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MATERIALS ON THE HISTORY OF JAMAICA
IN THE EDWARD LONG PAPERS

held at the British Library

An introduction to the microfilm collection

by
Kenneth Morgan
Brunel University

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Provenance

This microfilm edition makes available the main surviving manuscript papers of Edward Long (1734-1813), author and commentator on Jamaica. These manuscripts, preserved in bound volumes, were presented in several tranches to the British Museum by his grandson Charles Edward Long between 1841 and 1859. Edward Long was the pre-eminent eighteenth-century historian of Jamaica and the author of a widely read and frequently consulted book entitled *The history of Jamaica or, General survey of the antient and modern state of that island: with reflections on its situation, settlements, inhabitants, climate, products, commerce, laws and government*. This was published in London in three volumes in 1774. Long's manuscripts are among the most important surviving deposits of primary evidence relating to Jamaica from the period of the English conquest of the island from the Spanish in 1655 to the first period of intense public investigation of the British slave trade in the 1780s and 1790s. The Long Papers deposited in the British Library contain the manuscript sheets of the History of Jamaica along with many other documents pertaining to the Anglo-West Indian connection.

Biography

Edward Long was born on 23 August 1734 at Rosilion, St Blazey, Cornwall, the fourth son of Samuel Long (1700-57) of Longville, Jamaica, Tredudwell, Cornwall, and Bloomsbury, London, and Mary (1701-65), second daughter and co-heir of Bartholomew Tate of Delapré, Northamptonshire. He was educated at Bury St Edmunds School, Liskeard (c.1746-52) and privately. He entered Gray's Inn, London on 28 June 1753. On his father's death in early 1757, Long left his law studies and sailed to Jamaica. He received a call to the bar ex gratia.

The Longs had been connected with Jamaica since the 1660s. Edward's grandfather Samuel had been Speaker of the Jamaican Assembly. His father Samuel, born in Jamaica, was a member of the Council and the owner of Lucky Valley sugar plantation, a rich property in Clarendon Parish. Edward supervised the plantation and became the private secretary of the lieutenant-governor, Sir Henry Moore, husband to Edward’s eldest sister, Catharina Maria. He was soon promoted to the position of judge of the vice-admiralty court in Jamaica. At St Catharine's Church, Jamaica on 12 August 1758 he married Mary Ballard, second daughter and eventually heiress of Thomas Beckford of Jamaica and widow of John Palmer. They had six children - three sons and three daughters.
Edward Long was elected a member of the Jamaican Assembly for St Ann Parish in 1761, 1765 and 1766. On 13 September 1768 he was elected Speaker of the Assembly, an office he held only until the House was dissolved on 22 September. In 1769 he left Jamaica because of ill health and lived the rest of his life in England. He retained his judgeship in Jamaica until about 1797 but never returned to the Caribbean.

Edward Long leased a house at 46 Wimpole Street, London from 1781 until 1802. He also lived in various properties in Berkshire, Surrey, Hampshire and Sussex. He was a member of the West India Merchants and Planters Committee for many years. He wrote numerous articles for London newspapers as well as pamphlets on the sugar trade and the game laws. After 1783 he wrote regularly about imperial policies from a Whig viewpoint. He was a cultivated, studious man who wanted his family to be brought up with a classical education in an intellectual atmosphere. An accomplished musician, he played a Cremona violin. In 1791 he corresponded on scientific matters with Dr Thomas Dancer, a botanist in Jamaica. Mary Ballard Long died on 16 July 1797, aged sixty-two. Edward Long died on 13 March 1813 at Arundel Park, Sussex, the seat of his son-in-law, Henry Howard Molyneux. He was buried on 20 March in the chancel of Slindon Church, West Sussex, where a memorial slab commemorates him.

The History of Jamaica

*The history of Jamaica, or General survey of the antient and modern state of that island,* based on Long's private papers, public records and his own experience of living in Jamaica, is an invaluable vade mecum to the social, economic and political life of Britain's largest and wealthiest West Indian colony. The book combines encyclopaedic detail with polemics and propaganda; some sections are plagiarised from other writers. The metereology, botany, zoology, medicine, history and laws of Jamaica are all covered, but *The history of Jamaica* is mainly consulted for its political arguments and its commentary on slavery. Long argued for better schools in Jamaica, for improved military defences, for a stronger militia, for more extensive white immigration, and for a solid church foundation. A staunch supporter of the elected Jamaican Assembly, he criticised the governor's power to dismiss judges and suspend the assembly and council.

