Shelburne in Joshua Wise’s Schooner Commanded by Captain McDonald, 1787, Shelburne, #25.3, RG 60, NSA.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

Attempted legislation reflects this terrible connection to the West Indies. In 1789, an unpassed bill in the Nova Scotia Assembly readily acknowledged how some white people utilized abduction and deceit to send free Black people to the West Indies, stating that “attempts have been made to carry some of them out of the Province, by force and stratagem, for the scandalous purpose of making property of them in the West Indies contrary to their will and consent.”<sup>236</sup> As Whitfield writes, this act attempted to protect slavery by incorporating it into statute law even as it was “disguised as an attempt to regulate free black people.”<sup>237</sup> Although unpassed, this bill reflects the attitudes of Nova Scotian enslavers, the offenses against the Black freedom, and the popular cognizance of the role that the West Indies played for the Maritimes in regard to re-enslavement.

Five years later, a young indentured servant met a similar fate as Dick Hill and the free Black people alluded to in the unpassed 1789 bill. In 1794, the Shelburne Grand Jury received a complaint that “a Negro Boy formerly bound to John Stuart, & by him transferr’d, to some person in Liverpool, has lately been Carried off to the West Indies, & left Bound (as it is said) to some person there.”<sup>238</sup> The kidnapping and enslavement of this young boy probably meant the devastating separation from his family and likely upset the rest of the Black community in Shelburne and Birchtown. As the Grand Jury’s complaint suggests, free Black people hesitated to send their children into indentured

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<sup>236</sup> An Act for the Regulation and Relief of the Free Negroes within the Province of Nova Scotia, In Council, 2 April 1789, RG 5, Series U, Un-passed Bills, 1762–1792, NSA, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 129.

<sup>237</sup> Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 129.

<sup>238</sup> Black Boy Carried Off, 22 April 1794, Shelburne County Court of General Sessions of the Peace, RG 34-321, J 145, NSA.

servitude because of the insecurity of their freedom. The Jury urged against the abduction of this child less out of concern for its illegality, which only received parenthetical mention, and more out of fear that “a transaction of this nature... if Overlook’d, will be productive of much injury to the community in preventing the Negroes from Binding out their Children in the future.”<sup>239</sup> In other words, the Shelburne Grand Jury was more interested in maintaining the supply of cheap and exploitable Black labor than preventing the kidnapping and trafficking of people of African descent. Meanwhile, parents lived in a state of fear for the safety of their families, and they grieved the sudden losses of their children.

Due to the connections to West Indian societies based on enslaved African labor, the Maritime economy was clearly not a secure place for free Black Loyalists to live out the freedom that the British had promised. As Carole Watterson Troxler explains, “many other people were illegally seized by white Loyalists as they left Nova Scotia to move or trade with the Bahamas, the West Indies, and the United States.”<sup>240</sup> Some Black Loyalists, like Jack Sweley, Betsey, and the seven-year-old in her care, carried memories of the West Indies with them to the Maritimes. Others, like Dick Hill and the young indentured boy, discovered the horrifying fragility of their freedom as Black Loyalists when white traders and captains abducted them and shipped them to the West Indies. The unequal, frequently hostile environment for free and enslaved Black people in the Maritimes engendered anxiety and grief among families and communities.

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Carole Watterson Troxler, “Uses of the Bahamas by Southern Loyalist Exiles,” in *The Loyal Atlantic*, ed. Bannister and Riordan, 185–207, especially 200.

*An Ocean Away and Too Close for Comfort:  
Maritime Attitudes toward the West Indies*

Whether free or enslaved, Black people in the Maritimes did not have to spend time in the West Indies or even know anyone sent there to understand its hostility. Enslavers weaponized this knowledge, playing upon fears of arduous toil, abuse, and separation as they threatened to ship Black individuals to the tropics. In spite of these efforts, Black people in the Maritimes resisted these cruel threats. They sought protection through the courts, escaped through the wilderness, and fled with their families. Black and white people alike uttered statements about the West Indies fully comprehending the menace it posed for people of African descent. To them, the West Indies felt closer than the tropical region where it was physically situated, and it was closer. The West Indies existed in the Maritimes: on the pages of its newspapers, on the shelves of its storehouses, among the cargo of its ships. It fell upon ears in hissed and hushed whispers. It crept into the thoughts of people who feared to learn what this place might mean for them, and it haunted the minds of those who already knew.

