1

'The principal ingredient necessary to form a good planter': Education and the Making of a Transatlantic Elite

The painter Benjamin West called them "The Cricketers." Finished between 1763 and 1764, this little-known conversation portrait depicted five young Americans: James Allen and Andrew Allen of Pennsylvania, Ralph Wormeley V of Virginia, and Arthur Middleton and Ralph Izard of South Carolina. In the painting, the men sit at leisure, engaged in polite conversation with the River Cam visible in the background (or the Cam as West imagined it, as he had never visited the town). Though the two Allen brothers did not attend Cambridge (they completed their legal educations at the Inns of Court in London), the remaining three cricketers were undergraduates there. The five tourists shared another connection: they were descended from wealthy and politically powerful slaveholding and slave-trading families. The Allen family, who were West's chief benefactors, enslaved Africans, rented their forced labourers to mercantile partners, and advertised recent arrivals of slave ships. Ralph Wormeley's family had 102 enslaved persons on their tobacco plantation, "Rosegill." Middleton, too, would be a signatory to the Declaration of Independence, and both he and Izard possessed huge estates that together numbered close to 8,000 acres and more than 200 enslaved persons.[1]

A snapshot in time, this painting illuminates the presence of men with connections to the transatlantic slave economy at the University of Cambridge. The sons and relatives of plantation owners, merchants, financiers, and slave-traders attended Cambridge from the rapid expansion of North America's slave societies in the seventeenth century through to British slavery's abolition in August 1838. Using John Venn and John Archibald Venn's extensive list of students from the foundation of the university to 1900, University College London's *Legacies of Slave-Ownership* database, and other primary and secondary sources, a sample of 850 students with families and family members actively engaged in the transatlantic slave economy have been uncovered. As the first expansive social history of enslaver students at a British or American university, exploring their birthplaces, student class, and colleges of choice, the backgrounds and experiences of these Cambridge students illuminate the banal personal connections between enslavers and fellows, and presents an important methodological lens to consider the historic emergence of a transatlantic elite that used their educations and wealth to elevate their status in the British

Empire. In fact, college fellows helped to garb these students with respectability, thereby identifying them as members of the British ruling classes. The University also stood to benefit from admissions. At a time when Cambridge was at its lowest point in admissions and at risk of institutional decline, all colleges benefitted – some to a greater degree than others – from enrolling many rich and well-connected students. In so doing, the chapter illuminates how casually slaveholding was woven into the fabric of British life from the bottom up and top down, and how university educations helped to construct and reinforce the power of an Atlantic economic elite.[2]

Students with families that were involved in the transatlantic economy arrived from Britain's twenty-six American colonies and only increased in number as the plantations and slave societies expanded throughout the Americas (see Table 1). The three largest sources of Caribbean students were from Barbados (with 140), Jamaica (113), and Antigua (46). The mainland North American colonists – befitting their relatively poorer status compared with the Caribbean sugar magnates and the growing number of domestic colonial colleges providing a suitable tertiary education – sent fewer students to Cambridge. The next three largest colonies of origin were Virginia (33), South Carolina (17), and Bermuda (14). Regardless of birthplace, the pattern was consistent in the data: if you went to Cambridge and you were from North America, your family was more likely than not involved in enslavement.[3]

Students with transatlantic ties called Britain home too. The three largest counties for student admissions were Middlesex (132), Lancashire (76), and Somerset and Yorkshire (20) (see Table 1). These locations made sense given the prominence of London, Liverpool, and Bristol as major ports and financial centres for the chattel slave economy and the growing number of landed estates in Britain owned by absentee slaveholders in counties such as Somerset, Denbighshire, Yorkshire, Norfolk, Kent, and Essex – an expression of the self-confidence and power wielded by the *nouveau riche*. The Bevan family, who were involved in provisioning the Caribbean colonies, acquired Riddlesworth Hall in Norfolk, the Salusbury's owned Lleweni Hall in Denbighshire (amongst their other landholdings which included plantations in Saint Kitts and Nevis, which were sold in 1776), and the Harford banking family owned a castle – Blaise Castle near Bristol. Enjoying the fruits of their colonial riches in Britain, the fortunes of the rapidly growing Atlantic economy were intertwined with the numbers of students coming to Cambridge from the North American colonies. As slaveholders grew their coffers, Cambridge benefitted from a growing influx of eager students.[4]

As a result of the incredible wealth that could be gained from chattel slavery, the students with connections to the Atlantic world who arrived in Cambridge originated from families deeply enmeshed in the slave economy – from financiers to merchants to slave-traders to cotton manufacturers

to plantation owners (see Table 2). Most of these men were born into families that owned plantations (630), yet many counted merchants involved in the provisioning trade that supplied the Caribbean with material goods (52), slave-traders (44), and bankers and financiers (25), who underwrote the complicated insurance and debt arrangements that facilitated the system, amongst their family. Families were involved in multiple parts of the supply chain that underpinned the enslaved economy, and the student admission sample reflects that complicated reality: many students were from families involved in both the merchant trade and had landed estates (47), owned plantations and participated in the slave trade (17), and some student families were involved in both banking and the plantation economy (12). The professions of these student families reflected the entangled nature of slaveholding and the immense wealth that could be gained from these enterprises. Great wealth resulted in greater spending – and the enslaver class spent significant sums on carriages, cutlery, clothing, portraits, and books to stock their bulging libraries from suppliers in Europe. In time, they invested their money in another enticing, intangible commodity: a British education, which was an avenue of social advancement, particularly for those interested in the law or church or politics, for which an education at European universities helped one establish vital personal and professional connections that paid dividends in later life.[5]

Slaveholders valued an education from a university as globally prominent as Cambridge. That education was quite comprehensive: at this time, a person's course of study combined a moral as well as intellectual education and focused on instilling the qualities of a refined gentleman. A focus on refining a 'polite gentleman' in the eighteenth century was replaced in the following century, however, with a greater focus on stoicism, hard work, and 'inner moral worth'. The Virginian slaveholder Nathaniel Burwell certainly agreed that education did not just involve tutorials and lectures (even as Cambridge undergraduates received a comprehensive education in Latin in the trivium of grammar, rhetoric, and logic alongside the Quadrivium of music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy). To Burwell and his contemporaries, education helped to form a proper gentleman. If he did not concentrate on his studies, Burwell worried, his brother would be 'unfit for any Gentleman's conversation, & therefore a Scandalous person & a Shame to his Relations, not having one single qualification to recommend him[.]' Education, for Burwell, made the man, stripping away perceived colonial manners and mannerisms, and would transform his brother into a respectable British subject. According to two Virginian parents, a British education was essential because it placed one above the 'common level & drudgery of Life' accorded to the 'lower Class', helping to 'preserve you in the same Class & Rank among mankind'.[6]

Hoping to avoid such shame and 'scandal', enslavers stipulated in their wills that their children would receive the best education possible, making clear in these documents whether their offspring were to be educated at home or sent abroad to Europe – the latter option becoming increasingly popular for British Americans because their growing wealth did not match the poor schooling which they received in the colonies. Robert Carter of Virginia ensured in his will that his son 'George be kept at school at the College of Wm. & Mary [the college in Virginia] two years longer & that then he be Sent to the University of Cambridge for an education… & if my ex'tors his Brothers See it is so fitting that he… may be entered first at the Inns of Court, that if his inclination & capacity Lead that way he may be bred to the Law'. Enslavers planned their children's education in minute detail, from the colleges and schools that they attended to the subjects that they studied. For instance, Robert Carter decreed that one of his sons, Landon, was to become a 'perfect master' in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. With some of their personal finances invested in the same South Sea, Royal African, and East India securities as the Cambridge colleges and fellowship, the enslavers claimed that an expensive education – an "English education," as it was called – at the public schools, ancient universities, and legal Inns of Court in London – would establish their children amongst the aristocratic governing classes who ruled the British Empire.[7]

The Antiguan slaveholder Samuel Martin identified education as the basis for white planter dominance. Perhaps remembering that his father had been killed by Akan enslaved persons on their plantation, Martin was particularly preoccupied with the qualities that were needed to become an effective plantation owner. He determined that an English education was one avenue to achieve this skillset, despite the risks of sending children overseas, whether from the dreaded smallpox virus or common colds, which forced students to ocassionally flee to the coast for 'sea air'. First admitted to Trinity College in 1711, Martin's *Essay upon Plantership* was immensely popular, running to seven editions after its original publication in the 1750s, and it was also featured in Arthur Young's *Annals of Agriculture*. Written for the 'instruction of a young planter', Martin dismissed metropolitan charges, according to one historian, of 'crudeness, lack of education, corruption of morals, materialism, alcoholism, and cruelty' that were aimed at the colonists, who had been 'de-anglicize[d]' in the colonies. Rather, he argued that plantation owners were the equal of Roman farmers who had 'captivated all the renowned legislators, patriots, soldiers, orators, and poets of antiquity, who gladly devoted their hours of retirement to this admirable Instructress, and her industrious filter Experience'. Listing the enviable traits of a worthy "planter," Martin concluded that 'A liberal education is undoubtedly the principal ingredient necessary to form a good planter, who ought at least to know the rudiments of all the sciences, if he attains not the mastery of them[.]' For Martin, education made landed enslavers the equal of aristocrats and patriotic intellectuals, soldiers, generals, and legislators.[8]

