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'Slaves and Highlanders'

talk by

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This is the eighteenth time I have given this talk in the past eighteen months; I should say that it is a very uncomfortable subject. In an important sense, it is not one to be enjoyed: although I have spoken on it many times, I still find some of the material difficult.

My interest began because I live in Cromarty and was interested in Hugh Miller, who came from, and wrote about, Cromarty. He wrote a book, as many of you will know, called *My Schools and Schoolmasters* about his upbringing there. One of the things that struck me was that, as a schoolboy sitting at the parish school in Cromarty - this would be around 1813 or 1814 - he sat next to a Black pupil. The two of them ended up having a knife fight in the classroom, and Hugh Miller stabbed the other pupil in the thigh.

So, when people tell you that standards in schools have deteriorated over the last two hundred years, don't believe it. Interestingly, I can give you exactly the same starting point from Dornoch. Donald Sage, who wrote *Memorabilia Domestica* about his upbringing in the Highlands - his father was a minister in Kildonan - was sent to school in Dornoch in 1801.

Dornoch was fairly small at that point, and the school would also have been similar; yet in that school there were three Black pupils, all brothers named Hay. Sage talks about the wide age range between them. He remembers his friendship with the youngest, called Sandy, and says he used to wander with him from Dornoch down to Cyder Hall and up into the woods at Skibo. On one occasion Sandy and his older brother went home for the summer holidays with Donald to Kildonan.

Like me, you'll be thinking: why was it that there were Black pupils in schools in Cromarty and Dornoch at about the same time - and in Tain, Fortrose, and Inverness as well? I'll come back to that later.

That was the beginning of my interest; that is why I became interested in the connection between slaves and Highlanders.

Before moving on to the main topic - which is the involvement of Scots from this part of the world in one particular plantation economy in the Caribbean - I think it's worth reminding ourselves that there were slaves in the Highlands as well. Until 1778 you could be held as a slave in Scotland. In 1778 a very important decision was made in the Court of Session: the case of Joseph Knight. Fifteen judges sat, and they decided that slavery was incompatible with the law of Scotland. I think that is something to be proud of; it is probably the only thing, as Scots, that we can be proud of in the material I'm going to present this evening.

This gentleman here is Sir Hector Munro of Novar (*figure 1*), who came from Clayside - the farm which has now disappeared, just beyond Dunrobin on the way north. The ruins of the building are still in the fields there, opposite Dunrobin.

He made his money in India, and in 1778 came back to this country and acquired the Novar estate. In 1772 he had placed an advertisement in one of the Edinburgh evening papers, seeking the return of a runaway slave called Caesar, who had run from Novar. Caesar was a cook, and the point of placing the advertisement was to prevent any sea captain from taking Caesar on board.



Figure 1 - Sir Hector Munro of Novar

Now, I don't know whether he got Caesar back or not; but the fact that Caesar managed to run away from Novar and get as far as Edinburgh is, in its way, quite encouraging. He must have had help to do that.

When Sir Hector Munro came to have his portrait painted in the 1780s, this is what he did: he had made his money in India, so in the background is an Indian scene, but the portrait itself was painted in this country. And there, holding his horse, is this gentleman

here. Whoever this is, by the 1780s he could not legally be a slave in Scotland, but I would suspect this was someone who had been a slave, and who was brought back from India by Sir Hector Munro.

So, there were slaves in the Highlands. However, what I am particularly interested in is what I found to be a remarkably close connection between this part of the Highlands - north of Inverness, on the east coast - and three colonies on the north coast of South America: Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice.

To be quite honest, when I started all this, the only one of these colonies I had heard of was Demerara. I actually thought Demerara was in Africa; but it is not - it lies on the north coast of South America. These were former Dutch colonies, which then became British Guiana, and today the independent Republic of Guyana. The capital is still Georgetown; its older name was Stabroek, the Dutch name. The area I am particularly interested in runs from the Demerara River down to the Berbice River, and especially Berbice itself.

That distance - from Georgetown down to the boundary of the colony of Berbice - is almost exactly, as the crow flies, the distance from Inverness to John O'Groats. And if you take Berbice, which is the area I am focusing on, from the Abary Creek down to the Corentyne, that distance is almost exactly the same as from Inverness to Helmsdale.