Mertilla Dixon was one woman who experienced these terrifying threats. In 1791, this free Black woman had been working as a domestic servant for Thomas Barclay's family in Nova Scotia, after moving there with them from Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>241</sup> After enduring repetitive threats from Susan Barclay "to ship her to the West Indies, and there dispose of her as a Slave, and being fully persuaded that she was to be put on board a vessel, then ready for Sea," Dixon acted with an interest to preserve her life when she

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<sup>241</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 14.

fled from the Barclay's household to the home of her father in Birchtown.<sup>242</sup> Susan Barclay was notoriously vicious to her slaves and servants.<sup>243</sup> Even the "refuge" of her father's house probably only offered Dixon slight solace when she submitted a complaint to Shelburne County's Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace. She anxiously prayed for "Your Honor's Protection, until Major Barclay, can prove his claim." Appealing to the Court of Sessions and seeking safety with her father shows Dixon's efforts to protect herself from enslavement in the West Indies at all costs. Mertilla Dixon may have only known the West Indies in her mind from these threats, but the place nonetheless likely conjured a sense of great anxiety and fear.

In his account of his journey to Nova Scotia to organize the 1792 Black Loyalist exodus to Sierra Leone, abolitionist John Clarkson mentioned several stories of free Black people who, like Mertilla Dixon, were nearly sent to the West Indies. Clarkson recorded the life of Lydia Jackson in particular because "it will serve to give some idea of the situation of the Black people in this Province."<sup>244</sup> Impoverished and deserted by her husband, Jackson resorted to indenturing herself to Henry Hedley, a Loyalist in Manchester, Nova Scotia. She believed it would be a one-year term, but Hedley took advantage of Jackson's illiteracy and tricked her into signing an indenture for thirty-nine

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<sup>242</sup> Complaint of Mertilla Dixon, RG 34-321, M 97, NSA, in Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 14.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid. Mrs. Barclay's cruelty towards slaves is well-documented. Smardz Frost and States write she "punished [the enslaved] by hanging people up by their thumbs," and they recall an oral account where she "was accused of beating one enslaved man to death, with no consequences except perhaps the annoyance of her husband and disapproval of her neighbours;" Smardz Frost and States, "King's College: Direct Connections with Slavery," 46-47. When one young slave was accused of eating a stolen pie and giving the scraps to the hogs, "Barclay whipped her, forced the 'girl' into the hog pen, and made her consume the leftover scraps;" Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 79.

<sup>244</sup> Fergusson, *Mission to America*, 89.

years. He then sold her to Doctor Bolman (the same man previously referenced in the story of John Lavender) in Lunenburg, who was “a very bad master, frequently beating her with the tongs, sticks, pieces of rope &c. about the head & face,” sometimes with his wife. Once, Bolman “in the most inhuman manner stamped upon her whilst she lay upon the ground” while Jackson was in the late months of pregnancy, and it appears the unborn child did not survive.<sup>245</sup> Jackson was wary of her enslaver; before he stomped on her pregnant body, “she had spoken with the least intention of giving offence.”<sup>246</sup> How did an ever-present fear shape the tone, behavior, and actions of Lydia Jackson and others towards unpredictable and violent enslavers? When Jackson sought the aid of an attorney, Bolman used his power to silence the case, “who then or soon after expressed his intention of selling her [to] some Planter in the West Indies to work as a slave.” His actions show that he believed merely mentioning the West Indies could control his slave. Clarkson did not share for how long Bolman threatened sale to the Caribbean, but he wrote that she was still working for him several years later when she escaped “in a wonderful way through the woods” to reach Halifax.<sup>247</sup> Did she flee because she believed a sale to the tropics was imminent? In Halifax, she submitted a complaint about Bolman to the Governor and Chief Justice, to no avail. Finally, John Clarkson met, advocated for, and advised her. Importantly, Clarkson also wrote in his diary, “I do not know what induced me to mention the above case as I have many others of a similar nature; for

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<sup>245</sup> Fergusson, *Mission to America*, 90; Whitfield, “White Archives, Black Fragments,” 339.

