

"MASSA VERY GOOD TO TONY"

**The family of Captain William Giles
- encounters with slavery**

~ John A Ferguson ~



“MASSA VERY GOOD TO TONY”

**The family of Captain William Giles
- an encounter with slavery**

~John A Ferguson ~

Published by Cold Harbour Press 2007
Fergcoldharbour@aol.com

Copyright © John A. Ferguson 2007

Based on a lecture given to the Annual Conference
of the Cumbria Family History Society
November 2007.
The Crooklands Hotel, nr. Kendal

CONTENTS

1. “There was only one black man, servant to a Captain Giles”	1
2. William Giles, origins and family.....	2
3. Joining the 19 th Foot (Green Howards)	4
4. Jane Hodgson and family background.....	5
5. First children.....	7
6. American War of Independence	7
7. To the West Indies	10
8. Conditions in Jamaica.....	11
9. Sons are born	13
10. Giving birth in Jamaica.....	13
11. Jamaican trade	15
12. Jamaican slavery	16
a. Samuel Douglas	16
b. Mary Prince.....	17
c. John Terry	18
d. The Revd. Thomas Rees	18
e. Captain Robert Ross.....	18
f. Revd. Robert Boucher Nicholls, Dean of Middleham, Yorkshire.	18
g. Henry Coor	19
h. Zachary Macaulay.....	19
13. Testimony to Committee of House of Commons	20
14. Ex-slaves of late 1700s	23
a. Francis Barber	24
b. Olaudah Equiano.....	25
c. Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire’s black boy.....	25
d. Thomas Kent.....	25
15. Return to England	26
16. Captain William Giles’s death and burial	26
17. Tony’s circuit round the family	28
18. Sam Bough’s anecdote.....	30
19. Another slave in a kitchen	31
20. A Mayor of Carlisle	32
21. Tony’s wife and residence	34
22. Death and burial.....	34
Index	36
References	37

“MASSA VERY GOOD TO TONY”

1. *“There was only one black man, servant to a Captain Giles”*

The year 2007 was the 200th anniversary of the passing of the Act which ended the British slave trade. To mark this event, rather than recount the statistics of the slave trade, an encounter with slavery at the personal level was investigated through a link to a former slave who lived in Cumberland.

Margaret Forster is an author who hails from Carlisle. In 1997 she wrote a book called *Rich Desserts and Captain Thins*.¹

It is the story of the Carr family of Carlisle - and the company which manufactures Carr's biscuits. It tells of the Carr's involvement in biscuit making and flour production over four generations from the arrival of the firm's founder, Jonathan Dodgson Carr (1806-84), in Carlisle in the 1820s.

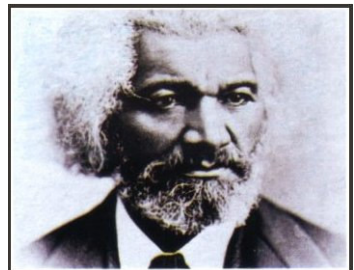


Jonathan Dodgson Carr

He was a Quaker and was determined to do what he could to free slaves. He offered hospitality to escaped slaves who were brought over from America to Britain to tour the country and recount their stories, so helping to raise funds for the cause.

In Forster's book there is a reference to Jonathan Dodgson Carr walking through Carlisle in 1846 with a man called Frederick Douglass, who was one of those escaped American slaves:

“They made a strange pair walking through Carlisle, Jonathan Carr, so tall and heavy and fair, and



Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass, though not a small man, dwarfed by him as most people were. Carlisle had no black inhabitants. Parish records do show that 'a blackmoor' was baptised in St. Mary's as far back as 1686, and four more in the next century, but in the 1840s in Carlisle there was only one black man, servant to a Captain Giles, and he died in 1844." (p. 78)

This research results in an introduction to Captain Giles, to his escapades and travels - and to his family. This eventually leads us to that only black man in Carlisle in the 1840s.

2. William Giles, origins and family

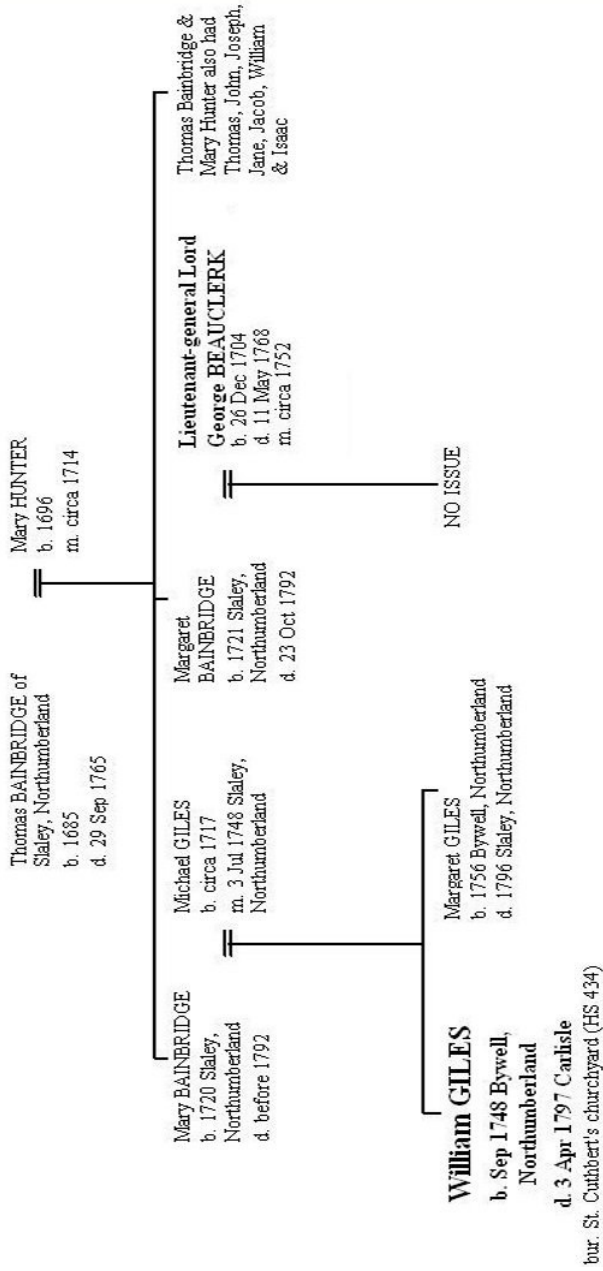
William Giles (1748-97) was born in 1748. He was baptised in the church at Bywell, Northumberland although his family were from Slaley. Both places are situated near Corbridge. His father was Michael Giles and his mother was Mary Bainbridge.

His mother's sister Margaret (1721-92) (his Aunt Margaret) had married Lord George Beauclerk (1704-68). In 1748 George Beauclerk, became the Colonel commanding, what eventually became known as, the 19th Regiment of Foot. Later he went on to command the 2nd Battalion of Foot and in 1756 was appointed the Commander-in-Chief of all forces in Scotland. So he was a distinguished and noted soldier.