If you look around that coast (*figure 2*) here is Stabroek, here is the Corentyne over here, and here the Berbice River - then this is what you find. There is someone from Guyana who now lives in Fortrose, and she told me that when she first came to the Highlands she could not understand why so many of the place names seemed Guyanese. Some of them, of course, have lost a little in translation: Goldsby has become Golspie, for example. These are the current or disused names along that coast.

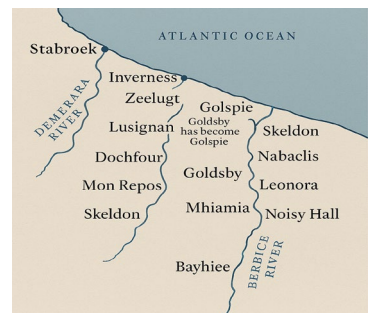


Figure 2 - Map of the Berbice coast showing Stabroek (Georgetown), the Corentyne, and the Berbice River, with Scottish place names adapted or retained along the shoreline.

So why? I should say there is not another set of Scottish place names elsewhere on the coast. There are a few, scattered, but the Scottish names are overwhelmingly concentrated along this particular stretch of the eastern Highlands. Let me tell you a little about Demerara and Berbice.

The period I am interested in is around 1800; from the mid-1790s up to about 1810 or 1820. This was a plantation economy. The crops were cotton, sugar, and coffee; but it was particularly the cotton plantations that the Highland Scots were involved in.

Throughout this talk I am going to use the terminology of the time. At that time Demerara had a population of about 80,000 Black slaves from Africa and around 3,000 white settlers. In between there was a group called the Free Coloureds - probably about 6,000. In Berbice the figures were 25,000 slaves and about 500 whites.

Across the Caribbean, in the slave economies, there was a general rule of thumb: you should have a ratio of slaves to white owners and their employees of about 8 or 10 to

one. That was thought to be safe and manageable. You can see in Demerara and Berbice that they had gone way beyond that.

They pushed things to the limits of what was regarded as a safe way of running a slave plantation. The sense you get, when you read about Demerara and Berbice in this period, is of a place where there were huge returns - if you were prepared to take the risks. That is what people believed.

There was even a phrase at the time: 'as rich as a Demerary man.' One of the figures I will talk about later described the opportunity for very rapid and splendid fortunes. The idea was that you would go out with a bit of money and come back with a fortune.

This was the allure. It was almost like a bubble - like investing in dot-com companies, or in any of those schemes that come round again and again. People got it into their heads that this was the way you could make money; this was where the opportunities were.

So, they pushed things to the limit. They took risks that they were not taking elsewhere in the Caribbean. Berbice in particular had some of the most inhospitable climatic conditions; the problems of fever and disease were extreme. It was at the edge of empire, at the edge of where people were prepared to invest - perhaps for that very reason.

Ultimately it was a failure, in many ways: quite apart from the obvious human failure, it was also an economic failure. Yet, I think, it is precisely because people were pushing things to the limits - even of what seemed sensible at the time - that we can perhaps learn something from it.

And because things were being pushed to the limits, I don't think it is any accident that in 1822 in Demerara there was the largest slave rebellion in the British Empire. No whites were killed in that rebellion, but it was brutally put down.

The illustration here was drawn in 1823, the year after the rebellion (*figure 3*). You can see the slave hanging from the gallows, and two severed heads on stakes along the plantation walk. The walk was the path linking the front of the plantation with the back—on flat ground beside the coast.

This particular plantation was not Scottish. I think it was Dutch, or perhaps French, but just beyond it lay a plantation called Strathspey, owned by the Grant families. So, this was the context of the suppression of the Demerara slave rebellion.



Figure 3- Execution after the Demerara Rebellion, 1823 (Joshua Bryant, 1824)

Now, if you look at the figures - the number of slaves compared to the number of whites - if I were to divide this talk equitably, I would spend about 59 and a half minutes talking about the Black slaves, and leave 30 seconds for the white owners at the end. But of course, the sources are the other way round. It is relatively easy - surprisingly easy - to find out about the white owners, and very difficult to find out about individual slaves.

Due to that imbalance in the sources, I want at least to begin by trying to do justice to one of the slaves we do know something about. I want to tell you about a man who was called Inverness. Of course that was not his real name; we do not know what his real name was.