<sup>246</sup> Fergusson, *Mission to America*, 90.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

example, Scott’s case, Mr. Lee, Senr. case, Smith’s child, Motley Roads child, Mr. Farish’s negro servant, &c.” How many of these people—and how many others—lived with the daily threat of sale to the West Indies?

Clarkson’s usage of the word “child” in so many of the above listed names bears an important point about how these shipments harmed Black families. During a deposition for the 1805 case of *Richard Hopefield v. Stair Agnew* in New Brunswick, Richard Hopefield, Sr. shared about his family’s connection to the West Indies.<sup>248</sup> In the 1780s, both he and his wife had moved to the Maritimes separately from the American colonies, but unlike Richard, who was indentured, his wife Statia had migrated to Saint John with her enslaver. Richard and Statia met in New Brunswick, married, and had several children.<sup>249</sup> At one point, the unity of the family came into question when, according to Hopefield, Statia “had been put on board a vessel by one Phineas Lovitt in order as the deponent was informed to send her to the West Indies to be sold.”<sup>250</sup> This southward migration ultimately did not go through (“she was relanded [sic] by order of Governor Carleton who set her at liberty”), yet the possible shipment of his wife to the Caribbean had been impressionable enough for Hopefield to include it in a deposition he gave over ten years later.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 105; Bell, Cahill, and Whitfield, “Slave Life and Slave Law in the Maritimes,” 373.

<sup>249</sup> Bell, Cahill, and Whitfield, “Slave Life and Slave Law in the Maritimes,” 373.

<sup>250</sup> *Richard Hopefield v. Stair Agnew*, 1802/1805, RS 42, Supreme Court Original Jurisdiction Records, PANB, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 119.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*



After this event, Richard and Statia sadly faced more hardships and their safety was uncertain. After the couple lived a few years together as free people, Joseph Clarke re-enslaved Statia. It is easy to imagine that the couple, already intimately aware how easily enslavers could traffic humans to the Caribbean, lived by certain precautions and with a great deal of worry. Despite the enormous risks involved with escape, at some point Statia and Richard weighed their options and recognized that running away was the only chance to stay together, probably because Statia's enslaver threatened separation. In 1792, a pregnant Statia, her husband, and their two young children summoned great courage to flee from Clarke in order to remain a family. Surely, the memory of previously almost losing Statia to the West Indies coursed through the minds of the husband and wife as they prepared to escape. Tragically, Clarke captured Statia, separated her from her spouse and children, and sold her away to another New Brunswicker, Joseph Hewlett.<sup>252</sup> The story of Statia's family demonstrate the risks enslaved families in the Maritimes were willing to take to avoid the separation and the perilous conditions of West Indian slavery.

Through complaints to the courts, instances of near re-enslavement, and records of families escaping together, it is obvious that the West Indies occupied space in the thoughts, whispers, and petitions of Black people in the Maritimes who sought to avoid enslavement, separation, and forced migration. The West Indies' importance to and presence within the Maritimes went beyond the tangible goods traded between the regions, even beyond human migration and carried experiences. As an idea, the West

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<sup>252</sup> "Hopefield, Sr., Richard," in Whitfield, *Enslaved Black People in the Maritimes*.

Indies existed in the Maritimes because it pervaded Maritime thought. The idea of the West Indies burdened the hearts and minds of Black people in these colonies at the cost of their physical safety, control over their bodies, and unity of their families. Like the enslaved people who travelled to the Maritimes from the West Indies or vice-versa, and like the free and re-enslaved Black Loyalists whose origins or fates lay in the Caribbean, the individuals who lived with the persistent threat of shipment to the West Indies shaped the history of the Maritimes because they were part of the political, sociocultural, and imagined realities that connected the British colonies of the north and tropical Atlantic.