Uncle George Beauclerk had an interesting pedigree. His father, Charles Beauclerk (1670-1741/2), was created 1st Duke of St. Albans when fourteen years old, by King Charles II who accepted that Beauclerk was his illegitimate son by the actress Eleanor (Nell) Gwynne. In 1684 he awarded Charles the dukedom of St. Albans.



Nell Gwynne



Uncle George was not only a distinguished soldier; he also had all the right connections with the people who mattered.

William Giles was only 14 years old when in 1762 he decided he would join the army. It is more than likely that Uncle George suggested he should join the regiment he had commanded - the 19th Foot.

So on 23 July 1762 an Ensign's commission was purchased for young William and he set off to join his regiment -

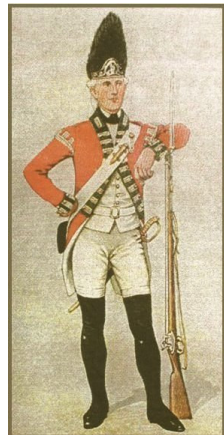
- initially, for about a year, he was stationed in England
- then for eight years, between 1763 and 1771, he was in Gibraltar with the 19th Foot
- whilst there, on 25 May 1769 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. Later in the same year he became the Adjutant to the Commanding Officer and was put in charge of discipline
- in 1771, aged 23, he returned to Britain
- and 1774 saw him stationed in Dumfries.

3. Joining the 19th Foot (Green Howards)

The 19th Regiment of Foot was originally formed in 1688 when Colonel Francis Luttrell raised a regiment to support William of Orange in his efforts to take over the throne from his father-in-law, King James II.

In 1744, the Regiment acquired the nickname of "The Green Howards", which eventually became its official title in 1920.

The reason for the name was that before 1751 regiments were referred to by the name of their commanding officer. The commander of the regiment, prior to Lord George Beauclerk, had been the Honourable Charles Howard, son of the 3rd Earl of Carlisle.



Grenadier of the
19th Regiment of Foot 1781

This had the potential for some confusion. There were, at that time, two regiments under the command of Howards – the other one was commanded by Thomas Howard. To avoid confusion Thomas Howard's 3rd Regiment, which wore buff facings on its uniforms, were called the Buff Howards while those in Charles Howard's Regiment with green facings became the Green Howards.

In 1751, the tradition of naming units after their colonel came to an end, so what had started life as Luttrell's Regiment in 1751 officially became the 19th Regiment of Foot.

4. Jane Hodgson and family background

When William Giles was stationed at Dumfries in 1774, he visited Carlisle where he met Jane Hodgson (1750-1814). On 12th January 1775 they were married in St. Mary's, Carlisle.

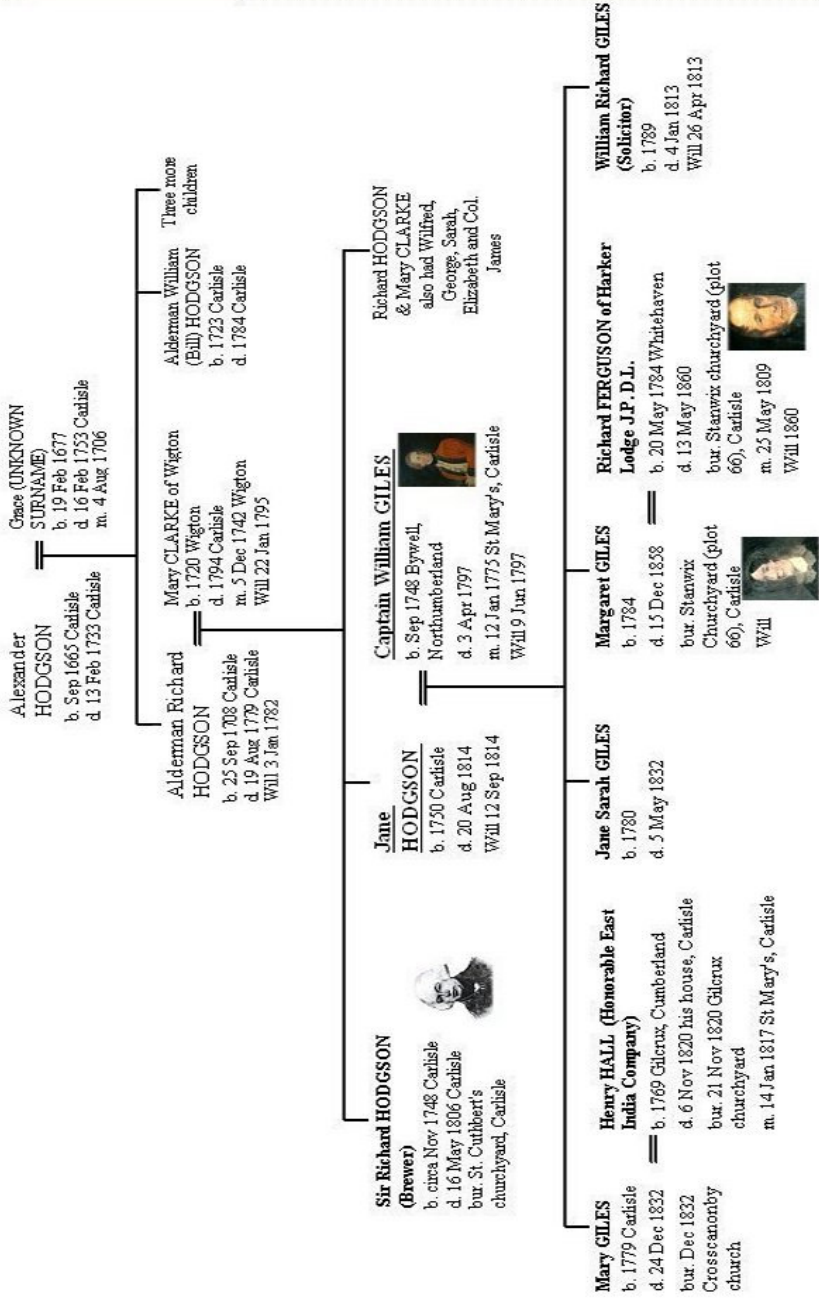
The following week the *Cumberland Pacquat* carried the notice (19 Jan 1775):

On Thursday last at St. Mary's, Lieut and Adjutant Giles of the 19th Regiment now lying at Dumfries to Miss Hodgson daughter of the present Mayor of Carlisle.

Jane was the oldest living daughter of Richard Hodgson (1708-79). He was a merchant, a brewer, an Alderman and had been Mayor of Carlisle in 1766-67. When Jane married William in 1775 he was once again the Mayor.