This image here is not Inverness (*figure 4*), but it is of a man who was his exact contemporary: a slave in Demerara called Sampson. So, I am going to use Samson here to stand in for Inverness.

Inverness had been enslaved in Africa and shipped across the Atlantic. He was carried by a company called George Bailey & Company - part of a network of Bailey brothers and cousins heavily involved in the trade. He was taken to the Caribbean and sold in Georgetown, the capital, by their agents, McLeod and McKenzie. I am not certain who the McKenzie was, though I suspect he was a McKenzie of Red castle on the Black Isle. I do know the McLeod: John McLeod, son of Donald McLeod of Guineas, sheriff of Ross and Cromartie.

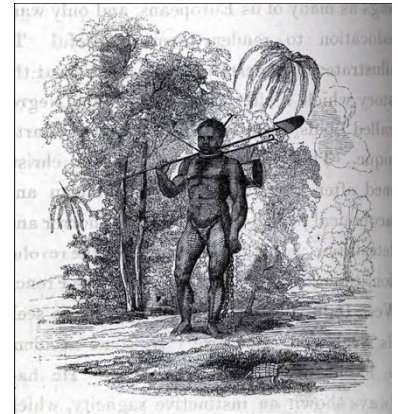


Figure 4 – Enslaved man Sampson punished as a run away with slave collar, Demerara c.1806, Drawn by Thomas Staunton St Clair (London 1834)

Along with nineteen others, Inverness was purchased by Peter Fairbairn, secretary to Lord Seaforth, chief of Clan Mackenzie. Fairbairn had started his career at Brahan Castle in Ross-shire, and Lord Seaforth had invested in Berbice. Fairbairn had been sent out to manage that investment - he thought for three or four years, long enough to get it established. In fact he never came back: he remained for more than twenty years, and died there along with two of his sons.

On 17 July 1803 Fairbairn bought what was described as a 'lot of twenty prime Gold Coast Negroes': ten men and ten women. The ten men were renamed Bran, Britton, Kintale, Lewis, Gordon, Crawford, Ross, Sutherland, Dingwall, and Inverness. By the end of that year, Inverness had already run away.

Escaping from those coastal plantations meant pushing through the scrubland, across the Savannah, and into the forest; if you got that far, you had at least some chance of remaining free for a time. Inverness was recaptured, but he ran again. We cannot be certain how long he remained free, but he was known on the plantations as someone who had managed to evade capture for a considerable time, while still keeping contact with those still enslaved—returning by night to see them. That made him particularly dangerous in the eyes of the planters.

Sampson, too, was a runaway. One common punishment for recaptured fugitives was to shackle them with chains fixed to a heavy log, which they had to drag everywhere. Samson is shown here in such chains, carrying his log. Around his neck was welded a three-pronged iron collar with hooks on the ends (*figure 4*). The hooks were designed to catch in the scrub if he tried to run again. It would also have made it almost impossible to sleep in any position but sitting upright. Inverness, like Sampson, was a runaway.

Now, I cannot be exact about what finally happened to Inverness, but it is likely that he was recaptured in one of the annual slave-hunting expeditions that set out from this house here on a creek off the Demerara River.

This was the home of Charles Edmondstone, who came from Cardross near Dumbarton. He had a woodcutting plantation (*figure 5*). He married a woman called Helen Reid—a good Scots name, but in fact she was the daughter of a Glasgow sailor and a woman of the local Arawak Indian tribe. The mother was a woman of high status within the tribe, so by marrying Helen, Edmondstone was also marrying into the Arawaks.

The reason he was so effective as a hunter of runaways was that he led parties of 30 or 40 Arawak men, who knew the forest and could track fugitive slaves as they would have hunted any other prey. Edmundston was rewarded with the right to cut timber, and with gifts from grateful colonists in Demerara and Berbice.



Figure 5 - Charles Edmondstones plantation on Mibirí Creek, Demerara, drawn by Thomas Staunton St Clair

His largest expedition came in 1810, when they recaptured around seventy slaves and killed about thirty. That raid effectively brought an end to the maroon communities of runaway slaves in Guyana.