Long was a strong proslavery advocate who regarded enslaved Africans as subhuman, an inferior species. He thought that transporting enslaved Africans to the Caribbean instilled order and discipline into their lives. He associated slaves with apes in terms of lechery and feared the prospect of slave revolts. He considered the slave trade a profitable business for British interests and
portrayed Jamaican slavery as a benevolent institution. He supported the rights of the plantocracy against the power of the imperial government and defended their cause when faced with humanitarian objections to slavery. He also argued, however, that plantation owners were inefficient managers. In his view, this deficiency could be overcome when estate owners resided in Jamaica rather than returning as absentee to Britain. Long's work influenced Bryan Edwards' *History, civil and commercial, of the British colonies in the West Indies* (1793), another important contemporary work on the Caribbean. Section two of Edwards' book, on the origin of the maroons, was in fact taken from Long's *The history of Jamaica*. Long spent much time revising his magnum opus for a second edition, but this was never completed.

The Scope & Significance of the Manuscripts

Long's high status in Jamaica and later among absentee planters in London gave him plenty of opportunities for gaining access to documentary evidence on Jamaica. The collections of his manuscripts in this microfilm edition cover an eclectic range of material relating to the history of Jamaica, the wider Caribbean and the Anglo-West Indian connection. Some manuscripts date from the period before he wrote his history; others were put together thereafter. He seems to have collected most of this material in the 1770s, 1780s and 1790s. But, as noted earlier, the chronological range of the material is much broader. Among the Edward Long papers are drafts and annotated printed copies of his own publications; writings on various topics by diverse hands; transcripts of documents relating to the Board of Trade, the Royal African Company, and the governors and laws of Jamaica; many statistics on the agricultural production, population and trade of Jamaica and other Caribbean islands; information on the sugar and slave trades; and many miscellaneous jottings. For some volumes it would be possible to provide a checklist of contents by folio numbers, but many volumes consist of undated notes, marginalia and brief memoranda which it would be impossible to list accurately or coherently.

Three volumes among these manuscripts present the printed text of *The history of Jamaica* combined with the author's handwritten marginal comments and numerous inserted pages (Add. Mss 12,404-6). Long intended that these additions and corrections should be incorporated into the second edition of his book. Some amendments are brief marginal notes; others are more extensive remarks. A comparison of these additions with James Knight's manuscript account of Jamaican history (referred to below) suggests that the latter was used extensively as a source for the proposed second edition. Add. Ms 12,405 contains the most valuable statistical data among these three volumes. Scattered throughout that volume are slave population figures for Jamaican parishes for 1778 and 1784 (ff. 138, 154, 157, 169, 177, 181, 182, 191, 206, 212, 218, 223, 224, 229). These figures should be used by historians in addition to the data
published in Long's History of Jamaica. Other inserted pages in Add. Ms 12,405 include details of the African music played and sung by slaves in Jamaica, with some musical examples, and a commentary on the management of slave children (ff. 422, 436). Other volumes gather material relating to the history of Jamaica. Add Ms 12,402 comprises Long's completed draft of constitutional remarks on the government of Jamaica, with an appendix. This is a fuller version of information contained in Book 1, chapter X, Appendix, sections 1-12 of his History of Jamaica, and was therefore presumably written after that was published in 1774. Some printed pages from Book 1 of The history of Jamaica, interspersed with pages in manuscript, are found in Add. Ms 12,403.