In 1756 he had been the co-founder of the Old Brewery in Fisher Street (with his brother William Hodgson and James Atkinson). The brewery then moved to Caldewgate where it remained until it was eventually taken over, in 1916, by the State Management. It was then bought by Theakston in 1974 and closed in 1987 when production was transferred to a Workington Brewery. After this it became a Hall of Residence for University students.





Jane's mother was Mary Clarke (1720-94) of Standing Stone, Wigton whose claim to fame was that she was the granddaughter of Ewan Christian (1651-1719) of Ewanrigg Hall, Dearham and was the cousin-once-removed of Fletcher Christian (1764-93) of *Bounty* fame.

Jane's brother, Richard Hodgson, like his father was also twice Mayor of Carlisle. He became Sir Richard Hodgson and there is an interesting tale about how this came about:

He had taken an Address to George III, from the Corporation of Carlisle, which congratulated the King on his escape from a stabbing by a mad woman called Margaret (Peg) Nicholson. After the king's escape from this attempt on his life, there were so many knighthoods conferred on the people who presented congratulatory addresses, that "a knight of Peg Nicholson's order" came to be used in common parlance. Richard was such a knight.

5. First children

Returning to Jane Hodgson and her new husband William Giles: We find that later in 1775 (the year in which they were married) they had taken up residence in Ireland, where the 19th Foot were stationed.

Their first child, a daughter, was born in Waterford just nine months after their marriage, but she died within a day or two of her birth. Jane returned to Carlisle where their next three children – all girls, were baptised: Mary in February 1780, Jane Sarah a year later in February 1781 and Margaret in June 1784.

6. American War of Independence

Being a serving soldier could be a risky business - so William decided that he ought to have a painting commissioned. If anything happened to him, his growing family would at least

have his likeness. So, during the first half of 1781 whilst in Edinburgh he had his portrait painted.



*Captain William Giles, 19th Regiment of Foot
(1748-1797)*

It was finished only just in time because in May 1781 he set sail bound for the American Colonies. He was part of the British forces trying to prevent the colonists there from achieving Independence.

They arrived from Ireland in Charleston, South Carolina on the 3rd of June, together with the 3rd Buffs, and the 30th Regiment and saw immediate action as part of the force of 1,800 foot and 150 horse which was sent to relieve Fort Ninety-Six.

The 19th Foot then took part in the Battles of Quinby Bridge and Shubrick's Plantation on 17 July 1781

This too was successful, but there was a rather embarrassing incident, shortly afterwards when the entire regimental baggage was lost when a American Column intercepted the baggage transport south of the Monks Corner in South Carolina. The immediate losses included all the officers' personal possessions.



The 19th Foot fared less well at the Battle of Eutaw Springs in South Carolina, on 8 September 1781. After more than 4 hours of battle, both armies had had enough. Casualties were high. "*Blood ran ankle-deep in places,*" and the strewn area of dead and dying was heart-breaking. Neither side were able to claim a victory.

Only 6 weeks later, the British General Cornwallis succumbed to George Washington at the Battle of Yorktown. The American colonists had won their freedom from British rule.

7. To the West Indies

The French had been allies of the American rebels and had defeated the British fleet at the Battle of the Capes so ensuring the success of the American Revolution.

The French were riding a wave of victory and were determined to oust the British from all the new world and win the Caribbean for the glory of France. By January 1782, the French fleet began capturing British possessions and within three months the only islands remaining under British rule were Barbados, St. Lucia, Antigua and Jamaica.

French plans to invade and capture Jamaica were thwarted by Admiral George Brydges Rodney who on 12 April 1782 defeated the French in a great sea battle off Dominica. Some 3,000 out of the 6,000 French troops intended for the invasion of Jamaica were killed or wounded.

British military reinforcements were needed. In June 1782 William Giles had arrived in Barbados to make arrangements for the arrival of the regiment. By December 1782 the rest of the 19th Foot had departed from America and had arrived in Barbados.

Apart from a break of 15 months, William Giles spent the next eight years in the West Indies serving in Barbados, Antigua, St. Lucia and Jamaica. He had arrived in June 1782 and he finally departed in April 1790.

In mid 1783, a year after his arrival in the West Indies, William returned to England for about 15 months. He had not seen his wife and two daughters for two years. During his time back home a third daughter, Margaret, was added to the family.

When he returned to the West Indies, towards the end of 1784, Jane accompanied him. They headed for Jamaica. Their five year old daughter Mary, three year old daughter Jane Sarah and six month old Margaret probably accompanied them.

They settled at Stony Hill in Jamaica. This is now a suburb of Kingston.



Stony Hill, Jamaica

8. Conditions in Jamaica

When the Giles family arrived in Jamaica over 300,000 slaves were working on over 5000 properties with perhaps ½ million acres under cultivation. The principal crop, sugar, was a high value product and drove the demand for more and more African slaves to work on the plantations.

In addition to sugar - tea, coffee, cocoa, rum, citrus, tobacco, cotton and even indigo were produced. About 12% of the slaves died on the sea voyage from Africa and many more died within the first three years of relentless labouring in humid, hot conditions. New slaves had to be imported continually to replenish the stock as it diminished. In the Caribbean the life of a slave could be short and nasty.

In addition, between 1780 and 1786 a series of severe hurricanes and a drought ravaged Jamaica. The result was horrendous. It is estimated that 15,000 slaves died from starvation because of the destruction of the fields and the plantations.

Charlestown, July 24th, 1769.

TO BE SOLD,

On THURSDAY the third Day
of AUGUST next,



A CARGO

OF

NINETY-FOUR

PRIME, HEALTHY

NEGROES,

CONSISTING OF

Thirty-nine MEN, Fifteen BOYS,
Twenty-four WOMEN, and
Sixteen GIRLS.

JUST ARRIVED,
In the Brigantine DEMBIA, *Francis Bare*, Master, from SIERRA-
LEON, by

DAVID & JOHN DEAS.

Owing to the separation of America from England, after the end of the American War of Independence in 1783, there was no trade between Jamaica and America. So food could not be easily imported from America to help the starving.

9. Sons are born

In 1786 Jane gave birth to a son, George Alured Giles. The unusual name of "Alured" was not a family name and would be given in honour of General Alured Clarke who became the Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica in 1784.

It was a fairly common practice to name a child after the Governor of a Colony and may have been done in an effort to seek some sort of recognition!

Sadly their 1st son George Alured Giles died shortly after birth. However two years later there was another birth. Richard William Giles was born in 1788. Unlike his brother he survived to return to England in 1790.

10. Giving birth in Jamaica

A birth in Jamaica at that time would have come as quite a shock for those who had been used to the cooler climes of England.

Lady Maria Nugent wrote a Journal² during her stay in Jamaica which gives an insight into domestic life.

She was the wife of Governor General George Nugent who took up residence not long after the Giles left Jamaica.