So, if Inverness had managed to remain free until 1810, then he was almost certainly either killed or recaptured in that expedition. The point I want to stress is that Inverness was enslaved, transported to the Caribbean, sold, renamed, exploited, and finally hunted down - all at the hands of Scots, and almost all of them from the Highlands.

So who were the Scots involved? Well, here is someone I mentioned earlier: Francis Humberston Mackenzie, Lord Seaforth, Chief of Clan Mackenzie. He owned Inverness, just as he owned Lewis and Kintale—I mean both the slaves and the places themselves.

For contrast I have placed his portrait beside that of Samson. Why was Lord Seaforth investing in Berbice? People like him faced a problem: their Highland estates were expensive to maintain. They had mounting costs; they had a place in society to uphold; he had daughters to marry off; and he wanted to preserve a particular style of living. But the danger was that his estates were no longer providing the returns to fund it.

And he's getting very, but remember, invest in Demerara and you can make very rapid and splendid fortunes, and that's Lord Seaforth's words. So he does, and I think there's this real fascinating, he's been told very clearly by his financial advisers, this is what you've got to do. He gets a job as Governor of Barbados, never goes to Guyana but he's in the West Indies.

And yet, remember the phrase: in Demerara you could make 'very rapid and splendid fortunes.' Those were Seaforth's own words. He was told clearly by his advisers that this was what he had to do. He accepted the post of Governor of Barbados, though he

never went to Guyana itself, but he is in the West Indies. He was advised to stay away from Britain as much as possible to cut down his expenses while waiting for the Berbice investment to pay. If he failed, he would have to sell off parts of his Highland estates.

Lord Seaforth had worked hard to revive his family fortunes. He's dressed up like this because he's raised a regiment (*figure 6*) Remember, these were families once branded rebels, yet he found his way back into high society by raising troops for the crown. He both wanted to remain part of that society, and to go on being a traditional Highland chief. He wanted to manage his estates in the old ways, not turn them into commercial businesses.



Figure 6 - Lord Seaforth, painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, 1797.

But the choice was stark: if he could make Berbice pay, if he could exploit slave labour, then he could afford to remain a traditional Highland chief. If he failed in Berbice, he would need a more commercial approach in the Highlands - meaning the clearances: removing tenants from the land and replacing them with sheep.

So the fate of Highlanders was bound up with the fate of people like Inverness and Samson. I just find that intriguing. You cannot think of the history of the Highlands as something that only happened in the Highlands - there were all these other influences coming in.



Figure 7 - Berbice coastal plantation lots, early 19th century.

This is Lord Seaforth's investment in Berbice. They bought this plot of land and he was working with partners (*figure 7*). This portion went to James Fraser of Belladrum. There were three Belladrum Fraser brothers out in Berbice, all very influential in the colony.

This is Archibald Alves, a doctor from Inverness but now practising in Harley Street, London. The largest share went to Lord Seaforth himself. Two others went to Edward Satchwell Fraser of Reelig, near Beaulieu, and William Munro. (*figure 8*)

We don't quite know where William Munro came from - he was a doctor - but he ended up with two plantations, which he named Novar and Fyrish. And finally, this portion went to William Somersall, the Englishman in the partnership.

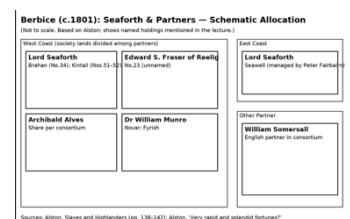


Figure 8 - Seaforth's Berbice consortium, c.1801—division of Society lands: Seaforth (Braham 34; Kintail 51-52) and Seawell (east coast, mgr. Peter Fairbairn); E. S. Fraser of Reelig (No. 23); Dr. William Munro (Novar; Fyrish); Archibald Alves; William Somersall.

So, one of Lord Seaforth's partners was Fraser of Reelig. Fraser of Reelig was a much smaller landowner, but the problem was exactly the same. They owned the Reelig estate - could they keep it, could they raise enough money not to have to sell? So, they invested in Berbice.

Lord Seaforth could afford to send out an employee, his secretary Peter Fairbairn. Edward Fraser of Reelig could not afford that - so he sent his sons. And it was the sons of these minor landowning families who tended to end up in Berbice.



