Background

The ideological discourses within the historiography of British colonial slavery emphasises mixed-heritage women who lived in concubinage, as derogatory promiscuous ‘cuckoos’ within the white man’s household. Although a marginalised people on the liminal edge of society, they made socio-economic contributions to the development of Jamaica, with many of them owning property, including enslaved people.

Aims

a) To examine free mixed-heritage women as rational, economic actors, whose principal concerns were to establish and solidify family links and friendships that enabled upward mobility, while retaining their freedom and that of their posterity.

b) To explore a reconciliation between the enslaver/enslaved dichotomy within families of multiple Diasporic colonial mixed-heritage.

Research Question: As marginalised mixed-heritage women during 18th and 19th century Jamaican slavery society, how did environmental pressures provide strategic and tactical opportunities to enable upward social mobility?

Research Design

A qualitative autoethnographic, narrative and interpretative analysis of archival documents constructed as case studies and supported by data sets in a structured database.

Sarah Sherman Elliott
Property: Twickenham
Claim: £263
Total paid: £271
No. of enslaved people: 13
Date paid: 22 Dec. 1835
Worth today: £31,708.00
Ref: T71/326 & T71/870
TNA, Kew, London

References:
Bottom right: Enslaved Quadroon Woman, The James Bell Library, University of Minnesota. Steadman, J.G. 1744-1797;
For further information about my research, please contact Melsia by email on mtomlinkraftner@bournemouth.ac.uk