Lady Maria Nugent



In her Journal she describes the birth of one of her children and gives us some idea of what it would have been like for Jane Giles:

“First, the heat is so dreadful, that it’s impossible to go to bed. Then, to mitigate it a little, the blinds are kept closed. Then, the dark shade of the room brings swarms of mosquitoes). With these teasing, tormenting insects I am half buzzed out of my senses, and nearly stung to death.

Then, the old black nurse (Flora) brought a cargo of herbs, and wished to try various charms, to expedite the birth of the child, and told me so many stories of pinching and tying women to the bed-post, to hasten matters, that sometimes, in spite of my agony, I could not help laughing.. .. I was really in a fright, for fear she would try some of her experiments upon me.

The very night my dear baby was born, it was nearly devoured by the mosquitoes - in spite of all my care in exposing my own arms and neck to their attacks; and, for a day or two, his dear little eyes were almost closed up.”



NURSE FLORA

Lady Nugent questioned the harsh treatment of slaves by their masters and, although it did not make her popular, she stated her belief that slaves were indeed human and did have souls.

In her account of a visit to a sugar plantation she was dismayed at hearing that the slaves stood at a cauldron for up to 12 hours at a time stirring the sugar. Sometimes the slaves were so exhausted that they fell asleep and got their fingers caught in the sugar mill. She was told that this was why a hatchet was always nearby in case it was needed to cut-off an entire arm in order to save a slave's life.

She also observed that ;

“white men of all descriptions, married or single, live in a state of licentiousness with their female slaves; and until a great reformation takes place on their part, neither religion, decency nor morality, can be established among the negroes.”

11. Jamaican trade

The British had captured Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655 and before long turned to the large scale importing of Africans to be used as slaves on the sugar plantations.

In its hey-day, Jamaica was described as one of "the jewels in the English crown" because of the great prosperity it brought to the English plantation owners, and to those ports, such as Liverpool, Bristol, Lancaster and Whitehaven which serviced the trade with Jamaica and the rest of the British Caribbean. Jamaica definitely was a Slave Economy.

Most of the ships trading out of Whitehaven were dealing with the markets in Jamaica and Barbados and, in the 25 years between 1750 & 1775, Whitehaven ships made nearly 60 slaving voyages. Following 1770, because of difficulties in maintaining profit levels, the merchants of Whitehaven withdrew from the slave trade to concentrate on coastal trading.

Prominent amongst those who owned slaves were the Lowther and Senhouse families who bought plantations in Barbados and

the Jefferson family of Whitehaven whose rum supplies were enhanced through purchasing a plantation in Antigua.

12. Jamaican slavery

Some of the plantation owners in the West Indies treated their slave well:

a. Samuel Douglas

Samuel Douglas was born in Kirkcudbright and was a cousin to William Douglas who founded Castle Douglas. He became a merchant of Savannah, Georgia and then lived in his old age at Windsor Castle, Jamaica where he owned a 900 acre tea and coffee plantation, which of course included plantation slaves.

When he died in 1799 Samuel left a bequest of £10,000 for the education of the poor children of two parishes in Galloway. This bequest resulted in the foundation of the school at Newton Stewart which is now called the Douglas Ewart High School.

In his will he also stipulated that:

- Each and every Negro belonging to his Windsor Castle Estate would have good warm clothing and a necessary allowance of Floorings, also a little beef and Rum on Christmas days.
- He directed that his Negro Man Slave named Tony, who had acted as his Driver, be made free and receive annually the sum of five pounds Current money of Jamaica, and that he should have a House and ground on the Windsor Castle Plantation.
- He also directed that the Negro Woman named Frances who had already become free would have the use and possession of a neat and comfortable small dwelling house on the Windsor Castle estate, to be built for her together with five acres of land for her maintenance and for the maintenance of three slaves called Cumboo, Joe and Lucretia. If Frances wished, she could accept an Annual sum of twenty pounds in lieu of the house and five acres of land.

Three years after death his body was returned to Scotland in a lead-lined coffin for burial in the 'Old Cemetery,' Newton Stewart.

There were however tales of the most awful brutality from people who were contemporaries of the Giles.

Punishment was a regular part of estate life for the slaves and ranged from lashings, to maiming and even to death. In 1781 a new “humane” law was passed by the Jamaican House of Assembly making it illegal to mutilate slaves by cutting off their ears or hands, but punishment could still be horrific.

b. Mary Prince

Mary Prince was a West Indian slave who was born about 1788 and published a record of her experiences.³ She wrote of the many vicious punishments she received from a series of owners. She tells of accidentally breaking a cracked vase and the punishment that was then meted out to her:

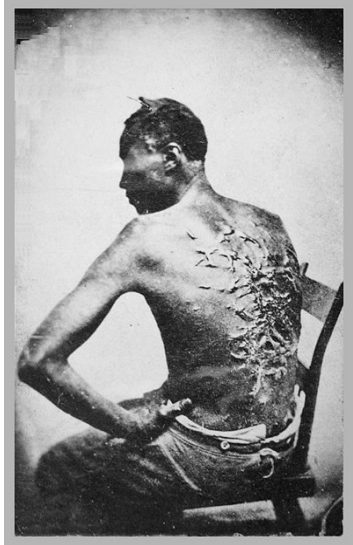
I could not help the accident, but I was dreadfully frightened, looking forward to a severe punishment. I ran crying to my mistress, “Oh mistress, the jar has come in two.” “You have broken it, have you?” she replied; “come directly here to me.” I came trembling; she stripped and flogged me long and severely with the cow- skin; as long as she had strength to use the lash, for she did not give over till she was quite tired.—When my master came home at night, she told him of my fault; and oh, frightful! how he fell a swearing. After abusing me with every ill name he could think of, (too, too bad to speak in England,) and giving me several heavy blows with his hand, he said, “I shall come home to morrow morning at twelve, on purpose to give you a round hundred.” He kept his word—Oh sad for me! I cannot easily forget it. He tied me up upon a ladder, and gave me a hundred lashes with his own hand, and master Benjy stood by to count them for him. When he had licked me for some time he sat down to take breath; then after resting, he beat me again and again, until he was quite wearied⁴

After Mary Prince eventually obtained her freedom in England she was examined and her back was found to be chequered with scars, the vestiges of severe floggings. The rest of her body also had scars as if the flesh had been deeply gashed by some instrument.⁵

c. John Terry

John Terry was in the West Indies from 1776 until 1790 as a slave overseer and then manager.