Figure 9 - James Bailey Fraser, c.1799-1800

Up there is James Bailey Fraser (*figure 9*), the oldest brother, and this is Edward Fraser (*figure 10*). Both of them are sent out when they're 16 and

before they leave, they have their portraits painted. These portraits are painted by Henry Rayburn and I think are a stunning picture.

Edward is a young lad of sixteen, dressed up, with the weight of his family's expectations on his shoulders. If he and his brother James could make enough money, they might keep the family estate. His shoulders are back, he's wearing his tartan and fine clothes - but if you look in his eyes, I think you see only uncertainty.



Figure 10 - Edward Satchwell Fraser Jr c.1803

A lot of the people who went out didn't come back, they died of fever. He's opposed to slavery, spends a lot of time out there round the table arguing with his brother and others about what's wrong with slavery, but what choice does he have? His family are expecting it of him. He writes back - he's a very sensitive and actually very attractive character - business letters to his father.

He writes much more personal letters to his mother from the first day that he arrives in Berbice. What I want to do, which is not a particularly good historical method, is just to lift bits from different letters. I want to read some of that to you to give you a sense of what it's like for somebody like Edward arriving in Berbice.

'The country is abominably ugly. I would rather live in the bleakest part of the Highlands than here. The only thing in favour of it is that if one is industrious one may make some money in it. To return home, little better than I came out, would be for me more dreadful than never to return.'

His family needs him to make them money. He talks about New Amsterdam, the capital of Berbice: *'The shabbiest thing to call a town I ever saw. In the evening you see a parcel of drunk men, I cannot call them gentlemen, smoking tobacco, drinking gin and playing billiards'*.

The whole theme through his correspondence, people are out there to make money, they're not out there to create a new society and social institutions. There is a very interesting comment later in the century, somebody writing a history of Guyana, who says, huge involvement of Scots, what do you associate Scots with? Sobriety, canniness, religion, and he says none of that, it just disappeared as soon as they got out there. And that's the same kind of thing Edward's saying, there is just nothing there of value in the society.

The whole theme through his correspondence: people are out there to make money, they're not out there to create a new society and social institutions. There is a very interesting comment later in the century by somebody writing a history of Guyana. He says, *'huge involvement of Scots, what do you associate Scots with? Sobriety, canniness, religion. And he says none of that, it just disappeared as soon as they got out there.'* That's the same kind of thing Edward's saying. There is just nothing there of value in the society.

At Doch Fuehr, this is the first one of the plantations he's on, the manager, Mr Simpson, *'is a harsh, disagreeable, vulgar little creature, though a very good planter. He keeps his house abominably dirty.'*

Edward is trained as an overseer at Novar Plantation, which belonged to that Dr Munro. His first night there, he writes back:

'second day there, I was interrupted last night to see a four day old negro child with lockjaw. It died in a few hours beside the mother, whose situation you may conceive. I was melancholy all evening, for which I was laughed at by Arthur'

Arthur is the other overseer who is being trained there. A lot of his letters back are about people dying.

'This coast is very unhealthy. Four namesakes of ours, that's all Frasers, have died of putrid or yellow fever. William Grant is dead. He came out a year ago. A few days illness carried him off. Alex Fraser is mad about Miss Haywood's marriage. She has jilted two or three gentlemen in the country.'

This is quite a common theme as well. If you're a young woman back here, being engaged to a young man out in Berbice is not a really good bet in the marriage stakes. So Miss Haywood, in jilting three or four of them, is probably just playing her cards smartly. The same seems to have happened to James—he seems to have been jilted.

'Dr Noble drank himself to death. There's a lot of death from alcohol. Simon Fraser, one of the Belladrum brothers, is in good spirits but he hates the country. Mrs Fraser makes the best of it. Mrs Fraser was the daughter of the Dutch Governor, a young Dutch woman Simon Fraser had married.' There's a very candid comment Edward makes to his mother: *'Mrs Fraser being the only woman almost I ever see. She will run in my head.'* It means, of course, the only white woman he ever sees. James now sits sullen and sulky: *'So very few I see but vulgar people.'*

When James has a tolerable house, he will have visitors. He must get from Britain silver spoons, knives and forks. He begins to invent this fantasy that somehow they're going to recreate out there the kind of society that he had left behind. He has a piano sent out, and his mother sends them hams, marmalade and tablecloths. He starts learning to play the flute.