To the chagrin of some fellows who favoured religion, enslavers such as Martin particularly valued Cambridge's expertise in mathematics and sciences. From the Welsh mathematician Robert Recorde's development of the equals sign ("=") in the sixteenth century to Isaac Newton's laws of universal gravitation at the end of the following century, Cambridge was renowned for mathematics and "natural philosophy," as the sciences were then called. Enslavers understood this fact, and it was unsurprising that they were interested in numbers given that, as plantation managers, they depended upon sophisticated accounting principles and calculations. As Morgan Godwyn, a minister in Virginia and Barbados, wrote in 1680, the 'Planters chief deity' was 'Profit'. On 25 May 1756, Stephen Fuller (an important figure throughout this story) wrote to Benjamin Newton of Jesus College introducing Samuel Alpress. Alpress (who, like Fuller, will appear later) was born in Jamaica, and Fuller noted that 'As Mathematicians are of more use in that Island than any other sort of People, I would have him immediately initiated in that Kind of Knowledge and conducted in it as far as 'tis possible wishing that and Natural Philosophy to be his Principal Studys'. Mathematical laws, for Fuller, were a tool to perpetuate enslavers' authority and wealth, and the surviving records reflected the significance of mathematics, the oldest tripos course on offer at Cambridge, with the Virginia-born Robert Beverley's surviving Trinity College notebooks detailing his efforts to understand complex algebra and mathematical logic.[9]

Fuller and others were secure in the knowledge that a university education was not intended to challenge anti-Black or proslavery orthodoxies. Anti-slave-trade activists, such as Peter Peckard, the Master of Magdalene, however, argued that Cambridge fellows were not doing enough to combat the 'fashionable' education that justified slavery and the slave trade. Instead, Peckard called for a 'firm and conscientious adherence to the rules of Virtuous Education' based on the 'Natural Equality of the human race'. Peckard's words carried a degree of truth: a classical education at Cambridge did not undermine an undergraduate's pre-conceived belief in Black or Indigenous inequality. Greek and Roman philosophers alike, such as Aristotle and Cicero, the two most popular classical authors, argued that some were slaves by nature – an idea, known as "natural slavery," that again gained traction in the sixteenth century to defend the enslavement of Native Americans in the Spanish colonies. The college libraries were no less ambivalent on the question of slavery. If administrative records are to be believed, colleges were in no rush to purchase abolitionist tracts, even at the height of the abolition movement.[10]

If they willed it, enslavers confronted few barriers to sending their children to Cambridge besides wealth and assent to the Church of England. Dissenters were excluded. Until the mid-nineteenth century, there was no standardised

admissions exam (unlike the University of Paris). Rather than anxious about whether their children would gain admission into the university, rich parents were often concerned that their sons would waste their fortunes on drinking, dining, and frivolities in Cambridge, London, and other British metropolitan centres. To combat this tendency, family members turned to their vast networks of social contacts, many of whom either owned plantations or were involved in the transatlantic slave trade, to chaperone their children whilst in England, inform their tutors of the student's plans, manage their finances, and report back on issues. (Stephen Fuller quipped that this role was a 'superintendancy'.) The Virginian tobacco merchant John Norton informed on student progress to friends and family, reporting to his son, John Hatley Norton, in April 1770 that 'Your Cozen [John] Baylor is at Cambridge'. That was where the good news ended because Norton then complained that 'I hope it may answer tho' I think he has not capacity to make a scholar & had better contented himself with learning the grammar in his Mother tongue properly, & reading history instead of attempting Greek Authors'. The personal relationships between chaperones and the fellowship were vital to the attendance of overseas-born students.[11]

Fellows and educators imposed few barriers to the attendance of enslavers – in fact, they encouraged their admission. After all, the Atlantic was a competitive educational marketplace where fellows and masters sought out the sons, brothers, and nephews of enslavers as students. Far from being appalled by conditions in American slave societies, university and college officials wrote pamphlets to convince the colonists' wealthy children to attend their institutions. The popularity of British universities, which at that time included Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St Andrews, was evident in how the colonial colleges responded to their dominance. John Witherspoon, the President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), pleaded with the Caribbean colonists to attend colonial colleges because the climate, distance from their homes, and reputation for focused study (not frivolity) were more dependable there. He deferentially addressed his fellow British colonists, arguing that they were persons in the 'highest ranks of life' and industrious landholders whose 'own activity and diligence' had seen them 'rise to opulence'. The Scotsman was probably aware of students using his College as a preparatory school for Cambridge. A plantation tutor noted that one Virginian, a 'Boy of Genius and application is to be sent to Cambridge University', but not before undertaking 'a course either in Philadelphia or Princeton College first'. Whatever Witherspoon's complaints, some begged to differ with his approach. One of Witherspoon's critics responded that the British universities were supplied with 'numerous, honourable and learned body of Fellows, for the Purposes of Instruction and Discipline', unlike the American colleges where 'one Person, besides the Superintendance and Government of the whole, is oblig'd to teach Divinity, and Moral Philosophy, as well as Rhetoric,

Chronology and History[.]' No maligned minority, universities courted the transatlantic economic elite.[12]

William Byrd II, a Virginian slaveholder, dined with the most illustrious Cambridge men. Byrd had studied at the Middle Temple and was elected to the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge (or "Royal Society") thanks to the patronage of Sir Robert Southwell, a friend of Byrd's father (who owned the 1,200-acre Westover Plantation in Virginia). Three years after his appointment as the London agent for the Virginia Governor's Council in 1698, Byrd, then aged twenty-six, undertook a fourteen-week tour of England to introduce the eighteen-year-old Sir John Perceval, Southwell's nephew, to Britain's most eminent religious, mercantile, and cultural figures. To that end, they visited Cambridge. John Colebatch, a Trinity fellow and later Professor of Moral Theology (1707–1744), was the tour guide for their Summer visit, and Byrd reported to Southwell that they had been 'surveying the University' alongside 'a man of distinction for learning and knowledge of the world, and we had the happiness of having abundance of his Company'. Enjoying the sights of Cambridge, Byrd and Perceval then 'din'd yesterday [on Sunday] at Mr Vice-Chancellour's [Richard Bentley], where Philosophy flew about the Table faster than the wine', and Byrd was happy to note that 'Sir John begins to make good discoverys of himself in Company', Perceval made good, too, on Byrd's introductions to distinguished men of the kingdom, such as Bentley (the most famous English classicist of the age). Perceval supported a college in Bermuda, and served as the president of the Georgia Trustees, a governing body that established the American colony of the same name. As for Byrd, he enjoyed esteem and infamy in equal measure – being remembered as much for his wealth and writings as for his multiple extramarital affairs and proclivity for sexual violence against the enslaved maids who ran his household.[13]

Thomas Gooch, the Master of Gonville and Caius College, illustrates the close relationships between enslavers and fellows as well. Gooch advised his brother William – who was Virginia's governor from 1727 to 1749. For many years, Thomas facilitated the arrival of Virginian students at Cambridge, utilised his access to Thomas Pelham-Holles, the Duke of Newcastle and Cambridge's ever-meddling Chancellor, to aid William's policies, and interceded with the Archbishop of Canterbury to find a new president for the local College of William and Mary. As a testament to their close relationship, William thanked Thomas in April 1728 for 'several Letters with the Hints & Advice for which I thank you; and I hope whenever you write you'l[l] continue the same method, which may always be of use to me, especially if we should have Peace, or War should be proclaimed'. Gooch's patronage network was particularly helpful in passing Virginia's Tobacco Inspection Act in 1730. In fact, Thomas's 'close relationship' with Newcastle made William's position much more 'secure', one historian notes, as the governor implemented new laws that aimed to improve the quality of Virginia's tobacco. In July 1733,

William wrote to Thomas hoping for 'your opinion of things by the first ship the next Winter, for I shall call an Assembly in the Spring, and would willingly be at some certainty with regard to [British] politicks'. The Master utilised his academic and clerical status to assist his brother's governorship in the halls of political power. That support was both personal and official in nature – and the Goochs discussed the frustrations of being a colonial official in regions where the governor's authority was contingent upon the power of the dominant planter class. Much of their correspondence concerned the new governor's expenses in purchasing enslaved people. In one letter, William elaborated on the enormous costs that a new governor, desperate to impress his fellow plantation owners, incurred on becoming the leader of an American slave society: he had to purchase 'Horses, Cows & Slaves and a constant grand expense of Housekeeping' and organise a celebration for the king's birthday. After airing these complaints, the governor commented that one of the enslaved persons, who may have worked in the kitchens and household or tended the palace gardens, was a 'little black boy' and that he had 'named him Caius'. From his letters, Thomas did not protest his younger brother's effort to name an enslaved man in Caius College's honour.[14]

Though silent on the enslaved "boy" named Caius, the two men spilled much ink discussing students who went to Cambridge from enslaver backgrounds. Thomas had met with wealthy Virginian slaveholders and merchants, most notably John Randolph and Robert Cary (who would later become George Washington's tobacco trader), at the George and Vulture, a London inn – and William hoped that Thomas would wine and dine his Virginian friends. For instance, in June 1731 William informed his brother that a 'very pretty young Gentleman… was coming over to your Colledge'. Two years later, Thomas received another filial missive, which addressed another new arrival: the 'Son of Col. Carter's, late President of the [Virginia's] Council' who was coming 'to your University, but goes to Trinity where his eldest Brother, now his Guardian… was brought up himself'. Unlike some of his undergraduate contemporaries, Carter was no dunce or drunkard – William acclaimed Carter as a 'sober youth and a very good scholar' and he 'entreat[ed] the favour of you to encourage him by your Countenance and Invitation sometimes to Dinner'. After two months had passed, William again pestered Thomas, noting that the 'eldest son to Col. Grymes… comes to Trinity Hall in your University to study the law'. As with the other Virginian luminaries, William hoped that he would be invited to 'dinner with you, and drinking our healths, and let me have a paragraph in your letters concerning' him and Carter's son to 'shew their relations'. Even as the master of a college with no familial connections to these men, the transatlantic ties that bound friends and superintendents worked to Cambridge's benefit as they brought Virginians and other colonists to Britain's shores.[15]