He thought that the slaves were treated very badly. He said that it hurt him much at first - but in time he became more inured to it. He knew of slaves who were severely punished by managers for trifling faults. They could not complain to their owner. He knew of slaves who were whipped again by their owner if they complained. The slaves of both sexes, who worked out in the fields, were usually scarred from being whipped. The whip would rip out a piece of flesh at each lash and there could be 200 lashes at a time



d. The Revd. Thomas Rees

The Revd. Rees whilst he was out walking came across a woman who was collapsed on the ground. She had been punished for running away and had been so severely whipped that she was unable to move and her whole left side was raw and covered in maggots. He relieved her as she was hungry but on visiting the spot a day later he learned that she had died.

e. Captain Robert Ross

Captain Ross saw a woman in Jamaica flogged with ebony bushes (which, as he said, were much worse than our own thorn bushes) so that the skin of her back was taken off down to her heels. She was then turned round and flogged from her breast down to her waist.

f. Revd. Robert Boucher Nicholls, Dean of Middleham, Yorkshire.

The Dean of Middleham observed the execution of seven slaves in 1774 whose right arms were first hacked off. They were

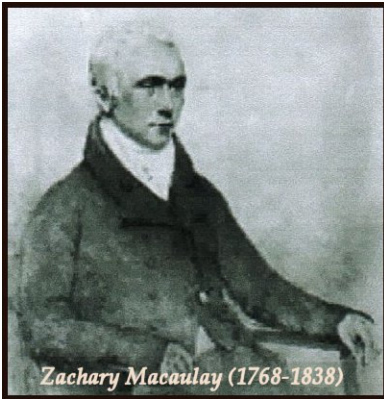
dragged to seven stakes and a fire of dry wood was lit round about and they were burned to death.

g. Henry Coor

Mr Coor had boarded in a gentleman's house. One of the slave house-girls broke a plate. In a fit of anger the owner nailed her by her ear to a post. Mr Coor remonstrated in vain. In the morning she was gone having torn the head of the nail through her ear. She was brought back and severely whipped by the owner who in his fury had "*clipped both her ears off close to her head*" with a pair of large scissors.

h. Zachary Macaulay

Zachary Macaulay was a son of the manse and grew up at Cardross, near Helensburgh. He was also the father of the historian and politician Lord Macaulay.



In 1784, when he was aged 16, he obtained an appointment as a book-keeper on an estate in Jamaica. The state of Jamaican white society absolutely horrified him. His background as a Scottish minister's son had not prepared him for what he saw. He could hardly believe the cruelty meted out to the slaves and the licentiousness of the planters.

He was soon appointed as a manager, and wrote that he was able to reduce the hardships endured by the slaves under him. However in his letters to his family, he expressed the fear that he might grow callous to their sufferings.

The experience changed his life. He eventually became a member of the Clapham Sect whose members fought for the ending of slavery. Apparently when information was needed William Wilberforce used to say "*Let us look it out in Macaulay*"

We can get an idea of the arguments of the pro-slavery lobby in an extract from the *Anti-slavery Reporter*, which was edited by

Zachary. In one issue⁶ criticism is made of an article in the newspaper *West India Reporter* which covered 12 pages in what was described as a feeble attempt to prove that the present conditions of the negroes in the West Indies were in a state of unexampled enjoyment.

The criticised article had listed the testimony of noted people who in 1790 had made claims about “*the innate humanity and loveliness of the African slave trade (and also said) that the slaves ‘are in a far better situation than the labourers at home.’*”

13. Testimony to Committee of House of Commons

How did William and Jane Giles react to their experience of slavery? Did they become inured to any suffering they saw and come to accept it as part of the background to life?

The answer is found in the “*Minutes of the Evidence taken before a Committee*” of the House of Commons which sat between 1789 and 1791:

“to consider further of the Circumstances of the Slave Trade, complained of in the several Petitions which have been presented to this House, relative to the State of the African Slave Trade.”

Many of the witnesses attested that they had never seen any cruelty towards a slave. They said that slaves were looked after humanely and were cared for by their owners. It was argued that if slavery were abolished then slaves would “suffer exceedingly” and it would be the ruination of every plantation owner. It was claimed that slaves who had bought or been granted their freedom were debauched and a great nuisance. The witnesses who argued in this fashion were mostly plantation owners or ex-colonial officials and Governors.

Number IV.

A B R I D G M E N T

OF THE

MINUTES OF THE EVIDENCE,

TAKEN BEFORE A

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE,

TO WHOM IT WAS REFERRED TO CONSIDER OF THE

S L A V E - T R A D E,

1791.

Others painted a very different picture for the Committee.⁷ Officers in the army were particularly scathing about the treatment of the slaves:

In 1791 Captain Giles of the 19th Regiment of Foot was called as one of the witnesses. There is no doubt about his feelings. In his own words he told the Committee:

- that Punishment by whipping was more severe and cruel than in the army, because of the size of the whip used.
- He thought that the treatment of slaves was generally severe. Field slaves were usually scarred with the whip. *(Slaves were divided into two main groups, the domestic/house slaves and the field slaves who worked on the plantations).*
- On one occasion he had observed the treatment of a jobbing gang, over a number of days. They were carrying wood and water for the soldiers. He considered that their labour was beyond what human nature could support for any length of time, because their allowance of food was too little to support them. He understood this to be generally the case.
- He was able speak of the inefficiency of laws to protect slaves against the ill-usage of their masters and other white people. He had been told by a planter that one his own negroes had been killed by the overseer. The body was collected and there was found upon it some chains or fetters. However, the overseer could not be punished because there was no evidence from a white person available. Black evidence had no validity.
- He knew of a free woman, and her two children, who were claimed by a person in Jamaica, to be his property. They were confined so that he could sell them to some Spaniards. Captain Giles heard of what was happening and interfered.

He knew that this person had not a claim either to the woman or her children because both she and her

husband had been part of the British army in South Carolina during the American Revolution, when he had been there.

(Note: Black American slaves who had fought on the British side in the American War of Independence were given their freedom in 1783).

It took two trials in Kingston before the woman and her children were set free. Captain Giles remarked that none of this would have been necessary if evidence from black people had been admissible. Without his taking up the case, this woman and her children would have been sold as slaves, because no one on the island knew about their circumstances as he did.

- Finally he told the Committee that he had seen, in Jamaica, a negro stone-mason, at work. He had a wooden leg, so Giles asked the white people who supervised the work, how he had lost his leg. The answer was that it had been removed because the fellow used to run away for months at a time.

Testimony from a surgeon confirmed that this type of thing did happen. He knew a plantation owner who had broken a slave's leg with an iron bar to induce the surgeon to cut it off as a punishment.

William Giles's testimony was about incidents he had witnessed during his time in the West Indies.

Meanwhile in Jamaica, promotion in the 19th Foot continued for William. On 12 November 1788 he became a Captain Lieutenant & Captain.

14. Ex-slaves of late 1700s

While they lived in Jamaica the Giles family owned a young domestic slave. He was called James Anthony, and was known as "Tony." When the family returned to England in April 1790 Tony accompanied them and became a free man.

A number of slaves came to Britain and took up employment as servants. They sometimes accompanied the families who had been in the West Indies.