The personal connections—the migrations, experiences, and memories—related to slavery in the West Indies and the Maritimes had a significant impact upon the lives of people of African descent. Enslaved people sent to the tropics faced perilous prospects and a different environment, even if they drew on the labor skills they had used in the Maritimes. For some free Black Loyalists, the West Indies were part of the backstory to their pursuit of freedom. Other times, the relationship between the regions produced horrifying sales, abductions, and migrations, of enslaved and free Blacks. Even for community members who did not have direct experience with this traffic, stories of these events created an atmosphere of fear and uneasiness. The West Indies constantly coursed through enslaved people's minds in the form of threatened and actual separations and sales. Dictated by economy and empire, exchanges with the West Indies were incredibly consequential for individual people of African descent in the Maritimes. Examining documentation from the Maritimes makes our understanding of the interchanges with the Atlantic world more complete. More importantly, tracing the stories of enslaved individuals along these lines of exchange affirms the human worth of those who

personally experienced the full potential, heartbreak, promises, deceit, hopes, and brutality of these connections.

## **Conclusion: Imperial Bonds**

The web of Atlantic slavery was worldwide. Investigating the intricacies of the economic and biographical aspects of it in two regions of the British Empire reveals the depth of these connections and gives us more ways to understand the lived experiences of enslaved people in the Maritimes. But the impacts of enslavement on individual lives can only tell us so much about larger patterns and systems at play. Taken together, the economic connections and biographical experiences relating to slavery, the Maritimes, and West Indies point to broader themes of this story: empire and identity. This conclusion parses out how and why imperial identities differed between white and Black Loyalists in the Maritime. It synthesizes the economic and consumerist trends relating to sugar production and consumption. It contends that these elements reinforced imperial connections as both white and Black people in the Maritimes sought to claim new imperial identities, albeit in strikingly different ways from one another and with opposite meanings in regard to Atlantic slavery. As anxieties about their role in the Empire spurred white Loyalist involvement in the West India trade, free and enslaved Black people drew upon or distanced themselves from their imperial identities within the British Empire in their search for freedom, safety, and community.

The British Empire safeguarded and fostered the relationship between the Maritimes and West Indies, binding the two distant regions within an imperial system. Tessa Murphy notes that by the 1780s, “the British Crown was particularly determined to

increase the productivity of her remaining colonies.”<sup>253</sup> Such a desire, coupled with the United States’ exclusion from the West India market, enabled traders in the Maritimes to become more deeply involved in opportunities to profit from West Indian cane. It is clear that without the protections from the Crown, Maritime merchants could not have competed against their New England neighbors. Empire was important in the West Indies for similar reasons. For example, much like how the Maritime colonies benefitted from American exclusion from trade to the British Caribbean in the 1780s, British West Indian planters during the American Revolutionary War had depended on the Empire to establish policies that protected them from competition with the French sugar islands. As Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy states of the American and West Indian colonies, “while the [Thirteen] mainland colonies were outgrowing the imperial economy, the island colonies were increasingly dependent on the discriminatory duties that guaranteed their monopoly of the home market. In the event of an imperial rift, economic self-interest dictated loyalty to Britain.”<sup>254</sup> On opposite latitudes of the British Atlantic, both the West Indies and the Maritimes had long histories of imperial dependence, strengthening their loyalty to the Crown.

Sugar (and the slavery involved in its production) was clearly paramount to these connections. By the Revolutionary War, “sugar and rum dominated the economies of even the most diversified islands” like Jamaica and the Windward Islands.<sup>255</sup> Older,

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<sup>253</sup> Tessa Murphy, “The Creole Archipelago: Colonization, Experimentation, and Community in the Southern Caribbean, c. 1700–1796” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2016), 231–239, especially 238.

