In the Shadow of the Plantation
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73. Vanneck-Arc/3A/1782/18, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcdeckne, May 8, 1782.
74. Johnson, 'Slow Abolition,' 167-68.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*, 172
77. Pares, 125-26.
78. Johnson, *Bahamas in Slavery and Freedom*, 3.
79. Johnson, *Slow Abolition*, 171.

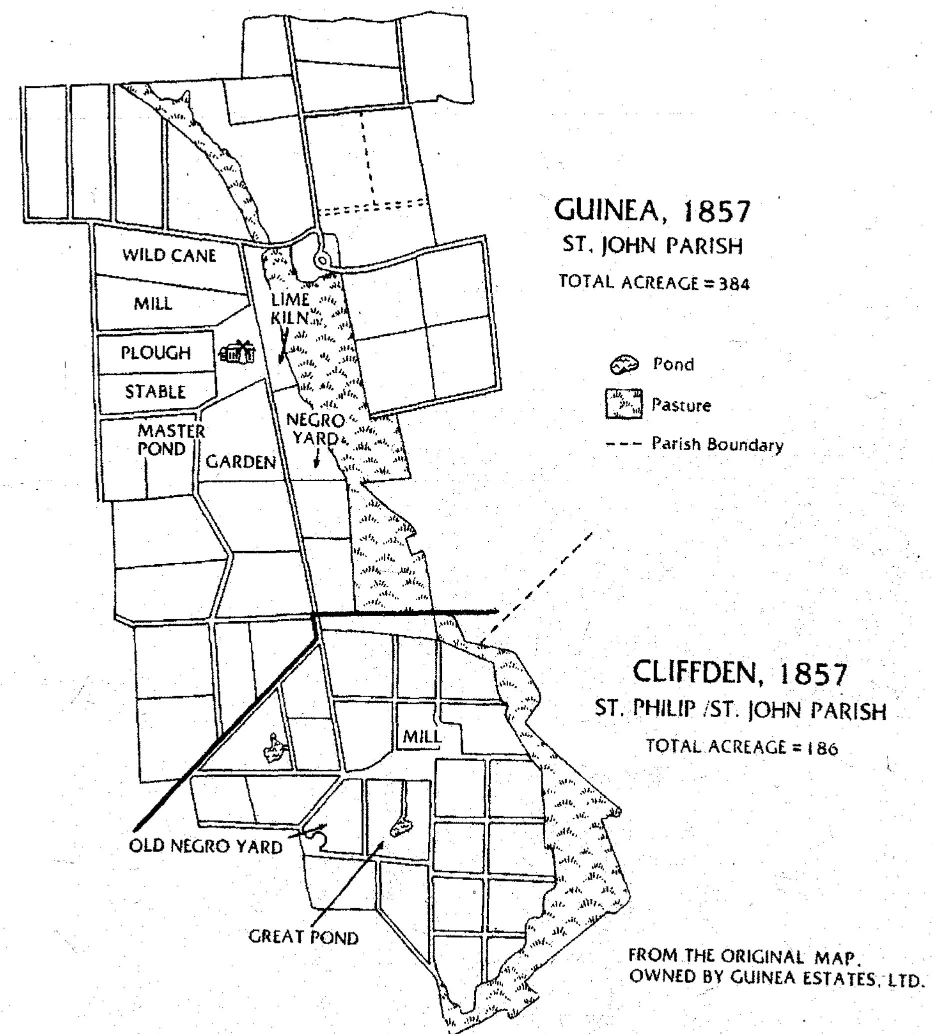

Figure 7:
Guinea and Cliffden (St. John), 1857, showing location of 'Negro yard' fields in relation to mill yard.

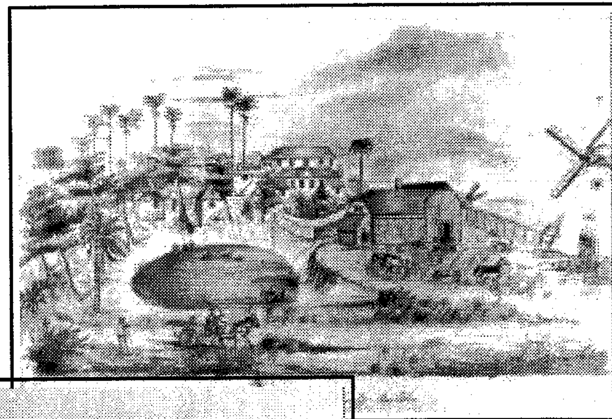

Figure 1: *Ashford plantation (St. John), Barbados, late 1830s, showing manor house, mill yard, windmill, pond and ex-slave/ apprentice houses in the centre, behind the pond.*
Figure 8: *Wattle-and Daub houses with thatched roofs*
Figure 9: *Stone house with thatched roof.*

CHAPTER 6

Plantation Slave Settlements in Barbados, 1650s to 1834[1]

Jerome S. Handler

Introduction

Professor Woodville Marshall has had a long-standing interest in the establishment of free villages in Barbados in post-emancipation times. In light of that interest, this paper describes the antecedents of many rural settlements in Barbados; it focuses on some of the major physical and demographic features of slave settlements, particularly on medium- and large-size plantations. Changes in some of these features are traced over the almost 200 years of plantation slavery on the island, and the possible influences of Africa or England on village layout and spatial arrangement of houses are considered. Some of the methodological and historical issues in establishing the number of plantation settlements during the slave period and of identifying the sites of former villages and plantation cemeteries in present-day Barbados are also explored. Finally, some of the sociological characteristics of the slave settlements as small communities are considered.

The slave settlement and plantation yard

In the late 1780s, Governor David Parry speculated that plantation slaves comprised about 88 per cent of the Barbadian slave population, assumed to be around 63,000 persons —although there were probably more. Barry Higman estimates that in 1834, when about 83,000 slaves were reported, aside from a relatively small percentage of town dwellers, 'no more than 78 per cent' lived on sugar plantations, while another 11 per cent lived on smaller farm units. There are no other overall estimates of the size of the Barbadian plantation slave population. Although the proportion who lived on plantations may have declined by emancipation, there is no doubt that at least from the 1650s to 1834, the majority of Barbadian slaves lived on plantations.[2]

Most slaves lived in plantation settlements that can be considered hamlets or small villages. Their work and leisure time, as well as their most important daily social interactions, were centred in these compact units. The settlements included the houses themselves, as well as the small plots of adjacent land

(where subsistence and, occasionally, cash crops, small livestock and poultry were raised), and several other features not literally within the settlements, but geographically very close and socially and economically important: plantation fields where slaves were allocated small plots (in addition to or in lieu of house plots) for cultivating crops of their choice; water and wood supplies; and burial grounds. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, plantations built infirmaries or sick houses near the settlements and, occasionally closer to the emancipation period, chapels or schools.

The heart of the plantation and the focus of operations was the area known from an early period (until the present) as the plantation yard, mill yard or, simply and most frequently, the yard. Plantations of any consequence had in their yards at least one windmill, occasionally two or three, for grinding sugar cane. Situated close to the mill were other buildings essential to the processing and manufacture of sugar, molasses, and rum, e.g., the boiling house, curing house, and distillery, storerooms, workshops for tradesmen, stables, houses for white staff (if a larger plantation), and the owner's or manager's residence, variously called the mansion house, dwelling house, or simply the house (today called the great house). Very close and usually adjacent to the mill yard was the slave settlement itself.

The 'Negro yard:' name and location

From early in the slave period, the yard complex and its associated settlement appeared to European visitors, using the cultural models of their own geographical landscapes, as small villages or towns. 'Most of the plantations in the country,' wrote Antoine Biet, a French priest who resided in Barbados in 1654, 'are like as many villages whose size varies according to the number of slaves each plantation has.' In 1675, an English visitor described how 'every dwelling house, with the sugar work and other out housing, looks like a handsome town.' A few years earlier another English observer remarked how 'their buildings . . . at a small distance ordinarily present themselves like castles, and their houses built for making and preserving sugar and for other offices, with their Negro huts, show about 2 leagues at sea like so many small towns, each defended by its castle.'[3] Such reactions to the Barbadian countryside, regardless of the adjectives used to describe it, emphasise a settlement pattern that was at the core of the Barbadian landscape and social order: plantation yards and slave villages. Their essential physical features varied little from the last half of the seventeenth century to emancipation in 1834.

If the plantation yard and slave settlement together appeared to Europeans as villages or small towns, similar observations, stressing a more or less compact unit, were made when only the slave settlement was reported. For the Barbadian-born Anglican minister Henry Holder (a defender of the slave

system), the slaves' 'small houses . . . are concentrated in little villages, inhabited solely by themselves.' Other writers also referred to the slave settlements as little villages, little towns, small towns, or the 'Negro town.' In fact, referring to the late 1600s or early 1700s, John Oldmixon, a British historian (who had never been to Barbados, but had gathered information from a variety of first-hand sources) wrote how 'every plantation look[s] like a little African city, and the planter's house like the sovereign's in the midst of it.' Dr William Douglass, who visited Barbados in 1717, observed that slaves 'live in contiguous huts like an African town.'[4]

Regardless of comparisons made with Africa, the slave houses were concentrated in a relatively small land area. By the late seventeenth century, and probably starting much earlier, this area was called the 'Negro yard'. This continued to be the most common designation, although occasionally terms such as 'Negro houses' or 'Negro land' were also used.[5] After emancipation, 'Negro yard' also referred to the villages of the ex-slaves before they were moved to newly established tenantries at the plantation peripheries.[6] When the houses of these new freemen or apprentices were placed elsewhere on plantation lands, their former village areas were usually converted to agricultural use. However, these new agricultural fields continued to be called 'Negro yard' or 'Negro yard field,' even though the areas no longer contained human settlements. In present-day Barbados, it is not unusual to find plantations with 'Negro yard fields.' Usually, these fields are employed agriculturally, but they are invariably situated close to the mill yard and mark the site of the former slave settlement.[7]

From early in Barbadian plantation history, slave settlements were placed very close to the plantation yard, and almost universally within ready sight of the mansion house itself. For example, in 1652, Heinrich von Uchteritz, a German indentured servant, observed that 'around the plantation yard stand the slaves' small houses.' In the 1780s, William Senhouse, the island's surveyor-general of customs and also the owner of Grove Plantation, noted how the 'ground immediately surrounding' the dwelling house was 'as usual in this island, appropriated for the use of the Negroes.' In early 1796, George Pinckard, a medical doctor with the British Army, also observed that slaves lived 'at a short distance' from the mansion house, a settlement pattern also reported in 1796 by Sampson Wood, the manager of Newton and Seawell plantations.[8]

The proximity of the slave settlement to the mansion house and plantation yard recorded in literary sources is also sometimes shown on plantation maps. Unlike Jamaica, where an abundance of plantation maps and plans exist, there are relatively few maps and plans of Barbadian sugar plantations dating from the slave or early post-emancipation period. Of those, only a handful actually show the slave/apprentice houses or identify the 'Negro yard,' and they invariably show the settlements adjacent to the yard or mansion house.[9] This settlement pattern is also indirectly corroborated by modern sugar plantation

field names. From early in the island's history, plantations divided their acreage into fields of varying sizes and shapes, and assigned names to the fields. Field names, which could change over time, usually referred to former landholders or residents in the plantation vicinity, or agricultural, physical, and cultural features found on the plantation.[10]

It is often difficult to obtain literary or oral information on the history of specific fields, but many field names today seem to have existed for a very long time; sometimes these names, as with English field names, can be useful in reconstructing local history.[11] In Barbados, one such name is 'Negro yard' or 'Nigger yard' — the latter term being occasionally used today (although much more common 20 or more years ago) by elderly black and white Barbadians. Although the term 'Negro yard' once referred to the plantation area containing the slave village, many Barbadians are unaware of the origins of this field name.