Aside from their acceptance of slaveholders, college fellows had a close and enduring connection to enslavers because many Cambridge men either owned

plantations or were related through blood and marriage to slavers. Junior and senior fellows with slavery connections were numerous in number and present at most colleges. For example, Benjamin Bosanquet, whose Huguenot father was a prominent banker and director of London Assurance (which provided, amongst other services, maritime insurance to slave traders), became a fellow of Trinity in 1733; the Reverend Richard Smith part-owned the mortgage on Mapps Plantation in Barbados whilst a fellow at Trinity from 1791 to 1804 and was twice Junior Dean (1798 and 1800–1801); and Robert Pedder Buddicom, the scion of a slave-trading family from Liverpool, was elected a Queens' fellow in 1807. Thomas Tenison was apparently a slave-trader before being elected a fellow of Trinity Hall, holding the latter post from 1725 to 1728. The son of Edward Tenison, the Bishop of Ossory and cousin of the more prominent Thomas Tenison (the Archbishop of Canterbury), the young Thomas was provoked by a 'just correction' at his school in Sevenoaks to set off for Bristol, a port city that, by the middle of the eighteenth century, transported nearly half of the 20,000 enslaved Africans sent to the Americas from Britain. Leaving Bristol, he served on a slave ship bound for Guinea, where, as a contemporary chronicler wrote, 'by his good behaviour, he [eventually] rose to be Superintendant of the slaves, during their voyage to Barbadoes'. Tired of life as a slaver and 'common sailor', Tenison returned to complete his education at Cambridge, becoming a fellow at Trinity Hall upon the recommendation of the Master, Sir Nathaniel Lloyd, and served as the chestkeeper for the college's funds.[16]

Apart from individual fellows, enslaver and colonial connections went to the top of the University hierarchy. Christopher Monck, the 2nd Duke of Albemarle, Cambridge Chancellor (1682–1688), and benefactor who provided £100 for the construction of Trinity's Wren Library (construction for which was completed in 1695), was, at the same time, one of the Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas and the Bahamas and later became Jamaica's governor; Dr George Sandby the Master of Magdalene from 1760 to 1774 and Vice-Chancellor, had a lease on the 300-acre Triall Estate in Jamaica through his wife (see Figure 1.1); and the Hon. George Neville Grenville, Master of Magdalene from 1813 to 1843, was the son of Richard Griffin, 2nd Lord Baybrooke. (Indeed, his father, who was the Provost-Marshal of Jamaica until the end of the Napoleonic Wars, appointed George to the position because the Baybrookes were the hereditary visitors to the College and thus had the right to select the Master.) Family connections entailed substantial economic benefits, too, and Grenville was a trustee via a marriage settlement to Hope Estate in Jamaica, worth an estimated £20,000. Fellows without discernible links to the plantations became close to enslaver families as well, and the strained and underfunded nature of tuition at Cambridge in the early modern period may have cemented relationships between slaveholders and academic tutors, as teachers were forced to take on multiple family members. At Trinity, Thomas Postlethwaite, the future Master, taught numerous members of the Hall family from Jamaica, including two sons of Thomas Kirkpatrick Hall; and James Backhouse, a tutor, instructed two sons of John Campbell, who owned New Hope plantation in Jamaica.[17]

Sibling relationships provided a support network for students far from home. Walter Pollard was the second son of a Barbadian doctor and had entered Emmanuel as a pensioner in October 1772 after his schooling at Eton and Harrow. Walter's university letters do not survive, however his elder brother John's missives from Oxford discuss the trials and tribulations of young men at college. Writing from Queen's College, Oxford, in November 1772, John missed his sibling and complained that he 'was much disappointed at not having heard from you once while you continued in London, not for so long a Time after your settlement in College'. He mentioned, too, that their father had 'expressed some disapprobation at your neglect in writing'. When they did write, the brothers broached topics such as the (in)adequacy of 'Tutor & Rooms', the pitfalls of a 'large acquaintance' of friends, the 'Study of Logick', John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, a course that John attended on 'Experimental Philosophy' with Thomas Hornsby (the Savilian Chair of Astronomy) that had caused him to feel 'my own insufficiency sometimes', the illness of 'our ever honoured Father', and his anxieties concerning their 'considerable' college expenses. For his part, Walter was a successful student, acclaimed for his 'ingenuous temper, his sportive humour, his sprightly manners, his virtuous principles, and his literary attainments' – qualities that earned him the friendship of John James Hamilton, the 1st Marquess of Abercorn, Charles Manners-Sutton, the later Archbishop of Canterbury, and William Pitt the Younger, who was admitted to Pembroke on 26 April 1773. Unfortunately for Walter, his time at Cambridge was cut short after a 'fatal hurricane', as the young Emmanuel student remembered, had laid 'our properties in the dust, the hard earnings of the past, the hopes of the rising generation'. After securing his father's lands in Barbados and Virginia, Walter returned to England, earning an appointment from his old friend Pitt as the Comptroller of the Exchequer.[18]

Cambridge, then, was a family affair. Cambridge counted some of the most powerful enslaver families amongst their number: the Carters and Baylors of Virginia, the De Lancey's and Livingstone's of New York, the Izards and Lynchs of South Carolina, the Fullers and Longs of Jamaica, the Martins and Byams of Antigua, and the Husbands and Mayers of Barbados. The Fullers were a particularly prominent family at the University. Numerous Fullers attended Trinity, including the brothers John (1723), Henry (1732), Rose (1732), and Stephen (1734). The family had had a swift rise to power. Originally, Dr Fulke Rose had moved to Jamaica from Mickleton in Gloucestershire; however, by 1670, he possessed 380 acres and had a substantial interest in the Royal African Company. The catastrophic 1692 earthquake in Port Royal, Jamaica, disrupted the Rose-Fuller family's operations, but it did not shake their ascent to financial prominence. The doctor's grandson, Rose Fuller MP, owned the plantations of Grange Pen, Hoghole Estate, and Knollis along with a workforce of 290 enslaved Africans. The Fullers soon diversified and developed a significant financial interest in the ordinance trade. Given the continued struggle for

imperial supremacy in the Caribbean between Britain, France, Spain, and the Dutch, the gun trade was incredibly lucrative. From their Weald iron forges, the Fullers expected an annual income of between £500 and £1,500 a year from the production of cannons and firearms for the British army. A 'King in Brightling', John Fuller (the father of the brothers listed above) purchased a 242-acre estate in Sussex, later named "Rose Hill" after his wife, expanding their landholdings so that, by 1777, they controlled extensive property in both England and Jamaica. The patrons of painter J. M. W. Turner and sponsors of the Royal Institution, the Fullers were representative of the cultural, political, and financial power wielded by participants in the Atlantic slave economy.[19]

The prominence of enslaver families resulted in a greater degree of familiarity between students and fellows. Stephen Fuller was a significant go-between for students and the Cambridge fellowship. Having completed his expensive schooling at Charterhouse, Stephen was a scholar at Trinity in 1735, took his BA in 1739, and was 'Chosen Fellow' of the College in 1741. That year, in September, his father John Fuller sent Stephen's report of a 'violent hurricane' in Huntingdonshire to the Royal Society (of which his father and brother, Rose, were also Fellows). Fuller also corresponded with college fellows, including Stephen Whisson, Trinity's Bursar. In March 1756, Whisson responded to Fuller's 'friendly offer; for I think the proposals such as some young men would be glad to accept of, and there was a time when I could have recommended one very amply qualified for that business[.]' The nature of this "business" was not discussed, but Whisson had 'thought of two others, both [of] which wou[l]d have done us credit and they both seemd pleasd with the prospect; when the affair was first mention'd; but after long consideration and consulting their friends, they have declin'd it'. The College refused Fuller's proposition because of 'the fears of mothers and remote hopes of small pittances at home prevailing against the prospect of immediate advantage abroad'. Fuller's attempt to recruit Trinity men for opportunities overseas had not met with opposition from the College – the students' families had stopped him. Whisson's rejection did not damage their friendship. Two months later, in May 1756, Stephen Fuller introduced the Bursar to his nephew John and hoped that he would 'defray the Expences of his admission &c. draw upon Mr. Thos. Fuller Merchant in St. Clements Lane London ten days after date for your reimbursement'. Planning his nephew's academic future, Fuller hoped that 'As soon as he is admitted my Brother would have him return to his Master again, & he shall go down & reside in October next. When I will give you further Instructions in addition to his studies'. Only John's success at Cambridge, Fuller admitted, would 'entitle him to be look'd upon as one of the Family'. Like the Burwells, the Fullers took their educations seriously as the mark of a true gentleman.[20]