<sup>254</sup> Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 58–9.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

major sugar-producing colonies such as Barbados, Jamaica, and Antigua tended to appear most frequently in Maritime newspaper advertisements.<sup>256</sup> Similarly, more recently acquired British colonies, like Grenada, also featured prominently, likely because it experienced a “rapid expansion of sugar cultivation.”<sup>257</sup> With Maritime exports directly supporting Caribbean sugar plantations, the centrality of cane products in linking these British colonies is apparent.

In a post-American Revolutionary context, therefore, the exchange of trade goods between the two colonial regions was significant because it reified their shared imperial bonds. As historian Serena R. Zabin writes, “North Americans from merchants to slaves engaged in a ‘consumer revolution’... Eighteenth-century imports... often had a cultural meaning far beyond their practical value.”<sup>258</sup> So, what cultural meaning did the imports of cane products have? And what was the cultural meaning of free and enslaved participation in Maritime commerce? First of all, the growing consumption of sugar products across the British Atlantic, particularly in the standard-bearing metropole, simultaneously drew Maritime consumer practices closer and closer towards West Indian

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<sup>256</sup> This statement is based on my observation and analysis of the Maritime newspapers cited in this thesis.

<sup>257</sup> Murphy, “The Creole Archipelago,” 202.

<sup>258</sup> Serena R. Zabin, *Dangerous Economies: Status and Commerce in Imperial New York* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 6.

products.<sup>259</sup> Sugar consumption became increasingly important, colonists incorporated molasses in their diets, and rum functioned like a form of currency.<sup>260</sup>

Secondly, as the correlation between major sugar-exporting colonies and the trading partners of the Maritimes suggests, this trade created an opportunity for the Maritimes to gain imperial significance. Although Britain and the West Indies soon were eager to reestablish trade with the United States in order to boost sugar production, the Loyalist refugees in the Maritimes consistently viewed their local natural resources as ideally suited for the Caribbean market. They hoped and believed they would be the answer to Caribbean struggles after the American Revolution. When Lieutenant Governor John Parr praised the advances to the fishing, agricultural, and lumber industries in 1785, he emphasized Nova Scotia's capacity to meet the demands of the West India market.<sup>261</sup> According to Esther Clark Wright, "The West India trade, into which the Loyalists, particularly at St. Andrews [New Brunswick], *had entered eagerly*, flourished until 1830, when the West India trade was thrown open to American vessels," or, in other words, until outside competition damaged the sanctity of the imperial trade relationship.<sup>262</sup> Indeed, New Brunswick's motto, *Spem redixit*, ("Hope restored") captured the buoyant attitude of Loyalists regarding the creation of the Empire's newest

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<sup>259</sup> J.R. Ward, "The British West Indies in the Age of Abolition, 1748-1815," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P.J. Marshall and Alaine Low (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 415-438, especially 421.

<sup>260</sup> Diane Tye, "'A Poor Man's Meal': Molasses in Atlantic Canada," *Food, Culture & Society* 11, no. 3 (2008): 336-353.

<sup>261</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 40.

<sup>262</sup> Wright, *The Loyalists of New Brunswick*, 232. Emphasis mine.

colony in 1784.<sup>263</sup> Importantly, though, the early years of Loyalist settlement were marred by “feelings of fear and desperation.”<sup>264</sup>

From the historian’s vantagepoint, the enthusiasm of Maritime merchants seems almost naïve, foolish, or pathetic. How could confidence and hope exist alongside the actual, dismal conditions of the economy? Optimism persisted not simply because the Caribbean was “the one good market open to them,” as we examined earlier, but also because white Loyalists in the Maritimes strove fervently to supply the Caribbean and obtain its products out of a psychological desire to be assured and affirmed of their position in the empire.<sup>265</sup> Having been rejected from the United States (although some were more than ready to leave), the Loyalists’ optimism toward the West India trade suggests they believed commercial exchanges were the means to securing their place in the nascent Second British Empire. In spite of his lamentations about Nova Scotia’s prolonged dependency upon royal provisions, for example, Governor Parr envisioned the colony would become a crucial outpost of the British Empire: “But I have not a doubt my Lord, after a few years this Province will become a rich and flourishing part of the Empire, a valuable appendage to the parent state.”<sup>266</sup> In short, a desire to establish (or, reestablish) their imperial identity encouraged white involvement in the West India trade.