Quite a few Barbadian plantations retain the field name 'Negro yard.' Even if a named 'Negro yard' no longer exists on a particular plantation, an elderly or retired manager or worker sometimes can remember which of the plantation's current fields was formerly called 'Negro yard.' Visual inspection of plantations with 'Negro yards' during my fieldwork in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and examination of post-emancipation maps, almost invariably show the 'Negro yard' field located very close to, or adjoining, the mill yard — thus pointing to the area which had once contained the slave settlement (see, for example, figure 7). In general, then, all types of evidence converge to show unequivocally that the slave houses were situated very close to the mansion house and the mill yard (as seen in the cover illustration to this volume and Figure 1, showing Ashford Plantation, St John).[12] In Barbados, as throughout the West Indies, the areas for locating the 'Negro yards' were determined by the planters, not by the slaves; planters overwhelmingly chose these sites for reasons of their own personal comfort and security.

In many nucleated villages, typical of farming areas in England during post-medieval times, the houses of labourers and others who inhabited 'humble tenements' were generally close to the manor house. Although this settlement pattern began to change during the 1600s and especially the 1700s, it would not be surprising, albeit conjectural, if early English planters in Barbados transferred this general layout to the West Indies — as they attempted to do with other facets of life, including architecture.[13] In the West Indies, however, security issues relating to the slave population became an important factor — thus adding a New World variable to an Old World settlement pattern.

Inferential evidence for Barbados, and comparative evidence from elsewhere in the West Indies, strongly argue that security and surveillance were the major reasons why the slave settlement was located so close to the mansion house. For example, during the last half of the seventeenth century, several slave plots resulted in laws requiring regular searches of their slave

houses for weapons, hidden fugitive or runaway slaves, or other signs of suspicious activity. It was also well known that slave plots could be hatched at dances, and these usually took place over the weekends in the 'Negro yards.' Although white fears of slave revolts had abated by the eighteenth century, plantation managements were still concerned about security issues ranging from the harbouring of runaways from other plantations to theft from plantation storehouses and workshops. The advantage of having the slave houses close at hand was sarcastically noted in 1796 by the manager of Newton and Seawell. In Barbados 'generally,' he wrote, 'the managers dwelling house is . . . situated where they enjoy the sight of all the doors of the [yard] buildings at one view; if nothing is wrong in the day time, all must be secure — they suppose — and from . . . their front door, they give their directions with a stentorial voice without the trouble of motion.'[14]

Was there any patterning to the direction in which the 'Negro yard' was situated with respect to the mill yard or mansion house? Ronald Hughes, a well-known Barbadian historian and authority on plantation history, has suggested to me that the slave village was located downwind, that is, to the leeward or west, of the mansion house so as to avoid the 'smoke and stench' from cooking fires. The same reason was also expressed by an anonymous late eighteenth-century author who was knowledgeable about the West Indies. Without mentioning a particular island, he observed that 'Negroes live in huts, on the western side of our dwelling houses . . . [so] that we may breathe the pure eastern air, without being offended with the least nauseous smell. Our kitchens and boiling houses are on the same side, and for the same reason.'[15]

My field observations on contemporary plantations and interviews with Barbadians who had personal knowledge of particular plantations, as well as an examination of plantation maps, yielded a group of 28 plantations which had identifiable 'Negro yard' fields or where the precise location of the former slave settlements could be established in relation to the mill yard or mansion house.[16] Of these 28 plantations, 19 (68 per cent) of the 'Negro yards'/ slave settlements were west of the mill yard/mansion house (11 were due west, while the remainder were either northwest or southwest); in three cases the 'Negro yard'—slave settlement was to the north; in four cases to the south or southeast; and in two cases to the east. These limited data support the view that slaves lived 'on the western side of our dwelling houses,' but they also suggest that this pattern was not universal in Barbados.

The 'Negro yard:' appearance and layout

By the time that the Barbadian plantation system was fully mature there were variations in the physical appearance of the slave settlements. Some, Pinckard reported, contained few trees or shade spots and were 'standing amidst the open fields, exposed to the full ardor of the sun;' others were 'shaded

by the sea-grape,' or 'the broad and balmy leaf of the plantain,' or were 'protected by the umbrageous coco-nut.' In 1796, the Newton settlement contained 'a few shrubs' and 'no trees,' while at Codrington a few years later, 'the land all around the huts [was cultivated] with our luxuriant tropical vegetables;' trees were 'growing throughout the village.'[17]

Although visitors to Barbados had different reactions to the aesthetics of the slave village, some viewing it in pleasing terms, others much less so,[18] writers over a long period of time unanimously described the settlements as compact and congested. The individual, free-standing houses were clustered in close proximity, and to white observers they seemed to be arranged in an haphazard and disorderly fashion. Moreover, in their written comments — however brief and superficial — whites either imply or explicitly state that what they observed differed from European settlements of comparable scale. Father Antoine Biet noted that 'each household' had 'its own dwelling; they are all close to one another'; for William Douglass, over 60 years later, slaves lived 'in contiguous huts.' In the 1780s, Governor Parry compared the spacing of slave houses, which were 'so much nearer each other' with 'the lowest class of white inhabitants [who] live all separate from each other.' Pinckard contrasted one estate he visited with the more general pattern of slave settlement; the latter was a 'mean order, straggling . . . and bearing no kind of resemblance to the collective abode, constructed for the slaves of this estate.' During apprenticeship, Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, British emancipationists viewed the 'huts' of plantation workers as 'crowded irregularly together,' while for J.A. Thome and J.H. Kimball, American emancipationists, houses were 'crowded thickly together.' The picture of a compact settlement is also conveyed by the few plantation maps that show slave houses, and other observers also stressed in one way or another that slave houses were 'concentrated in little villages' or 'crowded together on a small piece of ground.'[19]

The actual acreage of this 'small piece of ground' varied from plantation to plantation, but is actually known in only a few cases.[20] At Edgecombe in 1810 and 1812, the 'Negro yard' was reported as four acres and three acres, respectively,[21] while plantation maps indicate that the slave houses at Staple Grove in 1818 were on approximately five to five and a half acres, those at The Bay in 1822 on about two acres, and those at Sandy Lane in 1797 on about one acre. A 1719 map of Drax Hall shows the settlement divided into two portions of approximately eight acres each. Drax Hope, adjacent to Drax Hall, is also shown with an approximately three-acre village area. An 1845 map of Cottage Plantation (St George) shows the village on about five acres of land before it was removed. Despite the limited number of cases, these data suggest that the slave village area or 'Negro yard' averaged around five acres on medium to large plantations.

This five-acre figure is roughly supported by field data randomly collected on the acreage of 13 present-day 'Negro yard fields.' These fields ranged in size from about one and a half to 15 acres, but averaged around 6.25 (seven of the fields were between four and six and a half acres). If 6.25 acres is used as a rough average for present-day 'Negro yard' fields, it should be noted that this acreage does not significantly differ from the five-acre estimate derived from historical sources. However, although the locations of the fields called 'Negro yard' have not changed since emancipation, it is quite likely that their specific acreages (and shapes) shifted, and in most cases there is probably not a precise correspondence between the acreage of a present-day 'Negro yard' field and that of the village once located on it.

The congestion or crowding that Europeans observed was largely a function of the limited space that planters allotted for the 'Negro yards.' However, what Europeans considered a disorganised, even chaotic, layout of houses may have resulted from the inclinations of the slaves themselves and their cultural preferences in the use of space. Although planters determined the actual locale of the 'Negro yard,' the slaves generally chose their specific house sites within the yard. The Barbadian practice was probably very similar, if not identical, to that of Jamaica where, as Barry Higman has written, 'the masters simply set aside a tract of land for the village site and permitted the slaves to locate and construct houses as they wished.' In Barbados, as in other areas of the West Indies, it appears that 'most slave villages remained internally-ordered communities in which the planters rarely intervened.'[22] Although Barbadian planters, as those elsewhere, sometimes intervened in the internal arrangement of the settlements, this intrusion seems to have largely taken place during the later years of the slave period.

The evidence that Barbadian slaves followed their own inclinations in placing their houses and were, in effect, free to choose specific locations within the 'Negro yards,' is largely indirect and inferential.[23] For one, during most of the slave period, slaves were expected to build their own houses from locally-available materials on plantation woodlands, and there is no evidence that planters interfered with their choice of house sites. In addition, white observers, as noted above, describe or allude to a seemingly haphazard and non-geometrical arrangement of houses in the 'Negro yards.' Although post-medieval English settlements displayed considerable diversity, village plans fit into several major broad categories: one of these, 'the agglomerated village,' was composed of 'dwellings planted down almost haphazard, with no evident relationship to each other or to any visible nucleus.'[24] Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English visitors to Barbados were familiar with such villages, but what they observed in plantation settlements clearly differed from the English 'haphazard' arrangement or irregular clustering of houses. It was not the irregularity of spatial relationships *per se*, but rather the configuration of this irregular and 'haphazard' arrangement (as well as, undoubtedly, the race of the slave inhabitants), that produced a settlement which struck English

visitors. Their observations can be interpreted to suggest that slaves were not following European practices, but rather their own cultural notions of arranging space: these notions were probably shaped by African practices. The clustering of houses in relatively small spaces and in non-geometrical alignments would have conformed to common African spatial arrangements.

For most of the slave period, then, and provided plantation managements did not intervene, houses in Barbadian settlements were arranged, as in Jamaica, in 'irregular scattered layout rather than in geometric patterns.' Such a layout was more consistent with African village spatial arrangements than with European, particularly English, ones, even though African village configurations could also be, as Denyer has pointed out, 'quite formal or symmetrical.' The differences that white observers saw in slave settlements also attest their fundamentally African or African-like character. I am not suggesting that slave settlements exactly replicated African ones; rather that they were more African than European in their basic layouts. As in African communities, Barbadian slaves may have viewed their settlements 'as groups of people rather than as groups of buildings,' and in arranging their houses in the 'Negro yards' slaves placed emphasis on their social relationships.[25] In fact, writers such as Oldmixon and Douglass even explicitly likened the Barbadian slave settlements to African villages. The attorney for the Codrington plantations indirectly, albeit ethnocentrically, also made this point. Shortly after emancipation, he reported how the plantations' new settlements contrasted with the crowding of the old Negro villages; the latter, he believed, 'tend to keep up in the minds of the Negroes the idea of "savage life".'[26]

When planters directly intervened in the layout of the settlements and the placement of houses, they altered them to suit their notions of landscape order. As early as 1700, Father Jean Baptiste Labat, who visited Barbados for eight or nine days, reported that planters 'take care that their Negroes' huts are neatly aligned and uniform; this costs nothing and gives a good appearance.' However, this must have been exceptional since European-planned settlements tended to occur mostly toward the later years of the slave period. For example, in the 1780s, Philip Gibbes, a prominent planter, ordered that the 'houses be so situated as to preserve exactly the line upon which that row of houses is built,' and in 1787 William Senhouse ordered a new settlement at Grove Plantation in which the houses were 'disposed in regular streets, every house in the centre of a piece of ground 20 yards square.' Pinckard, in 1796, compared the more usual arrangement of the 'Negro yard' with an unusual one at a plantation he visited. He described it thus:

> A circular piece of ground had been appropriated as the Negro-yard, but instead of the slaves being left to construct their own habitations, sixteen very neat and uniform habitations have been erected . . . Placed in eight divisions they form a hollow octagon . . . The huts are neat, and the whole premises wear an air of order, and of cleanliness, not common to the abode of slaves.[27]

Changes in England may have influenced some Barbadian planters in organising and planning their slave settlements. The creation and planning of English villages on lands held by institutional authorities and aristocrats have a long history, but during the seventeenth century and especially the eighteenth and continuing into the nineteenth, as Rowley has written, 'not a single settlement in the country remained untouched and many, perhaps the majority, were substantially altered.' Most planned villages simply replaced already existing ones, but many also involved 'completely fresh deliberate creations.' For example, in earlier periods the 'humble tenements' were generally close to the manor house, but now the landowner either rebuilt his own house on a new site or, 'more frequently,' removed 'all or part of the village' from near his dwelling to the outskirts of the estate, creating parks around the manor house. In addition, from around 1750 estate owners made greater attempts 'to landscape the new villages' and plan them according to formal aesthetic considerations.[28]

Some of the changes in England probably had some effect on planter intervention in the layout of slave settlements. However, this intervention seems to have primarily increased in Barbados, as Higman observed for Jamaica, because of general ameliorative trends in the West Indies and the increasing emphasis on slave health. Some Barbadian planters believed that slave health could be improved if housing was improved. Improvement in housing sometimes involved structuring the 'Negro yard' so that houses were less proximate and congested, or the entire settlement was removed to an area that planters considered healthier.[29]