Cambridge's acceptance of chattel slavery offered more than social connections – it provided a not-insubstantial income stream for the colleges. Though the average number of colleges and universities grew in the British Atlantic

world, the late seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries were the most difficult period in the University's turbulent history. After the education boom of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the legacy of which can still be seen in the extensive building work and professorships founded in that era, Cambridge experienced a precipitous fall in its student population. For some years of the eighteenth century, 300 students were in residence. John Venn has argued that 'anyone, who in 1760, endeavoured to infer the future from observation of the past [student enrolments] might well have come to the conclusion that in another century Cambridge and Oxford would be nearly extinct'. It is not difficult to see why, then, wealthier students, including young men with ties to the transatlantic economy, were welcomed at the struggling colleges.[21]

There were many reasons for the collapse in student numbers. The university experienced numerous scandals as the indolence of Cambridge fellows and lecturers became more apparent, with some arguing that the colleges exploited students for money, silver plates, tankards, and benefactions – and the college silver collections still bear the names of students from enslaver backgrounds, some of whom were expected to spend fifteen to twenty pounds on plate upon arrival. The role of a college fellow was, to all intents and purposes, a prestigious yet comfortable position. Fellows had few necessary duties other than dining at hall and attending service in chapel, but some did not even rise to these meagre duties. As Peter Searby notes, 'many were lax in attendance, and some were wholly non-resident'. Most did not teach. In 1788, one frustrated polemicist called for the reform of Cambridge because the 'enormous, and enormously increasing, Expence in the Education of young Men in this University, has been, is, and always must be Matter of very serious Concern to the Kingdom in general'. To that writer, the 'great Influx' of wealthy men to the colleges, perhaps referring in part to the relatives of enslavers, had corrupted the college fellowship, particularly the richest colleges.[22]

Cambridge's critics had a point: families and students spent vast fortunes on their educations, and, facing increasingly competitive oral and (from 1772) written examinations, young men turned to private tutors – raising the cost of their educations. From 1720 to 1830, a year's tuition at Cambridge, including board, increased from around £30 to £250, with Rose Fuller alone spending perhaps £570 at Cambridge and Leiden in the Netherlands. Student money impacted the local Cambridge and wider British economies too. If their ancestors came to the Caribbean poor in the seventeenth century, as the poet William Davenant mused, the children of enslavers returned to England rich a century later. One pamphleteer in 1701 estimated that enslavers in England invested around £50,000 per annum in the mother country on land, expensive educations for their children, and the other "baubles of Britain."[23]

Student expenses, in turn, enabled them to project an aristocratic self-image to their peers. For these men, the sum of 200 pounds for a year's expenses (perhaps £28,870 today) was a pittance. (Fuller advised one parent that 200 pounds

was sufficient.) A disgusted Cambridge fellow noted that 'the number of… West Indians have done infinite hurt by their lavish way of spending both money and their time'. Horse racing was a popular (and expensive) component of student leisure, as it was in Virginia and the other North American colonies, as a means of projecting gentility. By 1740, the number of races had grown to such an extent that government regulation was required, as racing became 'an integral part of the fashionable social scene'. In an August 1756 letter to Rose Fuller, one slaveholder 'begg[ed]' his favour to 'see how his [son's] best Suit of Cloaths is and likewise whether He has any Breeches or Shoes fit to be seen in at ye Races' at the town of Lewes in East Sussex and, if he 'wants new Cloaths', Fuller would 'order a suit to be made, I shall bring shirts &c with me'. The Ascot and Newmarket races were popular student diversions, especially with Virginians. John Baylor of Caius was such a frequent attendee of the Cambridgeshire racetracks there that he later named his Virginian plantation "Newmarket" in that town's honour.[24]

Students found excitement in Exchange Alley too. A cursory examination of the South Sea records reveal that many Cambridge men owned securities. Richard Roderick of Queens', the son of Dorothy and the Reverend Dr Richard Roderick, was provided with £1,410 in annuities by his parents whilst completing his Bachelor's degree in September 1728, and he later became a fellow at Magdalene in 1742. John Mandeville of Corpus also owned £500 of annuities. The rising tide of wealth in the collegiate university drove some fellows to distraction. Amid the South Sea Bubble, Zachary Pearce, a Trinity fellow, complained that the 'old thirst for sciences seems to have been somewhat quenched here already' because 'our men are generally rich rather than educated men'. The 'desire for silver', he wrote, outweighed scholarly endeavours. Fellows sought to profit from investments in the slave trade: for instance, Richard Loving of Trinity owned £100 of Royal African Company stock, and Richard Monins, a St John's fellow, held £122 of South Sea stock. Perhaps reflecting on his colleagues and students, Richard Bentley, the Master of Trinity, identified a true intellectual as someone who 'lives inglorious or in want, To college and old books confin'd; Instead of learn'd, he's call'd pedant, Dunces advanc'd, he's left behind: Yet left content a genuine stoic he, Great without patron, rich without South-sea'. Bentley, who provided his Greek manuscripts to Trinity's Wren Library, had a secret though: he had £4,250 in South Sea stock around the Bubble, expanding his holdings in annuities to £5,500 by March 1725. (According to his journals, he later lost around £4,000 in 'the South Seas'.) Bentley was a man rich and poor in South Sea, indeed.[25]

Even at study, the relatives of slavers spent vast sums of money. John Fuller's expenses at Trinity and later at the Inns of Court, though frugal (in comparison to others), provide an insight into exactly what wealthier students purchased and the wider commercial economies in Britain that were bolstered through their expenditure. Families assisted the students wherever possible, providing money (and, in John Baylor IV's case, a hamper of hams, cider, brandy, and wine), yet their expenses frightened even the proudest and most trusting

parents, forcing Fuller to assure a worried relative that 'I am of Opinion that boarding in some sober family will be the best Method [for his holiday] as I shall by that means be less liable to fall into any temptations: as to chumming I think it must on many Accounts be disagreeable & inconvenient[.]' On the subject of 'chumming', John assured Rose Fuller that 'it shall be my constant Endeavour by my future Discretion & diligent application, to render myself deserving of the Confidence you repose in me'.[26]

If John was frugal, then that is some indication of the significant incomes that these men drew upon in Britain. From March to mid July 1761, he spent more than seventy pounds on board, stockings, tea, sugar, handkerchiefs, gloves, wine, a journey to Maidstone, various books (including Sir Edmund Plowden's legal reports), pens, ink, paper, the rent of chambers, breakfast, shoes, and a mirror. He also hired the services of numerous workers, including a milliner, laundress, hosier, and landlady. These expenses did not include his tuition nor the significant amounts of alcohol and coffee that students consumed at coffeehouses in Cambridge, such as "Clapham's" or "Greek's" (named after its Greek proprietor). One visitor witnessed 'chief professors and doctors' amongst the patrons reading 'papers over a cup of coffee and a pipe of tobacco, and converse on all subjects; and thus you can make their acquaintance'. At these establishments, students and fellows traded news and formed friendships that endured following university, whether they remained in the metropole or returned to the colonies.[27]

Cambridge alumni donated to their colleges too. Burch Hothersall, the son of a Barbadian slaveholder, was admitted at Emmanuel College as a fellow-commoner in 1672, took an MA that same year, and later donated more than £120 for a new chapel organ (see Figure 1.2). (The college account books noted that a payment was made for 'Entertaining Mr. Hothersall and his Lady Joice at dinner who gave the organ… and [there] wine then [served]'.) Resplendent in a red gown, his portrait is still held by the college. William Long, the son of the Caribbean merchant Beeston Long, gave 100 pounds to Emmanuel, after a college fire in 1811 damaged the Westmoreland Building. Furthermore, in 1870, funds from Richard Burgh Byam's earlier £200 bequest to King's College (he had been a fellow there from 1807) was used in 'erecting two brass standards for lights at the East end of the chapel'. The standards were inscribed with Byam's name as a tribute to his generosity.[28]

Some students spent far more than Burch Hothersall or Richard Burgh Byam. Unsurprisingly given its reputation for educating the social elite, Cambridge reflected Britain's prevailing class hierarchies (see Table 3). The noblemen and fellow commoners (sometimes called 'Gentlemen Commoners'), 203 of whom were from enslaver families, were perched atop of the University's social pyramid. They were entitled to miss lectures, take plain exercises for the bachelor's degree, and dine at high table with the fellows. In return, these students provided plate to the college and paid higher fees. These students were highly esteemed – Dr William Savage, the Vice-Chancellor (1724–1725), acclaimed the fellow-commoners

for adding 'a great Lustre to our University' and he wanted them to appear in clothing 'proper to their Quality & Station; which, by distinguishing them from all other Scholars, would be both an Honour to ye University, & also a means of procuring that greater Degree of Respect to themselves, which is due to Persons of their Quality & Fortunes'. Dressed in gowns trimmed with gold, the fellow-commoners were marked out at the University as members of the gentility.[29]

Below the exalted fellow-commoners stood the pensioners who paid for their board and lodgings and, at the bottom of the hierarchy, the sizars, who worked as college servants or received scholarships to afford tuition (see Table 3). The pensioners were overrepresented within the student sample because the University class system was reformed in the nineteenth century. Still, student admissions reflected the power and wealth of families with ties to the transatlantic economy: 571 entered as pensioners and only twenty-seven commenced as sizars. These figures should not be taken at face value, however. Some students were admitted as sizars, but these students often acted as servants to their elder siblings at the college, and some changed their class multiple times whilst at university. Fourteen of the sampled individuals started as pensioners and ended their time at Cambridge as fellow-commoners, and some young men went through more dramatic changes in social status: Arthur Holt from Virginia underwent an educational odyssey, beginning life at Christ's as a sizar, rising to become a pensioner, and then finished his college residence as a fellow-commoner.[30]