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<sup>263</sup> “The New Province: *Spem Reduxit*,” in Ann Gorman Condon, *The Envy of the American States: The Loyalist Dream for New Brunswick* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1984), 131–151, accessed 26 November 2020, <https://web.lib.unb.ca/winslow/reduxit.html>.

<sup>264</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 51.

<sup>265</sup> Gwyn, *Excessive Expectations*, 42.

<sup>266</sup> Parr to “My Lord,” November 11, 1785, MG11, NS-A, vol 107, PAC in MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 52.



White Loyalists used slavery in the West Indies and the Maritimes to create a sense of meaning within the Empire. To them, Atlantic slavery engendered and enabled imperial identity-making through windows of economic opportunities and by its very existence.

Where did this leave Maritime slaves? Like those of free white Loyalists, the actions of enslaved Black people in the Maritime economy testify to their desires to discover and secure their own place within the British Atlantic in the wake of American independence. Although the presence of Atlantic slavery sometimes created opportunities to escape enslavement (as examples of enslaved people fleeing on trading vessels or at ports have shown), exploitation, racism, and abuse inherent in the system profoundly wounded the Black Maritime experience. Where Atlantic slavery was a window of opportunity for white Loyalists, it was a wall for free and enslaved Black people. As their free white counterparts strove to develop a robust imperial relationship *through* the West India trade, unfree Black people wrestled with their unique, literal experience of these imperial bonds and sought to develop an imperial relationship *outside* of Atlantic slavery.

Confined, even in “freedom,” by the offenses against their human dignity, by the oppression of white will, and by the self-endangering value of their own bodies, people of African descent in the Maritimes fashioned their own imperial identities by rejecting the brutal grip of Atlantic slavery and aspiring for safety, happiness, and the true freedom of social belonging. Black people effected these aspirations in three different ways. In many instances, imperial connections enabled free and enslaved people of African descent to distance themselves from Atlantic slavery. Other times, Black people used the Empire and its economic opportunities and trade goods as the framework in which they claimed their humanity. Finally, when it was more attainable outside of the Empire than within or

through it, Black people pursued liberty without concern for imperial connection. In this way, we can see that Black imperial identity, although often framed in loyalty to or dependance upon the Crown, was generally conditional upon a deeper loyalty to one's own free will, safety, and security.

First, the decisions of Black Loyalists to run away from their enslavers to join the British testifies to how, for some Black people in the Maritimes, the British Empire symbolized the opposite of Atlantic slavery—it was a way out of it.<sup>267</sup> For them, the Maritimes may have represented a place of refuge from their enslavers in the West Indies and United States. Furthermore, once the reality of living in the Maritimes proved to be harsher, some Black people in the Maritimes took advantage of their imperial connections again to extricate themselves from the region and its oppressive ties to the West Indies. For instance, the advocacy of Thomas Peters on behalf of himself and other Black Loyalists—“some [...] desirous [sic] of obtaining their due allotment of land and remaining in America, but others [...] *ready and willing to go wherever the wisdom of Government may think proper to provide for them as free subjects of the British Empire*”—demonstrates how Black people used their connections to the government and British abolitionists like Wilberforce and the Clarkson brothers to acquire rightful treatment as free members of the Empire.<sup>268</sup> Peters' plan to leave the Maritimes, where Black people “remain[ed] destitute and helpless,” and immigrate to Sierra Leone was

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<sup>267</sup> Book of Negroes, NSA.

<sup>268</sup> Fergusson, *Mission to America*, 31–32. Emphasis mine.

conceived and conducted within an imperial framework.<sup>269</sup> And, as John Clarkson's account testifies, this migration was significantly motivated by fears of re-enslavement.<sup>270</sup> Only by acknowledging how and why this group of people drew upon their identities as "free subjects of the British Empire" are we able to marry the concept of Black imperial identity with that of the desire to escape Atlantic slavery.