Throughout the period of slavery, most Barbadian slaves were, as Pinckard noted, 'allowed to build themselves small huts to live in;' they constructed and repaired their own houses without planter intervention, and built their houses, as in Jamaica, 'according to their own fancy both in size and shape.'[30] The most common Barbadian dwelling, deeply influenced by West African architectural forms, was a small, low, rectangular wattle-and-daub structure with a packed earth/dirt floor and a pitched, thatched roof (see figure 8). There were many house types and architectural variations in West and West-Central Africa, but historical evidence from Barbados indicates that the wattle-and-daub house (also found in other areas of the Caribbean) was very similar to what Kwamina Dickson calls the 'Guinea forest house type, . . . rectangular, gable-roofed, and of wattle-and-daub,' that was widely distributed on the southern Gold Coast (modern Ghana), as well as in other tropical forest areas of West and West-Central Africa. This house was covered with oil-palm leaves. The wattle in the Barbadian slave house, as in others of this type, was formed by inserting (forked?) wooden posts or stakes into the ground to form a

framework; this was then interlaced with twigs or slender tree branches. The wattle was plastered internally (and probably externally as well) with a mud or clay mortar. Roof thatching in Barbados was made from plantain leaves (especially in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries), palm leaves or branches and, what was the most common type, the leaves or trash of the sugar cane.[31]

Thatching on slave houses probably closely resembled, or was identical to, thatching on working-class rural Barbadian houses during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see figures 8 and 9). Some elderly Barbadians still remember the trash house, with its roof of thatched 'cane tops tied together.' During slavery, housing materials were largely obtained from plantation woodlands, and planters were sometimes advised to keep some of their land in 'wood for 'Negro houses;' occasionally plantations sold 'rafters and other sticks for building Negro-houses.'[32]

Wattle-and-daub was not only the earliest structural type; it remained the most typical slave house until emancipation. However, by the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, it co-existed with other house types as planters increasingly changed the structural materials and design of slave houses, and employed plantation carpenters and masons to construct them. The increased use of slave tradesmen to build slave houses often followed, as Higman has observed for the West Indies in general, 'standardized [architectural] plans chosen by the masters. This tendency toward master-controlled building often went together with the imposition of geometrical regularity on the settlement pattern.' Barbadian carpenters and masons constructed stone and wood plank (i.e., frame) houses, and these types increased in frequency. The latter was constructed of rough boards or planks (largely imported from abroad) nailed to wooden posts, the former from coral limestone, i.e., the stone-walled houses (see figure 9). Thatching continued as the major roofing material, although wooden shingles were also used occasionally. By 1850 in Barbados, as Thomas Cochrane observed, the 'small wooden [plank] houses resting on clumps of wood or blocks of stone' seem to have been very common among the working class, but stone houses also may have become more numerous. Both types, however, continued to be thatched, although occasionally they were shingled. In a sense, Barbadians today are correct when they refer to stone houses (the ruins of which are still found scattered about the island) as 'slave houses,' but it is erroneous to assume that such houses were typical slave dwellings. Stone houses were not numerically significant until the pre-emancipation decades of the nineteenth century, but were much fewer in number than wattle-and-daub ones.[33]

Houseplots and 'Negro grounds'

Barbadian slaves acquired most of their food through rations, usually distributed weekly, from plantation managements. Among the West Indian territories, Barbados fell somewhere between what the British emancipationist James Stephen called the home-fed and foreign-fed colonies, a distinction based on the degree of dependence on imported foods.[34] In Barbados, although foods were imported, considering the entirety of the slave period it appears that most food was locally produced and was cultivated on plantation fields called provision grounds. These grounds were collectively worked by slave gangs as part of their normal labour routines. In addition, many plantations gave adults or households[35] small plots of land on which they cultivated food crops (and later in the slave period cash crops as well) and raised small animals. These garden plots were usually worked on weekends or holidays, and their produce went directly to the producer. The produce was used to augment plantation food rations or exchanged in the island's markets for foods or material goods not provided by the plantation. Small garden plots were allowed slaves, starting around the mid-seventeenth century, but these plots were never codified in law; as Governor Parry reported in the late 1780s, they were given by 'long established custom.'[36]

There were two types of garden plots. One was a sub-division in a field that the plantation set aside specifically for slave use. This field was distinguished from other plantation fields upon which food crops were raised, i.e., the provision grounds, and was referred to as the 'Negro ground,' 'Negro land,' or 'Negro garden.' The 'Negro ground' was situated 'in the outskirts of the plantation' or adjacent to the village, but not literally within the "Negro yard'.'[37] The other type of garden, apparently meriting no special term, was adjacent to, or surrounding, individual houses within the 'Negro yard.' On these 'small patches of garden,' as Pinckard generalised in the 1796, 'it is common for the slaves to plant fruits and vegetables, and to raise stock. Some of them keep a pig, some a goat, some Guinea fowls, ducks, chickens, pigeons, or the like.'[38] The houseplots were small and hardly sufficient to raise much more than meagre supplements to plantation food rations; yet they were important features of the slaves' domestic economy.[39]

The distinction between the houseplot, on the one hand, and 'Negro ground,' on the other, is clearly expressed in a number of sources. For example, Governor Parry reported on the 'small portions of land annexed to each Negro house, but not assigned as part of their subsistence; and there is also in most plantations a field of land called the Negro ground, the profits of which are taken to the use of those who cultivate them, independently of the allowance they receive from their owners in common with other slaves.' Philip Gibbes also articulated the distinction: each house on his plantations had a small garden ground attached to it, and 'besides this spot of ground, a field is set

apart in which each Negro is allowed to mark out his lot to any extent which he thinks he and his family are capable of cultivating.'[40]

The 'Negro garden' system is clearly illustrated in an 1835 map (the original survey dating to an earlier period) of Husbands (St Lucy). This map identifies two areas on the plantation as 'Negro gardens,' one of which is adjacent to the western portion of the mill yard, while the other is a few fields south of the mill yard and slave village. An 1825 map of Lowther also shows a seven-acre field named 'Negro garden;' after emancipation this field name was dropped and the field was sub-divided into two fields, each receiving a new name.[41]

The 'Negro garden' system was also evident at Ashford (St John) in 1809 when 6.5 acres were 'planted by the Negroes.' However, Ashford's records for the following year omit the separate acreage 'planted by the Negroes,' thereby suggesting that assignment of a field as a 'Negro ground' was not consistently followed from year to year. Yet, in 1812, there were nine acres at Ashford 'cultivated by the Negroes for their own use.' Also, a detailed account of land use on an unnamed plantation in 1822 shows that nine of the plantation's approximately 250 cultivated acres were designated 'Negro gardens.'[42]

Defenders of the slave system in Barbados usually emphasised that slaves were provided with gardens, but others questioned their universality. For example, Dr Caddell, a knowledgeable plantation medical doctor, reporting to a society of planters in 1812, observed that 'on many plantations the Negroes have no ground at all; on very few do they cultivate what they have; on none are they cultivated sufficiently to contribute materially to their comfort or support.' Also, an English emancipationist visiting Barbados in 1830, made a special effort to observe 'the small portions of ground allotted to them near their dwellings.' However, on visiting 'different estates' he found this 'only partially the case, many being certainly without this provision.'[43]

In summary, both types of slave gardens, the 'Negro grounds' and houseplots, date from at least the last half of the seventeenth century, and this dual system appears to have operated throughout the slave period. Both types could exist on the same plantation at the same time, but 'Negro grounds' may have been found mostly on the middle-sized to large plantations. Whatever the case, it is also clear that although houseplots were very common, they were not universal.

Water supplies

The earliest way that Barbadians ensured their water supplies was through the construction of ponds. 'This pond water, they use upon all occasions and to all purposes,' Richard Ligon wrote of the late 1640s, 'to boyle their meat, to make their drink, to wash their linnen.' Ponds were formed in natural depressions or were artificially constructed, usually taking advantage of an incline or slope in the terrain. In earlier periods, as Antoine Biet observed in

1654, 'great care' was taken 'to dig ponds in tree shaded spots so that they do not dry up too soon.' During slavery, as in post-emancipation times, plantations had both ponds and cisterns. Cisterns were constructed adjacent to the mansion house and collected the rain funnelled through roof gutters; however, except in emergencies, cistern water was largely for the plantations' white personnel. In early years, ponds seem to have been shared by blacks and whites alike, but as whites increasingly relied on cisterns, ponds continued to provide slaves (and, of course, the plantation cattle) with their main sources of water.[44]

Modern and early plantation maps, as well as my field observations, demonstrate that the major ponds were usually within or close to the mill yard, and not far from the 'Negro yard.' Pond depressions are common sights in the Barbadian countryside today, and even casual inspection of plantation yards and their immediate vicinities will often show these depressions, some of which still contain water; many of the empty depressions still have the capacity to be filled in the event they are needed.

Historical sources generally give the impression that, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, slaves frequently shared their ponds with livestock, particularly during droughts, although this practice may have decreased by the later eighteenth century and pre-emancipation decades of the nineteenth.[45] Whether shared with cattle or not, the ponds could become seriously polluted by, for example, their use for bathing and their contamination with human waste, drowned small animals, and so forth. It is not surprising that slaves were especially vulnerable to parasitic worms and a variety of gastrointestinal disorders.[46]

Also, reliance on ponds could be precarious. Until well into the nineteenth century, rural Barbadians depended on ponds, and during a prolonged drought in 1870–72, 189 (74 per cent) of the 257 ponds in six parishes dried up. Conditions could not have been very different during slavery. Evaporation was a problem and when there was 'hardly sufficient [rain] to moisten the surface,' reported the visitor Arthur Anderson (director of the St Vincent Botanical Gardens) in 1783 or 1784, 'the lower class of inhabitants as well as the negroes are in great distress.'[47] Rain shortages or prolonged droughts were not infrequent in Barbados, and they sometimes caused serious alarm. In 1796, for example, the manager of Seawell (located in one of Barbados' lowest rainfall areas) reported that neither of the plantation's two ponds 'hold water through the year'; at the time, both were 'actually dry,' forcing him to 'drain every drop of water' from the plantation's well. In 1813, Robert Haynes, the plantation's attorney, complained that the drought was so bad that 'every drop of water . . . used by the Negroes and cattle at Newton and Seawell for many weeks has been drawn from the wells, not having any in the ponds;' 'the island is certainly in a most melancholy state,' he wrote eight years later, 'for the want both of rain and water in the ponds for our slaves and livestock.'[48]

In addition to cisterns and ponds, wells tapped underground streams

formed by water percolating through the coral limestone. Wells may have been widespread on plantations by the late 1600s, and in the 1730s and 1740s, Griffith Hughes (the rector of St Lucy and a resident of Barbados for about 11 years during the period) wrote, there was 'not a parish . . . nor scarce a large estate' without a well, 'and a great many of these are very deep,' excavated to between 90 and 300 feet.[49] Slaves, of course, were compelled to dig these wells; yet, wells were not generally dug specifically for slave use, even though they occasionally had access to them.[50]

Wood supplies

Slaves preferred their meals cooked and warm (even though circumstances sometimes compelled them to eat their food cold), and fires also afforded some warmth during the chilly evenings of the winter months; in addition, as discussed earlier, most slave houses were constructed from locally obtained wood. With the expansion of sugar production and the plantation system, by the mid-1660s (perhaps even later in the seventeenth century), the indigenous forests of Barbados were virtually gone, and for the duration of the slave period the island's wood resources were limited. Barbados was unable to satisfy its timber needs in, for example, domestic and commercial building materials, windmill parts, barrels and other containers, carts, wagons, and so forth, and imported wood from other West Indian islands; increasingly wood came from North America and, later, from the Guianas.[51]

Although much forest land was removed, it bears stressing that plantations during the period of slavery had more of their acreage in food crops, pasturage, and woodlands than in post-emancipation and modern times.[52] The tropical climate and the island's soils permitted active tree and brush growth in fields and gullies. On most plantations, these wooded areas provided fuel for black and white Barbadians alike, as well as building materials for slave houses. In addition to woodlands, the widely-grown pigeon pea bush was used for fuel. However, by the late 1700s, and probably starting much earlier, firewood was in short supply, and slaves were commonly involved, observed a white Barbadian, 'in splitting up their bedding for firewood;' he urged the planting of more trees, and stressed how 'absolutely necessary' it was 'to forbid the cutting down and destroying of trees.' By apprenticeship, as a special magistrate reported in 1837, wood was a 'very scarce article here.'[53]

The charcoal or 'fuel wood' Barbadians used for cooking was imported or locally produced from trees or brushwood in the rural areas or plantations. Owners of plantations or small farms legally sold their own firewood in the towns, but some slaves (and poor whites) also illegally traded in charcoal or firewood they had stolen from plantation woodlands. Although wood and charcoal scarcities probably meant that slaves sometimes lacked cooking fuel or acquired it illegally, the wooded areas of many plantations were important

sources of firewood and housing materials; although not literally in the 'Negro yard,' they definitely were features of the slave settlement.

