

wrote to a contact in Jamaica, who replied:

We are very little acquainted with the Windward Islands on account of the tediousness of the Passage from this place, it being what the Sailors call, right in the Wind's Eye...³

The Hotchkin family of Rutland owned an estate in Jamaica from at least the early 18th Century. By 1780 the administration of various estates which belonged to Robert Hotchkin, declared a lunatic, had been given to Charles Bowyer Adderley. Hence these records have been added to the estate papers of Lord Norton and are to be found in the Norton collection.

The Estate belonging to the Family of the Hotchkins consists of as follows:

1296 Acres of land situate in the Parish of St. Catherine & St Andrew near Passage Fort in the Island of Jamaica with 46 negroes, 41 working steers, 80 head of Cattle, 188 sheep. with Wains Canoes etc part is planted with Scots Grass the other pasture land, with broadland, there is a

wharf belonging to it at Passage Fort, on which some storehouses stores are built. The pasture land lies on the left hand of the road from Passage Fort to Spanish Town near half way Tree.⁴

A map of the estate made in 1737 by Alex[ande]r Skene, surveyor, shows 'Hotchkins House' in an area of 'good pasture' with brief descriptions of the other types of land included in the estate. These range from 'Drown'd Mangrove Sand Pitt Cutting Firewood' to 'Good High Ground in Pastureage and Planted in Provisions Cotton etc.'⁵

Thomas Hotchkin described the effects of a hurricane on the island in a letter to his brother:

We had a very great Hurricane here on 28th of Aug[u]st last in w[hi]ch several ships & men was lost at Anchor in Harbour, in w[hi]ch was Olivers Son of Grantham named Edward we suffered much by it having lost two canoes a Wherry & another much Damaged two Storehouses blown down at Passage Fort, ye Dove Coat blown down all my Houses un-shingled, 2 steers yt.



Brunswick Square, Port of Spain, 1897. From MS 466 / 42 (Views in Trinidad). Reproduced by permission of Cadbury-Schweppes plc.

was put up to fatten knock on ye head, a house blown down at halfway tree w[hi]ch did lett at 25 [[ibri] p[er] annum & much Damage done in ye Woods...⁶

The firm of Boulton and Watt supplied 119 steam engines to the West Indies between 1778 and 1825. Most went to Jamaica or Guiana and most were intended for use in sugar mills. In 1799, however, there was a request for an engine to power a new waterworks at Falmouth in Jamaica. A letter from one James Lawson describes the town thus:

The Town from which I date this Letter is called falmouth, but it is in England better known by the name of Martha Brae; it has of late increased in Population & Building to a very extraordinary degree, and is in respect of Trade & Shipping the second Port in the Island, but it labours under the material Inconvenience of having no fresh water nearer than a mile & a half from it. This disadvantage has induced the Inhabitants to apply to the Legislature of the Island for leave to erect themselves into a Body Corporate under the name of the Falmouth Water Company in order to supply the Town and shipping with good & wholesome water.

He concludes:

I am certain that should one of your Patent Engines be erected here under the direction of a competent person, it would be the means of creating a very great demand for these from this Country where water is in general so difficult to procure, & when it is essentially necessary to the manufacturing of our staple Articles of Sugar & Rum as well as to the watering of our Fields in the intense heats & long continued draughts to which we are so frequently liable...⁷

The Boulton and Watt collection also includes a delightful printed map of Kingston, Jamaica, surveyed in 1807 by Major John Bonnet Pechon, engineer. It shows the grid plan arrangement of the city's properties with 'pens' and wooded areas close by. The buildings marked include the Court House, the Custom House, the Workhouse, the Gaol, the Asylum, English, German and Portuguese Synagogues, a Methodist Chapel, a Playhouse, a Free School. There is a Beef Market and a Fish Market; wells, water pumps and brick kilns. There are several burying grounds marked: a Jews' burying ground; a Strangers' burying ground; a Negroes' burying ground and a New burying ground. The Parade and Barracks appear at the centre of the city and there are also vegetable and ornamental gardens marked.⁸

Two of Birmingham's trade connections with the West Indies were food based, involving the importation of

cocoa and limes. The Montserrat Co. Ltd. was formed by J. & E. Sturge for the production and export of lime juice for use in the manufacture of citric acid at their chemical works in Edgbaston. This was as a result of the failure of Sicily's lemon crop. The company began with members of the Sturge and Albright families advancing funds for the development of the Montserrat estates in 1867. The lime juice was later employed as a source of Vitamin C to combat scurvy among seafarers. There is a good collection of minutes, papers and photographs relating to the company in the City Archives (MS 1436).