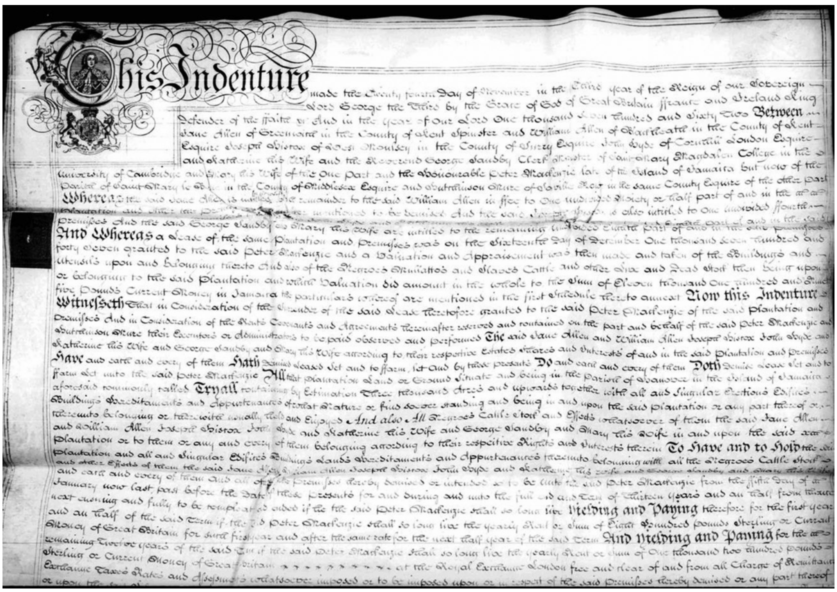

Figure 1.1 Lease for 13 and a half years of Triall plantation, 1762, Church Mission Society Unofficial Papers. Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham.

Figure 1.2 Unknown, *Burch Hothersall*, oil on canvas, unknown date. Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge.

Lewis Burwell IV from Virginia was one such fellow-commoner. Born in Gloucester County, Virginia in 1710, Lewis's maternal grandfather was Robert "King" Carter, who bequeathed to his family more than 300,000 acres and enslaved around 3,000 African men, women, and children upon his death. The young Burwell's father also owned a plantation named "Fairfield." Lewis had a tumultuous time at Caius College, which he attended because his cousin Sir James Burrough, a fellow, donor, one of the architects of the Senate House, and later Master, was a prominent figure at that institution. Burwell appears in the Caius

Figure 1.3 Robert Edge Pine, *Ralph Wormeley V*, oil on canvas, 1763. Virginia Museum of History and Culture.

Bursar's Books in 1729 for a minor expense, and the elder Carter worried that his grandson did not have the qualities of a 'Scholar' and 'Gentleman'. That same year, Carter wrote that Burwell was 'under the care of Dr. Gooch our Governors Brother supposing him to be endowed with the same noble Qualitys that our Governour… whose temperate & Gentlemanly behaviour among us worthy render him a fit Pattern to us all to square our Morals by who have the honour to be frequently in his conversation[.]' Gooch's guidance had little effect. On his

'Scholarship', Carter complained that his grandson's head (and purse) was 'not to be turned to make any large improvements… what good the conversation of the University will do you I shall not prognosticate but I think I may fairly suppose you will come into your own country [Virginia] very indifferently equipped with talents proper to govern your affairs here'. The following year Carter denied Burwell another £170 to fund his expensive lifestyle, and the Virginian planter lamented to Micajah Perry, a London tobacco merchant and chaperone who had likewise tried to constrain Burwell's finances, that 'if this is to be the Effects of an English Education I don't know who will venture their Sons thither[.]' Burwell's trials had not ended years later. In a July 1734 letter to his old tutor Burrough, Burwell complained of his efforts to find a marriage partner, his painstaking efforts to study the law, and economic difficulties following his mother's death. At the end of the letter, he paid his respects to 'the Master [Thomas Gooch], Mr. Simpson [Robert Simpson, a fellow at Caius], & the rest of my worthy acquaintance[s] in your College'. Burwell had not endeared himself to his relatives, but his friendships with men such as Gooch, Burrough, and Simpson (a South Sea investor) persisted beyond Cambridge.[31]

From their class rank at Cambridge, the students had already been earmarked as an aristocratic class because of their education at English public schools. A Cambridge education was a package deal: an enterprising family would typically send a child over to England for an "English education" that involved schooling, university, and, if they were to be trained for the law, the Inns of Court in London. That context explains why only around half of sampled students graduated, as Cambridge was one stop on a student's longer educational journey. Lewis Burwell was one of many who were educated at Eton (142), and other public schools represented included Westminster (59), Harrow (51), and Charterhouse (39). At these schools, students would have found common cause with teachers, some of whom were prominent investors in the East India and South Sea companies. For example, Dr Henry Godolphin, the Provost of Eton and Dean of St Paul's, had £1,000 in East India securities in April 1694, and later owned £2,140 in South Sea stock in the early 1720s, continuing to hold his investments at the time that Burwell attended school. Godolphin was the namesake of "Godolphin House" at Eton, in part because he funded chapel repairs and erected 'at his own expense' the copper statue of the College's founder, Henry VI, which remains a prominent feature of School Yard.[32]

Slaveholders also drew upon family and friends for advice on where to send their sons. The South Carolinian merchant Ralph Izard contacted a friend, advising him that 'Harrow bears a very good character' and would 'be as proper a place for him [the son] – as any – until he arrives at age'. Yet Izard also recommended 'two or three years residence at Geneva' and, 'If he is sent to Cambridge – or Oxford', he 'must have a considerable degree of judgment and discretion – if his time – and money – are not thrown away – to very

little purpose'. After all, these children were investments, and their education reflected the value that their family placed on a British schooling. Simon Taylor, a Jamaican plantation owner and one of the richest men in the Empire, offered advice too. He treasured his time at Eton, holding on to his 'Eton buttons', but reflected that he was a 'better scholar' when he arrived in 1755 than when he left, writing that 'a person may as well send his child to the devil at once, as either Oxford or Cambridge' – and he complained that students often ruined themselves through overspending and joyriding in carriages. Acknowledging these temptations, families often banded together to choose schools for their sons, with students from enslaver backgrounds attending the same elite institutions. At Eton, Ralph Wormeley V was friends with Izard, Daniel Dulany of Maryland, and John Randolph Grymes, a fellow Virginian. There they mixed with the *crème de la crème* of England, with Wormeley counting the future parliamentarian and abolitionist Charles James Fox, and Robert D'Arcy, the 4th Baron Hildyard, amongst his youthful companions.[33]

The colleges that these students attended reflected their attempts to attain social capital at Cambridge. To varying degrees, almost every college admitted these students; still, the three largest institutions of attendance from the student sample were Trinity (329), St John's (160), and Trinity Hall (53). After those three colleges, the students were more dispersed, with Christ's (40), Peterhouse, Pembroke, and Queens' (35) the other leading institutions in popularity (see Table 4). Slavers made a logical choice in Trinity and St John's, two of Cambridge's most prestigious seats of learning. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, half of England's peers and sons of peers matriculated at Trinity and 151 men who entered there between 1790 and 1820 became parliamentarians. Students formed enduring friendships with members of the British elite. (Henry Goulburn, who attended Trinity and whose father owned a sugar plantation, became friends with Henry John Temple, the 3rd Viscount Palmerston and future Prime Minister, at Cambridge.) Trinity's prestige accounts for the fact that, between 1710 and 1838, men with familial connections to the transatlantic economy constituted around five per cent of total admissions there. This figure rose to almost ten per cent around the middle of the eighteenth century and did not fall below five per cent until the 1820s.[34]

Student portraits were another component of the aristocratic self-presentation that enslavers projected at home in the Americas and abroad in Europe. The students provided ample opportunities for portraitists, such as Benjamin West and the Welsh painter John Downman, to further their careers in Cambridge. Dressed as the dutiful student, mortarboard resting atop a powdered wig and one hand in his waistcoat (a sign that the sitter was a member of the gentry), John Baylor IV of Virginia was painted soon after his arrival at Caius. Ralph Wormeley V also sat down for a personal portrait the same year as West painted "The Cricketers" (see Figure 1.3). Wormeley employed the services of no less than Robert Edge Pine, who painted George II and George

Washington, to memorialise Wormeley's education and, as a result, his promising future as a leading political figure in Virginia. Wearing the black and gold gown of a fellow-commoner, Wormeley held his mortarboard in his left hand as the entrance to Trinity Hall lay in the background. Upon leaving Cambridge, students again took the opportunity to have a portrait completed. John Carter, the future secretary of the Colony of Virginia, posed for a portrait attributed to Sir Godfrey Kneller – a Royal African Company investor and the court painter for Charles II and George I. The use of royal painters helped to cement an aristocratic image to their fellow British subjects, whether in the colonies or in Britain, and made these men stand apart as potential leaders.[35]