Burial grounds

Apart from the houses, gardens, and water and wood sources, other features of the settlement complex were gravesites and cemeteries, and later in the slave period sick houses or plantation hospitals, as well as chapels and schools. Documentary evidence is very strong that the overwhelming majority of the several hundred thousand slaves who perished in Barbados from the seventeenth century to emancipation were buried on their plantations — either under houses within the slave villages or in separate cemeteries not far from the villages. In 1676, for example, Governor Jonathan Atkins wrote that slaves buried 'one another in the ground of the plantation where they die and not without ceremonies of their own.' Over a century later Governor Parry described, albeit in ethnocentric phrasing, how:

> Negroes are superstitiously attached to the burial places of their ancestors and friends. These are generally as near as can be to the houses in which they live. It is frequent to inter a near relation under the bed-place on which they sleep, an unwholesome and dangerous practice which they would think it the utmost tyranny to alter . . . and to remove their habitations unto healthier spots, has been found, from that very attachment . . . a most dangerous experiment.[54]

Additional evidence for the interment of slaves in plantation cemeteries is to be found in replies to questions raised in 1828 by a London-based Anglican missionary society. The island's parochial rectors were asked, 'in what places are slaves usually interred?' Replies included, for example, the one from St Michael that 'slaves are always interred in places set apart for that purpose on each plantation;' in St Joseph, the 'slaves are usually interred in their burial-places on the estates;' and in St Lucy 'on the plantations to which they belong.' Even though Anglican influence far surpassed that of any other Christian denomination (e.g., Moravians and Methodists), its influence on slave burial practices was relatively small. For most of the slave period relatively few slaves, particularly plantation inhabitants, were baptised. Since baptism was a prerequisite to church burial, few slaves were buried in Anglican cemeteries. In brief, as Dr John Davy learned during his residence in Barbados in the late 1840s, the 'majority' of Barbadian slaves 'were not . . . interred in consecrated ground, but in some spot apart on the estate of the proprietor.'[55]

Archaeological research on Barbadian plantations during the early 1970s and in 1987 failed to provide evidence for under- or near-house burials, a practice of very clear African origin.[56] However, research at Newton discovered

a slave cemetery close to the site of the former slave village. Importantly, the Newton cemetery is the only case that permits identifying the specific location of a slave cemetery on a particular plantation. I am unaware of any sources, such as maps or other documentary evidence, that show or describe the location of a cemetery on any specific plantation, although a few sources suggest an area in the general vicinity of the slave village or mill yard. Even the abundant documentation on Newton fails to mention the very cemetery whose existence was so clearly demonstrated by archaeological research.[57] Occasional oral information supplied by Barbadians also supports archaeological and historical data that plantation cemeteries once existed. Yet, such information is generally inconclusive with respect to the specific location of these cemeteries. Newton is the only case where oral evidence actually located a cemetery on a particular plantation. Field interviews as well as archaeological efforts in 1987 failed to locate another.

Historical sources provide no evidence that slave cemeteries were marked. Moreover, surface observations and field investigations on contemporary Barbadian plantations, as well as occasional oral evidence from plantation personnel, all suggest that slave graveyards lacked fences, gravestones or other readily observable features that identified them as burial grounds. The Newton experience indicates that earthen and stone mounds were occasionally constructed over grave sites, but the heavy grass cover on uncultivated fields in Barbados today makes it difficult to observe such mounds and be certain if they, indeed, contain burials or are not merely piles of rubble removed from a field.[58]

Planters determined the location of a cemetery area (as was the case when a 'Negro yard' was established), and then, as with house spots within the village, I assume slaves decided the specific grave sites within that area. These assumptions are based on, first, the fact that plantation managements dictated land use patterns, perhaps choosing as burial sites agriculturally marginal lands — as at Newton — and perhaps even taking into consideration the value that slaves attached to having their dead buried close to their villages. Secondly, it is important to stress that Barbadian slaves, as those elsewhere in the Americas, were relatively free to bury their dead according to their own customs and inclinations. Moreover, the likelihood that slaves decided specific burial sites within the cemetery area is also supported by the archaeological findings at Newton. Variation among the Newton burials and their scattering around the cemetery area (some were solitary field burials without mounds, others were interred in mounds) strongly suggest that the slaves themselves decided who would be buried where. How these specific decisions were made cannot be determined.[59]

In brief, although Newton remains the only slave cemetery yet discovered in Barbados (and to this day is still the earliest and largest undisturbed plantation cemetery reported in the Americas), documentary evidence clearly

shows that Barbadian plantations contained separate areas for slave interments, and that most slaves (even some of the baptised minority) were buried in these cemeteries or within the village itself. Given the important role played by the dead or the ancestors, these burial sites were intrinsic and vital features of the village complex.[60]

Sick houses, chapels, and schools

Throughout the period of slavery, including the emancipation period, slaves largely attempted to care for their own medical needs. However, by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with the impending, then actual, abolition of the slave trade, there was a growing planter interest in the natural increase of the slave population and its health and medical care. Barbadian slave laws did not provide for slave medical care (or for their housing or food); this was left to the inclinations of individual owners, and plantation medical expenditures were intimately linked to how planters defined their economic self-interests. Some expenditure went to hiring white medical practitioners; others to the purchase of medications or special foods; still others to the construction and maintenance of the so-called sick house or plantation hospital. As the term indicates, this was a small building in which ill slaves and lying-in women were confined. The sick house was administered on a daily basis by the sick nurse, usually one of the plantation's older, even elderly, female slaves (sometimes poor white women were hired instead). She was charged with cooking and otherwise caring for the hospitalised. The sick house was also visited by white medical practitioners when they made their regular plantation rounds, or when they were sent for on special occasions.[61]

There is little indication that sick houses existed in Barbados (or other areas of the West Indies) during the seventeenth century and for most of the eighteenth. However, by the late eighteenth century, and especially in the pre-emancipation decades of the nineteenth, sick houses were common on larger plantations, although they were probably lacking on many of the smaller ones.[62] The sick house was located in or near the plantation yard, within the general vicinity of the mansion house and not very far from the 'Negro yard.' Today in Barbados, there are still some plantations with a 'Hospital field;' this field is located near the plantation yard.[63]

Many sick houses were probably very dismal and similar to the one described in 1796 by Sampson Wood, Newton's manager, as 'a horrid unhealthy hole.' As elsewhere in the West Indies, they were generally poorly ventilated, hot, dirty, damp, and lacking rooms or compartments that separated people with contagious disease as well as by sex. Although sick houses improved somewhat during the few decades before emancipation, many left a great deal to be desired even by the standards of the period. The observations of J.B. Colthurst, a stipendiary magistrate, indicate what sick houses were like on

many small plantations during apprenticeship; they also suggest what in earlier years must have been widespread on larger plantations as well. In his 1836 'observations upon the defective state of the hospital system, particularly upon small estates,' Colthurst reported:

> On the large ones, the hospitals are comfortable and airy buildings . . . but it is far otherwise on the small ones. They are wretched in the extreme . . . Indeed in many instances the sick apprentice, on going into the sick-house, becomes a close prisoner; the windows (if there happen to be any), closely shut, the door locked and the key taken away . . . This system is one of the remnants of slavery . . . It therefore sometimes happens that the apprentice, though ill, will continue to work, to the injury of his health, sooner than go into hospital. If he does go, he becomes a prisoner, and when the medical attendant says he is fit for labour he is compelled to resume it.[64]

Colthurst gives some insight into the negative reactions of slaves to these sick houses, and in the 1840s, Dr James Bovell also wrote how the plantation 'hospitals . . . were peremptorily abandoned by the newly emancipated, notwithstanding endeavors . . . made to induce the people to accept of medical aid and attendance free of expense to them.'[65] However comfortable whites might have viewed these structures, the evidence indicates that slaves felt otherwise and, as elsewhere in the West Indies, frequently resisted going to the hospitals, preferring to stay in their own houses when sick.

Plantation chapels and schools only began to appear in the last decade or so before emancipation; they were located near the mill yard. It is not known if special structures were erected for schools, but they were largely absent until the very late 1820s. They provided what planters considered appropriate Christian education, and sometimes reading instruction, primarily to slave children. By 1828, at least some plantations in all parishes (but a definite minority in each) afforded Christian instruction on a regular basis. In 1833, shortly before emancipation, approximately 50 plantations held daily schools, and many of the 50 included instruction in reading. Plantation chapels were rarer still. Aside from the one at Codrington, others were occasionally established very late in the slave period. For example, in returns by the parish rectors in 1830, most did not mention plantation chapels. However, in St James there was 'a small building on the estate of Sir Osborne Gibbes, where Divine Service is read every Sunday morning to the Negroes, by the overseer of the estate.' In Christ Church, there was 'one private chapel on the estate of Edward H. Senhouse, Esq. for the instruction of his slaves in religion,' and 'one Methodist chapel [for slaves] erected on the estate of William Reece.'[66]

Slave settlements: numbers and demographic features

This section addresses the possible number of plantation settlements in Barbados, the number of houses in each, and some of the basic demographic features of the settlements. There are no estimates of the number of such settlements at different periods of time, so the number must be estimated indirectly by ascertaining the number of plantations. The sources often identify many small land units in Barbados as plantations, but these units lacked sugar mills or 'sugar works,' and their owners milled their cane at neighbouring plantations. For purposes of this paper, land units with at least one sugar mill (some had two, a few had three) are considered medium and large plantations. Only a small set of figures give a direct idea of the number of such plantations at different periods: in 1683-84, there were 358; in 1717-21, 405; in 1771-73, about 400; and in 1822 and 1834, 302 and 399, respectively. Using these figures and estimates from narrative sources as well as maps, a simple method was devised for roughly estimating the number of medium and large plantations. On average, then, and despite fluctuations in ownership and acreage, I estimate that Barbados contained close to 400 medium and large plantations from around the late 1660s to 1834; by extension, there were probably a comparable number of slave settlements. However, many smaller plantation units had at least a few slave houses on them. If these smaller units were to be included in an estimate of plantation settlements, then obviously the number would be much greater than the 400 estimated for medium and large units.[67]

Statistics on the slave populations of individual plantations at various time periods yield some idea of settlement size. For the seventeenth century, a randomly collected sample of 20 plantations from 1650 to 1693 gave an average population of 64, ranging from seven to 150. Some 'Negro yards' were even larger: for example, Nicholas Abbey in 1686 had 157 slaves, and Antoine Biet claimed that some plantations in 1654 contained from 200 to 300.[68]

Another set of data, randomly collected on 177 plantations from 1727 to 1834, show that settlements averaged about 142 persons, ranging from 20 to 350; during the 1820s, another group of 20 plantations averaged 229 slaves per plantation. Four other plantations averaged close to 200 slaves during the approximately two decades preceding emancipation.[69] The size of slave settlements and their frequency distribution are also indicated by individual plantation statistics. For 197 plantations from 1650 to 1834, about one-third had 100 or fewer slaves, close to 50 per cent had from 101 to 200, and close to 16 per cent from 201 to 300; only 1.5 per cent had over 300 slaves.[70] In 1832-34, about 46 per cent of Barbadian slaves lived on holdings of 100 or fewer, 32 per cent from 101 to 200, 18 per cent from 201 to 300, and almost 4 per cent were on holdings that exceeded 300 persons.[71] Thus, from at least the 1700s to 1834, I estimate that most settlements on medium and large plantations probably held between 100 and 200 people, and a significant number had populations in the 200s; settlements exceeding 300 people were relatively rare.