In about 1857, Joseph Sturge bought the Elberton Sugar Estate, wishing to convert it to lime production and to prove that Free Labour could be made profitable. (The Sturge family had been instrumental in the anti-slavery movement.) However, a report on the lime estates made in 1872 suggests that all was not going well:

The decayed state of the trees must arise either from defective soil or unskillful cultivation. Much of the land probably wants irrigation and under-draining but the most obvious defect is the want of shelter. In Europe & Africa the orange tree are always grown under the screen of high stone walls or lofty trees but in Montserrat the trees are treated as if they were a grass like the sugar Cane requiring only sun & air to attain maturity and all the timber which originally covered the ground destroyed as if it were an encumbrance.⁹

An interest was taken in the provisions for education on the island and a report by A. Westerby, dated Antigua, 11 August 1874, reports on an inspection of three schools, all overcrowded, and none properly provided with books, blackboard or writing desks:

The school on the Glebe Land connected with the Episcopal Church. This school is kept by a Mrs Palmer and her daughter, persons of colour, in a room forming part of their dwelling house, and too small for the number attending. There are 81 names on the list, but only about 40 in average attendance...In this school there are no reading books for the older children except the Bible & Testament, and no provision for teaching the younger children to read in the shape of alphabet or easy reading cards. The children are allowed to bring any kind of book their friends choose to provide and consequently their progress in learning to read is very slow...The writing from Dictation was very poor and only 3 or 4 could write a passage from the Psalms without spelling faults...Seventeen children are reported by the Teacher as making figures or learning Arithmetic. I found only 3 in the compound rules and only one able to work correctly. Very few are acquainted with the arithmetical Tables, and only two or three could answer the most simple

Feature Articles

questions in Mental Arithmetic...Sewing I believe is taught in that school.¹⁰

In 1897 William Adlington Cadbury visited the Cadbury cocoa estates in Trinidad and Tobago, and returned with

some splendid photographs of the estates and estate workers.¹¹ In addition, he reported back to his brother Barrow Cadbury, in diary form, on a visit to the cocoa estate of Sir Charles Tennant, managed by Mr Bain and his wife:

Mr Bain has one interest: 'Cocoa' - that is outside his own family of 6 boys & 3 girls - so was delighted to show and explain everything & when we got home we set to & made some chocolate - The coolie woman in the kitchen roasted it most splendidly in an open bowl over

the fire, stirring it continually, and then husked it, by throwing it in an open grass tray, shaped like a malt shovel blade, then we ground it with sugar in the real old way on a flat stone, with a long shaped smaller stone held in both hands, & made up with boiling milk & water it was first rate - Mrs Bain (like all the Creoles) realized also the virtues of cocoa butter for all kinds of wounds burns and strains...so the following night we had great fun 'making cocoa butter' our only apparatus was an ordinary office press, used for letter books, & a dripping tray wh[ich] we put below.¹²

Let us finish with a quotation from the film script of *The Colony*, a documentary made for the BBC in 1964 by Philip Donnellan, for which Charles Parker provided the soundtrack. The interviews were with migrants from the West Indies who had come to live in Handsworth. Among them was Bernice, here describing sunrise in Jamaica:

It's four o'clock in the morning, the cocks are crowing, the cows are lowing and everywhere things are silhouetted in the darkness. Gradually it becomes lighter... It's getting warmer, it's getting brighter, all the shadows seem to be moving away. Things are taking their usual shape. Trees are more outlined and you can see the silver dew drops on the cocoa leaves and all of a sudden you know something is coming. The clouds, they're moving faster and faster and changing colour, so fast that you can't keep up with the colour. All of a sudden something comes up and stops. It's brilliant. You look again and it changes and then everything bursts forth in a sudden blaze of glory and there you can see the golden sun coming out of the horizon giving out millions of little twinkling lights. It's just too

brilliant for the eyes.¹³

Don't you just want to be there!

- 1) Boulton & Watt, Box 43 / 26 / 15
- 2) B&W Box 44 / 15
- 3) B&W Box 47 / 11
- 4) MS 917 / 109
- 5) MS 917 / 110
- 6) Norton 102 (2708)
- 7) B&W Box 3 / 2 / 1-34
- 8) B&W Steamboat Box / 75
- 9) MS 1436 / 3
- 10) Ibid.
- 11) MS466 / 42-43
- 12) MS466A / 538 pp. 29-32
- 13) CPA / 2 / 101