Several volumes contain miscellaneous notes, copies of tracts and other material used to compile the History of Jamaica (Add. Ms 12,413, 18,270-1, 18,273, 18,960-2). He clearly never intended that this material should be printed, for there are many crossings-out, scrappy notes and preliminary drafts. But these volumes contain data and commentaries of historical value that are unavailable in printed format. Add. Ms 18,270, for instance, contains population estimates for Jamaica over the period 1658-1768, the scale of property in different Jamaican counties between 1668 and 1768, average yearly charges on sugar estates in Jamaica, and an attempt to estimate the profits to Africans from participation in the transatlantic slave trade (ff. 20, 21, 57, 58). Add. Ms 12,413 has valuable evidence on the scale of Jamaican trade with France and Ireland; on the rum trade; on ships entered and cleared through Kingston, 1761-73; and on the quantities of goods traded between Jamaica and individual British ports for selected years, 1764-74 (ff. 7, 8, 12-14, 19, 22, 56, 72-3).

Long's interests ranged beyond Jamaica to cover other aspects of the British Empire. Thus Add. Ms 12,413 has memoranda and remarks on the Mosquito Shore (the Bay of Honduras) for 1760 and 1773; calculations on the 'State of the West India Islands laid before Parliament, March 1775'; and a computation of the wealth brought home by the principal nabobs from the provinces of Bengal (ff. 3-6, 8-9, 20, 21). Long calculated for 1775 that the value of the British sugar islands came to £60 million, with property in the British West Indies owned by absentee residents in England valued at £14 million. This was greater than his estimate of the capital extracted by nabobs from India, which he reckoned as in excess of £5 million (ff. 20-1).

Other volumes among Edward Long's papers provide varied material on the history of Jamaica. Add. Ms 12,412 includes estimates of the value of land and the prices of sundries in Jamaica, along with the tonnage which the trade and shipping of Jamaica was supposed to employ (ff. 14, 22-3, 31). Add. Ms 12,409 begins with answers provided by Governor William Henry Lyttleton to an enquiry by the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations in 1764 about the state
of Jamaica (ff. 1-16). Most of this volume, however, comprises manuscripts relating to Jamaican political affairs while Charles Howard, first Earl of Carlisle was governor of the island in 1678-80 (ff. 26-87). Included here is good material on the buccaneers in Jamaica. Add. Ms 22,676 offers miscellaneous manuscripts on Jamaica, 1662-1765, including documents relating to the Royal African Company in 1723-4; accounts of the slaves imported into Jamaica and exported from the island, with the import duties paid, for the decade after 1725; and proposals made by James Knight in the 1730s for increasing the number of white inhabitants in Jamaica (ff. 28, 41-2, 89-90, 108-09, 141-2). Add. Ms 22,639 comprises *Miscellaneous papers relating to the Company of Mines Royal in Jamaica, 1720-7*. Add. Ms 18271 is Long's draft (c.1771) of a discourse on the subject of slavery in Jamaica. He later published this anonymously as *Candid reflections upon the judgement lately awarded by the Court of King's Bench in Westminster-Hall on what is commonly called the Negro-cause* (1772). This was printed in the same year as Chief Justice Mansfield ruling in the Somerset case that slavery had no legal support in Britain. The manuscript version repeatedly refers to Granville Sharp, the abolitionist lawyer, though the published version refrains from doing so. Long wanted in this publication to denounce Sharp's views on the illegality of slavery in England.

Valuable statistical data form the core of several volumes. Add. Ms 12,431 includes statistics on the sugar trade and a list of Jamaican sugar plantations, their owners, and their output for 1739 (ff. 152-6). Add. Ms 12,436 provides a comprehensive list of landholders in Jamaica c.1750, together with the quantity of land each one possessed and the quantity supposed to be occupied and planted. The list is arranged alphabetically by parish. Add. Ms 12,435 contains many statistics on Jamaica between 1739 and 1792, including population and livestock figures, estimates of military strength, details from various poll taxes, and export volumes. Add. Ms 12,414 includes important information on the population of Jamaica and on the social history of Kingston for the 1780s (ff. 22-47) that extends the information presented in the published edition of Long's *The history of Jamaica.*

The Caribbean was the cockpit of international rivalry among the great western European powers in the eighteenth century. Several volumes present manuscripts and notes by Long on the military strength of Jamaica, naval protection in the Caribbean, the state of non-British (primarily French) West Indian territories, and contemporary discussions of the slave and sugar trades. Add. Ms 12,408 has notes on the state of the French West Indian islands (ff. 24-47). Add. Ms 12,438 has scattered notes on the population and produce of the French West Indies for 1701, 1763 and 1772 (f. 21). Add. Ms 12,411 includes a copy of Governor John Dalling's plan for the Security and Defence of Jamaica (1781) and miscellaneous notes dealing with coins and bills of exchange,
especially in relation to the Spanish American colonies (ff. 13-17, 21-55). Add. Ms 12,434 includes undated material on French, Spanish and British naval squadrons (ff. 16-19). The gathering of information on Britain's chief rivals among the European powers in the Caribbean reflects the contemporary concern with the strength of the British presence in the West Indies and its contribution to national wealth and prestige.