In other cases, the Empire and its conveyance of West Indian products provided free and enslaved Black people with opportunities to assert their humanity. They inverted the cultural meanings that white consumers assigned to products of Atlantic slavery. By stealing and imbibing rum, for example, Jupiter Wise and his friends rendered a West Indian slave-produced trade good as a symbol of Black resistance, celebration, and ambition.<sup>271</sup> Archival records show that free and enslaved Black people enjoyed these products and actively chose to involve themselves in Britain's imperial networks by consuming these West Indian products.<sup>272</sup> Although slavery was a constant threat or reality for many Black people in the Maritimes and throughout the British Empire, many clearly took advantage of their imperial connections to find space for self-expression and resistance.

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>271</sup> Hornby, *Black Islanders*, 16–18.

<sup>272</sup> For example, Thomas Prior is believed to have been a free Black man who neighbored or lived with the Easson family in Annapolis, NS. An account shows he frequently purchased various quantities of rum every few days between July 1828 to September 1829, totaling £17. Account, Thomas Prior to Joseph Foster, 2 October 1831, MG 1 vol. 3478 A/235, NSA.

When liberty seemed in closer reach outside of the imperial framework than within it, however, Black people in the Maritimes did not hesitate to renounce their imperial identities. As Rachel Zellers states of eighteenth and nineteenth century Canada, “resistance to black life... compelled migration southward.”<sup>273</sup> Jupiter Wise’s intended escape from Prince Edward Island to Boston, for example, reflects how opportunity sometimes existed beyond the Empire.<sup>274</sup> With no guarantee that British promises of freedom would be upheld, and the omnipresent threat and familiar practice of slavery, enslaved people and Black Loyalists in the Maritimes had no reason to feel beholden to a certain imperial identity. As precarious as the “line between black servants and black slaves,”<sup>275</sup> the imperial identities of Black people in the Maritimes could fluctuate quickly.

In spite of instances where enslavers exploited their bodies or coerced their labor in ways that upheld the system of Atlantic slavery, Black people in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island navigated the region’s mercurial social and economic landscape in search of autonomy. They carved out space and protected their families as they dealt with dramatic migrations to and from the West Indies. They regularly formed communities, escaped bondage, and asserted their individual and collective worth. The stories of Black people in the Maritimes shed light on the