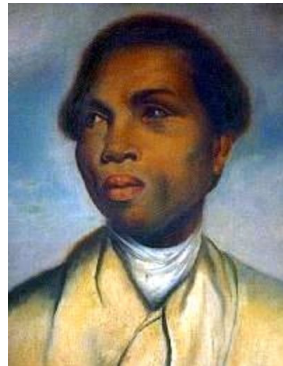
After 1772 their residence in England meant that they were no longer slaves because in that year there was a ruling that: *“No master was ever allowed here to take a slave by force to be sold abroad because he deserted from his service, or for any other reason whatever.”*

Although the ruling did not abolish slavery on the slave islands, it led to the de facto end of slavery in Britain.

There were some interesting characters amongst these ex-slaves:

a. Francis Barber

Francis Barber was born in Jamaica about the year 1735, and was brought to England by a plantation owner who was the father of one of Dr. Samuel Johnson's closest friends. Two weeks after the death of Johnson's wife in April 1752, Francis was sent as a valet to Dr Johnson. Two years later the plantation owner died and left Francis Barber £12 pounds and his freedom.



Francis was only 19 at the time. He first went to serve an apothecary in Cheapside and paid Dr Johnson occasional visits. In 1758, he went to sea and served two years on H.M.S. Stag, protecting English fishermen in the North Sea. Dr. Johnson arranged for him to be discharged and then paid for his education at Bishop's Stortford Grammar School.



When Francis left school, Johnson came to rely on him more and more, not only as valet, but also as secretary. Francis arranged Dr. Johnson's trips, received documents, and kept Johnson's diary. But they were also great friends.

After Francis married, Johnson allowed his wife and children to move into his house and when Dr Johnson died in 1784 he left Francis Barber an annuity of £70 and a gold watch.

b. Olaudah Equiano

Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-1797) was probably the most important black man in Britain in his day. His experiences as a slave led him, in the 1770s to become involved in the movement to abolish slavery.

He wrote his autobiography⁸ which had a major influence on the fight to end the slave trade. It was published in 1790 and was a best seller. It is still in print and has the rather long title: "*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself*".



c. Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire's black boy

In 1774 Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire wrote to her mother, "*George Hanger has sent me a black boy, 11 years old and very honest, but the Duke don't like my having a black, and yet I cannot bear the poor wretch being ill us'd. If you lik'd him instead of Michael I will send him to you. He will be a cheap servant and you will make a Christian of him and good boy.*"



d. Thomas Kent

In October 2006 BBC1 broadcast a programme which was entitled "*The Hidden Slave Trail*." It discussed black slaves brought back to Britain from the West Indies by captains, planters and those who had served with the military.

The programme focussed on Thomas Kent who was a slave brought from the West Indies to work as a servant by the Senhouse family of Maryport. His son, John Kent, lived in Carlisle during the 1820s and 1830s and was Britain's first black policeman. He was a swash-buckling character and was well known in the city, particularly for keeping the local youngsters in order!

Thomas Kent's descendants were tracked down and interviewed. These descendants were a Cumbrian farming family who were totally unaware of their ancestor and their link to the slave trade.

15. Return to England

The Giles family returned to England in April 1790:

The first noted event was on 2 June 1790 when William was promoted to the rank of full Captain.

The following year he gave his testimony about slavery to the House of Commons Committee.

On 20 March 1793 he retired from the 19th Regiment of Foot at the age of forty-eight.

Over 31 years with the Regiment he had seen service in England, Scotland, Ireland, Gibraltar, the American Colonies, Barbados, St. Lucia, Antigua and Jamaica.

Captain William Giles retired to Jane's home town, Carlisle where they, their four children and Tony lived on the east side of Scotch Street, opposite what is now the Old Town Hall

16. Captain William Giles's death and burial

However, William only managed four years of retirement. He died, aged 48, on 3rd April 1797 and was buried in St. Cuthbert's churchyard, Carlisle. The family grave stone still stands in the churchyard and is a tall four-sided pyramidal pillar.



Showing the Giles house, Scotch St. By W.H. Nutter 1835
Courtesy of Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery

It is one of the few stones still in its original position and lies opposite the Sportsman Inn in Head's Lane. The inscriptions on the four sides of the monument are barely legible now.⁹ Thankfully they were fully recorded and published in 1889 by the author's 5th cousin, 3 times removed, Margaret Ferguson.¹⁰ There is also a memorial tablet inside St Cuthbert's church.¹¹



Giles Memorial, St. Cuthbert's Carlisle

In his Will, William left £4 per annum for his servant "James Antonio." (In today's purchasing power this would be £285).

After the Captain's death Tony remained for a short while in the Giles household as servant to his widow Jane, and was still there in Nov. 1797.

17. Tony's circuit round the family

He then became a servant to Sir Richard Hodgson, Jane's brother, (1748-1806) who owned the Old Brewery in Carlisle. He remained there until Sir Richard's death on 16th May 1806.

In his Will, which was written on 20 Nov. 1797, Sir Richard had left £15 to Tony, a black



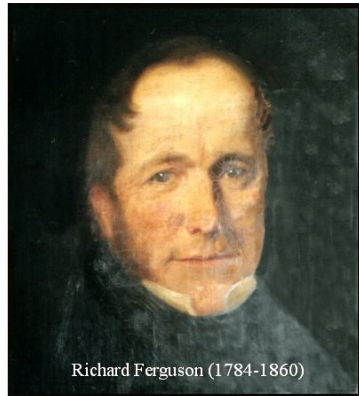
Sir Richard Hodgson
of Carlisle Old Brewery

servant of his sister Jane Giles. However, nine years later, in a Codicil dated 10 Jan 1806, and written 4 months before his death Sir Richard changed this provision: Tony had become “my faithful black servant” and was to receive a £25 annuity, for the term of his natural life (a present purchasing power of £1325 per annum).

After Sir Richard’s death, Tony spent seven years as the servant of the Captain’s son, William Richard Giles (1788-1813). He was the son born in Jamaica. By the age of 24 he was doing very well for himself. He was a solicitor, the Carlisle Diocesan Proctor, Deputy Sheriff and a Lieutenant in the Carlisle Local Militia.

Young William Richard Giles had a very bright future ahead of him in the life of Carlisle. Then tragedy struck. He died at his mother’s house in Scotch Street on 4 January 1813, aged only 24 years. In his will he left £20 to “Tony, my black servant.”

He also left his house to his brother in law Richard Ferguson who had married his sister Margaret in May 1809



The following year, 1814, Jane Giles, née Hodgson, died. Her death was announced in the *Carlisle Journal*, 27 August 1814: *Death at her house in Scotch Street on 20 August, Jane widow of William Giles Esq. of his Majesty's 19th Regiment of Foot aged 64.*

So where would Tony go next?