But it is a fantasy. There it's not going to happen, because people are out there to make money, not to create an alternative society. James has utterly changed. He has an utter aversion to being at home. He has been away so long from family and friends and has got too much into the ways of this country.

'There are many little forms and ceremonies in society at home which are despised here as restraints. We are almost entirely without the society of women which acts as a check on the liberties men would otherwise take. This country has great attractions for some people but they are people I hope I will never resemble'

Another line that kind of almost just sums up his physical reaction against the place: *'There is a lack of neatness. I am more disgusted and sick than ever with the country and manners and everything in it'.*

Their investment in Berbice was a failure. James went off to India with one of his black slaves from Berbice, who travelled with him through India. He was the first white man to reach the source of one of the Indian rivers [the Bhagirathi, a headstream of the Ganges]. His slave, Black John, was with him. They came back through the Middle East, and Black John eventually died in London and was buried in one of the cemeteries there. Edward went off to join him, but he contracted tuberculosis and died, so he didn't make it.

I want to pick up Edward's phrase about the society of women, which acts as a restraint on the liberties men would otherwise take. Young men going out to these colonies, among other things, expected sex - which they would get either by force or by negotiation of one kind or another.

The two illustrations here have yet another Scottish connection. They are from the neighbouring Dutch colony of Surinam. They are based on drawings by a Scots soldier called John Stedman, and one of them was converted into an engraving by William Blake. It is part of a series that Blake produced from Stedman's drawings. This here is Stedman himself.

This is something that happened very shortly after he arrived in the colony. It was twenty or thirty years before the period I've been talking about, but things hadn't changed. It illustrates the point. He arrived at one plantation, serving in the Scots Brigade of the Dutch Army. When they got there, the overseer on the plantation was flogging a young slave girl for refusing to go to bed with him. Stedman tried to intervene, but the overseer's reaction was that whenever anybody tried to stop him doing his job, he simply started the flogging all over again. It's not clear whether the slave woman survived this flogging. There was nothing Stedman could do, and so here he is shown calling for the boat so that he can leave.

In the very same week - his first week in Surinam - Stedman was approached by a slave woman who offered him, for a sum to be agreed, the use of her daughter for the duration of his time in the colony. The price was agreed, and the deal was concluded.

Yet, out of that beginning, there did emerge what appears to have been a genuine loving relationship. This is the woman, Joanna. She had a child by Stedman. He tried to save enough money to buy her freedom, but she died shortly before he left Surinam. Their son went into the British Navy, but I think he died before he reached twenty. This, I think, sums up the range of what was going on: from rape and coercion on the one hand, to relationships that, from the most unlikely beginnings, could turn into something genuine, of real emotional value.

There are some pretty awful things going on, and again I want to go back to the point I made about how difficult it is. It's actually easy to find out what white owners are saying, but it's very difficult to hear what the slaves themselves are saying. There is, however, one way. From early 1816, there was mounting pressure from the anti-

slavery movement. Let me set this in context: in 1807, right in the middle of the period I've been talking about, the slave trade was abolished. From that point, no new slaves could be brought from Africa, though of course slavery itself continued.

So, there was still the campaign for abolition. The abolitionists were putting pressure on the authorities, and one of the concessions made in Demerara and Berbice was the appointment of an official who could hear complaints from slaves about ill treatment. This official was called the procurator, and the records of their hearings survive. So here, for the first time, you can actually hear the voices of some of the slaves themselves, in their own words, giving evidence to the procurator.

What I want to read to you is from a plantation called Providence, and this is a slave called Brutus who is complaining about excessive punishment. This is what he says:

'The manager wants my daughter Peggy. I said no. He asked me three times. I said no. He kept the wife of rule and after having her a few nights, left her, therefore, I refused.'

Now you can see the hard calculation that's going on there. It might have been all right for the manager to have Peggy if Brutus could be sure she would become the manager's woman and have some kind of future through that. But because the manager had already taken the wife of one of the other slaves and abandoned her after just a couple of nights, it wasn't worth the risk. So Brutus said no.

'The manager asked me Friday night. I refused. And on Saturday morning he flogged me. It is not for my work. This thing hurt me, and I came to complain.'