Sugar and slavery were the twin foundations of Jamaica's prosperity in the eighteenth century. The economic health of these trades was therefore a matter of vital interest to Long and his fellow absentee planters and merchants. Long's Papers show that he followed the public discussion of the slave trade closely in the late 1780s and early 1790s, when the operation of the trade was discussed extensively in Parliament for the first time as a result of abolitionist pressure. Add. Ms 12,432 includes printed versions of the Jamaican House of Assembly's proceedings on the sugar and slave trades (23 October 1792) and the present Code Noir of the island (1789) (ff. 4-34, 42-51), while Add. Ms 12,433 includes a manuscript speech made in the House of Lords on the slave trade (14 May 1792). Add. Ms 18,272 provides extracts from the evidence given to the Privy Council on the conduct of the slave trade in 1788, material also available in printed Parliamentary Papers.

Edward Long's manuscripts contain extensive evidence on the political and constitutional history of Jamaica. Many items relate to the affairs of the Jamaican assembly. Material of this nature can be found in Add. Ms 12,430, a collection mainly of tracts. Included in this volume is the journal of Sir William Beeston during his stay in Jamaica between 1660 and 1680, some years before he became the island's governor from 1693 to 1702 (ff. 22-40). This journal appears to have been prepared at the suggestion of Sir Thomas Lynch, who became Governor of Jamaica in 1682. Add. Ms 12,424 consists of another journal by Beeston which deals with the period when he was a commander of ships in the Caribbean. Edward Long acquired this item because he was the grandson of Beeston's daughter, Jane.

Manuscript papers relating to Governors of Jamaica, 1660-1752, make up Add. Ms 12,428. A copy of the Journal of the proceedings of the Assembly of Jamaica (17 March 1702-30 November 1704) is found in Add. Ms 12,425. Long's marginal notes and underscorings in the text reflect his view that the Council should not sit as a legislative body apart from the Governor. Extracts from the Minutes of the Council and Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica, covering 1661-1714, are found in Add. Ms 12,426. They relate to rights and privileges claimed by the Jamaican Assembly and Council. They specifically deal with matters on which Thomas Pitt, appointed Governor of Jamaica in 1716 but who never assumed office, asked for instructions. Add. Ms 12,423 consists
of Governor Edward Dooley's manuscript journal of his proceedings in Jamaica (19 November 1655-27 May 1662). These are mainly minutes of councils of war over which Dooley presided to make regulations for the army. Add. Ms 18,269 comprises Orders and rules to be observed in the High Court of Chancery of the island of Jamaica made by Governor Sir Nicholas Lawes between 1740 and 1744. Long's own draft remarks on the constitution and government of Jamaica are in Add. Ms 12,402.

Long read widely among earlier accounts of Jamaica's development since its settlement by Britain. Among his Papers are volumes containing manuscripts by some of these writers. Add. Ms 12,422 is an unpublished manuscript of The civil history of Jamaica by Henry Barham (c.1670-1726), a friend of Sir Hans Sloane, doctor and founder of the British Museum. This is a copy of the autographed manuscript also found in the British Library as Sloane Ms 3,918. Barham was a master-surgeon on a naval vessel. Before the end of the seventeenth century, he was appointed surgeon-major to the troops in Jamaica. His manuscript narrates the history of Jamaica from its conquest by English forces in 1655 to 1721, when Barham appears to have completed his account. Long thought Barham was a poor writer, whose discussion of Jamaica included many incorrect statements (Add. Ms 12,422, f. 147v).

