



Timeline Notebook

In responding to our anonymous 1865 petitioners of Morant Bay, we need to develop a set of criteria for change and continuity:

1. _____
 - What did the British public think of Colonial Slavery over this period?
2. _____
 - What happened to the daily lives of the plantation workers both before and after emancipation?
3. _____
 - What happened to the profits of the Jamaican Slave Economy?
 - Did the 'Slave Economy' decline *before* or *only after* abolition?
4. _____
 - What happened to the organised resistance from the enslaved in Jamaica during this period?
5. _____
 - How were both the enslaved and the White population in Jamaica presented during this period?

Year	Event Name	Event Description	My Own Notes
1623	English landing at St Kitts, established as a colony 1624	The first island to be colonised by the English in the Caribbean	
1626	First recorded landing of enslaved Africans in St Kitts	The first use of the transatlantic slave trade by the English	
1637	Sugar introduced in Barbados	The introduction of a key crop that was to make colonial slavery in the Caribbean so profitable.	

1655	Seizure of Jamaica (ceded formally by Spain 1670)	As Cromwell rules at home, England takes control of their largest and, soon to be, most profitable Caribbean island in a war with the Spanish.	
1664		A legislature was established in Spanish Town , with twelve districts of Jamaica represented , to rule over Jamaica. A high property qualification meant it was effectively a club for the super wealthy White Planter Class to rule over Jamaica, with little interference from London and no voice for any others on the island.	
1760		An uprising of enslaved people on the Island of Jamaica. Named after one of the supposed leaders of the revolt, an 'Akan' man kidnapped from the 'Gold Coast', it was the largest uprising by enslaved persons on Jamaica in the 18th century. Over the course of eighteen months the rebels killed as many as sixty whites and destroyed many thousands of pounds worth of property. During the suppression of the revolt over five hundred black men and women were killed in battle, executed, or committed suicide. Another 500 were transported from the island for life. Colonists valued the total cost to the island at nearly a quarter of a million pounds.	
1763		Britain continue to expand their empire in the Caribbean - gaining new slave colonies in the Seven Years War from European Powers.	
1764		1733 Molasses Act was a Mercantilist law that effectively prohibited the British North American Colonies from buying their sugar from the French West Indies (which was cheaper). It instead ensured they bought from the British islands such as Jamaica, further enriching the 'West Indians' off the backs of the enslaved workers. It's renewal and enforcement in 1764 (it was set to expire in 1763) caused unrest among colonists in North America and was widely flouted.	

1772		A British court judgement which held that chattel slavery was unsupported by the common law in England and Wales, although the position elsewhere in the British Empire was left ambiguous. This did not instantly free any enslaved person but left the legal justifications for slavery slightly more vulnerable. Edward Long was among many who published a response highly critical of Mansfield's decision.	
1776-83		North American colonists fought a war for Independence from the British, eventually declaring their Independence. Britain's refusal to trade significantly with countries outside of their empire (Mercantilism) meant Jamaica and other British islands were economically cut off from one of their key trading partners - North America.	
1781 -3		The killing of more than 130 African slaves by the crew of the British slave ship on and in the days following 29 November 1781. Enslaved persons were murdered (being thrown overboard) in order to claim insurance payments. Such everyday brutality was typical of the system. However when the insurers refused to pay out to the ship's owners, the resulting court cases instigated some public horror at the system in Britain.	
1788		A British abolitionist group, formed on 22 May 1787, by twelve men who gathered together at a printing shop in East London. They were motivated by a christian belief in the wrongs of trading in human beings.	
89		Written by a noted abolitionist and formerly enslaved man, the book gives both a powerful biographical account of his own fight for emancipation, as well as a strong moral argument against the Slavery as an institution. One of the first widely read slave narratives, it's success reflected a sympathy for abolitionism within Britain at the time.	