These glittering portraits bely the fact that the sons of enslavers often used violence, both against fellows and college servants, to prove their superiority. Charles Crawford of Antigua was one such belligerent student. Baptised at St John's Church on 28 October 1752, he was the son of Alexander Crawford of Evansons plantation. His brother received the estate in Alexander's will, but Charles was granted a legacy of £2,000 and an annual income of £150. With too much time (and money) on his hands, Crawford gained a reputation as a violent drunk at Queens' College, Cambridge, where he matriculated in November 1768. Hearing that Samuel May, a Pembroke senior fellow, had impugned the character of several ladies in Crawford's company, he entered May's rooms and forced him to sign a recantation or suffer defenestration. Queens' eventually expelled the Antiguan on account of 'having been drunk, and for assaulting and beating a waterman in the town, and for making a riot'.[36]

That judgment was not the end of the matter – the College made two further futile attempts to eject Crawford from Cambridge: the first he ignored; and, when Queens' barred his dormitory door, he hired a local blacksmith to break the locks. Following his forced removal, Crawford returned to the dining hall where he resisted the efforts of servants to 'take him out', threatening them that if 'they had any regard to self-preservation' they were 'not to touch him'. Cambridge fellows, students, and servants were not the sole objects of Crawford's ire: he threatened to strike Michael Lovell who, as was 'usual for West India merchants', had been 'consigned' to his care – an altercation that the London-based Caribbean merchant attributed (using the environmentalist discourses of the time) to 'young West-Indians' being 'less discreet' and 'more expensive' than British subjects from 'colder climates'. Queens' soon filed a lawsuit to remove Crawford, who seems later to have mellowed, becoming a poet in Pennsylvania and an abolitionist, freeing his enslaved workers in his will. Five years after Crawford's matriculation, a newspaper wondered whether his change in habits had shown that the 'Mind of a Creole may be enlarged, and how much the Language be originally learnt amongst his Father's Slave-Drivers may be refined by a Residence at *Queen's College, Cambridge*'.[37]

Alongside class structures, Cambridge reflected the wider racial prejudices in Britain at the time. Historians estimate that there were perhaps 10 to 15,000

Black people in Britain during the eighteenth century. There may have been Black attendees at Cambridge too. Born around 1700 to John and Dorothy Williams, a newly freed Black couple in Jamaica who were slavers, Francis Williams was the youngest of three sons. His father John was an energetic figure in Jamaican society, arguing before the Assembly in 1708 and 1716 to ensure that his family had the 'customs, and privileges of Englishmen'. From childhood, Francis was academically gifted and, as a result, John Montagu, the 2nd Duke of Montagu, the governor of Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent, decided to send him to England to be educated. Montagu's charity was replete with prejudiced stereotypes of Black inferiority, however. The governor had used Francis as an experiment to see whether Black men prospered in academic settings and, predictably, Williams excelled and, if accounts are to be believed, attended Cambridge. (No archival evidence exists of his attendance but given the paucity of records such a gap in the historical record is not unusual.) In England, Williams was often greeted with exclusion and derision though. The philosopher David Hume mocked the poet, recalling that they 'talk of one Negro as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly'. Later in May 1771, the *Gentleman's Magazine* described how he was 'dressed like other gentlemen in a tye, wig, and sword' and was 'admitted to the meetings of the Royal Society', but was ultimately 'rejected solely for a reason unworthy of that learned body, viz. on account of his complection'. It was further reported that Williams was admitted a member of Lincoln's Inn on 8 August 1721. Given his treatment in England (not to mention the costs of such an overseas adventure), few free Black students followed his example.[38]

Despite the relative scarcity of source material on early Black Cambridge students, the presence of African-descended servants or enslaved persons in the town of Cambridge cannot be dismissed. A record exists from 4 February 1710 mentioning the baptism of a 'Negro Christian' at Conington Hall near Cambridge, and Black persons were used as servants for the aristocracy and were featured in portraits as a status symbol for the landed nobility. Cambridge newspapers featured several advertisements for Black servants in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In November 1797, Elizabeth Bigland advertised the services of 'A Black Servant' (who was probably formerly enslaved) in a Cambridge newspaper to 'Any Lady or Gentleman that is in want of a sober steady Man Servant, twenty-six years of age, and in good health'. Bigland further stated that the man had been in her service for three years, and 'previous to which he lived with her son [Edward Bigland] in [Westmoreland] Jamaica, with whom he conducted himself with the greatest propriety from a state of infancy'. More than fifty years later, another article advertised for 'a black servant – a post as a footman or Butler'. Some students, whose families donated to Cambridge, had enslaved people working on their British estates. John Yorke, an enslaved man from the Fish River plantation in Jamaica, was brought to

Britain when his enslaver's daughter, Elizabeth Campbell, married a white man named John Yorke. By 1772, Yorke was enslaved to John Hutton, the owner of Marske Hall in Yorkshire and an alumnus of Christ's. As local researchers have shown, the parish register described Yorke as a 'a negro servant belonging to John Hutton' – a young man 'supposed then to be about 17 or 18 years of age and could say his catechism in a tolerable way'. Freed after saving a gamekeeper's life in a moor fire, Yorke was provided with a cottage where he married a Yorkshire lady, Hannah Barker, in 1799 and they together had seven children. As for Hutton, his sons John and Timothy donated 100 pounds to the University Library fund and their extensive Arabic and Persian manuscripts to Christ's.[39]

Students certainly utilised the services of enslaved people whilst they lived in Britain. In 1770, John Faucheraud Grimké matriculated at Trinity College. The son of a prominent South Carolinian enslaver, Grimké depended upon Henry Laurens, the future President of the Continental Congress, as his benefactor. Laurens was a rice planter and partner in the largest slave-trading firm in North America, facilitating the enslavement and trafficking of more than 8,000 Africans in the 1750s alone. In 1772, Laurens was in London on business and attended by "Scipio," who later changed his name to Robert Scipio Laurens. In an October 1772 letter, Laurens informed Grimké's father that they were travelling to Geneva, and that they would 'fill a Genteel hir'd Coach & be attended by an interpreting Servant & my Black Man'. The trip would be 'preparative', Laurens argued, before Grimké made a 'more extensive tour' of Europe – a grand tour to expose young, wealthy men to the continent's polite society, music, and art. Before and following the 1772 Somerset Decision, which made enslavement illegal on British soil, undergraduates undoubtedly encountered Black Britons in Cambridgeshire.[40]

Enslavers' efforts to cultivate an aristocratic image through education led, in time, to more tales of prodigals gone astray in Britain. Samuel Alpress, who later served on the Jamaica Assembly, attended Cambridge. Born in January 1739, Samuel's father owned a 125-acre estate in Clarendon, Jamaica, and 51 acres in Vere Parish with 273 enslaved workers in total. George Alpress, who also managed one of the Fuller plantations, chose Jesus College to continue his son's education, writing to that institution in July 1754 with a letter of recommendation from his former schoolmaster. Along with Stephen Fuller's cover letter (or 'Doct Fuller', as he was called), Alpress Snr'.s introduction stated that he had 'already expended a Considerable sum of money upon his Education it will give me the greatest Satisfaction in this Life to have him reap the benefit of it'. He hoped that a Cambridge education would 'qualify him to make a figure in this Island as a Barrister at Law wch Profession I would in that prefer I am willing to bring him up to one other most suitable to them'. During his stay at Jesus, Samuel relied upon Thomas Fuller, a London merchant, for the

necessary funds to finance his expenses and tuition, and Stephen Fuller set out in chapter and verse Alpress's education to Benjamin Newton, a Jesus fellow: 'He is intended for the Law, and is admitted of the Temple, but we shall probably let him take a Bachelor's degree with you. When his Education is finish'd, he is to go to Jamaica, where he is to get his Bread by his Profession'. Alpress's conduct disappointed his family and friends, especially Fuller.[41]

Admitted as a pensioner, Alpress matriculated in 1756 and soon after his financial problems began. In only his second term, the young man had exceeded his yearly allowance, forcing him to beg Fuller for more money and permission to learn 'to Fence an hour an afternoon'. In January 1758, he sent another letter appealing for more funds, which was revealing of the kinds of social networks and friendships that these students made at Cambridge. Alpress recounted that, after matriculation, he 'knew one or two young Gentlemen of Fortune in the University, I was introduced into a great deal of Company, (and without any Vanity to some of the best, of Men of Fortune may be so stiled) wch. naturally led me into a vast Expence, & I at that Time not considering, that they had large Estates to support them in it, & I none'. Alpress was caught in a bind: having little money, he worried that he was 'engag'd in a large Circle of Acquaintance, [and] to drop them all at once my false Modesty wou'd not permit me, as they wou'd naturally have inferred something bad, from so sudden a Transition, as that of a general Acquaintance, to that of none'. Fearing social embarrassment, he borrowed extensive sums of money, around £140 in total, and 'Having got ready Money I went often to Taverns, and as I commonly herded with my Fellow-Commoners my Credit was established upon, that Accts'. Friendship with the fellow-commoners drew the ire of his creditors, and he sought refuge in London for three months to avoid repayment.[42]