More extensive than Barham's account of Jamaica is that of James Knight, The natural, moral and political history of Jamaica and the territories thereon depending, from the earliest account of time to the year 1742, which is found in Add. Mss 12,415 and 12,417-20. Knight was a merchant who had lived in Jamaica for over twenty years. Add. Ms 12,418 is prefaced by printed proofs of the title page, preface and first eight pages of Knight's work, but the work was never published. From internal evidence among these manuscripts, Knight appears to have written his history of Jamaica after returning to live in England. He claimed that the motivation for writing his account was that previous histories were either defective or incomplete. He does not specify the works to which this criticism refers, but it may be that his comments were directed at Charles Leslie's A new history of Jamaica, published in 1740. Portions of Knight's correspondence are gathered in Add. Ms 12,431 (ff. 101-132).

Long's history of Jamaica includes detailed sections on the flora and fauna of the island. He was friendly with a botanist, Dr Thomas Dancer, who had lived in Jamaica and who wrote one book on Jamaica's Bath waters and another on the medical condition of slaves in the Caribbean. The correspondence between Long and Dancer for 1787-91 is contained in Add. Ms 22,678. Miscellaneous observations on the climate and temperature of Jamaica (October 1760-August 1763) are included in Add. Ms 18,963. Meteorological Journals kept at Breadnutt Island, Jamaica, 1770-5, are preserved as Add. Mss 18,275A and B.
These journals stemmed from Long's acquaintance with Thomas Thistlewood, a white overseer settled in western Jamaica; the information was taken verbatim from Thistlewood's observations in his diaries (now deposited at the Lincolnshire Archives Office). Tabular information can be found in these volumes about the varieties of weather and temperature readings at sunrise, noon and sunset. This is the most important written record of weather data from tropical regions of the world known to be available for the eighteenth century.

Finally, Long's manuscripts in the British Library include numerous miscellanea. His manuscript on the commerce of the United States with the British West Indies, dated 22 March 1784, is in Add. Ms 18,274. In this account, he urged the British government to circumvent the Navigation Acts to allow free trade between the United States and the British Caribbean, primarily in order that American provisions might be available regularly to the sugar colonists. The draft manuscript challenged Lord Sheffield's Observations (1783), which argued that the British West Indies should only trade with British North America rather than with the United States. Long enlarged his draft and published it anonymously as A free and candid review, of a tract entitled 'Observations on the commerce of the American States'; shewing the pernicious consequences both to Great Britain and to the British sugar islands, of the systems recommended in that tract (1784).

Add. Ms 12,440 contains official correspondence of ministers with Sir Henry Moore, Governor of New York, 1763-9, and previously Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica. Long presumably had access to these manuscripts because of his employment with Moore (mentioned above) and because Moore was married to Long's sister, Catherine. Add. Ms 12,439 is a manuscript draft of Considerations on the creation of the human race by Dr J. Lindsay, Rector of St. Catharine's Parish, Jamaica. This obscure clergyman submitted this work to Long for publication, but wished to have it appear in print anonymously. This was presumably because it has a clear proslavery stance. Add. Ms 12,437 is a manuscript dated 1701 on the proposal for settling a colony on the isthmus of Darien, in central America. Add. Ms 12,427 is the Journal and letterbook of Christopher Lilly (6 January 1721-23 June 1734), mainly concerning his work as the king's chief engineer in the West Indies. This volume includes good information on the fortifications of Jamaica.

Conclusion
Edward Long showed great curiosity in all his collection of published and unpublished writings about the contemporary history of Jamaica, the Caribbean and the wider British imperial world. He approached his work with the wide-ranging interest of a polymath, and his conception of what constituted history
was broad. These scholarly attributes are combined with considerable polemical drive, fully evident in his history of Jamaica. Many historians today would disagree with Long's analysis of the state of Jamaican society in the American revolutionary era, and all would decry his racist biases. But his Papers do preserve an extraordinary corpus of important manuscripts and notes for historians of the first British Empire. Some of the statistics Long gathered are unavailable elsewhere; a good many of the manuscript items are the only known copies; and where historians have had recourse to checking his notes and jottings, they have found he maintained a high standard of factual accuracy. It is for these reasons that the Edward Long Papers will be long consulted by historians.

Bibliographical Note


Kenneth Morgan
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Professor Kenneth Morgan
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