How many houses were found in the settlements on medium and large plantations? Pinckard described one village with 'sixteen families,' and it can be assumed that each 'family' had its own house.[72] A 1719 map of Drax Hall and Drax Hope shows 27 or 28 houses and 6 houses respectively, but it is not known if the map-maker intended to depict the actual number of houses or merely to give a generalised idea of the village. The same problem exists with other plantation maps that detail the houses; on a sketch of Staple Grove in 1818, 12 houses are shown, while 18 houses are sketched for Cottage Plantation in 1845 (the latter, although post-emancipation, clearly shows the slave village before it was removed).

A more accurate idea of the number of houses in a settlement derives from data on a group of six plantations over the period 1796–1833. These are the only cases of which I am aware in which both the number of houses *as well as* the size of the slave population are specified for the same plantations. The number of houses ranged from 30 to nearly 80, averaging about 55. In addition, an 1838 inventory of the 203-acre Lightfoot Plantation (St John and St Philip) mentions 27 houses in the plantation's 'Negro village newly built;' although the inventory post-dates emancipation, the village was clearly constructed during slavery.[73]

Another idea of the number of houses in a settlement can be gained by applying estimates of household size. Following conventional social anthropological usage, by household I mean the residential unit, that is, the group of people who live together in the same house. Sometimes households contained members of the same family, sometimes not. In either case, data on household size are very limited. The six-plantation group mentioned above provides the best available data and yields an average of about 3.8 persons (range 2.9 to 5.6) per household (see note 73). This figure is independently supported by an estimate given in the 1820s by William Sharp, a prominent Barbadian planter; he reported 'an average number of about four persons inhabiting each house.'[74]

Assuming that slave households averaged about four persons, it can be roughly estimated that on many medium and large plantations there were fewer than 25 houses, and on a more consequential number of units, with populations from 100 to 200, the settlements contained from 25 to 50 houses. The significant number of settlements with populations numbering in the 200s contained up to around 75 houses. It is doubtful that many plantations exceeded 80 houses. In 1833, for example, Vaucluse was among Barbados' largest plantations, consisting of 'nearly 600 acres' and 'more than 300' slaves. At this time, less than 4 per cent of the island's slaves lived in population units of this size, and the Vaucluse settlement had 'nearly 80 houses.'[75] In any event, with so many plantations containing much more than just a handful of houses, it is not surprising that writers could refer to the settlements as 'little villages,' 'little towns,' 'small towns,' or the 'Negro town.'

Sex and age distribution

During the mid-1670s, the Barbadian slave population as a whole (including town dwellers) was about equally divided between males and females, with a slight preponderance of the latter. This island-wide demographic picture continued over the duration of the slave period and was reflected in the sexual composition of the average plantation settlement. As Governor Parry reported, 'most plantations' contained 'a greater number of females than males;' this estimate is generally supported by statistical data from individual plantations.[76]

There are no island-wide figures for the age structure of the slave population prior to 1817, but demographic data on individual plantations give an idea of the distribution of ages in the settlements. However, when the ages of slaves on individual plantations were recorded in earlier periods they were invariably given by the categories of men, women, boys, and girls. In a sample I collected at random on 43 plantations from 1781 to 1834, adults (presumably people 16 years or older) averaged about 59 per cent. In another study, Ronald Hughes presents data on 92 plantations from 1671 to 1816; adults averaged about 67 per cent on these plantations. And in the late 1780s, on a group of 22 plantations Barbadian authorities considered as representative, adults comprised about 61 per cent of the 3,116 slaves.[77]

Whatever the specific age structure on a given plantation at a particular period, the settlements contained several age groupings, including infants, small children, teenagers, young and mature adults, and the relatively elderly. Only the very first and very last of these categories were exempt from plantation labour, but all contributed, in one way or another, to the life of the community and the social roles within it.

The slave settlement as a small community

Reflecting a pattern found on sugar plantations throughout the Americas, the Barbadian slave settlement with its relatively small population, density, and the proximity of dwellings made for a compact social unit or community. Within this community it is unlikely that many activities went unnoticed, and there was great physical and, undoubtedly, psychological intimacy as well.

In 1796, George Pinckard provided a detailed, albeit romanticised and patronising, description of this community and its general ambiance. Observing that the crops slaves cultivated and the stock they raised in the settlements 'afford them occupation and amusement for their leisure moments,' he continues:

> The negro-yard, viewed from a short distance, forms an object of highly interesting and picturesque scenery. It comprizes all the little huts, intermixed

> with, and more or less concealed by, the variety of shrubs and fruit trees ... ; likewise the many small patches of garden ground around them, and the different species of stock, some appearing in pens, some tied by the leg, or the neck, and some running at large. And if it be evening, you have also the crowd of negroes, male and female, as they chance to be seen, at rest, or moving in busy occupation, some passing from hut to hut, some dancing to their favorite music, some sitting at the door with the pipe in their mouths, and others smoking their loved sagar under the broad leaf of the plantain. The picture is also further enlivened by the groups of little black children; some running and skipping about, some seated, playing before the doors, in nature's ebon dress, and some, unable to walk, attempting little pedestrian excursions upon their hands and feet. Perhaps within so small a space, few scenes could offer so much to interest a contemplative mind; or to aid the pencil of a painter of the picturesque.[78]

Another idyllic and somewhat pastoral view of the slave village is illustrated in an early nineteenth-century engraving, although it shows details of slave housing and various activities.[79] Both Pinckard's description and the illustration mask a reality that was far less picturesque. They do not show the abject material conditions under which slaves carried out their daily lives, the dilapidation of their housing, their tattered and worn clothing, the hunger they often suffered, the blandness (and often inadequacy) of their food rations, the contaminated water they frequently drank. They also obscure the illness and infirmities that were widespread in the villages.

The village was central to the everyday life of plantation slaves and was a community in the sociological sense, viz. a 'distinct unit and of such a size that its inhabitants can all be personally acquainted.'[80] Small communities of this kind existed in all Caribbean sugar plantation areas, but in Barbados, with its many plantation and farm units, small land area, relatively easy topography and well-developed road network, the communities were not very far from one another and slaves from different plantations were in regular contact. Many leisure-time or recreational activities were not confined to the settlements, and despite laws designed to curtail their movements, slaves left their communities and attended markets in town or the countryside, weekend dances at neighbouring plantations, or visited kinsmen and friends elsewhere. Yet, on a day-to-day basis and outside of the plantation labour regimen during the work week, most of the activities in which slaves voluntarily engaged took place within their small communities.

Within these communities households were formed, crucial family connections could be established (though kinship or family ties often extended to other plantations or the towns), children were born and named, the dead were prepared for burial and interred, and various religious practices took place. Other leisure and domestic activities that occurred in the communities

included food preparation and consumption, diagnosis and treatment of illness, nursing and care of small children, cultivation of garden plots, and making and repairing household utensils and furniture. Games and gambling, tobacco and alcohol consumption, musical activities, gossiping and visiting among kinsmen and friends also took place within the communities. The settlements were also places where revolts or other forms of resistance were plotted, runaway or fugitive kinsmen or friends from other plantations were hidden, and goods stolen from plantation storehouses or provision grounds were traded or consumed.

Although historical sources rarely provide explicit details on the internal organisation and life of the plantation community, they suggest an array of interpersonal conflicts that would be found in many small communities. Such conflicts could stem from, for example, sexual jealousies, disagreements over ownership of material goods, or the belief that food had been stolen from a garden plot. More generally, disagreements or conflicts within the communities could evolve into verbal arguments, physical assaults, or even murder. Indeed, interpersonal conflicts and community tensions were reflected in witchcraft or sorcery accusations, and the apparently frequent incidents of people believing themselves the victims of malevolent magical practices.[81]

However, cooperation between individuals or households was just as much a part of community life. For example, because of their high combustibility, houses were vulnerable to fire and, particularly when fanned by winds, fire could spread rapidly within the compact settlement. Cooperative endeavours were a community response to an ever-present threat of fire. Joseph Senhouse described how as soon as an accidental fire in a slave house was discovered, 'the bell was rung to alarm the neighborhood & the Negroes of the adjoining plantations as well as those of this estate (as is customary on such occasions) immediately repaired in crowds to the spot to give their assistance.'[82] Other cooperative labour forms may have extended to, for example, house construction, assistance in the care and nursing of infants and small children, and cultivation of the garden plots.

Within their communities, slaves had a variety of roles and specialties that were defined by their own cultural needs and were independent of the occupational roles that served plantation labour demands and interests. Such roles were associated with, for example, kinship, affinity, and friendship; music, crafts of one kind or another, haircutting, dentistry, storytelling, and midwifery. An important member of the community was the Obeah person or 'Negro doctor,' involved in the diagnosis and curing of illness; there were also people accused of practising evil magic. In the later years of the slave period, literate slaves taught others to read, and converts to Christianity proselytised among their peers. A Moravian missionary, for example, observed how one slave used his 'superior station' on the plantation to 'encourage the Negroes to come to church.'[83] Some people, through their personalities or special talents, were

able to influence others in planning of revolts or other forms of resistance, and despite limited direct information, there were undoubtedly persons whose wisdom and advice were solicited on more mundane problems and in the adjudication of disputes with which plantation managements were not concerned.

Conclusion

Many features of the Barbadian plantation slave settlement were not unique to the island and were broadly shared by sugar plantations throughout the West Indies. In Barbados, as elsewhere, fundamental social and material patterns that emerged in plantation settlements during the era of slavery were to have considerable impact on post-emancipation rural life; major features of these settlements were to endure far into the post-emancipation period. The slave village, then, was a social unit of great significance to understanding the island's long history and particularly the impact of the slave era on rural life for many years after emancipation.

Notes

1. Ronald Hughes, Philip Morgan, and Fred Smith commented on earlier drafts of this paper, completed while I was a Senior Fellow at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, Charlottesville.
2. *PP*, XXVI (1789), Part 3, David Parry, Replies to Queries, in 'Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council . . . Concerning the Present State of the Trade to Africa . . .;' Barry W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 50.
3. Jerome S. Handler, ed., 'Father Antoine Biet's Visit to Barbados in 1654,' *JBMHS*, 32 (1967): 55; Thomas Towns, 'An Extract of a Letter of Mr Lister Containing Some Observations made at the Barbadoes [March 26, 1675],' *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, X (1676): 400; CO 1/21, 'Some Observations on the Island Barbadoes,' 1667; see also, Jean Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau Voyage aux Isles de l'Amérique*, 6 Vols. (Paris: Theodore et Guillaume Cavelier, 1722), IV, 413.
4. Henry Holder, *A Short Essay on the Subject of Negro Slavery with a Particular Reference to the Island of Barbadoes*.(London: Couchman and Fry, for C. Dilly, 1788), 23; John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America*, 2 Vols. (London, 1741), II, 131; William Douglass, *A Summary, Historical, and Political of the . . . British Settlements in North America*, 2 Vols. (Boston and London, 1755), I, 118; also, for example, George Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 3 Vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1806), I, 289; *PP*, XXVI (1789), David Parry, 'Extract of a Letter from Governor Parry to . . . Lord Sydney, August 18, 1788,' 17; Barbados Council, Replies to Queries, in 'Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council;' Estate Inventory of Robert Hooper, September 12, 1654, in 'Hooper of Barbados,' *JBMHS*, 7 (1940): 71.
5. E.g., Barbados Legislature, House of Assembly, *The Report from a Select Committee of the House of Assembly, Appointed to Inquire into the Origin, Causes and Progress of the Late Insurrection* (1817;London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1818), 32; *Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette*, June 11, 1805; BDA, R1/3a, b, Plan of a Section of Constant Plantation, St. George, 1739-1740 (see also, Deeds Record Book R1/90, fols. 128-29); J.W. Jordan, *An Account of the Management of Certain Estates in the Island of Barbados* (London, 1824), 4; University of London Library, Newton Estate Papers 523/129, 'Boiling House Account,' Newton Plantation, 1799; Ibid., 523/290, Wood, 'Report on the Buildings at Newton,' June 24, 1796; Pinckard, I, 287-88, 368-69; *Minutes of the Society for the Improvement of Plantership in the Island of Barbados, Instituted December 8th, 1804* (Liverpool: Printed by Thos. Kaye, 1811), passim; Raymond Richards Collection of Miscellaneous Historical Documents, University of Keele Library, Staffordshire, England, 'Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership, 1811-1812 and of the Agricultural Society, 1812-1816' [June 1, 1811- April 6, 1816], passim.
6. E.g., Meliora, *Letters on the Labouring Population of Barbadoes* (London, 1858), passim.
7. Jerome Handler, *Searching for a Slave Cemetery in Barbados, West Indies: A Bioarchaeological and Ethnohistorical Investigation* (Research Paper No. 59. Carbondale: Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, 1989), 17-19.
8. Alexander Gunkel and Jerome Handler, eds., 'A German Indentured Servant in Barbados in 1652: the Account of Heinrich von Uchteritz,' *JBMHS*, 33.3 (1970): 92; [William Senhouse], 'The Autobiographical Manuscript of William Senhouse,' [1787] *JBMHS*, 3 (1935-36): 14; Pinckard, I, 287; Newton Estate Papers 523/290, 'Buildings at Newton;' cf. Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 60-61; Handler, *Searching for a Cemetery*, 17-18.
9. These maps include The Bay, Cottage, Dayrells, Drax Hall, Drax Hope, Lambert, Searles, Staple Grove, and Stepney (see note 16). Cf. B.W. Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed: Plantation Maps and Plans of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica Publications, 1988).