Returning to Cambridge, Alpress made little effort to improve his studies. Before the end of his freshman year, college fellows were determined to see the back of him. William Hawes, a fellow, complained to Fuller that 'Mr Alpress seems to have ye Misfortune of thinking himself born to an independent Fortune, & that therefore all application to Business is unnecessary'. Such self-delusion, Hawes worried, meant his 'staying at College will be of no service to himself, tho' a great Expence to his Friends'. By mixing with the rich, Alpress had become an embarrassment to Jesus College. Fuller's problems were further compounded because he had numerous plans for his future and had expectations of positions above his fortune – a situation perhaps exacerbated by his longstanding friendships with wealthier Cambridge students. Learning that the Church may be a suitable profession, Alpress complained that a 'Curacy of 40£ p. ann. Is what I dare say, Hond. Sr. you yourself will think a very scanty sustenance, as a Clergyman is suppos'd to keep good Company, & appear as a Gentleman, which I'm sure such an Income would not permit now, as my Fathers Intention is that I shd. Provide for myself'. (Rose Fuller had offered Jamaica's 'best living'.) Alpress preferred a commission in the army before

commencing his curacy – yet further evidence of the posts that were available to the enslaver class.[43]

As the end of Alpress's time at Cambridge drew near, his debts mounted, and his profligacy served as a warning to future undergraduates. Fuller refused to answer the young man's letters, so Alpress implored Benjamin Newton at Jesus for money to pay his creditors. According to him, 'Mr Newton says he cant let me have any more therefore should be very much oblig'd to you if you woud send me some'. In February 1759, Alpress participated in a riot in Ely, with Newton writing that the Jesuan and his friends had taken 'a days pleasure on the water with several other Scholars, according to an annual custom', but he was remanded in the Justice of the Peace's home on a £100 bail. Soon his debtors returned: a clergyman requested reimbursement for having paid ten guineas to the local barber whose house Samuel had robbed, and four guineas to clear his expenses at an inn after a 'drunken frollick'. In May, the fellows informed him that he had 'in general behaved so very ill, & particularly so last week, that they can by no means suffer him to continue here any longer, there being no hopes that he will do himself any good, and the reputation of the College suffering daily from his irregular Behaviour'. Alpress was unrepentant. Leaving for London, he believed he had kept enough terms and had 'Friends enough in the College to get the Society to give me leave to admit at any other University to keep the other Term for a Degree'. Alpress never got his wish – he returned to Jamaica to embark on a successful political career, passing away in 1784.[44]

Alpress's conduct and that of other students served as a warning to future undergraduates and confirmed the attitude of some Americans that Cambridge was not worth the expense. Virginians had tired of sending their prodigals abroad. William Nelson, the future Governor of Virginia, sent his son Thomas to study at Cambridge, and his decision was widely lauded, with one correspondent arguing that his education – though 'expensive' – had 'proved a Foundation for him to build a Stock of manly Sense on; I believe he has as good a Heart as any Man living; his morals are sound; his Conduct steady, uniform & exemplary; & in point of Fortune, which necessarily gives a Man an Independency of Spirit, he is inferior to very few'. Thomas's father was less confident – in February 1768, Nelson mentioned to John Norton, who had offered to look after his children in England, that he would not send his son Hugh to Cambridge because 'the Temptations to Expence & Dissipation of Money & Time are too great for our Estates here; especially as the Improvements of our youth are Seldom answerable to Such great Expences as they often incurr'. Landon Carter echoed these sentiments. He remarked, perhaps with a chip on his shoulder (he had not attended a British university), that 'everybody begins to laugh at [an] English education the general importers of it nowadays bring back only a stiff priggishness with little good manners as possible'.[45]

The American Revolution and the rise to prominence of the former colonial colleges, such as Harvard, Princeton, and Yale, further drained students

away from Cambridge. Even before American independence, a newspaperman declared that local schools would inculcate 'Patriotick Principles' and instil the 'True interests of *their* Native Country'. Still, southerners did not disregard their expensive educations – those who attended the English schools and universities took great pride in their prestigious educations in comparison to their fellow countrymen in New England. 'Before and just after the Revolution', the US Attorney General Hugh Swinton Legaré wrote, 'many, perhaps, it would be more accurate to say most, of our youth of opulent families were educated at English schools and universities'. He proudly continued: 'There can be no doubt their attainments in polite literature were very far superior to those of their contemporaries at the North, and the standard of scholarship in Charleston [South Carolina] was consequently much higher than in any other city on the continent'. Similarly, Dr Samuel Miller of the Princeton Theological Seminary argued in 1808 that classical learning was more developed in the middle and southern states, such as Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, than in New England. 'The reason', he maintained, 'is, that owing to the superior wealth of the individuals in the latter States, more of their sons were educated in Europe, and brought home with them a more accurate knowledge of the classics'. In time, the planters travelled to universities in Scotland, France, and Germany. Southerners, then, took great pride after leaving Cambridge, in their superior educations compared to the men that they called "Yankees" in the north.[46]

Following American independence in July 1776, the influx of students with enslaver backgrounds from Britain and the Caribbean showed no signs of abating. Instead of student numbers declining, the descendants of Liverpool slave-traders arrived in force (see Table 2). Seventy-three students with families involved in slave-trading came to Cambridge, using the university – alongside their marriages into landed wealth – to join the British elite. John Collingwood Tarleton, who matriculated at St John's as a fellow-commoner in 1810, was one of these students. The name "Tarleton" was infamous at the time, both for General Banastre Tarleton reportedly massacring a group of surrendering American soldiers during the Revolutionary War and for the family's slave-trading operations. John Collingwood's father (also named John) was a prosperous slave-trader and a leader of the proslavery lobby. (Writing to his brother in February 1788, John Tarleton had 'minutely gone thro' [with William Pitt] the whole detail of the situation and nature of the African commerce' and convinced him that the 'prohibition of a further importation of negroes' would produce, in the colonies, 'a rapid decline in the two latter, and total ruin, & impending destruction'.) After his father's death in 1815, John Collingwood inherited a Northumberland property, a London warehouse making £300 per annum, an estate worth £23,000, and the family's Demerara plantations. The abolition of the slave trade did little to damage these families or their fortunes.[47]

Enslavers continued to attend as the plantation's wealth and power survived the age of revolutions. The Berney family were proof of this. Numerous members of that extended family attended Caius, but three men were especially significant. Hanson Berney, the son of Sir Thomas Berney of Kirby Bedon, Norfolk, had matriculated as a fellow-commoner in 1738, and then was elected to a junior fellowship from 1743 to 1756. Furthermore, John Berney, Hanson's cousin, a Caius fellow and bursar, donated £200 to support a scholarship fund upon his death in 1782. Sir John Berney, who attended the same college in 1776, also maintained a strong personal connection to his alma mater, convincing the Caius philologist Robert Forby to become a tutor to his sons and provided him with a living (that was until the family ran into financial difficulties). The Berneys owned the plantation Hanson's in Barbados, which was featured on a survey of Barbadian landholdings between 1717 and 1721. The family became involved on the island because Sir Thomas had inherited the plantation through his wife, Elizabeth Folkes. (The estate was mentioned again in 1766, when Hanson was identified as owning 'land in St. George's… formerly in tenure of Samuel Hanson [Elizabeth's father]'.) The Berney's owned and managed this estate until the early nineteenth century whilst they maintained close personal ties to Cambridge, and it was likely that other college members were aware of the plantation when they conversed with Sir Hanson and elected him to such a junior fellowship. Thomas Gooch had close ties to the family and was perhaps instrumental in attaining that position for Sir Hanson.[48]

Situated on a road between the capital Bridgetown and the Board Hall sugar plantation, Hanson's consisted of a main plantation house, two "negro yards" (where the enslaved had their dwellings and grew their own crops, poultry, and livestock), two mill fields, a hog pen, cotton, gardens, and other parcels of land. The "yards" were imperative for enslaved subsistence given the shortage of food in Barbados. In the House of Commons inquiry into the slave trade, an enslaved man 'of the same Sir Hanson Berney' was 'employed to carry the rum of the estate to market and sell it, and to make bargains for small supplies, with the traders in town'. The Berney estate also included '383 acres of Land… 46 of which are not contiguous to the Sugar works but near enough to plant corn[.]' Following Hanson Berney's death in 1778, his son, Sir John, and the executors struggled to sell the property to defray the family's debts. (Helped, in no small part, by John Berney, the Caius fellow, who bequeathed the 'principal part' of his fortune to his similarly named relative.) Time was of the essence. As one observer noted, the sugar price had shown 'considerable advance the price of the produce has also tended to enhance the value of Land and property in this Island'. They cautioned that this 'local advantage' was 'temporary, [the price rises] arising… from the repeated failure of Crops in several of the Islands for 3 or 4 years past'. Furthermore, the land had to be sold because of 'the unhappy disturbances in the French sugar colonies and particularly the late dreadful and ruinous effects of the revolt in St. Domingo'. Far from depress the price of sugar,

John's legal representatives claimed (or hoped) that the Haitian Revolution was an opportunity to be exploited, as it would take a number of years for the French plantations to return to 'peace and concord' and that 'in the mean time… the present very great price of sugar and other West Indian produce should tempt many to speculate in buying here, and of course advance the price of Estates also[.]' The Berney trustees' confidence in France's ability to maintain control over that slave society was misplaced. By 29 August 1793, the revolutionaries controlled more than a third of the island and had forced the French Assembly to abolish racial slavery (though the French colonists intended on replacing enslavement with a system of indentured servitude). Sir John's opinions on the morality of Black enslavement, however, are complicated – he was listed as a subscriber to Olaudah Equiano's 1789 memoir. The sale took much longer than expected (the newspapers featured no fewer than nine sale or lease notices in one year); still, in 1810 the Berney family managed to sell the 316-acre plantation, and its workforce of eighty enslaved persons – around the lower third of Barbadian plantations in terms of the size of their labour force.[49]