1791		<p>In 1791, the only ever successful Slave Uprising began in Saint Domingue, a French colony which produced 50% of the world's coffee and 30% of its sugar. 500,000 enslaved Africans liberated themselves by force, led by the formerly enslaved Toussaint L'Ouverture. Fear among Slave Owners in the Caribbean spread as they sought 'refuge' in nearby islands like Jamaica. Hope spread as quickly among the enslaved populations of the Caribbean. In 1795, the British saw a chance to seize the island from the French. The navy invaded but failed dismally. 60% of the soldiers died and the British left in 1798. After brutal battles, in 1804 the establishment of an independent Haiti was declared.</p>	
1795		<p>The agreement between West Indians and the Maroons that had lasted since the First Maroon War broke down. The prospects of a general slave revolt (the fear of St. Domingue provided a horrifying warning to the planters), meant troops were sent immediately to Montego Bay. Maroon efforts to incite slaves to revolt were, however, largely unsuccessful, most slaves having little liking for the Maroons. Eventually many Maroons did surrender, and over 500 were transported to Nova Scotia.</p>	
1802		<p>Created at the behest of the 'London Society of West India Planters and Merchants' (a 'West Indian' Lobby group made up of figures like George Hibbert and Robert Milligan) for all trade to and from the West Indies. In part it was built to prevent theft and spoilage, however it also symbolised the importance of the 'West Indian Economy' for the British Empire.</p>	

1807		<p>After years of failed attempts led by Clarkson and 'the Society' in public, and William Wilberforce in Parliament, the Act made it illegal to engage in the slave trade throughout the British colonies. This, it was hoped by abolitionists, would force Slave Owners to improve their treatment of Enslaved Persons as 'replacement' labour would become illegal. However trafficking between the Caribbean islands continued, regardless, until 1811 and within islands remained legal up until 1833. Slavery in the British Empire, however, was still legal.</p>	
1820s		<p>Amidst demands for political 'reform' in Britain (including 'amelioration' of the Canning Resolutions or the 'gradual abolition' of slavery), Abolitionism in Britain is re-energised by a new generation of activists (typified by Elizabeth Heyrick in 1824) who demand the immediate abolition of Slavery in all its forms in a widely read pamphlet</p>	
1823		<p>A series of measures proposed by the British government for the improvement, or 'amelioration', of conditions for the enslaved in the Caribbean. Foreign Secretary George Canning had consulted members of the proslavery lobby – the Society of West India Planters and Merchants – and the measures were limited. However the Jamaica Assembly was particularly resistant to the changes because they argued that these measures undermined the principle that each colony should legislate for its own internal affairs.</p>	

1831 -2		<p>Also known as the Christmas Rebellion, it was an eleven-day rebellion that mobilized as many as sixty thousand of Jamaica's three hundred thousand slaves in 1831–1832. Considered the largest slave rebellion in the British Caribbean and the most notable since Tacky's in 1760. Led by an enslaved Baptist preacher Samuel Sharpe, the uprising is seen by many historians as a catalyst for the Abolition of Slavery Act that came a year later.</p>	
1833		<p>In 1833 Parliament passed an act abolishing slavery in the Caribbean, Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope. A period of apprenticeship was forced upon the formerly enslaved people of 5 years (in effect to pay back their owners for the 'skills' they'd acquired from them). The British government also paid out £20 million of compensation to the slave-owners- approximately 40 per cent of government's annual expenditure at the time.</p>	
1838		<p>A temporary system for the formerly enslaved- that functioned a lot like the previous Slave Plantation system- was eventually abolished by each of the colonial assemblies in the West Indies, including Jamaica (with interference in the Jamaican constitution needed from Westminster). It required another trade off with the West India lobby - this time in return for maintaining preferable Sugar tariffs that allowed them to compete with sugar produced by full enslaved workers in Cuba and Brazil.</p>	

1838 +		<p>In an agriculturally abundant island like Jamaica, plantation owners were fearful that they would be unable to force to emancipated to continue to work on their land- or that they would have to pay them well in order for them to do so. Indeed emancipated workers were keen to develop economic independence and avoid working for white planters. Across Jamaica various measures were put in place after 1833 to ensure planter supremacy - vagrancy laws that made it effectively illegal to not work, or travel beyond your parish, land prices were exaggerated to prevent Black ownership, 'indentured labourers' were trafficked from elsewhere in the empire (India and China) to create competition between workers for jobs.</p>	
1840		<p>The World Anti-Slavery Convention met for the first time at Exeter Hall in London, on 12–23 June 1840. It was organised by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society - a descendant of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade - and coordinated campaigning against Slavery outside of the British Empire</p>	
1843		<p>One of several laws passed by the Jamaican Assembly to regulate the congregation / assembling of people in Jamaica - it helped enforce the criminalisation of vagrancy and a system that benefitted the remaining plantation owners who were anxious to ensure the required labourers for their land.</p>	