10. Handler and Lange, 43-45; see also Handler, *Searching for a Cemetery*, Figures 2-6.
11. See John Chandler, 'Plantation Field Names in Barbados,' *JBMHS*, 32 (1968): 133-43; J. Graham Cruickshank, 'Field Names in Barbados,' *JBMHS*, 2 (1935): 166; 'Old Plantation Customs,' *JBMHS*, 7 (1940): 109-15. The custom of naming fields, as well as the field system itself, undoubtedly derives from ancient English agricultural practices (see, for example, William Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), 12, 22; Trevor Rowley, *Villages in the [English] Landscape* (London: Dent and Sons, 1978), 166; Christopher Taylor, *Fields in the English Landscape* (London: Dent and Sons, 1975), 78, passim.
12. The unique drawing of Ashford, captioned 'Ashford. The Estate of Henry Hart, Esq. Barbados' (see cover illustration and Figure 1 of this volume), was made by a teen-age girl between 1837 and 1845. However, the basic settlement pattern of the slave period is still quite evident. The drawing clearly shows the mansion house (still standing today, although modified over the years) and the yard, including the windmill, sugar buildings, pond, and, located between the mansion house and pond, the houses of some of the labourers or ex-slaves (I am grateful to Mrs Mildred Hart Higgins for permission to publish this drawing; for more details, see Handler and Lange, 297, note 3). For examples of plantation maps that show the location of the 'Negro yard,' see Handler and Lange, Figures 3 and 4; Handler, *Searching for a Cemetery*, Figures 2-7). In a well-known historical geography of the West Indies, David Watts errs when he writes that non-household slaves lived in houses 'placed at some distance away from the plantation house and mill complex' *The West Indies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 193.
13. E.g., Rowley, 107; Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 262, 290-91.
14. Newton Estate Papers 523/288, Wood, 'Report on the Negroes [at Newton],' July 1796. As was reported in the eighteenth century for the West Indies in general, 'the habitations of the slaves, on every estate, are situated near the dwelling-house of the owner, or overseer; that they may be under more immediate inspection' (Robert Norris, *Memoirs of the Reign of Bossa Ahádee . . . and Short Account of the African Slave Trade*, 1789; London: Frank Cass, 1968, 176); also, for Jamaica, see Barry W. Higman, *Montpelier, Jamaica: A Plantation Community in Slavery and Freedom, 1739-1912* (Kingston, Jamaica: The Press, UWI, 1998), 100. Cf. Jerome S. Handler, 'Slave Revolts and Conspiracies in Seventeenth Century Barbados,' *NWIG*, 56 (1982): 5-43; Ibid., 'Escaping Slavery in a Caribbean Plantation Society: Marronage in

Barbados, 1650s-1830s,' *NWIG*, 71 (1997): 183-225.
15. Ronald Hughes, personal communication, March 1990; Native of the West Indies, *Poems on Subjects Arising in England, and the West Indies* (London, 1783), 11.
16. Modern plantation maps, copies of which were obtained from the plantations themselves, and/or interviews and field observations in the 1970s and 1980s provided information on Bissex (St Joseph), Burnt House (St Andrew), Claybury (St John), Four Hills (St Peter), Hanson (St George), Lancaster (St James), Malvern (St John), Morgan Lewis (St Andrew), Newton (Christ Church), Nicholas Abbey (St Peter), Parks (St Joseph), Todds (St John), Vaucluse (St Thomas), and Yorkshire (Christ Church). Plantation maps dating from the slave, apprenticeship, or post-emancipation periods (some depicting the slave houses themselves, rather than merely indicating the 'Negro yard' areas) and held by the BDA include Cottage (St George, 1845), Drax Hall and Drax Hope (St George, 1719), and Searles and Dayrells (Christ Church, 1815). Maps held by the Barbados Museum yielded data on The Bay (St Michael, 1822), Husbands (St Lucy, 1835), Sandy Lane (St James, 1797), Staple Grove (Christ Church, 1818), and Stepney (St George, 1794). Information also derived from post-emancipation nineteenth-century maps, usually based on earlier surveys, that are still privately held by the plantations themselves: Guinea (St John, 1857), Lamberts (St Peter/St Lucy, 1854), Lowthers (Christ Church, 1825), and Oughterson (St Philip, 1938).
17. Pinckard, I, 287; Newton Estate Papers 523/290, 'Buildings at Newton;' Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, *Annual Report* (London, 1836), 48.
18. E.g., Labat, 413; Pinckard, I, 368-69; Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1838), 2, 62.
19. Handler, 'Biet', 289; Douglass, 118; Parry 'Extract of a Letter,' 17; Pinckard, I, 287; J.A. Thome and J. H. Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies* (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838), 56; Holder, 23; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, *Annual Report*, 1836, 48; see also Barbados Council, Replies to Queries; James C. Brandow, ed., 'Diary of Joseph Senhouse' [1776-1778], *JBMHS*, 37 (1986): 403-04.
20. Historical data for individual plantations usually do not specify the 'Negro yard' acreage alone, but give a total for the mill yard and 'Negro yard' combined. This figure often includes roads and non-agricultural features. For example, none of Newton's records specifies the acreage of the slave village, but in 1796 the manager estimated that 'the Negro houses, buildings [of the yard], etc. stand on an area

of about twenty or twenty odd acres' (Newton Estate Papers 523/290, 'Buildings at Newton'). A 1739-1740 plan (R1/3b) in the BDA shows a portion of Constant (St George), and records as a little under 12 acres 'the land about ye sugar work, other buildings and the Negroe houses.' For other typical examples, see *Minutes of Society for Improvement of Plantership, 1804*, 85; Minute Book of Society for Improvement of West India Plantership . . . 1811-16, 270, 290, 295.

21. *Minutes of Society for Improvement of Plantership, 1804*, 136; 'Minute Book of Society for Improvement of West India Plantership . . ., 1811-16,' 43.
22. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 219, 221.
23. The Barbadian situation does not seem very different from the one described by Higman for a Jamaican sugar plantation: 'Whereas the proprietors of Montpelier controlled the location of the villages and held the ultimate authority to decide who should live within them, they intervened much less in deciding how the houses should be laid out and who should occupy each house. [But] they left no evidence of explicit instructions on these questions' (*Montpelier*, 127).
24. Rowley, 33-36,110; Hoskins, 55. Cf. Brian K. Roberts, *Rural Settlement in Britain* (Folkestone, Eng.: Dawson and Sons, 1977), passim.
25. Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed*, 244; Susan Denyer, *African Traditional Architecture* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1978), 19, 20. Cf. Paul Bohannan and Philip Curtin, *Africa and Africans* (Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Press, 1971), 120.
26. Oldmixon, II, 131; Douglass, 118; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel , *Annual Report*, 1836, 48.
27. Labat, 413; Philip Gibbes, *Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes, etc. etc. etc.* (London, 1786), 20; Senhouse, 'Autobiographical Manuscript,' 14; Pinckard, I, 289.
28. Rowley, 130-31, 133-35, 137. Cf. Hoskins, 17, 41-42.
29. Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed*, 244. Cf., for example, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, *Annual Report*, 1836, 48.
30. Pinckard, I, 287-88; Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial of the British Colonies in the West Indies*, 4 Vols. (Philadelphia, 1810), II, 349. Cf. Edward Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 234-35; Higman, *Montpelier*, 146 ff.
31. Information on Barbados house types is drawn from Jerome Handler, 'Housing, House Types, and Furnishings of Barbados Plantation Slaves' (Unpublished Manuscript, 1997, BDA). See also Kwamina Dickson, *A Historical Geography of Ghana* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 51, 52, 61, 284, Figure 45. There are many more architectural details available for Jamaican wattle-and-daub houses. For a discussion of possible cultural influences on these houses (as well as other housing types), some of which is relevant to Barbados see Higman, *Montpelier*, 153-59, 182-90. Cf. Juanita Anderson, 'Houses of the Enslaved Africans in the Caribbean and Southern United States' (Unpublished Manuscript, Department of Anthropology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 1978); Jay Edwards, 'The Evolution of Vernacular Architecture in the Western Caribbean,' in S.J.K. Wilkerson, ed., *Cultural Traditions and Caribbean Identity* (Gainesville: Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, 1980, Figure 4).
32. *Barbados Mercury*, March 4, 1788; William Belgrove, *A Treatise Upon Husbandry or Planting* (Boston, 1755), 31. Cf. Newton Estate Papers 523/290, 'Buildings at Newton;' 'Minute Book of Society for Improvement of West India Plantership . . ., 1811-16,' 111.
33. Handler, 'Housing;' Higman, *Slave Populations*, 220, 244; Thomas Cochrane, *Notes on the Minerology, Government and Condition of the British West India Islands* (London: Ridgway, 1851), 50. Cf. Ronald Hughes, 'Sweet Bottom, St. George, Barbados: An Early (1777) Non-White Freehold Village,' *JBMHS*, 36 [1981]: 270. For a similar progression of housing types in Jamaica, see Higman, *Montpelier*, 160-61.
34. James Stephen, *The Slavery of the British West India Colonies*, 2 Vols. (London, 1824-30), II, 261. At least by the nineteenth century, and probably for many years earlier, slave dependence on plantation rations was greater in Barbados than in the other West Indian territories (Higman, *Slave Populations*, 205, 210).
35. Some sources suggest that planters usually assigned plots to 'each adult Negro' or 'the grown people,' but the most common practice seems to have been allocating land to each household, regardless of household size (Joshua Steele, 'Queries from . . . Governor Parry, Answered by a Planter of 1068 Acres,' *PP*, XXVI (1789), 25; Beilby Porteus, *An Essay Towards a Plan for the more Effectual Civilization and Conversion of the Negroe Slaves, on the Trust Estate in Barbadoes* (London: Printed by T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1807) 195-96; Barbados Assembly, *Report of the Slave Trade*, 4; Barbados Council, *Report of Slaves*, 107, 113; Borome, ed., 'William Bell,' 34; Pinckard, I, 368-69; Report of Lords 1789, query 5; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, *Annual Report* , 1827, 216-17; Alexander Gunkel and Jerome Handler, eds., 'A Swiss Medical Doctor's Description of Barbados in 1661: The Account of Felix Christian Spoeri,' *JBMHS*, 33.1 (1969): 17; 'Treatment of Slaves in Barbadoes,' 408.
36. Parry, 'Replies to Queries.' Aside from crops grown in their house or plantation gardens, slaves also raised small livestock and poultry, collected wild plants and land and marine animals, and acquired

food through trade in the markets and by theft; however, such activities played a minor role in their diets. Moreover, despite the occasional distribution of animal products, such as imported dried salt fish and meat, their fare was overwhelmingly vegetable. Food distributed by plantations was either imported or grown on the plantations themselves, but throughout the period of slavery the island depended less on imported food than on foods grown locally. Corn, primarily Guinea corn, was by far the most important food in the slave's diet (Indian corn, or maize, played a secondary role), although during the seventeenth century potatoes and plantains (the latter was particularly significant in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries) were also very important. The triad of potatoes, yams, and eddoes, collectively referred to as 'roots' or 'ground provisions,' also played an important role. The potato, in particular, was relied on as a back-up food when the corn crop failed or was insufficient. Plantations occasionally distributed other vegetables, but none played a significant dietary role, although some vegetables, particularly okra (a West African domesticate), may have been more widely consumed. Okra was probably one of the crops grown in the gardens (Jerome S. Handler, 'Food and Nutrition of Barbados Plantation Slaves,' Unpublished Manuscript, 1997, BDA; Ibid., 'The Domestic Economy of Barbados Plantation Slaves: Production and Distribution,' Unpublished Manuscript, 1997, BDA). Higman notes that among the West Indian territories, at least by the nineteenth century and probably for many years before, slave dependence on plantation food rations was the greatest in Barbados (Higman, *Slave Populations*, 205, 210).