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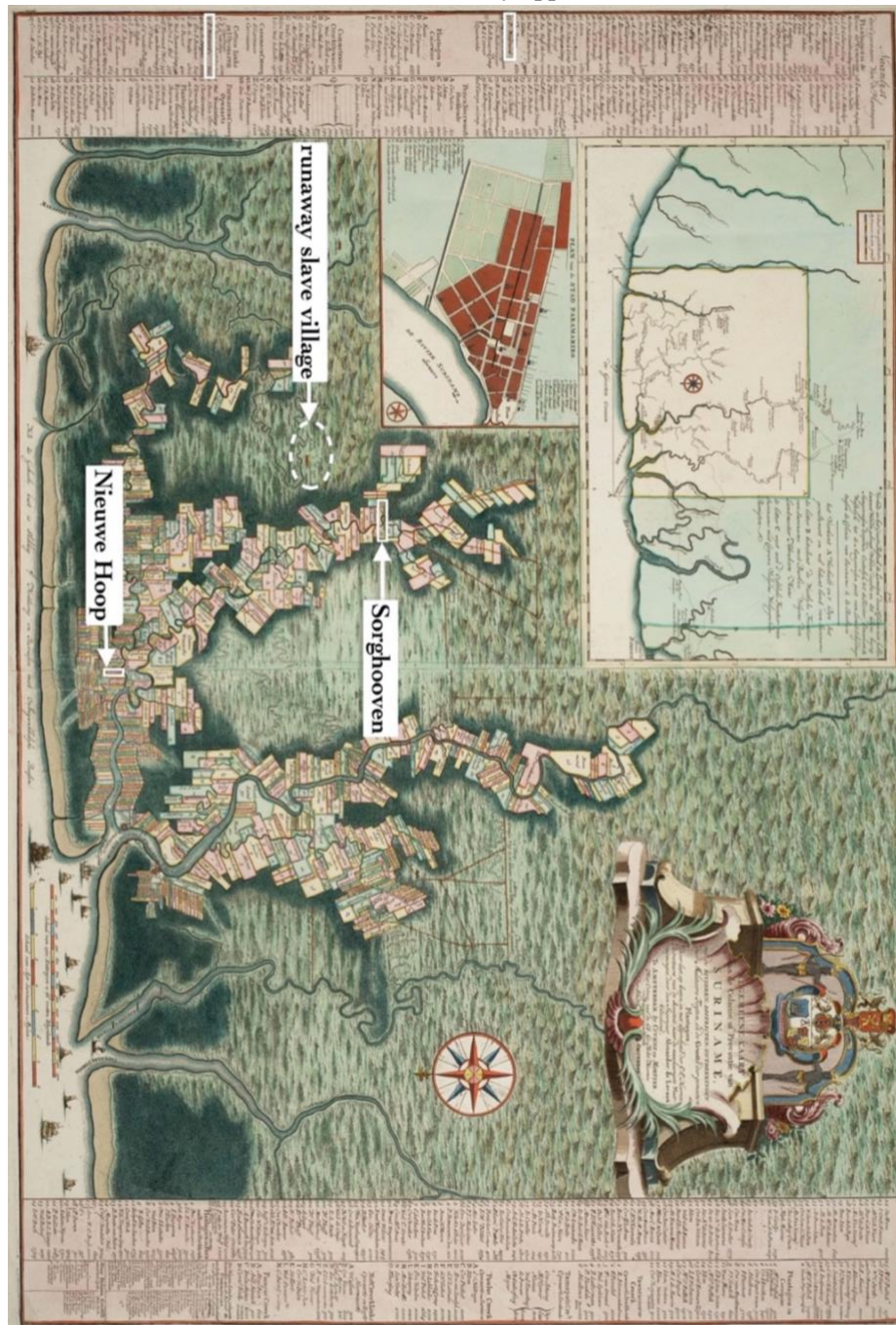
<sup>273</sup> Rachel Zellers, “‘Too Tedious to Mention’: Pondering the Border, Black Atlantic, and Public Schooling in Colonial Canada,” *Left History* 23, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2019): 62–93, especially 69. See also Afua Cooper, “The Fluid Frontier: Blacks and the Detroit River Region: A Focus on Henry Bibb,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 30, no. 2 (2000): 129–50, especially 133–135.

<sup>274</sup> Hornby, *Black Islanders*, 16–18.

<sup>275</sup> Whitfield, “White Archives, Black Fragments,” 330.

significance of the West Indies and Atlantic slavery to the region. They also allow us to better understand the lived experiences of the Maritimes' most marginalized population. Their actions bear witness to their resilience and courage in the face of perilous circumstances, cruel hardships, and inconsolable losses. While white people staked their imperial identity upon Atlantic slavery, Atlantic slavery did not define the imperial identity of Black people in the Maritimes. The pursuit of freedom did.

**Figure 1:** *Algemeene kaart van de Colonie of Provincie van Suriname* by Lavaux, after 1758, with Nieuwe Hoop, Sorghooven, and the Maroon village indicated. In the left column, “P. Windword” and “P. Wentword” are boxed where they appear.<sup>276</sup>



<sup>276</sup> A. de Lavaux, *Algemeene kaart van de Colonie of Provincie van Suriname ... [etc.]*. 60 × 89 cm. Amsterdam, Covens en Mortier, [after 1758]. Allard Pierson, University of Amsterdam, HB-KZL 105.20.03, accessed 22 October 2020, <https://hdl.handle.net/11245/3.38619>. The textual and graphic annotations on the map are mine.

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