Margaret Giles (1784-1858), the third surviving daughter of Captain William Giles, had by then been married to Richard



Ferguson (1784-1860) for four years. They had married in May 1809 and had their own country residence at Harker Lodge. William Richard Giles had left his town house to Richard

Ferguson and Margaret – so Margaret was well provided for, with sufficient servants.

The Giles family home in Scotch Street passed to the Captain's two unmarried daughters, Mary Giles (1779-1832), the oldest, and Jane Sarah Giles (1781-1832), the second oldest.

Then in 1817 Mary married Henry Hall (1769-1820) of Gilcruix. He had been in the service of the Honourable East India Company in Madras from about 1790 until 1815. But within less than four years of Mary's marriage, Henry died in Carlisle and by 1820 Mary Hall, née Giles, was a widow living in the Scotch Street house.

So Tony continued as a servant with Mary until she died in December 1832. Her sister Jane Sarah Giles had died in Edinburgh in May of that year. Apart from Margaret, who was married to Richard Ferguson, all the family members were dead by the end of 1832.

By then Tony had been a servant to members of that extended Giles family for over forty years and before that he had been their slave during the time that Captain William and Jane Giles had lived in Jamaica.

None of their children had any children so it is unclear to whom Tony went after 1832.

But we do have a clue:

18. Sam Bough's anecdote

An anecdote told by the artist Samuel Bough (1822-78) indicates that Tony was for a time a servant with one of the Mayors of Carlisle.

In *The Autobiography of William Farish: The Struggles of a Hand-Loom Weaver*,¹² we find William Farish's striking description in 1843 of his 21 year old friend the painter Sam Bough:

"he was then a raw gawky lad, gaunt in figure and grotesque in dress. These, with a rather peculiar proboscis and a decided squint, made up a personage not easily forgotten."

Sam was born in the long since demolished Atkinson's Court, just off Abbey Street, in the centre of Carlisle. His father, James Bough (1788-1845), was a shoemaker in Abbey Street.

Denis Perriam discovered in the *Carlisle Journal*, 2 February 1926, an anecdote¹³ about the youthful Sam:

'... his father despatched him to the Mayor's house with a pair of mended shoes. It was a bitterly cold winter's night, and Sam was ushered into the kitchen to warm himself.

A negro servant, as black as ebony, was there. He was noted all over Carlisle for muttering to himself: "Massa very good to Tony."

While young Bough was sitting by the kitchen fire, fascinated by the shining black countenance of the servant, old Tony thus soliloquised on the fate of a hare that was stewing before the fire: "How much better are you dere, my fine fellow, roasting at dat nice fire, den if you was out in de fields dis damned cold night."



*Sam Bough aged 24.
Courtesy of Tullie House
Museum & Art Gallery*



*Atkinson's Court, off Abbey Street.
Courtesy of Tullie House Museum
& Art Gallery*

19. Another slave in a kitchen

An African slave called Louis ended up in England as a result of a storm driving a French slaving vessel into the port of St. Ives. Louis decided to remain here and became a servant. He would sit in deep thought also in front of the kitchen fire saying to himself. "Me think, me think." On being asked what he was

thinking he replied, “Me think what a good thing I came to England! Here I know what God is, and read my Bible; in my country they have no God, no Bible.”¹⁴

20. A Mayor of Carlisle

If, as seems likely, the Mayor, whose kitchen Tony was sitting in, was linked to the Giles family then the most likely candidate is Joseph Ferguson (1788-1863). Captain William’s daughter Margaret was married to Richard Ferguson and Joseph Ferguson was Richard’s brother. When Joseph was Mayor in 1836-7 Sam Bough was aged 14 so that appears to fit with him as a young lad carrying out errands for his father. At that time Joseph Ferguson was living in Fisher Street, which was just five minutes walk from Abbey Street.



Joseph Ferguson

In 1824, Joseph founded the firm which eventually became Ferguson Bros. of Carlisle and he later became the MP for Carlisle from 1852-57. But he also had an interest in the abolition of slavery.

This booklet began with the extract from Margaret Forster’s book *Rich Desserts and Captain Thins*. The Quaker, Jonathan Dodgson Carr, who founded Carr’s biscuits, was walking through Carlisle in the 1840s with Frederick Douglass, an escaped American slave, who was visiting Carlisle to give three lectures about his experiences as a slave. There was still slavery in the States and Douglass was touring the country to support the continuing campaign to rid that ex-colony of slavery.

This brings the story full circle because the person who chaired the final lecture on American Slavery given by Frederick Douglass in August 1846 in the Athenaeum, Lowther Street, Carlisle was the same Joseph Ferguson whom appears to have employed Tony as his black servant.

The *Carlisle Patriot* reported the last lecture by Frederick Douglass on 21 August 1846:

“he’d never received a day’s schooling in his life. He’d the marks of the lash on his body which would go down with him to the grave. He had four sisters and one brother whom he’d left in bondage and who, if death had not released them, were still suffering all the woes of slavery. To teach a slave the Bible, or to aid him in escaping from his chains, were crimes punishable by death.”

He had four sisters and one brother whom he’d left in bondage and who, if death had not released them, were still suffering all the woes of slavery. To teach a slave the Bible, or to aid him in escaping from his chains, were crimes punishable by death.”

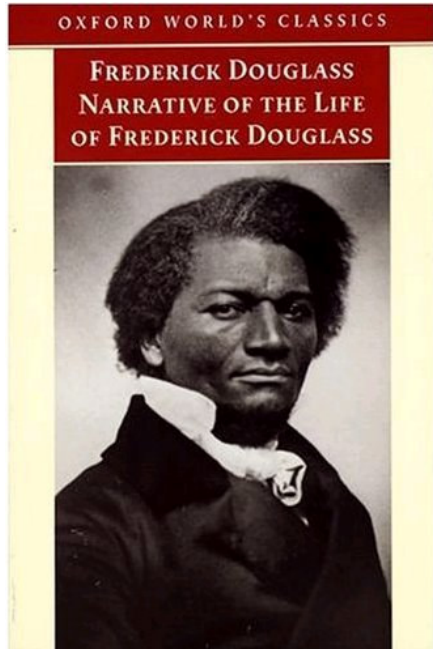
The article finished with:

“The lecture, which was ably and eloquently delivered, was listened to with much attention, and the many painful incidents of the horrors of slavery, which were adduced, seemed to make a deep impression upon the audience.”

It was not until 1865 that slavery was abolished in America.

Frederick Douglass wrote his autobiography, first published as *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Anti-Slavery Office, 1845. Several modern editions are available.¹⁵

The narrative has come full circle, but it is not quite finished yet.



21. Tony's wife and residence

It appears that Tony was married. He certainly had a partner who was referred to as his wife. She was called Margaret (1773-1838) and would probably have been a white woman as there would be a certain shortage of black women in Carlisle. However no trace can be found of any marriage. She was born in 1773 so Tony would certainly meet her whilst he was living in Carlisle. Margaret died in 1838 aged 65.