37. E.g. Parry, 'Replies to Queries,' no. 10; George R. Porter, *The Nature and Properties of the Sugar Cane* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1830), 326; Henry Drax, 'Instructions for the Management of Drax-Hall and the Irish-Hope Plantations' [written in the 1670s], in Belgrove, 56; 'Odd Pages from Old Barbados' [Letters between Seale Yearwood and A. Frere, March 1796 and 26 April, 1797], *JBMHS*, 16 (1949): 114-15.
38. Pinckard, I, 368. For similar comments, see, for example, Anon., *Authentic History of the English West Indies* (London, 1810), 41; Barbados Assembly, *Report of the Insurrection*, 42; Barbados Council, *A Report of a Committee of the Council of Barbadoes, Appointed to Inquire into the Actual Condition of the Slaves in this Island* (London: W. Sior, 1824), 107, 113; Borome, ed., 'William Bell,' *JBMHS*, 30 (1962): 34; F.W.N. Bayley, *Four Years Residence in the West Indies, During the Years 1826, 7, 8, and 9* (London: William Kidd, 1832), 92; John Brathwaite, Replies to Queries, 'Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council;' 'Treatment of Slaves in Barbadoes,' *The Christian Remembrancer*, 5 (1823): 408; Forster Clarke, 'Plan of Treatment of the Negroes on the

Estates in Barbados, 1823,' *JBMHS*, 2 (1934): 30; Henry Nelson Coleridge, *Six Months in the West Indies in 1825* (London: John Murray, 1832), 125-26; Douglass, 118; Gunkel and Handler, eds., 'Swiss Medical Doctor's Description . . .,' *JBMHS*, 33.1 (1969): 17; Holder, 21, 23; Griffith Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados in Ten Books* (London: For the Author, 1750), 171; *PP*, 1790, XXX, Robert B. Nicholls, Testimony, in 'Minutes of the Evidence Taken Before a Committee of the House of Commons . . . for the Abolition of the Slave Trade,' 332; [William Naish ?], 'Notes on Slavery, Made During a Recent Visit to Barbadoes,' *The Negro's Friend*, No. 18 (London, 1830), 6; Oldmixon, I, 134; Porteus, 195-96; Thomas Rolph, *A Brief Account, Together with Observations made During a Visit in the West Indies . . . in Parts of the Years 1832-3* (Dundas, Upper Canada, 1836), 52; Senhouse, 'Autobiographical Manuscript,' 14; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, *Annual Report*, 1836, 48.

39. Handler, 'Domestic Economy.' All sources emphasise the very small size of house plots, but only a few from late in the slave period provide actual dimensions. One source reports 'a square of 60 or 80 feet to each house;' another notes that in a new village in 1787, each house was 'in the centre of a piece of ground 20 yards square;' and in 1828, a 'new' village at the Codrington plantations had '100 feet square to each house.' These figures were offered as examples of liberal management policies, but the extent to which they represent other Barbadian plantations during the same time period is unknown (Philip Gibbes, *Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes, etc. etc. etc.* (1786; reprinted with additions. London: Printed for Shepperson and Reynolds, 1797), 121-23; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, *Annual Report*, 1827, 216-17; Senhouse, 'Autobiographical Manuscript,' 14.

Although specifically referring to Antigua, Trelawney Wentworth reported in the 1820s that house plots were 'rigidly define[d] by stones, or trees, and shrubs,' and implied that his comments were also applicable to Barbados, which he had also visited. In Jamaica, Higman writes, slaves sometimes 'set out their houses in compounds or '"yards,"' surrounded by fences' (Trelawney Wentworth, *The West India Sketch Book*, 2 Vols., London, 1834, II, 218; Higman, *Slave Populations*, 219). There is no information if slave houses in Barbados were surrounded by boundary markers; yet, the practice may have existed, at least by the emancipation period. Demarcating house spots or yard areas with brush, hedges or fences is characteristic of present-day Barbados.

40. Parry, 'Replies to Queries,' No. 10; Gibbes, *Instructions* (1797), 121, 123. For similar comments, see Barbados Assembly, *Barbadoes: Report of a Committee of the General Assembly upon the Several Heads of Enquiry*

&c. *Relative to the Slave Trade* (London, 1790), 4; Rolph, 53.

41. The Husbands map is in the Barbados Museum; for Lowthers, see Handler and Lange, 45.
42. *Minutes of Society for Improvement of Plantership 1804*, 85; 'Minute Book of Society for Improvement of West India Plantership . . ., 1811-16,' 38; Porter, 326-27.
43. Dr. Caddell, [Report on the Health of Barbados Slaves], Meeting of 14 November 1812, in 'Minute Book of Society for Improvement of West India Plantership . . ., 1811-16;' Naish, 6. Cf. Steele, 'Queries,' 25. During apprenticeship, plantations were no longer expected to distribute food to their ex-slaves, but the law required them to allow apprentices one-half acre for growing food. Because of this, some planters took away from their apprentices 'the small gardens around the huts' (*PP*, 1837, LIII (521-1), 'Papers . . . in Explanation of the Measures Adopted by Her Majesty's Government, for Giving Effect to the Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies,' 393, 394, 398, 404).
44. Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Iland of Barbados* (London, 1657), 28-29; Handler, 'Biet,' 64; Hughes, *Natural History*, 44-45. Cf., for example, Towns, 'Extract of a Letter,' 229; Neville Connell, ed., 'Father Labat's Visit to Barbados in 1700,' *JBMHS*, 24 (1957): 171; Henry J. Cadbury, ed., 'An Account of Barbados 200 Years Ago' [by John Smith], *JBMHS*, 9 (1942): 83; Richard Gardiner, *An Account of the Expedition to the West Indies* (London: Printed by Z. Stuart, 1759), 38. In the 1790s, one of Newton's 13 fields was called the 'Negro pond field,' suggesting its function as a source of water for the slaves; it is likely that similar or identical field names existed on other plantations (Newton Estate Papers 523/129, 'Boiling House at Newton').
45. E.g., James Hendy, *A Treatise on the Glandular Disease of Barbados* (London: C. Drilly, 1784), 45; Robert Jackson, *A Sketch of the History and Cure of Febrile Diseases; more Particularly as they Appear in the West-Indies among the Soldiers of the British Army* (London: Baldwin, Craddock, and Joy, 1820), II, 252; Robert Poole, *The Beneficent Bee* (London: Printed by E. Duncomb, 1753), 229.
46. Early observers noted how slaves bathed or washed in the ponds after their labours (e.g., Ligon, 28; Hughes, *Natural History*, 227; Hendy, 32). For Father Labat, writing of his visit in 1700, pond pollution resulted from such conditions as 'crabs being drowned, by the beasts which water there, by the laundry done there and by the Negroes, who never miss going to bathe there as often as they can' (Connell, 'Father Labat's Visit,' 171). Cf. Jerome S. Handler, 'Health and Medicine Among Barbadian Slaves: Diseases and Disabilities' (Unpublished Manuscript, 1997, BDA).

47. Frank C. Ramsey, *Protein-Energy Malnutrition in Barbados* (New York: Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, 1979), 12; Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, MS. 610, Arthur Anderson, 'Barbados' [ca. 1784-1785], 2.
48. Newton Estate Papers 523/291, Wood, 'Report on the Lands of Seawell,' July 16, 1796; Ibid., 523/ 694, Haynes to Lane, May 13, 1813; Ibid., 523/849, Haynes to Lane, May 7, 1821. See also, for example, Connell, 'Father Labat's Visit,'171; Huntington Library, STG, Box 25 (No. 26), Henry Grenville to George Grenville, February 20, 1751; Ligon, 28; Brandow, 'Senhouse,'403-04; Ibid., 'Senhouse Papers,'188-89.
49. Hughes, *Natural History*, 54; Ibid., 44-45; also Towns, 'Extract of a Letter,' 229; Henry Frere, *A Short History of Barbados* (London, 1768), 126.
50. E.g., Hendy, 45; Newton Estate Papers 523/291, 'Lands of Seawell;' Brandow, 'Senhouse' (1988),188-89; Towns, 'Extract of a Letter,' 400; Gibbes, *Instructions* (1786), 24-25; 'Minute Book of Society for Improvement of West India Plantership . . ., 1811-16,' 134. Cf. W.H. Garrod, 'Our Water Supply,' *JBMHS*, 19 (1952): 107-08.
51. E.g., David Watts, *Man's Influence on the Vegetation of Barbados 1627 to 1800* (Hull, Eng: University of Hull, Occasional Papers in Geography 4, 1966), 62; Council of Trade and Plantations to the Lords Justice, September 12, 1699, in *Calendar of State Papers-Colonial Series*, 1699 (London: Public Record Office), 435-36; Journal of Council of Trade and Plantations, November 16, 1699, in *Ibid.*, 527.
52. Plantation records do not separate woodland acreage from other non-agricultural acreage. Typical examples: in 1811, Lears had about 128 acres in 'wood, wasted lands, tenements, etc;' Joe's River included over 184 acres in 'wood, tenements, waste land, 'Negro yard,' water courses, etc;' and Colleton's had 179 acres in 'wood, waste, tenements, pasture, paths, etc.' ('Minute Book of Society for Improvement of West India Plantership . . . 1811-16,' 6, 18, 29).
53. J.W. Orderson, *Directions to Young Planters for their Care and Management of a Sugar Plantation in Barbadoes* (London: T. Bensley, 1800), 5, 22, 24; 'Papers . . . in Explanation of the Measures Adopted by Her Majesty's Government,' 412. Cf. CO 30/21, Act 497, 'An Act to Prevent the Cutting Down and Destroying of Trees for the Burning of Charcoal,' March 14, 1827.
54. CO 1/37, Atkins, 'Answers to the 32 Queries by the Lords of Trade and Plantations,' July 4, 1676; Parry, 'Extract of a Letter,' 17. The Barbados Council also commented on 'the injudicious situation of their houses, which it would be dangerous to alter, on account of their superstitious attachment to the burying places of their ancestors' ('Replies to Queries'). If such reports accurately reflect the intensity of

'attachment' to family grave sites, they raise the question of what might have happened in the immediate post-emancipation period when the 'Negro yards' began to be abandoned and plantation tenantries were established. Citing an 1838 letter from the Governor of Barbados, W. Emanuel Riviere writes that ex-slaves 'revered their burial grounds to the extent that a major ambition was to die on the estates where their relations had been interred, so that they too would be buried there' ('Labour Shortage in the British West Indies After Emancipation,' *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 4 (1972): 4). The movement to the tenantries, however, does not seem to have been marked by friction or a reluctance to abandon the 'Negro yards.' This, in turn, may suggest that house burials had significantly waned, if not disappeared, by the emancipation period.

55. Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the British West India Islands, 'Returns to Questions Addressed to the Clergy of the Diocese of Barbados and the Leeward Islands, up to December 31, 1828: Island of Barbados,' *Report for the Year 1828* (London, 1829); John Davy, *The West Indies, Before and Since Slave Emancipation* (London: W. and F.G. Cash, 1854), 93-94.

    A 'Graveyard' field is sometimes found on present-day plantations, but it is not a very common field name. However, the historical function of Graveyard field is ambiguous, despite its seemingly obvious association with burials; moreover, it is unknown if this field name existed during the slave period. Most Barbadians that I have queried specifically on this point were uncertain why Graveyard field was so named. Some informants speculated that Graveyard received its name because it had once contained a vault or tomb of a planter family. However, no historical, archaeological or physical evidence substantiates this reasoning, and in my experience a field with such a tomb would be called Vault field. Other informants suggested that 'old time people' had been buried in Graveyard fields, but they could not provide any evidence for their opinions. Perhaps some Graveyard fields were associated with the 1854 cholera epidemic, although the field name 'Cholera,' which is not uncommon in Barbados today, is a more explicit indicator of earlier function.

    A few informants opined that Graveyard fields were thus named because in the 'old days' large animals were buried in them. Once again, these informants could not provide direct or hearsay evidence for the actual discovery of bones, or an oral tradition on the plantation. Others emphatically denied that plantation animals were buried in only one plantation locale; they maintained that animals were buried all over a plantation, wherever the soil was sufficiently deep to prevent carcasses from being easily exhumed by dogs. The historical function of Graveyard fields remains problematical. For a more detailed discussion of Graveyard fields, see Handler, *Searching for a Cemetery*, 18-19.

56. House burials clearly continued African practices. Although communal burial grounds belonging to particular family groups were common in Africa, interment in the compound of the deceased or under his house or room had a wide geographical range which included many cultural groups. Where house burial existed it was usually not the only type of grave site found in the society. Burials under the houses or in 'adjacent plots of ground' were also reported from elsewhere in the West Indies, and Douglas Armstrong has provided unique archaeological evidence for house burials in Jamaica (Wentworth, II, 219-20. Cf. Brathwaite, *Creole Society*, 216; Matthew Gregory Lewis, *Journal of a West India Proprietor*, London: John Murray, 1834, 97; Douglas Armstrong and Mark Fleischman, 'Analysis of Four House Area Burials from the African Jamaican Settlement of Seville,' *Syracuse University Archaeological Reports 6*, Syracuse: Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University, 1993).

57. Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 58-60; Handler, *Searching for a Cemetery*. Documentation on Newton is described in Jerome S. Handler, *A Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627-1834* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), 158; Ibid., *Supplement to a Guide for the Study of Barbados History* (Providence, Rhode Island: The John Carter Brown Library and the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 1991), 60; Ibid., 'Sources for the Study of Preemancipation Sugar Plantations in Barbados: Manuscripts Relating to Newton and Seawell Plantations,' *Caribbean Archives*, 5 (1976): 11-21.

    In recent years, Lionel Ward, the principal owner of Newton, donated most of the cemetery area to the Barbados Museum. It is a grassland, not far from the yard, that is plainly visible against the surrounding cane fields. Merely looking at this field, however, would not suggest that it still contains many interments.

58. Handler and Lange, 104-17; Handler, *Searching for a Cemetery*, passim.

59. Handler and Lange, 104-32. Cf. Jerome S. Handler, 'An African-Type Healer/Diviner and His Grave Goods: A Burial from a Plantation Slave Cemetery in Barbados, West Indies,' *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 1 (1997): 91-130; Ibid., 'A Prone Burial from a Plantation Cemetery in Barbados, West Indies: Possible Evidence for an African-type Witch or Other Negatively Viewed Person,' *Historical Archaeology*, 30 (1996): 76-86.

60. For the role of the ancestors in slave life, see Handler and Lange,

passim.

61. Jerome Handler, 'Health and Medicine Among Barbadian Slaves: Medical Care and Treatment' (Unpublished Manuscript, 1997, deposited in BDA); Ibid., 'Slave Medicine and Obeah in Barbados, ca. 1650-1834,' *NWIG*, 74 (2000): 57-90. Even in the best of circumstances the medical care slaves (and whites) received from professional white medical practitioners, whether creole or foreign, was singularly deficient when judged by modern standards. Further, it is doubtful that the improvements in plantation health care during the early nineteenth century had a major impact on the health and longevity of the slave population (cf. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 260-61; Kenneth Kiple, *The Caribbean Slave: A Biological History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 154).
62. E.g., Barbados Assembly, *Report of the Slave Trade*, 5; Ibid., *Report of the Insurrection*, 46, 48, 51; Barbados Council, *Report of Slaves, 109*; Holder, 21; Parry, 'Replies to Queries.' Cf. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 267-68.
63. E.g., J. Harry Bennett, *Bondsmen and Bishops* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958), 41; Newton Estate Papers 523/ 290, 'Buildings at Newton;' Ibid., 523/291, 'Lands of Seawell;' Handler and Lange, 48, 60-61; 'Old Plantation Customs.'
64. Newton Estate Papers 523/290, 'Buildings at Newton;' Higman, *Slave Populations*, 267; Richard B. Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 268-91, *passim*; J.B. Colthurst, Monthly Reports for August and October 1836, in 'Papers . . . in Explanation of the Measures,' 387, 396.
65. James Bovell , 'Observations on the Climate of Barbadoes,' *The British American Journal of Medical and Physical Science*, 4 (1848): 170. Cf. Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 272, 285-86, 291.
66. Plantation schools, as well as others for slaves and free coloureds, are discussed in Jerome S. Handler, *The Unappropriated People: Freedmen in the Slave Society of Barbados* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 172-89. For schools and chapels on the island around 1830, see the reports of parish rectors, in *PP*, 1831-32, XLVII (660).
67. For a description of my method for estimating the number of plantations, see Handler and Lange, 37-39, Table 4. As to smaller units, for example, a consequential number of the approximately 1,400 plantations reported in a 1712 census were, in fact, relatively small units, and Mayo's map, based on a survey between 1717 and 1721, identified 998 plantations, but only about 405 had sugar mills. In the 1770s and 1780s, William Dickson estimated that in addition to 'upwards of four hundred sugar plantations' there were 'a great number of places and other small possessions.' The farms of 'small free holders are called places,' he later wrote, 'to distinguish them from the large sugar plantations;' 'places' had from 'one or two acres up to twenty or thirty,' and owners with 'eight or ten acres, or more, with slaves in proportion form a middle class between the sugar planters and poor whites.' Ronald Hughes calculates that in 1680 there were 259 plantations in Barbados of 100 acres or more, and notes that a comprehensive list of the island's sugar plantations and their acreages was not published until 1846 (CO 28/14, 'A List of the Inhabitants, Men, Women, and Children . . . Belonging to the Several Parishes of this Island,' August 16, 1712; William Mayo, *A New and Exact Map of the Island of Barbadoes in America*, London, 1722; William Dickson, *Letters on Slavery*, London, 1789, 8; Ibid., *Mitigation of Slavery*, London: Longman, 1814, 528; Ronald Hughes, 'Barbadian Sugar Plantations, 1640 to 1846,' Seminar Paper 1977-78, Department of History, UWI, Cave Hill).
68. Handler and Lange, 34-36; Handler, *Searching for a Cemetery*, 44; Ibid., 'Biet,' 65, 69. Ronald Hughes lists six plantations between 1671 and 1688. The average slave contingent was 81, with a range from 86 to 105 (Hughes, 'Sugar Plantations,' App. IX).
69. Sources for these various samples are given in Handler and Lange, 34; Handler, *Searching for a Cemetery*, 31, 35, 39, 44. Ronald Hughes independently gathered statistics from a variety of archival sources. For 88 plantations over the period 1715 to 1816, the average slave contingent numbered about 117, with a range from 35 to 281. Close to 70 per cent of the plantations averaged between 60 and 139 slaves (Hughes, 'Sugar Plantations,' App. IX).
70. Handler and Lange, 35, Table 3.
71. Calculated from Higman, *Slave Populations*, 439-41, Table S2.10.
72. Pinckard, I, 289.
73. The six plantations with the number of slaves and the number of houses are: Consett 1796 (169/30), Vaucluse 1833 (308/ 'nearly' 80), one unnamed plantation in 1816 (350/ 'upwards' of 70 houses), and three unnamed ones in 1824 (82/32; 118/41; 219/76). Sources: Consett (Bennett, *Bondsmen and Bishops*, 100-01); Vaucluse (Rolph, 53); unnamed, 1816 (Barbados Assembly, *Report of the Insurrection*, 41, 42); unnamed, 1824 (Jordan, *Management*). Lightfoot, BDA, RB 1, 295/287 (Ronald Hughes brought this inventory to my attention).
74. Barbados Council, *Report of Slaves*, 114. In the 1850s, a Barbadian planter described a 'Negro-yard' with 'some sixty-four huts or cottages,' containing a population of 'about three hundred,' yielding approximately 4.7 persons per household. Higman writes that 'generally' in the West Indies 'three to six slaves occupied each house,' but his data are not clear (Meliora, 29; Higman, *Slave Populations*, 222).

75. Rolph, 53.
76. For seventeenth-century statistics on males and females, see CO 1/36, Jonathan Atkins, 'An Account of His Majesty's Island of Barbadoes and the Government Thereof,' February 1676; Peter Colleton, Letter to Council of Trade and Plantations, May 28, 1673, in *Calendar of State Papers*, 1669-1674, 495. Cf. Ligon, 115; Parry, 'Extract of a Letter,' 18. On a randomly collected sample of 89 plantations from 1727 to 1834, females averaged close to 52 per cent. In slightly more than one-fourth of the sample males exceeded females, but the numerical differences between the two were very small (Handler and Lange, 36). Also, summarising data collected from archival sources on a group of 94 plantations from 1671 to 1816, Ronald Hughes concluded that up to 1780 this group was almost equally divided between plantations with more men than women and those with more women than men; however, from 1780 to 1830 'the number of women was significantly greater' (Hughes, 'Sugar Plantations,' 16).
    Although island-wide figures on sex are unavailable for the eighteenth century, during the decades preceding emancipation the entire slave population averaged 54 per cent females (Handler and Lange, 36; Handler, *Searching for a Cemetery*, 31, 35, 39, 44; Ibid., *Unappropriated People*, 24-25; Higman, *Slave Populations*, 413).
77. My sample was drawn from records in the BDA, Z9/11/5, Records of Drax Hall, 1803-04, and Estate Inventories, originals, 1780-1834. See also, Hughes, 'Sugar Plantations,' App. IX; *PP*, XXVI (1789), David Parry, 'An Account of 22 Plantations in Barbados, 1788 . . . Situated in Almost Every Different Part of the Island,' 39. For the age distribution of Barbadian slaves in 1817 and 1834, see Higman, *Slave Populations*, 462, 471, 477, Tables S4.1, S4.2, S4.3.
78. Pinckard, I, 368-69. For strikingly similar perspectives on Jamaican plantation villages, see sources quoted in Higman, *Montpelier*, 132.
79. This illustration (which space limitations prevent being shown here) appears in John A. Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies* (London: Richard Phillips, 1820), facing page 20. A surgeon in the Royal Navy, Waller had been stationed in Barbados for about a year in 1807-08.
80. Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (6th ed. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954), 64. Cf. M.G. Smith, 'Community Organization in Rural Jamaica,' *Social and Economic Studies*, 5 (1956): 295.
81. Handler, 'Slave Medicine and Obeah.' Planters regularly complained about slave theft from plantation storehouses or fields, but there is little direct information on theft within the slave community itself.
82. Brandow, 'Senhouse,' (1986), 405. Cf. Parry, 'Extract of a Letter,' 15.
83. Handler, 'Slave Medicine and Obeah;' Ibid., 'African-Type Healer;'

Ibid., 'Prone Burial;' Jerome S. Handler and Kenneth Bilby, 'On the Early Use and Origin of the Term Obeah in Barbados and the Anglophone Caribbean,' *Slavery & Abolition*, 22 (2001): 87-100; Letter from J.G. Zippel, Mount Tabor, April 30, 1832, in *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren* (London, 1832), XII, 223-24.