Slaveholders, such as the Berneys, maintained their plantations in the age of abolition, and Black students attended Cambridge in greater numbers too, including the Afro-Polish violinist George Polgreen Bridgetower, who performed with (and impressed) Ludwig van Beethoven and took a Bachelor of Music from Trinity Hall in June 1811. Bridgetower's success was due to his prodigious talent and his father's enterprising ability to get his son noticed by the English aristocracy, as most talented African musicians were condemned to forge professional careers at the fringes of the social scene. Bridgetower's father, Friedrich de August, may have been an enslaved man of African and European descent and travelled to Europe from Barbados, perhaps taking the name "Bridgetower" after his birthplace's largest town 'Bridgetown' (and most likely his point of escape from enslavement). Arriving in Europe, Friedrich married Mary Ann Bridgetower and fathered George, who may have been born in Baila, Poland, in either February or October 1778. At the age of ten, Bridgetower was a renowned musician, performing for the British royal family at Windsor and at the Bath Assembly Rooms, which were frequented by King George III. He was also acquainted with Dr Charles Hague, Cambridge's Professor of Music. Bridgetower's life at Cambridge is somewhat obscure, but during his degree he composed and performed with a full band at Great St Mary's Church before the Chancellor and the Duke of Gloucester, who were visiting the University. *The Times* reported that the 'composition was elaborate and rich; and highly accredited to the talents of the Graduate'. As the church echoed with the rich sounds of Bridgetower's composition, the performance was more significant because Cambridge's musical tradition owed a debt to men with slaving connections: the siblings of Thomas Tudway (1704–1726), a long-tenured Cambridge Professor of Music, had been Royal African Company merchants and master mariners in the Antiguan trade – a trade in men and women who looked like Bridgetower.[50]

Mixed-ethnicity students who were the sons of enslavers also attended Cambridge at this time. Thomas Hopkinson from British Guiana was admitted at Trinity College on 26 June 1819 after attending Anstey School in Hertfordshire. In a later court case in 1828, the press reported that Hopkinson was a man of colour and property owner in Demerara. (His education at Cambridge was significant because mixed-ethnicity family members were often shunned and deemed as threats to prevailing racial hierarchies and white dominance.) Little is known about Hopkinson's mother, however Thomas's father, John Hopkinson, was well-known on Demerara. Indeed, 'any nobleman or gentleman connected' with that colony apparently knew the family. John Hopkinson was mentioned as taking a leading role in suppressing the 1823 Demerara revolt. After the Lieutenant Colonel John Leahy and his militia fired into a crowd of 2,000 enslaved people, killing 200, he gathered his men at John and Cove plantations belonging to Hopkinson. Forcing their enslaved men, women, and children to remain on the plantation, Leahy, Hopkinson and the other landed enslavers tried Dublin, the supposed ringleader of the revolt, amongst the hundreds of rebels who were executed for their resistance to colonial power. Nevertheless, the execution of the Reverend John Smith of the London Missionary Society, a 'freeborn native Englishman', increased British antislavery sympathy as white Britons protested the execution of a freedom-loving (and white) Christian.[51]

Alongside Black or mixed-ethnicity students, the student body's complex relationship to slavery became evident in the white students who had enslaved relatives. Robert Collymore matriculated at Trinity in 1811. He was the nephew of Robert Collymore, a Barbadian enslaver resident in St George, and Amaryllis Collymore, who Robert had manumitted in 1784. She soon became 'the richest free woman of color in pre-emancipation Barbados', and, in 1824, she was bequeathed "Lightfoots" estate and several enslaved persons in Robert's will. Her will was worth an estimated £10,000 to family members, and included sixty-seven enslaved persons provided to various relatives, with an estimated property value of £3,000, silverware, furniture, houses, and land at Haggatt Hall and Bridgetown worth £7,000 to her descendants. Yet Robert, Jr., his cousin, who had the same name, was born an enslaved man – a fact he may have felt compelled to hide at Cambridge. He would have certainly found it difficult to hide his slaving background. At a dinner, a Trinity student joked that he had been at a college formal with 'Sugar Bichard' (Alexander Grant, the son of a Jamaican planter).[52]

Private tutors guided the steady stream of students from the Caribbean to Cambridge. Slave societies, indeed, often spent significant sums on education because of the growing number of educated men who wandered the colonies and the consolidated plantations in search of pupils, placing advertisements for their services in newspapers such as *The Barbadian*. The Reverend William Browne, an alumnus of St John's, was one of their number. In a May 1825

edition of that newspaper, alongside advertisements for saddles, draft horses, and sacks of flour, Browne proposed, for forty dollars a quarter, 'instructing a limited number of young Gentlemen from the age of 14, in the GREEK and LATIN CLASSICKS, MATHEMATICKS and ALGEBRA' – with 'Gentlemen prepared for either of the Universities, and read with for Ordination'. The same notice was printed more than seven times, offering Barbadian families a path to educational success. The English education system, then, continued to attract white families, many of whom feared the social and cultural stigma of living amongst enslaved people. James Scarlett of Jamaica, later the 1st Baron Abinger, reflected in his memoirs that his parents 'were sensible of the corruption of morals' in a slave society. They feared 'contamination' from social 'intercourse either with slaves' or with anyone 'whose dialect was touched with the broken English of slaves'. Such racial anxieties ensured that Scarlett was hurried along to Trinity College before a successful legal career.[53]

British-born students with enslaver parents who followed that path to Cambridge continued to make a name for themselves – but not as their parents would have wished. Admitted to Trinity College in October 1816, Lawrence Dundas was the second son of the Hon. Lawrence Dundas, the later 1st Earl of Zetland, who made a career as a wine merchant and army contractor before purchasing two plantations in Dominica and Grenada. The younger Dundas would not leave Cambridge alive, however. A victim of his vices, the Dundas incident drove the Reverend Frederick Herbert Maberly of Chesterton to write *The Melancholy and Awful Death of Lawrence Dundas*. According to Maberly, the lamentable incident began on 5 February 1818 when Dundas met with five students, among them Keith Alexander Jackson, a fellow-commoner at St John's (and the nephew of Joseph Jackson, a Jamaican enslaver, and the heir of Sarah Woodruff, who died the previous year and had one enslaved person in Port Royal), and William Thellusson, a Trinity undergraduate (and the third son of Peter Isaac Thellusson, the 1st Baron Rendlesham and a banker and heir to a Grenadian estate). Meeting at Jackson's property, the men dined for four hours before they set off for Barnwell, a ward of Cambridge infamous for being a 'resort of women of the town', but Dundas never made it that far. So inebriated that he was unable to put on his gown, the Trinity student 'tumbled into a muddy ditch' on Parker's Piece, and 'after stripping everything off, saving his pantaloons and his stockings… he fell to rise no more; for he was found dead on Friday morning in a sitting posture in the ditch… he does not appear to have been drowned, but to have perished from the inclemency of the weather'. Driven to despair, Maberly denounced undergraduates for their 'evil nature' and for behaviour more suited to a 'glutton and drunkard' than scholars.[54]

Though acknowledging the risks, the Caribbean colonists continued to send potential undergraduates to Britain. Wealthy enslavers from British Guiana, the Bahamas, and Trinidad soon added new revenue streams for the colleges. The Dickinson family from Somerset, who were Bristol merchants and Jamaican

plantation owners, were one such example. On his death in 1799, Stephen Fuller left £10,000 to his grandson, William, who followed his father into Parliament, and William's children, Francis and Edmund, both attended Trinity in 1831 and 1838. Francis, whose correspondence survives, was simultaneously involved in the wider Cambridge community and the proslavery lobby. In June 1838, the Secretary of the Oxford and Cambridge University Club in London informed Dickinson that he was being elected a member of that exclusive society, and he corresponded with George Peacock, the Lowndean Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge, concerning college matters. (Thomas Lowndes, who had endowed that professorship, was Provost-Marshal of South Carolina and, at his death in May 1748, he authorised his executors to sell 'all my estate in Carolina'.) At that time, Dickinson was also a member of the Association of Jamaican Proprietors. Following abolition, the Proprietors depressed Black wages because, in their words, 'a great proportion of the labouring population refuse to work at all, while others will only work for a rate of wages that is impossible for the planters to pay without absolute loss'. The enslavers, then, did not fall into obscurity and poverty following abolition. Rather, they maintained their positions in the wider Cambridge community.[55]

Historians of enslavement have increasingly devoted attention to the students who attended colleges and universities, and this chapter has shown the importance of such an approach to our historical understanding of the material and cultural benefits that educational institutions and the students derived from enslavement, and the significance of education to the formation of a transatlantic economic elite. For colleges, the slow trickle and sudden influx of students – many of them fellow-commoners, the propertied elite – in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries provided a source of revenue and prestige given the political prominence of these men with ties to the colonial economy. These linkages go beyond the material, however. College fellows and tutors were involved in plantation operations and even those who were not slaveholders forged close connections with undergraduates involved in the slave economy, dining with them at high table, providing money for debts, and keeping in touch with alumni long after they had left. Far from innocent and unaware bystanders or abolitionists waiting to convince these students of their misdeeds, the college fellows accepted and nurtured these undergraduates who, after Cambridge, often returned to the colonies to run their estates and take leading roles in governing slave societies. In educating students with transatlantic economic ties, Cambridge men helped to bolster imperial racial hierarchies.