Notice that you could only complain about excessive punishment.

So the procurator directs Peggy to attend. She is sick and cannot come, so her sister Akashiba appears in her place and this is her evidence:

'The manager sent Aunt Grace to call Peggy, and to say if Peggy would not come, I must. We said Daddy said we must not. I was too young. Grace left us and went to Daddy. Shortly afterwards she returned and tried to coax me to go, but I would not as my Daddy had forbid it. Grace went and told the manager. The manager sent to call Fanny. Fanny went up and found him in his room, and all of us, the Creoles, got orders to be watchmen at his door. I was watchman, Peggy, Fanny and many more.'

I think that being '*watchmen at his door*' means they slept outside his door.

Of course, out of these relationships there were children. And because some of the relationships had value in them, and the children were valued, some of those children were reasonably well looked after.

One of the great sources for this now is the number of wills available online. Let me give you an example. This is Hector Mackenzie. When Peter Fairbairn - sent out by Lord Seaforth - was setting things up, he employed Hector Mackenzie because he

knew how to get a plantation up and running. But Mackenzie did not live long. He died at Plantation Dunrobin in 1805.

He had no legitimate children. He left money to his brother in New Brunswick, to his sisters in Sutherland, and to some other relations. But to his 'mulatto' daughter, Rose - the word 'mulatto' being the term of the time for half black, half white - he left £1,000. That was a great deal of money. And he also granted freedom to his slave Nancy, directed that a house be built for her on Plantation Dunrobin, and gave her a slave girl of her own, Charlotte. Reading between the lines, it is fairly clear that Nancy was Rose's mother.

So, there's one example. But some children were also being sent back to Scotland for education. And that is why you get the Hay brothers, the three black pupils at Dornoch. That's why Hugh Miller sat next to a black boy in Cromarty. That's why there were at least three black pupils in Inverness Royal Academy.

And my favourite of all is Fortrose. Fortrose Academy used to publish its prize lists every year. Usually, five or six pupils won prizes. In 1819, something very unusual happened: a girl appeared among the prize winners. Her name was Juner. What I discovered is that she was black. So, in 1819, a black girl won a prize at Fortrose Academy.

Her father, Hugh Juner, owned a wood-cutting plantation in Essequibo, one of the three colonies. So, you can see how these children come back. And were part of the Highland story. If people were trying to raise money for public institutions back home - if they were issuing an appeal - they would write to those who were making money in the colonies.

This is the Northern Infirmary in Inverness. A lot of money came from Berbice and Demerara. A significant contribution came from Colin Chisholm, a doctor who owned plantations. He was also the man who worked out, through careful observation, that yellow fever was an infectious disease transmitted from Africa to the Caribbean. That was a remarkable piece of scientific reasoning at the time, and it gave him some influence. He made a considerable donation to the infirmary. So even at home in the Highlands, you can see how much of the money for charitable and civic institutions was connected with the plantations

I want to finish off with a story that brings us back to Cromarty, because that's how I first became interested in this subject.

This gentleman here is Hugh Rose, who later changed his name to Hugh Rose Ross after he acquired the Cromarty estate. He married Catherine Munro, and it was through her Ross connection that the estate came to him. The Ross family owned the Cromarty estate until the 1960s.

But Catherine Munro was not his first wife. Hugh Rose had made his money in the Caribbean, in naval supplies, and then went on to own plantations. He came back, and his first wife was Arabella Phipps. They lived at Bayfield House in Nigg. Arabella Phipps died, and there is a memorial stone to her in the Collegiate Church in Tain. If

you've ever been there, it's worth looking at. It is one of those grand inscriptions which records along the lines of how she 'expired at Bayfield House in the act of preparing medicines for the poor' of the parish

But the story is rather different. The story goes that the reason she expired 'in the act of preparing medicines for the poor' was that she was stabbed in the back by Hugh Rose's mulatto - sometimes described as quadroon - mistress, who had been brought back from the Caribbean.

And so, Arabella Phipps is remembered as the White Lady of Bayfield, said to haunt Bayfield House to this day. But I think the more interesting figure is the Black Lady of Bayfield, and the many others like her who show us just how close and complex the connections were between Highlanders in the north of Scotland and the world of slavery and empire.

Thank you.