The 1841 census finds James Antony ("Tony") living in Keys Lane, Scotch Street, Carlisle. He was described as being born in "F" i.e. Foreign Parts, had an estimated age of about 60 years and was of independent means.

Keys Lane ran from Scotch Street to Lowther Street and was roughly opposite to what is now McDonald's restaurant. The entry to Keys Lane was very close to the Giles family home in Scotch Street.

22. Death and burial

Tony, the former Jamaican slave, died on 19th January 1844 and was buried in St. Mary's churchyard, Carlisle i.e. at the Cathedral

The *Carlisle Journal* dated 20 January 1844 announced:
"Yesterday in Scotch Street, at an advanced age, James Anthony, better known by the name of "Toney" a man of colour, who first came to Carlisle in the service of the late Captain Giles, and afterwards lived for many years as servant to the late Sir Richard Hodgson. He was an American negro."

On his long since removed gravestone was an inscription:

**SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
JAMES ANTHONY,
A NATIVE OF AFRICA.
HE CAME INTO THIS COUNTRY IN 1790
IN THE SERVICE OF WILLIAM GILES,
CAPTAIN IN THE NINETEENTH
REGIMENT OF FOOT
AND REMAINED THE RESPECTED
SERVANT OF THE FAMILY
FOR UPWARD OF FORTY YEARS.
DIED JANUARY 19TH, 1844,
AGED 75 YEARS.**

**THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD AND ONE SHEPHERD.
JOHN X-16.**

**ALSO OF MARGARET HIS WIFE
WHO DIED NOV. 18, 1838
AGED 65 YEARS.**

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Denis Perriam, John and Jean Sheffield, Ann Ferguson and Paul Cooper of the Green Howards Regimental Museum, Richmond.

Index

- Anthony**
Margaret..... 34
- Anthony (Tony)**
James 23, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34
- Atkinson**
James 5
- Bainbridge**
Margaret..... 2
Mary 2
- Barber**
Francis 24, 25
- Beauclerk**
Lord Charles 2
Lord George..... 2
- Bough**
James 31
Samuel 30, 31
- Carr**
Jonathan Dodgson 1, 32
- Christian**
Ewan 7
Fletcher 7
- Clarke**
General Alured..... 13
Mary 7
- Coor**
Henry 19
- Cornwallis**
General 9
- Douglas**
Samuel 16
- Douglass**
Frederick..... 1, 32, 33
- Equiano**
Olaudah..... 25
- Farish**
William 30
- Ferguson**
Joseph 32, 33
Margaret..... 28
Richard 29, 30, 32
- Forster**
Margaret..... 1, 32
- Georgiana**
Duchess of Devonshire 25
- Giles**
George Alured 13
Jane Sarah 7, 10, 30
Margaret..... 7, 10, 29, 30
Mary 7, 10, 30
Michael 2
Richard William..... 13
William . 2, 5, 7, 10, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28
William Richard..... 29
- Giles, née Hodgson**
Jane 5, 7, 10, 20, 26, 29
- Gwynne**
Eleanor (Nell) 2
- Hall**
Henry 30
- Hodgson**
Richard..... 5
Sir Richard 7, 28
William 5
- Howard**
The Honourable Charles 4
Thomas 5
- Johnson**
Dr. Samuel 24, 25
- Kent**
Thomas 25, 26
- King Charles II**..... 2
- King George III**..... 7
- King James II** 4
- Luttrell**
Colonel Francis 4
- Macaulay**
Zachary 19
- Nichol**
The Revd. Robert Boucher..... 18
- Nicholson**
Margaret (Peg) 7
- Nugent**
General George 13
Lady Maria..... 13, 15
- Perriam**
Denis 31
- Prince**
Mary..... 17
- Rees**
The Revd. Thomas 18
- Rodney**
Admiral George Brydges 10
- Ross**
Captain Robert 18
- Terry**
John..... 18
- Washington**
George 9
- Wilberforce**
William 19
- William of Orange**..... 4

References

- ¹ Forster, Margaret, *Rich Desserts and Captain Thins*, Chatto & Windus, 1997.
- ² Wright, Philip, Ed., *Lady Nugent's Journal*, Institute of Jamaica, 1966.
- ³ Ferguson, Moira, Ed., *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave*, The University of Michigan Press, 1993.
- ⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 5-6.
- ⁵ *Ibid*, p. 119.
- ⁶ *Anti-slavery Reporter*, July 1829.
- ⁷ The words of Terry, Rees, Ross, Nicholls and Coor in Section 12, "Jamaican Slavery" are taken from the Evidence given to the House of Commons Committee.
- ⁸ Equiano, Olaudah, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African Written by Himself*, Dodo Press, 2007.
- ⁹ Inscription: East side:
To the Memory of William Giles Esq. late Captain of the 19th Regiment of Foot, who departed this life April 3rd 1797 aged 47 years.
Also Jane, relict of the late William Giles Esq., and daughter of the late Richard and Mary Hodgson of this City, who departed this life August 20th, 1814 aged 64 years.
Inscription: South side:
To the Memory of William Richard Giles, the son of William and Jane Giles who died January 4th 1813 aged 24 years.
Also of Jane Sarah Giles, their second daughter, who died May 5th 1832 aged 51 years.
Inscription: West side:
To the Memory of Mary, relict of the late Henry Hall, Esq., of Gilcrux, and eldest daughter of William and Jane Giles, who died December 24th, 1832, aged 53 years.
Inscription: North side:
To the Memory of Mary the infant daughter of William and Jane Giles, who died October 2nd, 1775, at Waterford, in Ireland.
Also of George Alured their son who departed this life July 5th, 1786, at Stoneyhill, Jamaica, aged 4 months.
- ¹⁰ Ferguson, Margaret J., Ed., *The Monumental Inscriptions, St. Cuthbert*, Barnes & Moss, Carlisle, 1889.
- ¹¹ Sacred to the Memory of William Giles Esquire Captain in His Majesty's 19th Regt. of Foot who departed this life April 3rd 1797 aged 48 years and of Jane his widow, daughter of the late Alderman Richard Hodgson and Mary his wife, who died August 20th 1814 aged 64 years. Also to the Memory of William Richard Giles their son who departed this life deeply lamented January 4th 1813 aged 24 years also Jane Sarah Giles their second daughter who died May 5th 1832 aged 52 years.
- ¹² Farish, William, *The Autobiography of William Farish: The Struggles of a Hand-Loom Weaver*, Caliban Books, 1996, p. 53.
- ¹³ *Carlisle Journal*, 2 Feb 1926, p. 4, "Out and About."
- ¹⁴ Ferguson, Moira (1993) op. cit. p.122.
- ¹⁵ Douglass, Frederick, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave: Written by Himself*, Oxford World's Classics, 1999.